

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 1 Page

Beaver Creek Ranch Headquarters

Name of Property
Johnson County, WY

County and State

N.A.

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 13001064

Property Name: Beaver Creek Ranch Headquarters

County: Johnson County

State: WY

Multiple Name: N.A.

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

By Barbara Wyatt
Signature of the Keeper

1-8-14
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR is issued to make the following technical corrections:

Section 1

The name should be "Beaver Creek Ranch Headquarters" reflecting the boundaries that encompass the building complex (10.3 acres) and not the agricultural lands (900 acres total).

Level of Significance

The property is listed in the National Register at the local level of significance, which was checked on page 1 by the State Historic Preservation Officer and is supported by the text. Page 10 (first paragraph, first sentence) is corrected to read, "Beaver Creek Ranch, also known as the Schoonover or Harriet Ranch, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a *locally* significant historic district under Criteria A and C." Page 18 (last paragraph, last sentence) is corrected to read, "Beaver Creek Ranch is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The ranch is of *local* significance in the area of Agriculture and Architecture, and the period of significance is from 1916 when it was first occupied until 1963, a period of forty-seven years."

The State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file

Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1064

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Beaver Creek Ranch
other names/site number Schoonover Ranch, Harriet Ranch, Iberlin Ranch/48JO2679

2. Location

street & number 2333 Beaver Creek

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| N/A | not for publication |
| x | vicinity |

city or town Buffalo
state Wyoming code WY county Johnson code 019 zip code 82834

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination 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 x meets the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Mary M. Hopkins 11/13/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

by Barbara Wyatt
Signature of the Keeper

1-8-14
Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public – Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public – State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public – Federal |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 8 | 0 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| 1 | 2 | structures |
| | | objects |
| 9 | 2 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/storage
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuildings
DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Craftsman

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: concrete, earth
 walls: log, wood, concrete, stucco
 roof: wood
 other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Beaver Creek Ranch is located in the Powder River Basin in northeast Wyoming (see Figure 1). The Basin is a large region that reaches beyond the drainage of Powder River itself; the Tongue, Belle Fourche, and Cheyenne rivers flow from this area on the north and east, while the North Platte drains it on the south. The Powder River Basin lies between the Black Hills on the east, the Bighorn Mountains on the west, and the Laramie Range on the south and consists of a broad basin in the interior bounded by mountains and high lands on the peripheries. It is open to the north into Montana where the Powder River flows to the Missouri River Drainage. Beaver Creek Ranch is located in extreme eastern Johnson County at the south end of a triangle with the towns of Buffalo at the northwest point and Gillette at the northeast point. It is located on a broad terrace on the north side of Beaver Creek, a west-flowing tributary of the Powder River. The site is accessed via a two-track road leading from Beaver Creek Road. The natural features include the Beaver Creek bottomlands with eroding cutbanks along the streambed and surrounding sagebrush-covered buttes and open rangeland. The site is dotted with Russian olive and mature cottonwood trees. Although the current deeded ranch consists of over 900 acres, the nominated area consists of the ranch headquarters, a parcel of about ten acres (see Figures 2 and 5). The historic complex consists of buildings and structures constructed of locally procured and manufactured materials using vernacular traditions. The extant buildings (the residence and possibly some of the outbuildings) date from 1916, when Olga Schoonover filed on the land, to the 1950s, when Martin Harriet built the sheep shearing shed. It is organized into two components, residential and agricultural. The residential buildings are situated within a fenced yard in the north half of the site, and the agricultural buildings are located to the west of these buildings and also at the south end of the complex near Beaver Creek. Associated features include livestock chutes, barbed wire and hog wire fences, and abandoned farm equipment. The residential area has a planted grass yard with hand-planted trees and shrubs and a low hand-laid rock wall. The shearing shed is the most distinctive example of ranch architecture, and the remaining buildings form a well-preserved group of residential and agricultural structures, representative of early-to-mid twentieth-century Wyoming sheep ranching. Therefore, Beaver Creek Ranch conveys a strong and undisturbed sense of time and place. Established in 1916, the ranch complex functioned as an inhabited sheep-raising enterprise for nearly eighty years. The component buildings and structures were constructed over a period of about forty years and are predominantly single-story wood frame structures with stucco or board siding, wood frame windows and doors, and moderately-pitched roofs clad with shingles or corrugated steel sheeting. The buildings represent mass vernacular styles (as opposed to architect-designed), using commercially available and often machine-made materials. This complex represents the typical range of structures found on a twentieth-century Wyoming sheep ranch, including residential buildings (house and bunkhouse) and agricultural buildings (shop, shearing shed, barn, granary, sheds) as well as a one-room schoolhouse. The ranch was no longer inhabited after 1994, and as a result, the buildings have suffered from lack of maintenance; however, all remain in fair condition.

Physical Description

The proposed district covers about 10.3 acres and includes eleven buildings and structures (nine contributing and two noncontributing). The site boundaries are generally defined by existing barbwire fencelines, secondary roads, and Beaver Creek. Below are descriptions of the contributing and noncontributing buildings and structures.

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1. Residence (contributing building). This is a 1-1/2 story side-gabled wood frame and log building (main section: 34'-4" NS x 35'-0" EW; front porch addition: 10'-0" EW x 34'-4" NS; rear porch addition: 22'-6" NS x 10'-3" EW), located near the north end of the ranch complex. The foundation consists of poured concrete perimeter walls, and there is an 8' deep basement below the main portion of the house. A small gabled vestibule (7' x 8') on the south side provides access to the basement. Exterior walls are painted stucco over chicken wire lath on the first floor with painted lap wood siding on the second floor. The structural system consists of wood frame floors, walls and roofs with sawn wood joists, studs, rafters, and plates. Originally the residence was constructed with logs, but over time some of the rotted logs were replaced with wood frame wall segments or covered over with wood sheathing and stucco. There is a 10-foot deep screened porch extending the full width of the west front (façade), which also extends the partial width of the east rear. A concrete stoop with steps is located at the east rear entrance. Single-leaf doorways are located off-center on the front and rear porches. The front entrance of the house contains a four-panel wood door with a single rectangular glass light. The rear entrance also has a panel door with a decorative oval light. A narrow slab door is located on the gable end of the bulkhead entrance to the basement on the south side, and another slab door is mounted on the entrance into the front porch. All doors feature painted plain-board surrounds and mortised hinges and locksets. Windows are generally wood frame, two-over-two light double-hung units, placed singly or in pairs on all four sides and on both stories. Three-light awning-sash windows are located off-center on the second floor under the eaves of the west front and east rear. There are groups of screened windows in porches on all sides. All windows feature plain-board casings and slip sills; windows on the north side have aluminum storms installed over the original wood sash. The roof is a moderately pitched side gable with pressed-metal shingles over the main section and features wood cantilevered brackets in gables and exposed rafter ends. Shallow-pitched shed roofs with corrugated steel sheathing cover the front and rear porches. Two brick stove chimneys are asymmetrically placed, one straddling the roof ridge line and the other on the east slope of the main roof.

The interior contains a traditional layout with several rooms on each floor. The front door accesses the front porch, which then provides access to the first-floor kitchen. Behind the kitchen to the east is the living room, to which two bedrooms and a bathroom adjoin on the north side. The living room is also accessed through the rear porch. A stairway extends from a small stair hall off the living room to the second-floor hallway, which provides access to three bedrooms and two small storage areas. The stairway features enclosed stringers, wood risers and treads and a plain-board handrail with square balusters at the second-floor hallway. Flooring is wood tongue-in-groove boards, with linoleum and carpet covering in several rooms. The first floor features painted plaster walls; the second floor has painted cellulose-panel walls with wood battens. All floors have plain-board baseboards. There are cellulose-panel ceilings with wood battens throughout both levels. There are no decorative embellishments, and the building is served with electricity, plumbing and central heat through floor vents. Although Tax Assessor records state a construction date of 1930, land records verify that the house was built in 1916. It retains its original configuration except for the addition of the front and rear porches.

2. Bunkhouse (contributing building). This is a small one-story wood frame, front-gabled building (original section: 14'-2" NS x 15'-11" EW; west addition: 14'-2" NS x 6'-4" EW). The foundation is crudely formed with mass concrete perimeter walls. The exterior walls are painted stucco over chicken-wire lath, and the structural system consists of wood frame walls, roof, and floor. A small concrete stoop is located at the doorway on the west front. The entrance consists of a single-leaf door placed asymmetrically on the west front and has a five-panel wood door with mortised hinges and lockset. The north and south sides of the original main section contain one centered wood frame window, each with an aluminum one-over-one light replacement unit. There are wood frame windows on the north and south walls of the addition, each with wood frame opening and fixed sash. The west window is covered with a wood plank shutter, and the east wall is devoid of windows. Doorway and windows in the main section feature

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plain-board casings, aprons, and sills. Moderately pitched front-gabled roofs cover the main section and, slightly lower, the west addition. The main section is sheathed with hexagonal asphalt shingles covered by corrugated steel sheets; the roof of the lower west addition is sheathed with asphalt sheet roofing. There is a small brick interior end stove chimney centered on the ridgeline near the east endwall.

The interior contains three rooms, configured in a way that suggests a converted schoolhouse. The main room occupies the entire original section; the west addition consists of an anteroom in the northwest corner and a small unfinished coal room in the southwest corner. The building is accessed by the doorway on the west wall of the anteroom. The floor in the main section is wood plank covered with linoleum, and the west addition has uncovered wood planks. Walls in the main section are painted plaster with wood baseboards and quarter-round base shoes, and there is a cellulose-panel ceiling with unpainted battens. The addition has plaster/cellulose-panel walls and ceiling in anteroom; unpainted wood plank walls and cellulose-panel ceiling in the coalroom. There are no decorative embellishments, and the building is served with electricity; heat was originally provided by a coal stove, since removed. The bunkhouse retains its original configuration except for the addition of the small front anteroom. According to Tax Assessor records, it was built in 1930, but the exact date is unknown.

3. Shop (contributing building). This is a one-story wood frame, front-gabled building (14'-4" NS x 36'-5" EW) used as a shop. The foundation consists of poured concrete perimeter walls; there is no basement. Exterior walls consist of painted horizontal 1" x 6" tongue-in-groove siding. The wall, roof, and floor systems are wood frame. Small concrete stoops are located at the doorways on the east and west sides. Double-leaf garage doors are centered in the east and west walls, and single-leaf man doors are located in the north and south walls. All doors feature horizontal tongue-in-groove siding with surface-mounted strap hinges. Wood four-light fixed-sash windows with plain-board casings are aligned on the north and south walls. The south wall features one pair and one gang of six windows; the north wall has one pair. Small hayloft doors are centered in the east and west gable ends and are covered with wood board shutters. The roof is moderately pitched and sheathed with wood shingles and features moderate overhang and exposed rafter ends. A small brick stove chimney is offset at the southwest corner, and a cylindrical iron chimney is situated over a blacksmith forge in the southeast corner.

The interior is divided asymmetrically into two rooms, each extending the full width of the building. The 16-foot deep eastern room contains a blacksmith forge in one corner, a low concrete platform in the room's center, and a workbench along the north wall. The 20-foot deep western room has a workbench along its south wall and shelf rack along the north wall. The floor is concrete slab; the walls and ceilings are unsheathed studs and rafters. Interior window and door openings are unpainted and uncased. There are no decorative embellishments, and the building is served with electricity; heat is provided by woodstoves in the two rooms. According to Tax Assessor records, it was built in 1930, but the exact date is unknown.

