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United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

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

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other, (explain:)	removed from the Nation			Date of Action

for

6. Function or Use		
Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)	
Domestic: single dwelling, secondary	Domestic: single dwelling, secondary	
structures	structures	
Agriculture: animal facility	Agriculture: animal facility	
7. Description		
Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)	
	foundation Wood: log; rhyolitic tuff slabs	
Other (Vernacular)	walls Wood: log, board/batten	
	Stone	
	roof Wood: shingle	
	other	

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet

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The Riddle Ranch Historic District possesses a number of historic properties which exhibit good integrity and fair preservation. Together these historic properties have an ensemble value representing the era of homesteading and frontier range development of the early twentieth century.

Frederick Riddle Ranch (T33S, R 32 3/4E, Sec. 30, SEtSWt, SWtSEt, W.M.)

The structures at the Frederick Riddle Ranch include both contributing and noncontributing elements:

Contributing Historic Properties:

House Cooler Bunkhouse Storage Building and Tack Room Barn Corrals

Noncontributing Historic Properties:

Chicken House Bath House

1. House

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The house is a one and one-half story, rectangular structure situated on an east-west axis. The lower story, probably the original squatter's claim cabin erected by Scott Catterson, is made of unpeeled, saddle notched logs. Because of weathering, however, the bark has fallen from these logs except where they are chinked with wood splints. This structure measures 15' x 21', including the lean-to kitchen wing which has been added on the west (side) elevation. The logs on the long sides measure 21', each having a 4" overhang beyond the notches. The log first story is 7' high and has a four-panel, wood door on the north (rear) elevation and a screened, "dropped" verandah with shingle roof on the south (front) elevation. The verandah wraps around the west elevation to house the kitchen lean-to. A special feature is the pass-through woodbox attached to the exterior of the kitchen wing on the north (rear) elevation.

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The upper half-story of the house is enclosed with vertical board and batten siding. Its gable roof is shingled. The fenestration is irregular, however, most of the windows are of the simple, four-pane casement style. Since 1959 Glen and Helen Davis have created a paper "drop" ceiling in the upper story to improve insulation and have wallpapered this large bedroom with <u>Rodeo Magazine</u>. This building is in generally good repair, however some of the foundation logs, sitting on the ground, have problems of rot and perhaps insect infestation. The worst problem with the foundation logs is on the north (rear) elevation.

2. Cooler

This largely subterranean structure is in deteriorated condition but has the potential for rehabilitation. It is located to the north and rear of the house. This structure measures 8' x 10' and consists of an excavation in the bank, lined with field stone, and roofed with juniper posts and sawed lumber covered with earth. It has a wooden door on the south (front) elevation).

3. Bunkhouse

The bunkhouse stands at the northeast corner of the house and is a rectangular, one story, wood frame building measuring 10'9" by 12' 6". The building once possessed a shingled, gable roof which has almost entirely deteriorated, permitting water to pour into the interior and partially destroying the ceiling and rotting out the floor. This building is in poor condition. The exterior was originally horizontal shiplap, however vertical board and batten siding has been attached on the south (front) elevation. The bunkhouse has a ceiling of narrow tongue-and-groove shiplap, two 4-pane windows on the east elevation, and a fieldstone foundation. The vertical board door has a porcelain doorknob.

4. Chicken house

This structure has collapsed and is beyond restoration. Constructed of vertical posts, willow poles, and enclosed with screens, the chicken house is partially set in large boulders beneath a juniper tree on the hillside to the north of the house, bunkhouse, and cooler. The structure once possessed an earth-covered roof which, through the passage of time, contributed to its deterioration and collapse. The building no longer possesses historic integrity reflecting its

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character at the time it was built or used by the Riddle brothers. The feature, however, may have historical archaeological potentials.

5. Storage Building and Tack Room

This rectangular structure measures approximately 12' by 30' and is constructed of logs and poles. The largest room is on the west side of the building and has a low, gable roof, presently covered with sheet metal. The roof is supported with purlins and rafters. This building is chinked with wood splints; its casement window is missing. Attached to the east is a storage area and a tack room; both of these areas have a metal-covered shed roof. The metal sheeting partially covers the south (front) elevation. The east wall of the tack room is constructed of horizontal aspen poles. The eastern room has probably served as a blacksmith shop. In spite of its ramshackle appearance, this building is in fair condition. The foundation logs, however, are deteriorating.