4. Schoolhouse (contributing building). This is a one-story wood frame, front-gabled building (16'-5" EW x 14'-4" NS) that once served as a schoolhouse. The foundation consists of poured concrete perimeter walls, and there is an additional concrete foundation (16'-5" EW x 7'-8" NS) adjoining the building foundation on the south side. Walls, roof, and floor are wood frame, and the exterior walls consist of unpainted stucco over chicken-wire lath. A small wooden step is located at the entrance on the west wall. The entrance consists of a single-leaf doorway located off-center in the west wall (façade). The five-panel wood door (36" wide) features mortised hinges and lockset. The west, north, and south sides each contain a wood-framed window with plain-board casings and slip sills; each opening holds a replacement one-over-one light aluminum sash. The moderately pitched front-gabled roof is sheathed with corrugated steel sheets over wood shingles. The roof features moderate overhang and exposed rafter

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ends. The rafters are rough-hewn logs set at 24" centers, as opposed to the 2"x4" construction of other buildings. There is a small interior brick stove chimney centered on the ridgeline at east rear.

The interior consists of a single room, accessed through the front door on the west wall. The room has windows on the front and both sides and two painted masonite chalkboards mounted on the east rear wall. Flooring consists of tongue-in-groove boards; the walls and ceiling are covered with painted cellulose sheets. The interior window and door openings feature plain-board casings and slip sills. There are no decorative embellishments, and the building is served with electricity and heated by a single stove. This building was moved onsite from an unknown location. The original construction date of this building is unknown, but it was moved onto the ranch in the late 1940s as a schoolhouse for Raymond Schoonover's daughters.

5. Woodshed (noncontributing structure). This is a small three-sided shed-roofed structure (6'-0" EW x 6'-3" NS) located near the northeast corner of the ranch headquarters. There is no foundation, and the walls consist of salvaged wood planks and corrugated steel sheets on the north, east, and west sides. The south front is open. There are no door or window openings. The structural system is sawn wood frame wall and roof; the latter is a shallowly pitched shed roof sheathed with corrugated steel sheets. The interior has unsheathed wood studs and rafters. The structure serves as storage for firewood. The date of construction is unknown; the structure is considered noncontributing due to the lack of material integrity.

6. Shed (contributing building). This outbuilding is located in the northwest corner of the ranch complex, across an access road and west of the residential buildings. It is partially excavated into a hill slope. It is a one-story side-gabled building with a concrete foundation and consists of two components. The original west section (12'-4" NS x 18'-10" EW) is constructed of painted stucco over chicken-wire lath on concrete and wood frame walls, and the east addition (12'-4" NS x 14'-4" EW) is horizontal tongue-in-groove covered wood siding. The roof and floor systems are wood frame. Single-leaf doorways are located on the south wall (façade) of the west and east sections. The west door has vertical wood planks; the east door has horizontal tongue-in-groove boards. Both feature surface-mounted steel strap hinges and latches. The west section has five wood-framed windows along the south front, a group of four located west of the entrance and one east. Each features four-light fixed sash. Two simple openings with wood board shutters flank the doorway on the south front of the east section. The roof is a moderately pitched side gable sheathed with wood shingles. A small wood frame vent is centered on ridgeline of the west section; the roof features moderate overhangs and exposed rafter ends. There are no chimneys.

The interior contains two rooms, one in each of the two building sections. The concrete/frame west section is the original part of the building, to which the wood frame east section was added. The west section has concrete slab flooring and unpainted concrete/stucco walls and unpainted cellulose panel ceiling. The east section has tongue-in-groove wood board flooring and walls of unsheathed wood studs and rafters with wood shelves and racks along the west wall. Doors and windows have simple wood frames lacking casings and sills. There are no architectural embellishments, and the building is served with electricity. Tax Assessor records indicate a building date of 1930; exact dates are unknown, but it appears that the two components were built at different times.

7. Garage (contributing building). This building is a one-story front-gabled wood frame building (31'-0" EW x 9'-6" NS) on a foundation of mass concrete perimeter walls. Exterior walls are 12" thick poured concrete on the sidehill section on the north and west sides, which are built against a 7' high concrete retaining wall abutted by the west wall of the adjacent shed (No. 6, above). The south and east walls are unpainted 1"x12" vertical wood plank. The roof structure is wood frame with sawn wood studs, girts, rafters and plates. A double-leaf garage door occupies the entire east wall and features vertical wood planks and surface-mounted steel strap hinges. One small window

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opening is centered under the west gable. The moderately pitched front-gabled roof is covered with corrugated steel sheets over wood plank sheathing and features a moderate overhang and exposed rafter ends. There are no chimneys.

The interior consists of a single-story rectangular space, accessed through the double doors on the east wall. Flooring is bare earth, and the north and west walls are unpainted concrete with spalling. The south and east walls and ceiling are unsheathed wood frame. The garage door and window opening are simply framed with no casings, lintels or sills. According to Tax Assessor records, it was built in 1930, but the exact date is unknown.

8. Shearing shed (contributing building). This is a long one-story wood frame side-gabled building (147'-8" EW x 20'-2" NS) with no foundation. Walls are vertically placed unpainted wood planks on pole-barn construction. Log columns are sunk into the ground along the perimeter walls. The wall, roof and floor systems are wood frame. Fourteen low sheep doors are aligned along the south wall of the west section, surmounted by 4-light fixed windows, some with missing panes and sash. Door and window openings are simply framed without doors or casings. A double-leaf doorway is situated off-center on the west wall (door removed). Three single-leaf doorways are situated randomly on the north wall, each containing a vertical plank door with surface-mounted steel strap hinges. One eight-light fixed-sash wood frame window is situated off-center on the south wall of the shearing shed's two-story center section. The roofs are moderately pitched and side-gabled, and sheathed with corrugated steel sheets. The overhang is moderate, and the rafter ends are exposed. There are no chimneys.

The shed is configured as a two-story central section flanked by asymmetrical one-story side sections (80'-8" deep on the west and 47'-6" on the east). All three sections have open floor plans, with an open loft above the main floor of the center section, accessed by a wood ladder. The flooring consists of wood plank over wood stringers laid directly on the ground. The interior walls and ceilings feature unsheathed poles, studs and rafters. The interior window and door openings are unpainted and uncased. There are no architectural embellishments, but there are numerous historic graffiti from ranch hands, inked and painted on the north wall of the east section. At one time there were individual stalls inside; these have since been removed. The building is served with electricity. The shearing shed was built in the 1950s by Martin Harriet.

9. Granary (contributing structure). The granary is located at the southwest corner of the ranch complex, a short distance southwest of the shearing shed (No. 8, above). It is a one-story wood frame front-gabled structure (14'-2" EW x 12'-2" NS) on a foundation of perimeter walls of salvaged painted concrete blocks. The exterior walls are painted stucco with chicken-wire lath laid over wood planks. The wall, roof and floor systems are sawn wood frame. Single-leaf doorways are located on west front (façade) and south side walls. The doors feature vertical wood planks and surface-mounted steel strap hinges. The windows consist of small framed openings on the west front and south side walls, each with a horizontally placed wood plank shutter. The north and east walls are devoid of openings. A wood ladder is affixed to the wall south of the west entrance. The moderately pitched front-gabled roof is sheathed with corrugated steel sheets over wood planks and features moderate overhangs and exposed rafter ends. There is a wooden hatch opening on the south facing roof slope.

The interior consists of a single rectangular space, accessed through doorways on the west and south sides. The flooring is wood plank, and the walls are covered with plywood sheets. The ceiling has unsheathed rafters. The doors and windows have simple wood frames lacking casings and sills. A metal door is located in the floor to access grain. There are no decorative embellishments. According to Tax Assessor records, it was built in 1930, but the exact date is unknown.

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10. Privy (contributing building). This is a small one-story wood frame side-gabled building (5'-11" x 6'-10") resting on timber sills laid directly on the ground, with an open waste-pit below the structure. The exterior walls are tongue-in-groove on wood siding, horizontally placed and painted. The wall, roof and floor systems are sawn wood frame. A single-leaf doorway is located on the north front wall and features horizontally placed tongue-in-groove wood siding and surface-mounted strap hinges. There are no window openings, but crescent-moon cutouts are located in gables on the east and west walls for light and ventilation. The roof is moderately pitched and sheathed with wood shingles over wood planks.

The interior consists of a single rectangular space accessed via a doorway on the north side. There is a four-hole sitting platform on the south wall. Flooring consists of wood planks, and the walls and ceiling are unshathed wood studs and rafters. The simple wood frame doorway lacks casings and sill. According to Tax Assessor records, it was built in 1930, but the exact date is unknown.

11. Well (noncontributing structure). This is a structure lined with hollow clay tile blocks that was designed to trap the waters of an artesian well. It is located southeast of the ranch house. It measures 20' long by 7' wide with an unknown depth. The tile blocks are 12"x8"x4" and are open on the ends. Metal pipes were used to provide fresh water to the ranch. It appears to have been built by Jesse Schoonover in 1936. (See Statement of Significance, Phase I: The Schoonovers.) It is considered noncontributing due to a lack of material integrity.

Integrity

The proposed Beaver Creek Ranch historic district includes buildings, structures, fencelines, and corrals, which were constructed within about a 40-year period, beginning with the establishment of the Schoonover Homestead in 1916 and ending with the construction of the sheep shearing shed in the 1950s. The complex retains integrity of location as the original site of the homestead improvements used to prove up on the land starting in 1916. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship are rated as good. The variety of buildings and structures that comprise the complex generally retain their essential physical characteristics with minimal modifications and improvements over time and the inclusion of additional components as the ranching operation grew. All buildings are over fifty years of age. The integrity of setting is rated as good due to the sparsely populated rural agricultural setting. Oil and gas activity has occurred in the surrounding area for decades, but there are minimal physical or visual intrusions associated with the ranch complex. One energy-related building has been constructed on a nearby bluff but is not visibly intrusive from the ranch buildings. Overall, the surrounding landscape is dominated by open rangeland typical of a ranching setting. Integrity of feeling and association is rated as good, because of the integrity of setting and the good physical integrity of the Beaver Creek ranch buildings.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1916-1963

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Schoonover, Jesse; Harriet, Martin

Criteria Considerations N/A

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification) 1916-1963. The ranch was established in 1916 and was continuously operated as a sheep ranch until 1994. The date 1963 indicates a period of significance lasting 47 years, and is 50 years before the current date.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Beaver Creek Ranch, also known as the Schoonover or Harriet Ranch, is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places as a state significant historic district under Criteria A and C. The period of historical significance dates from 1916, the year of homestead filing and occupation, to 1963, indicating a forty-seven year period. Significant dates include 1916 through 1920, when the homestead was established by Olga and Jesse Schoonover and came to patent. The ranch is eligible under Criterion A, as it represents the twentieth-century sheep raising industry in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming. It was continually occupied from 1916 through 1994 and represents the typical sheep raising practices of the times, including transhumance, the seasonal cycle of trailing sheep to high mountain pastures in the summer and back to lower elevations in the winter. Brothers Jesse and Alvin Schoonover, raising sheep on neighboring ranches, were among the most successful stockmen in Johnson County and the Powder River Basin. The name Beaver Creek appears to be the historic name of the ranch and served to differentiate it from Alvin Schoonover's neighboring ranch on the Powder River. From 1951 to 1994, the ranch was owned by the Harriet family; Simon Harriet was a Basque sheepherder and represents the second phase of the ranch's history. During the Harriets' tenure, small numbers of cattle were also raised, but the ranch was always predominantly a sheep raising operation and at times led Johnson County in the size of its flocks. The ranch is also eligible under Criterion C, as the physical remains retain sufficient integrity to represent the themes stated above. The ranch complex consists of a grouping of residence-related and agriculture-related buildings, all constructed between 1916 and the 1950s. The buildings are generally of modest wood frame construction, representing mass vernacular architecture (as opposed to architect-designed), typical of a Wyoming sheep ranch. The ranch complex also represents a typical ranching layout that includes a sheep shearing shed with numerous historic graffiti from ranch hands, and a series of fencelines and corrals for the management of livestock surrounding the buildings.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Filing on the Public Land

In 1860 Horace Greeley stated: "The one great point of superiority enjoyed by our countrymen over their cousins in western Europe is the facility wherewith every American who is honest, industrious and sober may acquire, if he does not already possess, a homestead of his own; not a leasehold from some great capitalist or feudal baron, but a spot of earth of which no man may rightfully dispossess him so long as he shall shun evil courses and live within his means."¹

Between 1803 and 1853, the public lands in the United States grew to 1,413,333,000 acres by means of western claims by the original states turned over to Congress, as well as the result of treaties of acquisition with France, Spain, and Great Britain, of war and acquisition treaties with Mexico, and a purchase from the State of Texas. The public lands provided revenue to the federal government second only to import duties.²

Until 1841, settlers were technically trespassing if they dwelt on public land prior to purchase. That year, Congress passed the Pre-emption Act, which entitled a citizen of the United States to "squat" on public land. When that land was finally surveyed and put up for sale, the squatter was granted first chance to purchase up to 160 acres at \$1.25 per acre.³ The Pre-emption Act established a new government policy toward land that would be embodied in the Homestead Act of 1862 and subsequent land legislation. It established the principle that settlement of public domain was more important than revenue. It also established the precedent of breaking up public lands into small homesteads, thereby benefiting the largest number of people while reducing the hold of land speculators and those already holding sufficient land.

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The Homestead Act of 1862, entitled "An Act to Secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," was passed in May 1862, after a similar act had been vetoed by President James Buchanan in 1859. It went one step further and allowed a citizen of the United States who had reached the age of 21 or was the head of a family (including female heads of households) to file on as many as 160 acres of "unappropriated public lands." Restrictions required that the entrant maintain residence for five years and swear that he intended to cultivate and settle the land himself. A filing fee of 34 dollars on the Pacific Coast and 26 dollars elsewhere represented the only cash outlay. With six months residence and the improvement of one acre or more of land, the homesteader could gain title by purchasing the land at \$1.25 per acre, a system known as commutation. In 1912, Congress lowered the homestead residence requirement from five years to three, and the homesteader was permitted to leave the property for five months each year.⁴

The federal government reasoned that private ownership of public lands was preferable and resulted in the protection and improvement of the land. As farms were established and crops planted, the value of the land would increase. The public domain, on the other hand, was subject to spoilage by squatters, large timber companies, and mining and railroad interests. However, the wealthy retained the privilege to buy unlimited quantities of public land through auction or following an auction at a district land office. Although by the mid-twentieth century over 285 million acres of public land were transferred from the government to private hands through the Homestead Act, more than 700 million acres were bought from, rather than granted by, the public domain during the same period. In addition, land taken by the government from the Indians was reserved for cash sale, and huge railroad grants were turned into salable tracts, more desirable because the railroad provided the only available link to wider markets.⁵

Unfortunately, federal land policy had originally been formulated for lands east of the Mississippi River with a less harsh environment and high rainfall, and the small land parcels proved inadequate in the semi-arid West. Climatologists have established what is known as "the line of semiaridity" that runs from the northeastern corner of North Dakota in an arc to the mouth of the Rio Grande River. Those lands to the west receive less than the minimum of precipitation needed for agriculture of the ordinary type, about twenty inches a year, with the greater part falling during the growing season. Rainfall in the Great Plains is also characterized by cyclical variations of abundance followed by drought.⁶ Therefore, as homesteaders began to take up 160-acre homesteads, they experienced the difficulty of making a living on such a small land parcel. Mortgages, indebtedness, and foreclosures inevitably followed.

As a result of the homesteaders' plight, the federal government attempted to adapt the laws with piecemeal legislation, often more unrealistic than the Homestead Act itself. The Timber Culture Act of 1873 allowed an individual to claim 160 acres if he agreed to plant 40 acres in trees and keep them growing for eight years. Five years later, the acreage was reduced to 10 acres in trees.⁷ Nevertheless, settlers soon learned that it was virtually impossible to grow even 10 acres of trees in such a climate.

The Desert Land Act of 1877 attempted to fashion a land policy more suited to the western environment. A homesteader could buy up to 640 acres of "desert land" (land which required irrigation for the cultivation of crops). He could pay 25 cents per acre for the first three years, after which one dollar per acre was paid to gain title. In the interim, the settler had to irrigate at least a portion of the land to receive a patent.⁸ Once again, this act proved untenable in most areas lacking year-round water sources for irrigation. As a result, only 4,148 patents were issued from 15,898 filings under the Desert Land Act in Wyoming Territory.⁹

Settlement in terms of the small farming homestead as envisioned by the federal government was inhibited by the large open range cattle operators who were already entrenched in the most favorable locations along the major drainages. Engaging in an industry better suited to the environment, the cattle interests already controlled most of the available water sources and could thereby prevent the small homesteader from making inroads. After the advent of

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cheap barbed wire in 1875, the homesteader could afford to fence his parcel, but the cattle rancher could in turn fence the public domain, which he did not own, but claimed through custom and use. Furthermore, the earliest homesteaders had chosen either to head for the fertile valleys of Oregon or California, or to cling to the eastern fringes of the Great Plains, regions less arid than northeastern Wyoming Territory. Therefore, until better agricultural regions to the west and east were saturated, farmers had little incentive to brave the harsh climate, the cattle ranchers, or the Indians. With some or all of these drawbacks facing the prospective settler, it is little wonder that homestead settlement developed slowly on the high plains of Wyoming. By the 1880s, however, conditions began to change in favor of the small homesteader. First, an Act of Congress (February 25, 1885) forbade the fencing of the public domain by the cattlemen. Secondly, William A.J. Sparks was appointed Commissioner of the General Land Office and proceeded to crack down on fencing and land fraud violations, consequently stirring up the eastern press against the cattlemen.¹⁰ The blizzards of 1886-87 broke the hold of the cattle barons, and the weakening of that industry proved an opening for the homesteaders and sheepmen.

The federal government also lured homesteaders to western lands by the Stock Raising Act of 1916, which allowed an individual to file on as many as 640 acres of land that the Secretary of the Interior had classified as "stock-raising lands." Such lands were suitable only for grazing and the raising of forage crops, did not have any timber, and could not be irrigated. Homesteaders often used this act to increase existing holdings, and it was easier to prove up on this "additional" homestead by merely building fences and constructing stock watering facilities or small stock sheds.¹¹

Early Stock Raising

The region that now comprises the State of Wyoming was settled relatively late in the nation's history. Thousands of emigrants passed through the area on the Oregon Trail during the great westward migration in the 1840s and 1850s but were focused on reaching the more fertile lands to the west. When these areas (mainly Oregon and California) rapidly became populated, stockmen were forced to turn their attention to the northern plains. With the building of the first transcontinental railroad in 1867-1868 through today's southern Wyoming, distant cattle and sheep markets could be more easily reached, and the vast grass and sagebrush covered lands of Wyoming Territory were found conducive to the raising and fattening of livestock. Thus, Wyoming became more attractive to the prospective stock raiser.¹²

Cattlemen were first on the scene, and the cattle industry developed with the completion of the Union Pacific Railroad (an east-west transportation route) and the establishment of major north-south cattle drive routes. The open range days of cattle raising flourished with the help of numerous land laws that encouraged the pioneer stockmen to obtain the large acreage required for a successful operation. The Powder River Basin of northeast Wyoming contained vast grasslands, but settlement was initially held back due to a treaty that closed the Black Hills and the Powder River country to non-Indian settlement until 1877. After the treaty was renegotiated, cattlemen from Montana and southern Wyoming began filling up the available grazing lands. The *Cheyenne Leader* described the mass movement to the newly opened area as "a great exodus northward. They (the cattlemen) have been steadily moving their immense herds northward, until now they have crossed the North Platte Valley, and some of the more venturesome have reached the streams emptying into the Cheyenne River."¹³

European investors contributed to the golden age of the open range and cattle barons. However, by the mid-1880s, the range had become overcrowded and market prices declined. Then the Powder River Basin suffered a drought during the summer of 1886, followed by a series of devastating blizzards the following winter. The stock mortality rate was estimated at fifteen percent, and the poor condition of the cattle that survived decreased their market value. Foreign investment and absentee ownership were greatly reduced, and the Wyoming cattle industry entered an extended period of decline.¹⁴

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These depressed conditions in the cattle industry provided a foothold for the fledgling sheep industry. The initial outlay for a sheep raising operation was estimated at one-third the cost of a cattle operation, and a nearly unlimited public domain for grazing lured sheepmen northward from southeastern Wyoming. The range was soon stocked with sheep, many of which were driven eastward from California and Oregon. The sheep thrived on the buffalo grass, bunch grass, native bluegrass, and various kinds of sagebrush, and they required little water.¹⁵

Flocks of sheep were generally grazed on open range and required constant surveillance by a shepherd with his dog, horse and sheep wagon. Both cattle and sheep grazing depended on the use of public land, but one of the distinctions between the two groups was the constant attention required by sheep. This high maintenance shaped the cycle of activity on a sheep ranch, and a system known as transhumance was practiced. Sheep were trailed into nearby mountain ranges, such as the Bighorns, where they were fattened in the high pastures. They were then moved back down in the fall, with the foothills sometimes providing intermediate grazing lands. Once back at lower elevations, the sheep (mainly yearling lambs) to be marketed as mutton were separated and shipped to major markets, usually Chicago or Boston. Then herders managed winter grazing while fleeces thickened and last spring's lambs matured. After the threat of spring snows, sheep were sheared and the pregnant ewes were separated into a lambing ground with close and constant attention. After lambing and shearing, the sheep once again were herded into the high country, repeating the cycle.¹⁶

Within this seasonal cycle was a daily pattern of tending the sheep. Herders, each responsible for up to 3000 sheep, moved the flocks around so that food and water was available, overgrazing was avoided, and the bed grounds remained sanitary. Sheep shearers tended to be an itinerant group; both herders and shearers were generally Mexican or Basque. An 1892 Congressional report on the sheep industry reported that herders earned \$30 to \$40 per month and the ranch hands \$20 to \$30 per month by the year.¹⁷

Sheep Ranching in the Powder River Basin

Pioneer sheep ranchers in the Powder River Basin included D.A. Kingsbury and George T. Beck. Both ran sheep in the Kaycee area, using the Bighorn Mountains for summer range; by 1884 Beck ran the largest flock in Sheridan and Johnson counties. Kingsbury formed the Kingsbury-Todd partnership with his son-in-law J.W. Todd in 1893; this firm staked J. Elmer Brock to a start in the business and he eventually bought out their holdings. J.C. Oliver, who had come to Buffalo to run a freighting business, invested in sheep in the 1890s and financed a number of other ranchers' start in sheep ranching. By 1890, there were about two thousand head of sheep in Sheridan County, four thousand in Johnson County, and nearly eleven thousand in Converse County. Several more sheepmen established flocks in the area in the 1890s; the town of Buffalo became the center of the industry, and a regional sheep association was organized in 1899.¹⁸