6. Barn

The barn is located to the west of the house and storage building and tack room and is adjacent to corrals and the Little Blitzen River. This building is randomly oriented in a southeast-northwest direction. The central unit, which rises to a height of about 18', has a shingled, gable roof. It contains two wood bins for storage of feed. Lean-to stock sheds are attached on both side elevations and are covered with shingle roofs in poor condition. The barn is enclosed with vertical boards. The juniper framing logs are set on stone footings. The barn has a number of livestock stalls and a six-pane casement window in its south elevation. A low hayloft is located in the central unit of this structure. This structure probably was reconstructed during the ownership of Rex and Ethel Clemens in the early 1950s.

7. Corrals

The Riddle brothers had two, large, adjoining corrals on the south bank of the Little Blitzen River approximately one-quarter mile west of their house. They used these corrals for managing their livestock. John Scharff recalled that the corrals have been a scenic attraction for a number of photographers working on Steens Mountain. Helen Davis noted that the missing elements of the corrals were the result of the use of the materials as firewood. The corrals are of two types of construction: vertical juniper posts, fixed with wire, and horizontal

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willows, set between vertical posts. The corrals are in a deteriorated condition.

8. Bathhouse

The bathhouse is a low, one story, wood frame building with shingled, gable roof. It stands in a grove of cottonwood on the north bank of the Little Blitzen River. A wood stove heats water which passes through coils from the river to a bathing facility. This structure was erected subsequent to the Riddle brothers' occupancy of the ranch and thus was not present during the period of significance.

Benjamin A. Riddle Ranch (T33S, R32 3/4E, Sec. 32, NW4SW4, W.M.)

The Benjamin A. Riddle Ranch has three standing structures.

Contributing Historic Properties:

House Stone Building

Noncontributing Historic Properties:

Cooler

1. House

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The house is a one-story, wood frame structure standing on the north side of the Little Blitzen River. The building faces east and has a center entry door, four pane window, and collapsing lean-to porch on its front elevation. The structure measures 12' 5" by 10' 10"; the porch measures 12' 5" by 4' 11". The house is set on a foundation of rhyolitic tuff slabs, randomly coursed without mortar.

The shingled, gable roof is in a deteriorated condition. The exterior of this building was originally covered with board and batten siding. This exterior has been covered with horizontal shiplap. The window in the east (front) elevation contains four-panes and measures 24" wide by 32" high. The window in the west (rear) elevation measures 32" wide by 14" high and slides to the side. The building has a shiplap ceiling which was presumably added at a later date when the when the exterior was covered with this material and the porch was attached on

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the east (front) elevation. The two burner, iron cook stove has been removed and lies near the house.

This structure is heavily weathered, especially on its west (rear) elevation. The roof is deteriorated and the floor is rotting. The floor and supports for the porch have disintegrated and the porch roof is collapsing.

2. Cooler

A depression on the north side of the house marks the site of a cooler for food storage. This subterranean structure was framed with hand-hewn juniper posts as primary supports. Its walls were lined with planks. This building is collapsed and lacks historic integrity reflecting its character at that time. This feature may possess historical archaeological potentials.

3. Stone Building

This stone structure of undetermined use is oriented at 27° length and 117° width and faces north. Constructed of randomly coursed rhyolitic tuff slabs with mud mortar, this building measures 12' 9" long, 10' 11" wide, and 4' 7" from the base of its walls to the eaves. The center beam of the roof rises to 6' 4" above the floor. The wall thickness is approximately 28". The doorway, framed in split juniper, measures 4' 3" high by 1' 5" wide.

The roof was framed of juniper poles, both hewn and natural, and was covered with willow thatching. The poles are square notched with "drilled," vertical peg holes to fasten to the beam running along the eave. A series of horizontal peg holes run along the crest of the roof frame.

This structure is in deteriorated condition. The roof has nearly vanished. In spite of this, the stone walls are in place and the building has the potential for rehabilitation. It needs restoration of the mud mortar and replacement of the willow pole roof.

Walter S. Riddle Ranch (T33S, R32 3/4E, Sec. 33, SW4NE4, W.M.)

The Walter S. Riddle Ranch has one structure.

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Contributing Historic Property:

House

1. House

This structure is located on the north bank of the Little Blitzen River. It is oriented at 154° in length by 140° in width and measures 14' 11" by 13' 6". The exterior wall measures 7' 2" and is constructed of 9" logs. Three additional logs rise on the gable ends to the crest of the roof.