A further boost to the industry was the construction in 1891 of the Burlington and Missouri Railroad (Chicago, Burlington and Quincy), extending from Nebraska westward to Newcastle and Gillette. The Powder River Basin finally had a rail connection to eastern markets; many ranchers raised both sheep and cattle to allow for fluctuations in either market.¹⁹

The rise of the sheep industry in Wyoming ran counter to trends in the rest of the country. In the 1890s, the industry in the East and Midwest was in decline, caused first by the depression that began in 1893, and then by a glut on the world market caused by relaxed import duties and subsequent low prices for domestic wool. Low prices for land, however, kept the industry thriving in Wyoming throughout the 1890s, and by 1900 there were 1.25 million sheep in northeast Wyoming, accounting for about twenty-five percent of all the sheep in Wyoming. As opposed to cattle ranching, sheep ranches tended to be locally owned and operated.²⁰

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With cattle and sheep sharing the same range, conflicts arose. Cattlemen were well represented in the Territorial Assembly by the Wyoming Stockgrowers' Association, which passed legislation on such matters as brand inspection, maverick allocation, and water and range rights, skewing it in favor of the large cattlemen. Cattle ranchers also believed that sheep cropped the range grasses too closely and contaminated the range, rendering it unfit for cattle. They would establish arbitrary "deadlines" that the sheep operators were not permitted to cross, and when herders violated those lines, they and their flocks were sometimes attacked. Cattlemen were known to engage in mass clubbing, poisoning, dynamiting, or driving the flocks over cliffs. Range wars ensued and confrontations continued well into the twentieth century; three sheepherders were killed in 1909 on the west slope of the Bighorns. This level of conflict gradually subsided as grazing restrictions on the public domain became more stringent and better regulated.²¹

At the end of the first decade of the 1900s, sheep raising was still a profitable enterprise; the number of sheep in Johnson County exceeded 327,000 and the wool clip totaled over 2.2 million pounds. Throughout the 1910s and World War I, sheep ranching continued to prosper. However, stock raising in Johnson County, as in the rest of the state, declined in the years after 1921, as sharply dropping agricultural markets and tight credit combined to pressure many ranchers out of business. Furthermore, the Forest Service limited the number of sheep permitted to graze in the Bighorns in order to protect the mountain pastures from overgrazing. The accessibility of public lands also decreased when many farmers and ranchers invested their wartime profits in land available at \$1.25 per acre. Between 1918 and 1925, almost 600,000 acres of land in Johnson County had been transferred from the public domain to private ownership. This trend continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s.²²

The Great Depression caused a further slump in the wool and mutton markets, but it impacted the cattle industry more, and sheep finally surpassed cattle as the most important livestock in Johnson County. In 1925, some 110,000 sheep grazed in the county; by 1932 there were over 237,000. After that year, numbers began a long-term decline through the Depression and World War II. With the gradual end of open-range herding and the increased emphasis on range management and livestock improvement, the nature of sheep ranching had gradually changed between the 1920s and 1940s.²³

Sheep ranching continued to experience a steady decrease in profits in the twentieth century due to grazing fees, increased regulations, predators and lack of manpower. Since the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, sheep in the Powder River Basin have been generally grazed in fenced pastures and not as often driven to high mountain areas for summer range. However, Wyoming continued to derive a significant share of its agricultural income from sheep ranching. In addition, the industry was a major factor in the settlement and economic development of the Powder River Basin. It helped Wyoming Territory overcome the economic devastation wrought on the cattle industry by the droughts and blizzards of the late 1880s, and nearly dominated livestock raising from the 1890s to the outbreak of World War I. Also, the introduction of French and Basque herders around the turn of the century enriched the ethnic and cultural base of Wyoming.²⁴

Beaver Creek Ranch: Phase 1, the Schoonovers

This rural sheep ranching complex was established by Jesse and Olga Schoonover in the heyday of the industry and was built in stages between 1916 and circa 1940. Jesse and his brother Alvin moved from Wisconsin in 1900 and began raising sheep near the Powder River east of Buffalo. They managed their operation successfully, weathering market fluctuations, changing government regulations, summer droughts and winter storms, and becoming one of the larger and more prosperous sheep ranching families in the region. Johnson County sheepmen typically trailed sheep to pastures in the Bighorn National Forest to the west in summer, and tending them on the open range along the Powder River and its tributaries in winter. Spring lambing occurred on the open range, rather than in barns and sheds, and wool

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shearing in the fall was conducted by shearers, often nomadic, in shearing sheds or barns surrounded by holding pens or corrals. By adhering to these practices, Jesse Schoonover was able to minimize the relative size of the ranch headquarters to a cluster of residence-related buildings (house, bunkhouse, shed, garage), separated from the agricultural-related buildings (shearing shed, granary) by a series of fences, corrals, and pens.²⁵

Jesse Wilbur Schoonover was born in 1878 on a farm near Easton, Wisconsin. Both his parents were born in the Midwest. His brother Alvin Homer Schoonover was born three years later, and in 1900 at the ages of twenty-two and nineteen the brothers moved to Johnson County, Wyoming, and began raising sheep. In 1907 Jesse Schoonover patented property in Washakie County in an area later known as Schoonover Flats. The following year Alvin Schoonover patented property near the Powder River in Johnson County about thirty miles east of Buffalo. When Johnson County erected a steel wagon truss bridge at a crossing of the Powder River here, it was named the Schoonover Bridge, and the nearby county road (Johnson County Road 204) was named the Schoonover Road. Several Schoonover family members filed on land in eastern Johnson County between 1905 and 1937. These patents are located either in the vicinity of the Schoonover Bridge crossing of the Powder River or in the vicinity of Beaver Creek. In 1909, the brothers first appeared in the Directory of Sheep Owners in Wyoming, published by the Wyoming Wool Growers' Association. Like other sheep ranchers in the area, the Schoonovers grazed their flocks on both public and deeded lands. Jesse and Alvin Schoonover were listed in the same household in the 1910 census, and their residence was listed as Trabing, Johnson County, a small settlement located about twenty-five miles west of Beaver Creek Ranch.²⁶

On March 1, 1916, Jesse Schoonover (age 37) married Olga Pearl Robbins (age 34) in Sheridan. Olga was born in Hastings, Nebraska in 1881. She spent her "young womanhood" in Cayuga, New York, where she "enjoyed fine school and social privileges." Her chosen profession was nursing. In 1910, illness brought her to Wyoming, where she lived with her uncle, William Robbins, until she married Jesse. The marriage took place at the home of her aunt, Cora Robbins, in Buffalo. "Both the contracting parties are well known young people of the community, Mr. Schoonover having been engaged in the sheep business for a number of years. He is a man of strict honesty and integrity, industrious and affable, while the bride is a young lady of high accomplishments whose friends are legion." The couple left Buffalo for a honeymoon in a "perfectly appointed new sheep wagon" and headed to their first home, a sheep camp on Crazy Woman Creek.²⁷

The couple soon acquired property along Beaver Creek, a tributary of the Powder River, about four miles southeast of Alvin Schoonover's property. The land on the Beaver Creek property was well suited as headquarters for a sheep ranch, located along a sweep of the creek in a broad cove protected on the north and south by sagebrush-covered bluffs. The first official record of the filing process dates from February 14, 1916, a few weeks before the marriage. Olga was the applicant and used her maiden name, Olga Pearl Robbins, because Jesse Schoonover already had two patents totaling 200 acres. She filed on two homestead entries. The first filing was for 160 acres (Serial No. 08636, NWSE, NSW Section 25, NESE Section 26, T48N-R77W). On June 10, 1916, Olga filed an Application for Amendment, which included an additional 160 acres (Serial No. 08657, SNE Section 26, SSE Section 25). All lands were described as "dry farming lands." Olga stated that she was not the owner of more than 160 acres in any state or territory, that she was native born, unmarried, and over twenty-one years of age.²⁸

On June 16, 1920, the U.S. Land Office in Buffalo, Wyoming, received the Final Proof and Testimony of Claimant from Olga Robbins Schoonover. Her testimony included the information that she and her husband had resided on this land for four years, beginning on June 28, 1916, and that their residence was built on the same date; furthermore that they had not been absent from their land during this time. Of the 320 acres, 100 acres were "cultivable." None were timbered. In 1916, no crops were planted or harvested. In 1917, ten acres were ploughed and planted to oats, "crop

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good." Ten acres were grubbed and used for hay bottom. In 1918, thirty acres were ploughed for wheat, oats, and millet; again "crop good." Twenty acres were used for native hay bottom. By 1919, they had fifty acres ploughed for sweet clover, alfalfa, wheat, oats, and millet, but the crops failed due to drought; the native hay also failed. The following year they planted a similar crop that was not yet harvested at the time of the testimony. Improvements on the claim were also listed, and Olga described the beginnings of the Beaver Creek Ranch headquarters, located in the SE Section 25. Between 1916 and 1920, they had built a log house (36' x 36'), shed, chicken house, root cellar, ice house, large barn (partially built) Fifty acres were ploughed along the draw bottom throughout the entry, and five miles of fence were built. The total value of improvements for the first 160 acres was estimated at \$1500.00. The second entry, also 160 acres, had received improvements of about \$500.00 and was used for stock raising purposes.²⁹

Other testimonials were required before Olga Schoonover received an official patent for her parcels. On June 14, 1920, witness Cornelius M. Culp, corroborated the information stated by Olga Schoonover, and added that improvements also included a cement cistern, a cow stable, and a toilet. He estimated that the improvements were worth \$5000.00. Culp described himself as a neighbor and claimed he had visited the Schoonovers twelve to fifteen times a year. Olga's brother-in-law Alvin Schoonover also testified and verified that Jesse and Olga established residence in June 1916 and described similar improvements in construction and crops, and estimated the improvements to be worth \$2000.00. He also described himself as a neighbor and stated "I have seen her and the land at least a hundred times a year as she lived upon it." The requirements at that time were to file a notice of intention to make a Final Three Year Proof to establish claim to the land. The testimonials were designed to obtain information about residency and physical improvements to the land, such as buildings, fences, and crops. No questions were asked concerning livestock, so no information was given concerning numbers of sheep, cattle, or other livestock.³⁰

The patent was issued in Olga Robbins Schoonover's name on September 27, 1920 (see Figure 3). The parcel consisted of 320 acres (portions of Sections 25 and 26, T48N-R77W (see Figures 2 and 3). It was issued as a Homestead Entry Patent under the original 1862 Homestead Act. The Schoonovers soon increased their holdings by filing on an additional 320 acres, discontinuous but adjoining the original homestead. This parcel was acquired using the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916 and was issued in Olga Schoonover's name in 1924 (Patent No. 946607). It consisted of NNE, ENW, SESE Section 26, and SSW, NESE Section 25, T48N-R77W (see Figure 4).³¹

The 1920 U.S. Census lists the Schoonover family as residing in Election District 5, Johnson County, Wyoming. The household included Jesse and Olga, as well as Jesse's father John (age 70), his nephew Raymond Schoonover (age 12, unofficially adopted by Jesse and Olga Schoonover), Olga's younger sister Mary (age 32), and three apparently unrelated adult males, possibly ranch hands.³² Unfortunately, Olga Schoonover died in August 1921, soon after she and Jesse had established their ranch. Cause of death is unknown, but in 1916 during their first year at the ranch, a doctor was called to make a trip from Buffalo through a storm on horseback, because Olga was quite sick. Since she first came to Wyoming for her health, she may have suffered from illness most of her life. She died on August 14, 1921, in Sheridan. "During the few years she was spared him she made a happy home and a true helpmate. She was active in good works and loving kindness, patient in suffering and thoughtful of others. She leaves to cherish her memory, her husband, parents, four sisters, and true friends."³³ Jesse Schoonover continued to raise sheep, expanding his holdings with Alvin and adding buildings to his ranch headquarters.³⁴

Alvin Schoonover and his wife Hallie Marion Owen had four children (Addie, Raymond, Roy and Carroll) and operated their ranch on the Powder River. With all their years of combined ranching experience, Jesse and Alvin were well known in local ranching circles. Jesse and/or the Schoonover Brothers were listed in several Wyoming sheep raising directories (1909, 1916, 1918), indicating their status as successful sheepmen. In 1930, the U.S. Census lists Jesse Schoonover as residing in Election District 9, Johnson County, Wyoming, as a widowed man. His unofficially

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adopted nephew Raymond, age 22, was a member of the household, along with five other apparently unrelated people, listed as rancher, cook, and sheepherders.³⁵

After Olga's death, Raymond helped Jesse run the ranch. In a series of letters to relatives in Wisconsin, Jesse described life as a widowed rancher. Just before the Great Depression, times were relatively good, and in 1929 he wrote:³⁶

We (Jessie and Raymond) are building a much-needed and long-planned barn, we have had the preliminary excavation done for several years, but financial and other troubles prevented the building. This thing will be 32 by 80 feet, with a "hip" or rather gambrel roof. And a full basement. We have needed it for years. I think it will take about \$3000 to complete it.