The house is constructed of hand-split, hand-hewn, saddle-notched juniper logs with mostly saw-cut ends, though a few are left natural. The interior walls are chinked with split logs, while the exterior walls are filled with mud mortar. The roof consists of 1' x 11" planks fastened with wire nails. The floor is made of 1' by 11" planks of various lengths. The doorway measures 69" by 30"; the door is missing. The window in the side elevation measured 29" high by 24" wide and is missing. The window bay is framed with 1" by 5" boards.

8. Statement of Significance		
Certifying official has considered the significance of this pr	roperty in relation to other properties:	
Applicable National Register Criteria XA BX	С 🔲 D	
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)	C D D E F G	
Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Exploration/Settlement Architecture (vernacular)	1900-1912	1912
	Cultural Affiliation	
Significant Person N/A	Architect/Builder Frederick Riddle, Benjar (Walter B. Riddle), Walt	

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Beckham, Stephen Dow					
1987. The Riddle Ranch, Little Blitzen R	The Riddle Ranch, Little Blitzen River, Harney County, Oregon. Report on file, BLM Oregon State Office, Portland; Burns District Office, Burns.				
Brimlow, George Francis					
1951. Harney County, Oregon and Its Rang	eland. Binfords & Mort, Portland.				
Bureau of the Census 1860-1900. 8th-12th Census, Douglas Coun and Riddle precincts.					
1910. 13th Census, Harney County, Oregon	, Diamond Precinct.				
Harney County Clerk n.d. Deed Records, Vols. 51, 53, 55, 82	, Harney County Courthouse, Burns, Oregon.				
Rudolf & Ganong 1912 Survey Plat, T33S, R32 3/4E, W.M., Previous documentation or file (NPS):	X See continuation sheet				
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)	Primary location of additional data:				
has been requested	State historic preservation office				
previously listed in the National Register	Other State agency				
previously determined eligible by the National Register	X Federal agency				
designated a National Historic Landmark	Local government				
recorded by Historic American Buildings					
Survey #	Other				
recorded by Historic American Engineering	Specify repository: State Archeologist, Oregon				
Record #	State Office, Bureau of Land Management				
	P.O. Box 2965, Portland OR 97208				
10. Geographical Data	P.O. BOX 2903, POILIAIN OR 97206				
	Tombstone Canyon; Fish Lake, Oregon 1:24000				
Acreage of property1,120 acres	Tuibstone canyon; Fish hake, oregon 1:24000				
UTM References					
A L L L L L I Zone Easting Northing	B L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L				
	See continuation sheet				
Verbal Boundary Description					
	X See continuation sheet				
Boundary Justification					

X See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepar	ed By	
name/title	Stephen Dow Beckham, Historian	
organization	BLM Oregon State Office	date August 1989
street & number	825 NE Multnomah/P.O. Box 2965	telephone <u>503/280-7065</u>
city or town	Portland	

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Criterion 8. Statement of Significance

The Riddle Ranch Historic District includes three early twentieth century complexes of structures associated with homesteading and the development of the agriculture. The historic properties meet the following National Register criteria:

A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,

The Riddle Ranch Historic District is representative of the era of homesteading and pioneer settlement in Oregon's Great Basin region. The Riddle brothers' grandparents were Oregon Trail emigrants who secured a Donation Land Claim in the Umpqua Valley of southwestern Oregon. The Riddle brothers' parents and maternal grandfather were the first settlers in the Harney Basin where their grandfather and uncle were killed in conflict with the Indians. The Riddle brothers were among the first settlers on the western face of Steens Mountain. Their farmsteads are tangible documentation of their coming to terms with the challenges of settling and engaging in the range industry in the Great Basin.

The Riddle ranches are typical and uniquely intact examples of vernacular architecture representative of the Homesteading Era in Oregon's High Desert region. The years 1900-20 were a boom period in homesteading on arid lands in the Pacific Northwest. The Desert Land Act, Stockraising Homestead Act, and the Enlarged Homestead Act--all refinements of the original Homestead Act--helped drive this movement by offering increased amounts of marginal lands to would-be settlers. The range industry dominated the economy of much of southeastern Oregon until the advent of logging and lumbering in the 1920s. The range industry, of which the Riddle ranches represent the efforts of small-scale enterprise, has persisted as both part of the economy and the lifeway of the region.