Since there are no buildings still standing that are similar to that description, it was probably the barn that burned down; later owner Tom Harriet remembered that it was hit by lightning.³⁷

Jesse and Raymond weathered the early years of the Depression, and in March 1936, Jesse wrote: "Prices here are much better on most things, and need to be, if we are to carry on our affairs. Just now we are piping water into the house. It will be mighty handy when I want to wash my feet." But hard times soon followed. The summer of 1936 brought drought, then grasshoppers. Winter grass and feed were gone; lambs were small and sold for a low price. Jesse spent thousands of dollars for feed and pasture, planning on wintering about 5,000 breeding ewes. *"If we fail, all our years of work will be lost... I love the out-of-doors and take pleasure in raising stock. But in the 36 years I have spent in Wyoming, I have never seen so much to ruin years of effort...things look very gloomy."* Many farmers and ranchers must have shared these thoughts during the Depression. Even so, Jesse hosted country dances at his ranch; his niece Adaline Schoonover Cook remembered that "Jesse baked lots of loaves of bread for the midnight lunch, and as they danced until daylight, they probably ate before going home."³⁸

The Schoonover sheep operation survived the worst of the Depression, but Jesse's health was failing. Adaline remembers visiting him in sheep camp with her parents. *"He was staying in the sheep wagon. He was very sick with chills and fever. My Dad (Alvin) took him to Buffalo to the hospital. He was diagnosed with tularemia, which seemed to affect his health in later years."* Because of his poor health, Jesse sold the ranch to Raymond, who continued to raise sheep. In 1944, Jesse reported that Raymond had about 3,000 ewes, which were doing well, consuming about 1,000 pounds of grain per day as well as grass and brush.³⁹

In January 1946 (his last available letter), Jesse wrote: *"I have severe heart trouble, which does not sound too good for me."* The next year, he traveled to Arizona for his health, but he suffered a heart attack while driving and died in the wreckage of his car. Raymond took over the operation of the ranch.⁴⁰

In the late 1940s, Raymond brought in a one-room schoolhouse from another ranch for his daughters. Adaline came to teach. *"You could go to summer school,"* she said, *"and then teach in a rural school. Luckily, my mother Hallie was a teacher and could give me lots of help when I needed it."* The little school was used again by the next owners, the Harriets, who bought the ranch from Raymond in 1951.⁴¹

Beaver Creek Ranch: Phase 2, the Harriets

The Basque era of Beaver Creek Ranch began in 1951, when Raymond Schoonover sold the Beaver Creek Ranch to Simon Harriet. Simon was born in the French Pyrenees (Arneguy, France) in about 1880, and came to the

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Powder River country in about 1900. Buffalo, Wyoming, was known as the “Basque Web” because of the many Basques who came to the area in the early 1900s. Starting out as herders, many Basques were paid in sheep (“sheep on shares”) instead of cash and were then able to start their own operations. Those with experience raising sheep in the Basque country (the Pyrenees Mountains straddling France and Spain) often brought their native sheep raising practices to their new homes. Johnson County Basques were mostly French.⁴²

Simon Harriet first worked as a herder for John Esponda, then entered into partnership with Bernard Marton, another Basque, before acquiring Beaver Creek Ranch. Simon and Catherine Etchemendy Harriet raised three sons on the ranch – Martin, Prosper, and Jean. At first, the operation was called “Harriet and Son,” which referred to Simon and son Martin, while Prosper and Jean were in college. (An inscription “Harriet and Son” is still visible on an interior wall of the sheep shed.) In 1953, sons Prosper and Jean introduced about twenty head of cattle to the operation, which then became “Harriet and Sons.” However, sheep were the main concern of the ranch, and the Harriets at one time led Johnson County in number of sheep with as many as 15,000 head. Shearing took place in March, and lambing occurred in April and May. The large sheep shearing shed was constructed by Martin Harriet in the 1950s. Ewes and lambs were generally trailed to the southeast Bighorns in the summer, grazing on both deeded and public pastures. By the late 1960s-early 1970s, the sheep were trucked to and from summer pasture.⁴³

By the mid-1960s, the number of cattle had grown to about 200, reflecting the evolution of many sheep ranches that supplemented the income from sheep with income from cattle. Simon Harriet died on June 9, 1965, and the business then became Harriet Brothers. Martin Harriet had three children (Thomas, Ken, and Cheri), all of whom were raised on the ranch and attended school in the one-room schoolhouse that had been moved onto the ranch in the 1940s by Raymond Schoonover for his children. Mamie Barton lived on the ranch and taught the children; her husband Fred worked for the Harriets. In the early 1960s, the county discontinued funding rural schools, and the students had to live in Buffalo during the school year. Life and practices on the ranch continued to evolve. Traditionally, itinerant shearing crews from Mexico sheared the sheep with manual blade shears, but in the early 1970s, the Mexican crews were replaced with those from New Zealand using electric shearing equipment.⁴⁴

By the mid-1980s, the Harriets ran about 1,200 cattle and 12,000 sheep on the Beaver Creek Ranch. In 1994, the Harriet Brothers held a land sale and sold the Beaver Creek Ranch to John Iberlin, who was also Basque. After that date, the ranch was no longer occupied and was used only for grazing cattle. The ranch buildings were fenced off from the cattle.⁴⁵

Historical Significance Summary

Beaver Creek Ranch was one of the first sheep ranches established in this part of Johnson County, which was often a leader among Wyoming’s counties in numbers of sheep raised. Continuously operated for almost eighty years by just two families, the ranch contributed to the economic well-being of the area. The Schoonovers and the Harriets were not land barons, cattle kings, or eastern financiers. They came from agricultural families, and they chose this spot – isolated even by today’s standards – to work the land and raise livestock. They came to work hard, and they came to stay. The ranch survived the fluctuations of livestock markets, the Depression, droughts, sickness and death. Members of the Schoonover and Harriet extended families still make their homes in the Buffalo area.

Beaver Creek Ranch is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The ranch is of state significance in the area of Agriculture and Architecture, and the period of significance is from 1916 when it was first occupied until 1963, a period of forty-seven years.

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Criterion A. Beaver Creek Ranch is a rare and well-preserved example of a twentieth-century western sheep ranching operation in Wyoming as it evolved in the Powder River Basin. The ranch represents traditional Spanish sheep management practices that developed in Wyoming, rather than the English system utilized in the early Atlantic colonies. In Wyoming, large herds of sheep were grazed by individual herders across the public domain rather than in fenced pastures. Because of its proximity to the Bighorn Mountains, the practice of transhumance was incorporated into yearly sheep management. Flocks were trailed into the mountains during the summer months to take advantage of abundant water and forage. During the remainder of the year, herders and their flocks radiated out from Beaver Creek Ranch headquarters in all directions, grazing freely on the public domain, until the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 required permits and grazing fees on public lands. After that date, sheep management practices became more orderly, and sheep were required to graze within predetermined boundaries on the public lands surrounding the ranch. The site is also associated with French Basque ethnic influences dating from 1951, when the ranch was acquired by the Harriet family, who were a part of the larger Basque community that developed around Buffalo in the early 1900s.

Criterion C. Beaver Creek Ranch is a strong example of a twentieth-century sheep ranching operation whose collection of log and wood frame domestic and agricultural buildings and structures reflect a specific time period (all but one building were constructed in the late 1910s through the 1930s), and a practical layout for maximum efficiency, specifically adapted to the sheep ranching industry. Although the ranch buildings do not individually represent specific architectural styles, taken as a whole, they form a complex that represents a vernacular classification adapted to early-to-mid twentieth-century sheep ranching practices in the Powder River Basin. As defined by historian Fred Schroeder, "Vernacularity is in the design, which is traditional. The builder (not an architect) builds not according to blueprints, but according to a cultural template in his mind of what a building 'looks like' and what the current method of building construction happens to be."⁴⁶ The site retains a large sheep shearing shed where itinerant crews sheared the fleece in the late spring and left their signatures on the interior walls. This shed is one of the largest and most prominent buildings of its kind in the area. The buildings and structures were built by the owners using traditional designs they carried in their minds rather than from blueprints. The building materials consisted of a combination of locally available log and stone and commercially available lumber and hardware.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

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Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

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 5. Hine, *American West*, p. 176-77; Merk, *History of the Westward Movement*, p. 236.
 6. Merk, *History of the Westward Movement*, pp. 245-46.
 7. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 1873:605.
 8. *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 1875-1877, Vol. 19:377.
 9. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, p. 175.
 10. *Ibid.* pp. 179-182.
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 13. Agnes Wright Spring, *Seventy Years* (Gillette, Wyoming: Wyoming Stock Growers' Association, 1942) p. 41.
 14. Larson, *History of Wyoming*, pp. 190-192.
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Name of Property

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25. Fraser, *Schoonover Ranch*, p. 4.
26. *United States Federal Census of 1900 and 1910* (on microfilm), Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, and www.Ancestry.com; Fraser, *Schoonover Ranch*, 26; Marc Greenberg, et.al., *Schoonover Road Unit 3 Archaeological Monitoring* (Sheridan, Wyoming: Western Land Services, 2006, WPF Site 48JO2679) p. 2.
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33. *Buffalo Bulletin*, Buffalo, Wyoming, 28 December 1916 (untitled article); "Mrs. Schoonover Dead," *The Gillette News*, 25 August 1921.
34. Fraser, *Schoonover Ranch*, p. 26.
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39. Cook, Adaline Schoonover, letter dated 4 April 2012.
40. Letter dated 7 January 1946 from Jesse Schoonover, Buffalo, Wyoming, to Chester and Lucille Morgan, Menomonie, Wisconsin; "Jesse W. Schoonover Dies in Accident near Flagstaff." *Buffalo Bulletin*, 24 April 1947; Fraser, *Schoonover Ranch*, p. 28.
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Beaver Creek Ranch
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Johnson County, WY
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- 44. *Idem.*; "Final Rites Held for Simon Harriet Here on Saturday." *Buffalo Bulletin*, 17 June 1965.
- 45. Thomas Harriet, Buffalo, Wyoming, 3 February, 16 February 2012; Susan Harriet, 16 February 2012.
- 46. Schroeder, Fred, "Schoolhouse Reading: What You Can Learn from Your Rural School," *History News*, April 1981, quoted in Fraser, Clayton, *Schoonover Ranch Documentation, Site 48JO2679, Johnson County, Wyoming* (Produced by FRASERdesign, Loveland, Colorado, 2010) p. 5.

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10.3 acres
 (Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | <u>13</u> Zone | <u>416043</u> Easting | <u>4883255</u> Northing | 3 | <u>13</u> Zone | <u>415787</u> Easting | <u>4883120</u> Northing |
| 2 | <u>13</u> Zone | <u>416033</u> Easting | <u>4883120</u> Northing | 4 | <u>13</u> Zone | <u>415855</u> Easting | <u>4883255</u> Northing |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

UTM 1 is a point at the northeast corner of the ranch complex, located at the east extension of the north boundary fenceline and the west bank of Beaver Creek. The boundary turns south-southwest along the west bank of Beaver Creek for a distance of 500 feet to UTM 2. The boundary proceeds generally west along the north bank of Beaver Creek to its crossing with an access road and continues along the north side of that access road for a distance of 900 feet to UTM 3. The boundary turns north-northeast along the east side of an access road for a distance of 600 feet to UTM 4. The boundary then turns due east along the north side of a fenceline for a distance of 750 feet to point of beginning (see Figure 5).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is generally determined by the extent of the buildings, structures, corrals, fencelines, and other features that represent the headquarters complex of the ranch. The boundary also includes vegetation, particularly along the creek, that has been naturally present throughout the history of the ranch. Physical features such as fencelines, access roads, and Beaver Creek were used to describe the boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth L. and Robert G. Rosenberg, Historians
organization Rosenberg Historical Consultants date August 20, 2013
street & number 739 Crow Creek Road Telephone (307) 632-114
city or town Cheyenne State Wyoming zip code 82009
e-mail rosenhc@dishmail.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Beaver Creek Ranch

City or Vicinity: Buffalo vicinity

County: Johnson

State: WY

Photographer: Clayton Fraser

Date Photographed: April, 2008 Although the pictures were taken five years ago the site has not noticeably changed in appearance.

Overall view of the ranch from south of Beaver Creek. Photographer facing northeast.

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
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1 of 13

Overall view of ranch from butte north of the property. Photographer facing southwest.

2 of 13

View of shearing shed and surroundings. Photographer facing south.

3 of 13

Overview of shearing shed and corrals. Photographer facing southeast.

4 of 13

House, bunkhouse, and shop. Photographer facing southeast.

5 of 13

Garage and shed. Photographer facing northwest.

6 of 13

Beaver Creek with ranch complex in background. Photographer facing northwest.

7 of 13

Shearing shed with house and outbuildings in background. Photographer facing northeast.

8 of 13

House, shop, and bunkhouse. Photographer facing east.

9 of 13

Access road and Beaver Creek. Photographer facing east.

10 of 13

West side of complex. Photographer facing northeast.

11 of 13

Access road with pipeline in foreground. Photographer facing northeast.

12 of 13

Main house. Photographer facing east.

13 of 13

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

(1) Name Iberlin Ranch Limited Partnership

street & number 27 Hilltop Drive

Telephone (307)684-7460

city or town Buffalo

state Wyoming zip code 82834

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Maps and Figures

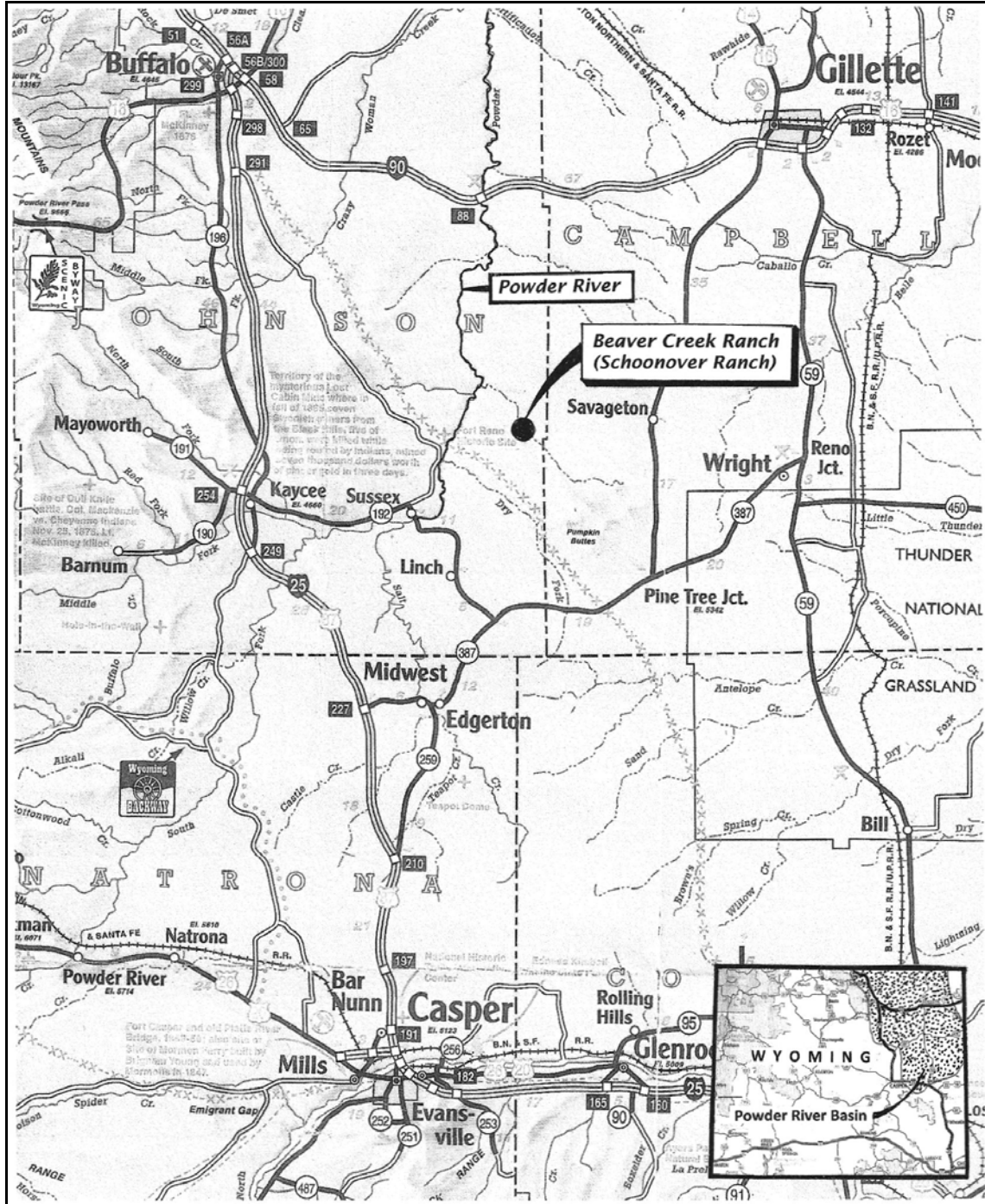


Figure 1. General area showing location of ranch

Beaver Creek Ranch
 Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
 County and State

Additional Documentation: Maps and Figures

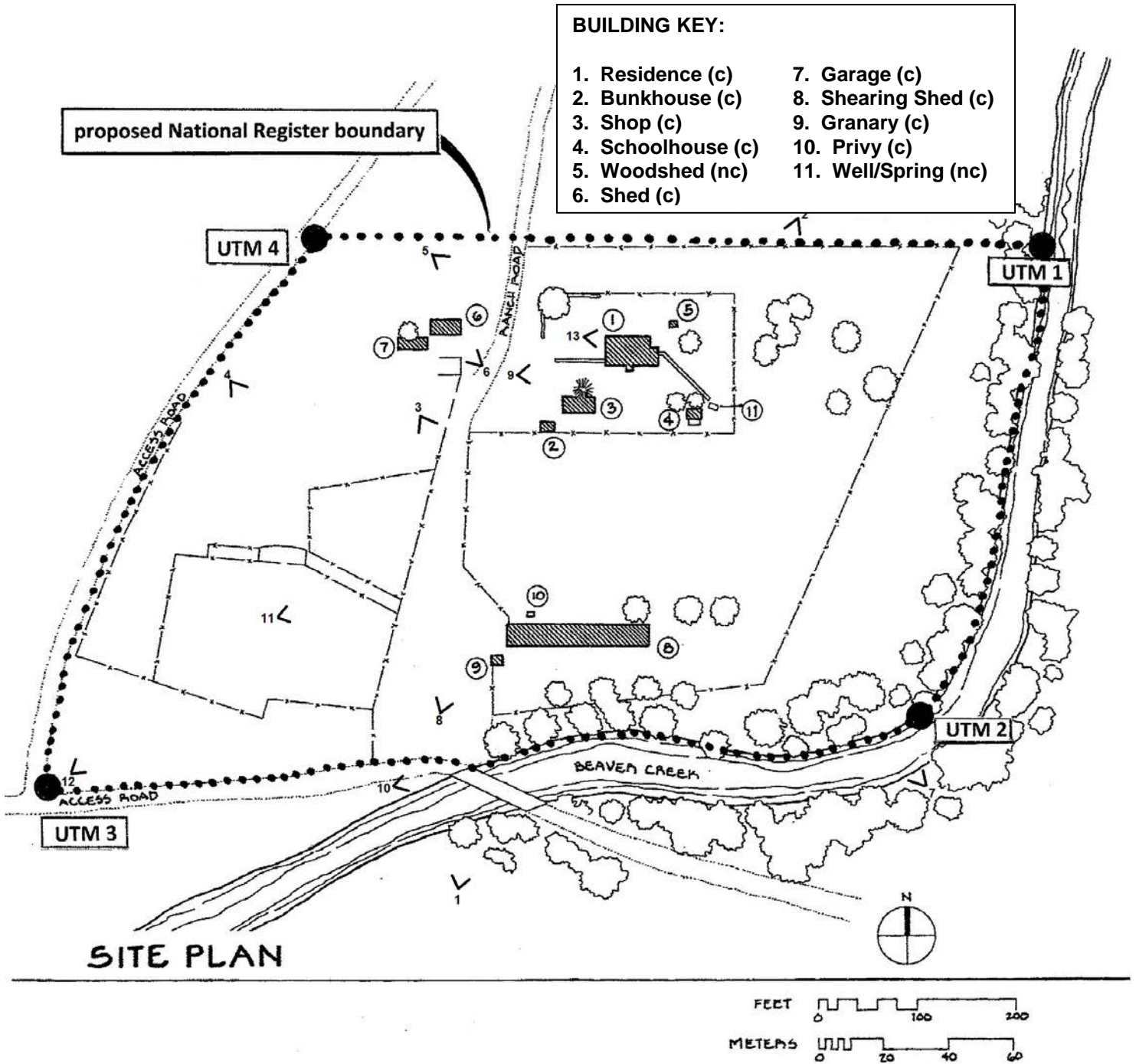


Figure 2. Beaver Creek Ranch, site plan showing boundary of historic site and ranch buildings.
 (adapted from Fraser 2010 and Western Land Services 2006)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Maps and Figures

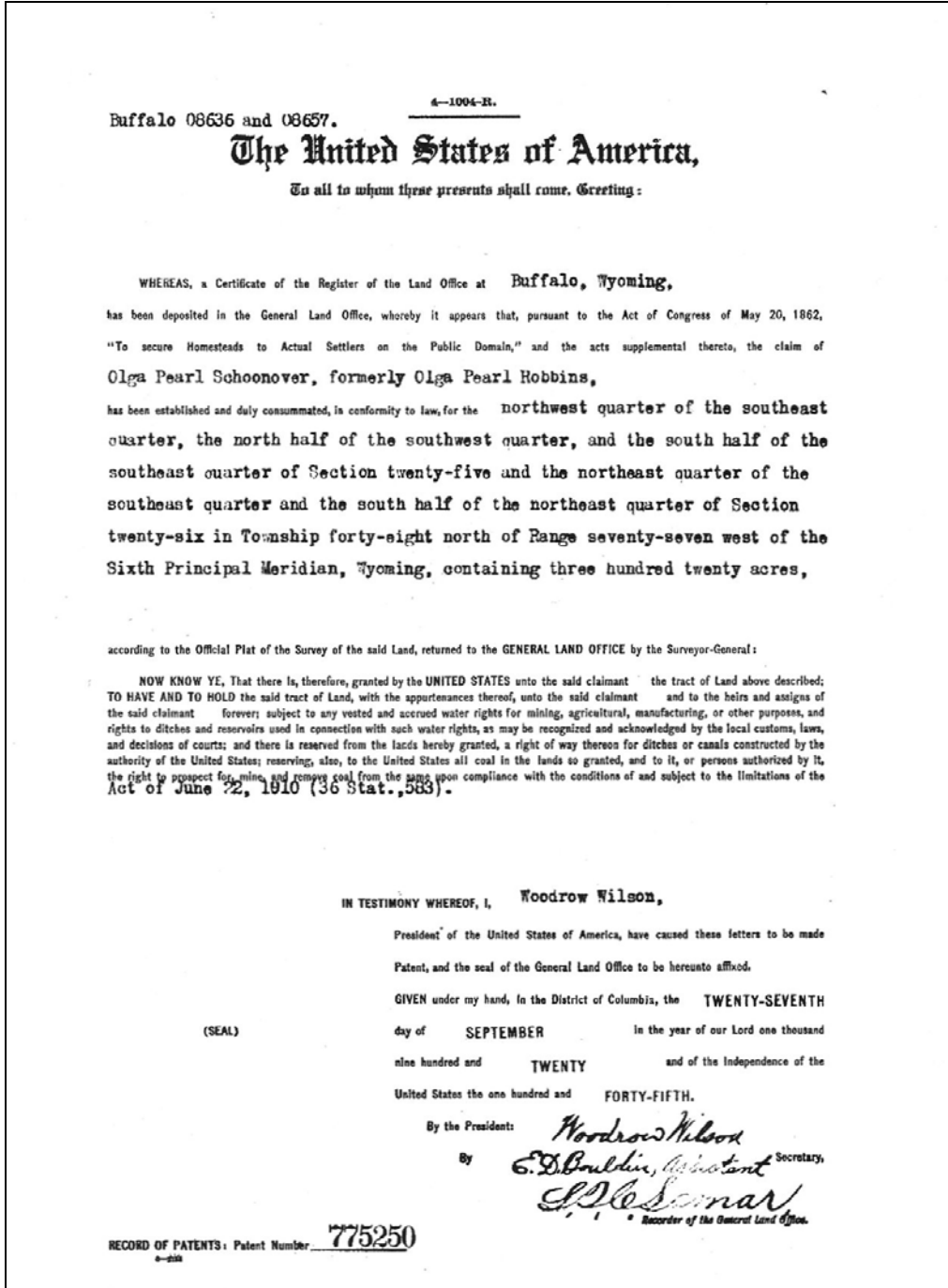


Figure 3. Olga Schoonover's homestead patent, granted in 1920, on which Beaver Creek Ranch is located.

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Maps and Figures

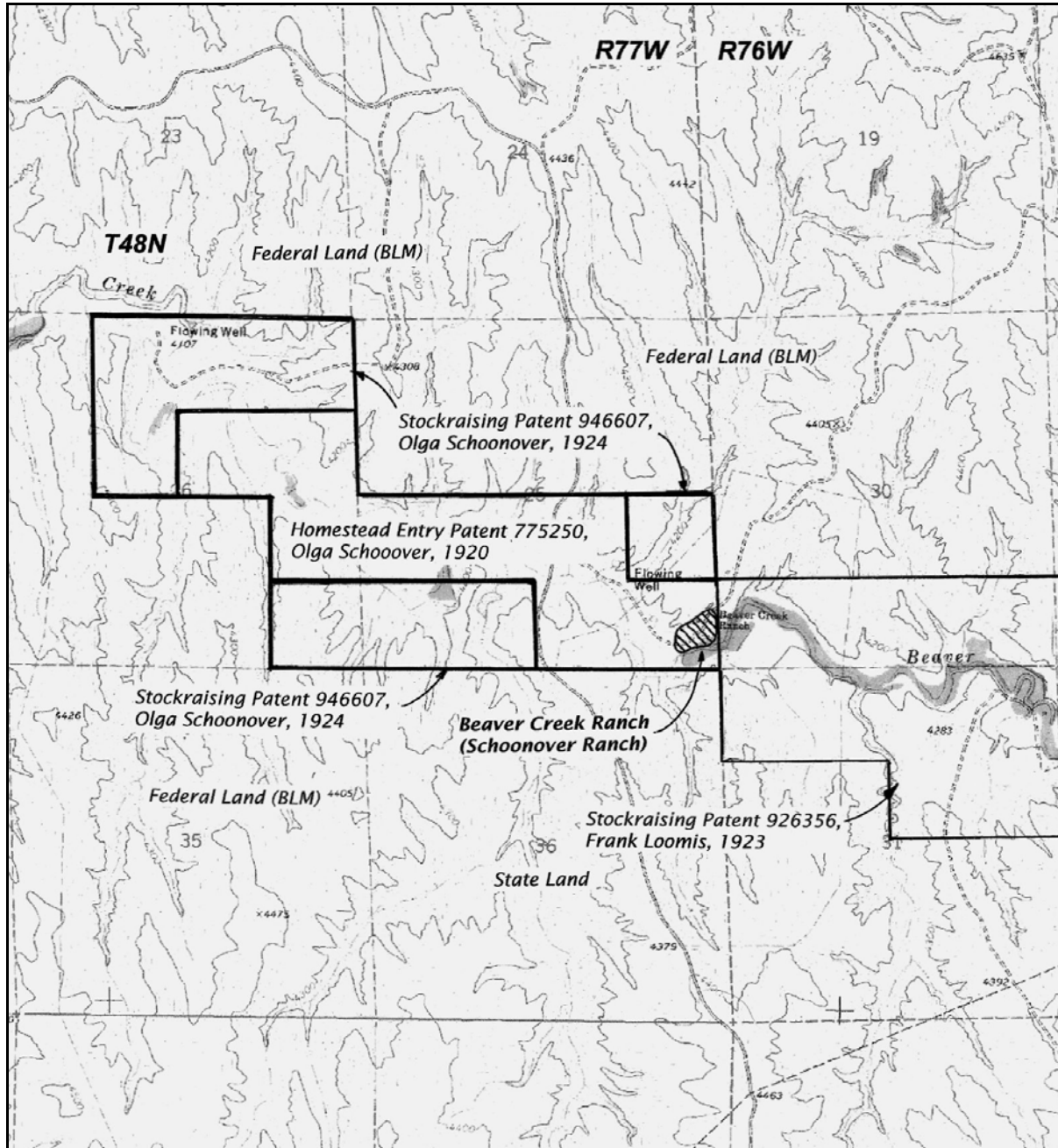


Figure 4. Portion of Negro Butte USGS 7.5' quadrangle (1972), showing the location of Beaver Creek Ranch in the SE Section 25, T48N-R77W, Johnson County, Wyoming, and the location of Olga Schoonover's two patent parcels as well as adjacent land status.

Beaver Creek Ranch
 Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
 County and State

Additional Documentation: Maps and Figures

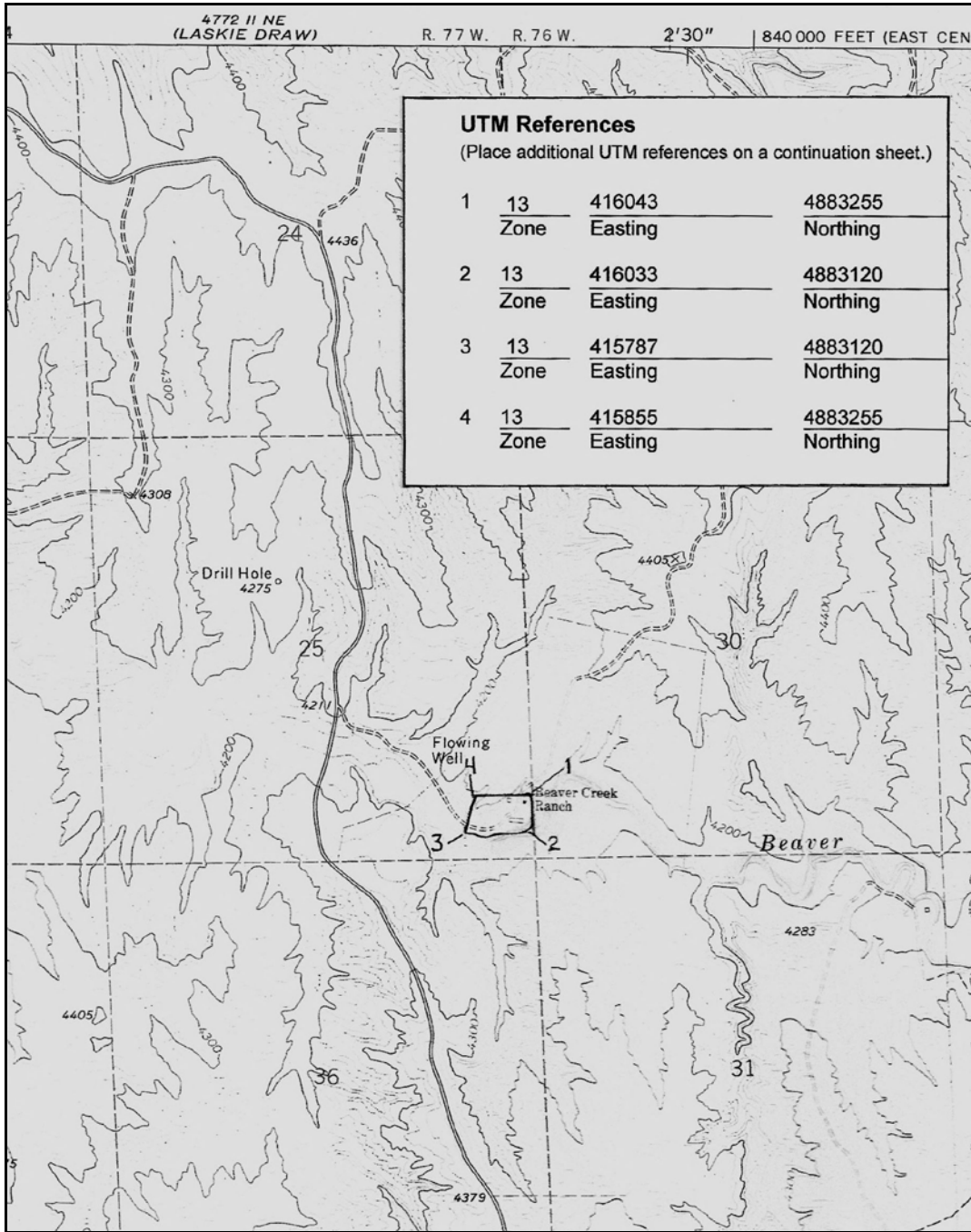


Figure 5. Portion of the Negro Butte USGS map, showing proposed site boundaries and UTM points.

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos



Historic photo 1. "Wash day in sheep camp, Bighorn Mountains, 1916." A rare photo of Olga Schoonover, at center. (courtesy Addie Schoonover Cook)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos



Historic photo 2. "Sheep camp, Bighorn Mountains, 1916." (courtesy Addie Schoonover Cook)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos



Historic photo 3. "Schoonover sheep, Bighorn Mountains, 1916." (courtesy Addie Schoonover Cook)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos

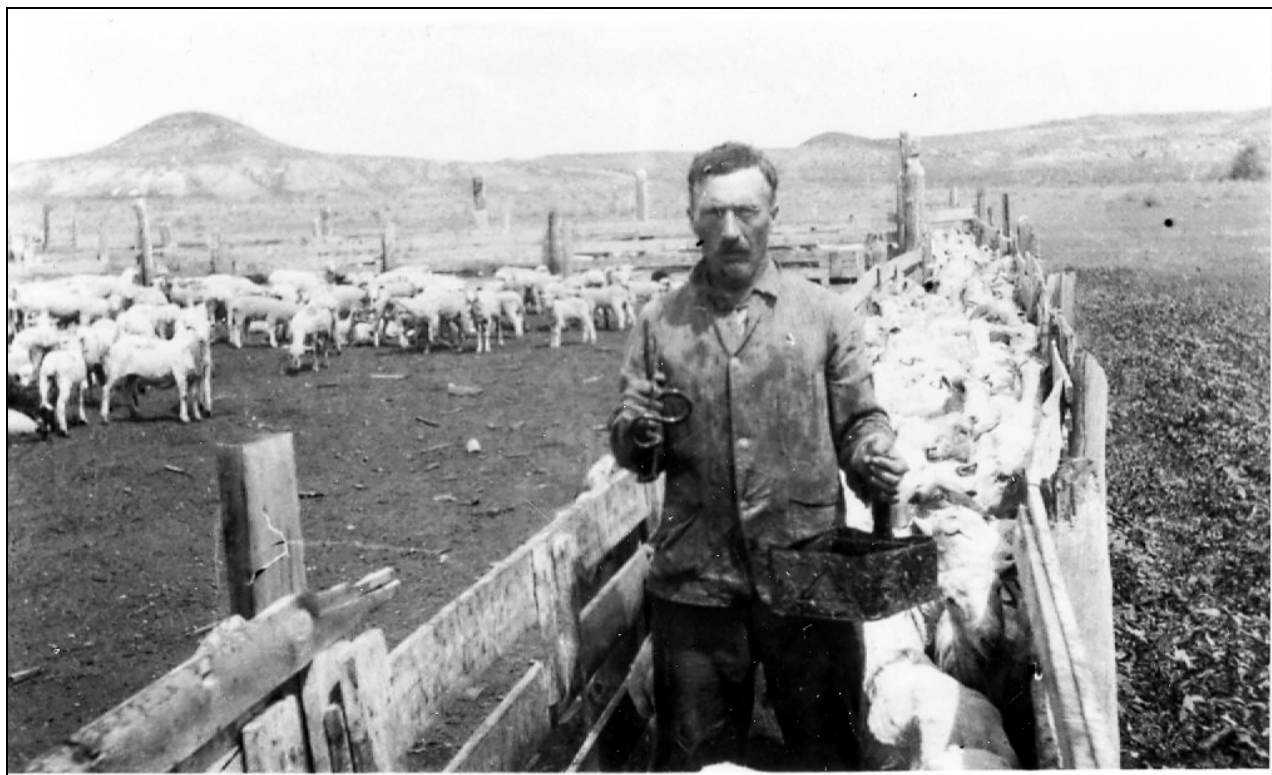


Historic photo 4. Raymond and Jessie Schoonover, no date. *(Courtesy Addie Schoonover Cook)*

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos



Historic photo 5. "Simon Harriet's corral"
(no date, courtesy Johnson County Library, Buffalo, Wyoming)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos

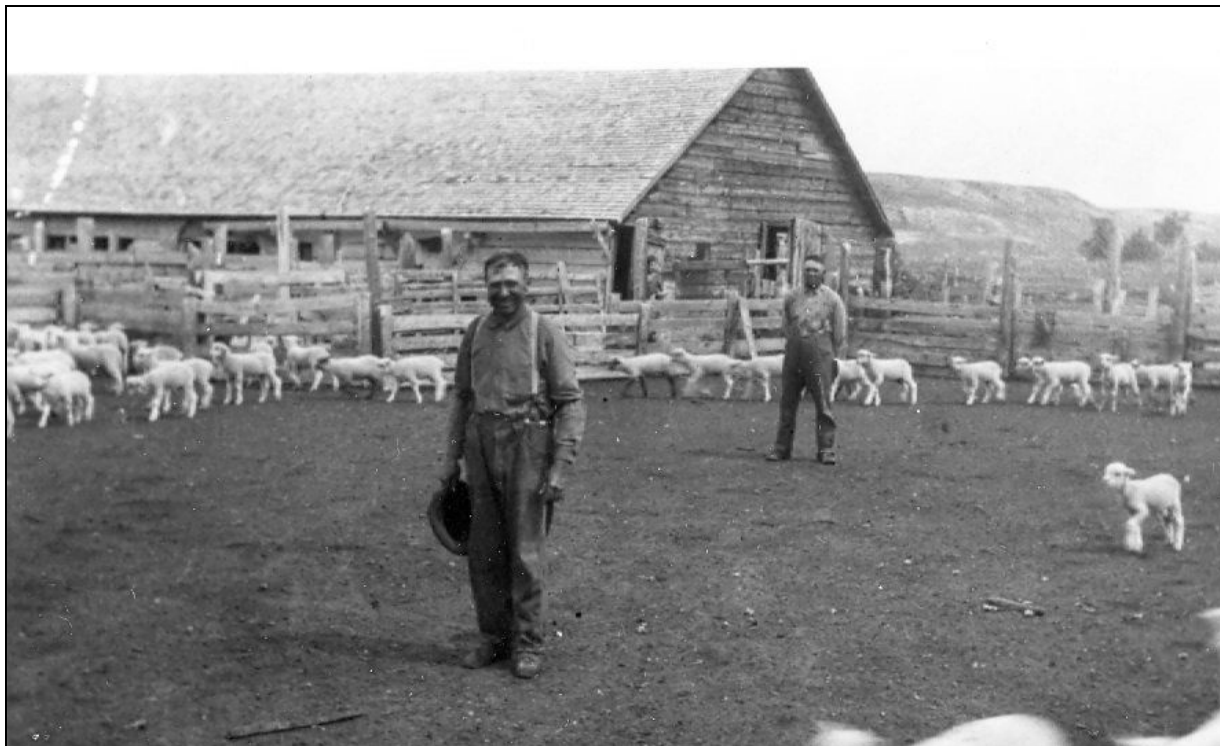


Historic photo 6. "Simon Harriet's corral"
(no date, courtesy Johnson County Library, Buffalo, Wyoming)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos

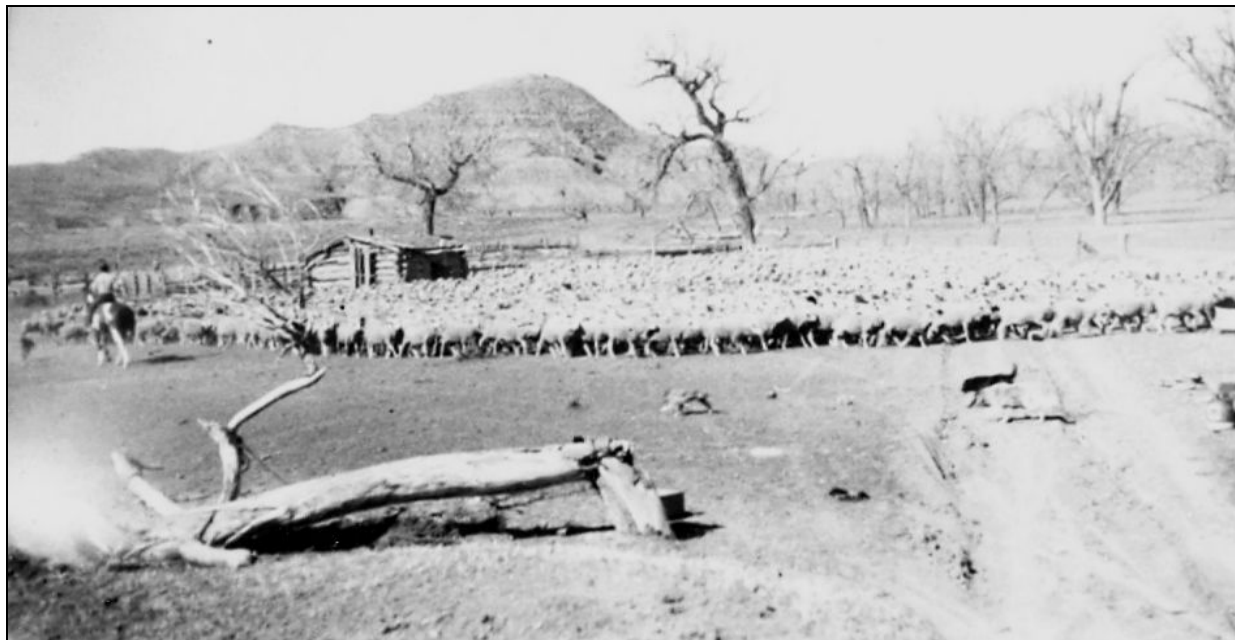


Historic photo 7. "Simon Harriet's corral"
(no date, courtesy Johnson County Library, Buffalo, Wyoming)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos



Historic photo 8. "Simon Harriet sheep on Powder River"
(no date, courtesy Johnson County Library, Buffalo, Wyoming)

Beaver Creek Ranch
Name of Property

Johnson County, WY
County and State

Additional Documentation: Historic photos



Historic photo 9. "Catherine Harriet at sheep camp"
(no date, courtesy Johnson County Library, Buffalo, Wyoming)



























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Beaver Creek Ranch

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: WYOMING, Johnson

DATE RECEIVED: 11/22/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/24/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/08/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/08/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13001064

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1-8-14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

**Please see the attached
Supplementary Listing Record.**

RECOM./CRITERIA A & C

REVIEWER Barbara Wyatt

DISCIPLINE Historian

TELEPHONE 202-354-2252

DATE 1-8-14

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

ARTS. PARKS. HISTORY.

Wyoming State Parks & Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office
2301 Central Ave., Barrett Bldg. 3rd Floor
Cheyenne, WY 82002
307-777-5497
FAX: 307-777-6421
<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us>



November 13, 2013

Paul Loether
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street, NW (2280)
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Submission of Beaver Creek Ranch National Register Form

Dear Mr. Loether:

The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office is submitting the Beaver Creek Ranch National Register Form for National Park Service review. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Beaver Creek Ranch to the National Register of Historic Places. The State Review Board reviewed and approved the nomination. Mary Hopkins, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Officer, has approved and signed the nomination.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Brian Beadles
Historic Preservation Specialist



Matthew H. Mead, Governor
Milward Simpson, Director