Unlike hundreds if not thousands of entries on the public domain in this part of Oregon between 1900 and 1920, the Riddle ranches possess a continuity of ownership and an integrity of structures. The harsh realities of life in this region--its isolation, scant financial rewards, and rigors--drove thousands of settlers away. As these people relinquished or abandoned their claims, their structures either fell prey to others who moved them, and often moved them again, to other

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sites, or were destroyed by fire or vandals. The relative isolation of the Riddle ranches and the five decades of tenure by the two surviving Riddle brothers, however, contributed to the preservation of their homemade housing and outbuildings, setting their improvements apart. Their properties are similar to the inventoried buildings of the Eskelin Ranch, Stingley Ranch, and Eleanor Long Ranch at Derrick Well--three homestead era properties in the Fort Rock Valley of Lake County under study for nomination to the National Register (Beckham 1982; Chappell 1989). These Lake County properties, however, grew by accretion. Owners and subsequent owners cannibalized abandoned buildings or moved and combined structures to make up the complexes of features at these sites. The Riddle ranches contain only those buildings erected at the site and possess good integrity of the expression vernacular construction.

The Riddle Ranch Historic District is a uniquely intact example of homestead era structures and features in Harney County. It is representative of the small scale settler, not the cattle barons who developed the P Ranch, Alvord Ranch, Sod House Ranch, or the Whitehorse Ranch in Harney County. It speaks to the marginal existence of whose who lived in isolated settings and attempted to wrest a living from the land. It is a an example of Homestead Era construction and lifeways historically linked with families prominent in the region's development.

C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction,

The Riddle Ranch Historic District possesses distinctive characteristics associated with frontier settlement under the Homestead Act of 1862. The structures do not represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values. Rather, the structures are simple, homemade vernacular housing and outbuildings clearly distinguishable as a type of "make-do" architecture by untrained builders who had no choice but to construct their own shelters for personal and livestock use on a remote frontier. The historic properties in the Riddle Ranch Historic District possess good integrity, both of rural historic landscape as well as materials. The historic properties are in fair to good condition.

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The measure of this criterion of significance is best made by comparing the structures in the Riddle Ranch Historic District with those appearing in <u>Harney County: An Historical Inventory</u> (1978). This study, commissioned by the Harney County Planning Office and partially funded by a HUD grant, identified 26 structures and sites associated with "The Cattlemen's Empire and Agriculture." Of these, the investments of J. H. Neal at Follyfarm on the northeast flank of Steens Mountain are comparable to the Riddle buildings. The Follyfarm buildings, however, fell prey to removal or destruction and lacked the long continuity of single ownership attaching to the Riddle properties. The other ranch properties included large barns, one or two-story, wood frame dwellings with painted clapboard exteriors, and, on the whole, features which showed considerably more sophistication than the vernacular buildings erected by the Riddle brothers (Jackson and Lee 1978).

Time has stood still at the Riddle ranches and they have avoided the ravages of fire and demoltion which have taken a heavy toll of other historic properties in this region. Collectively the Riddle ranches constitute a Historic District. The evaluation of the sites and features, however, also assessed the potentials for consideration as a Rural Historic Landscape. The Riddle ranches are a geographical area that "has been used, shaped, or modified over time by human activity, occupancy, or intervention." Problems arise, however, in the marginal meeting of the remaining parts of the definition of a Rural Historic Landscape. By accepted terminology, such a site should possess "a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of historic landscape features, including areas of land use, buildings, vegetation, roads and waterways, and natural features." The word <u>significant</u> is important in assessing this consideration.

In the refining qualifications of a Rural Historic Landscape, the Riddle ranches fall short. The lands were operated as a cattle ranch where livestock grazed freely on both deeded as well as public domain lands. Neither hedgerows nor impressive stone walls define areas of grazing, a dispersed activity. No distinctive plantings mark or identify any of the complexes of buildings, unlike Lombardy poplars, locust, or fruit trees often associated with farmsteads in this region. The trace of an irrigation ditch, present as early as 1912, runs along the south bank of the Little Blitzen River for nearly a mile in sections 32 and 33. The ditch, however, did not represent commitment to farming. It irrigated perhaps 12 to 15 acres of bottomland for production of alfalfa. The natural features constitute the strongest component of the

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landscape. The sagebrush-juniper vegetation dominates the immediate setting; the vistas of Steens Mountain to the east and the upper gorge of the Little Blitzen River are powerful statements of the natural features.

This nomination acknowledges the importance of the rural, historic landscape. The siting of all three complexes of buildings on the north bank of the Little Blitzen confirms a pattern of spatial organization which recognized the importance of a southern exposure and response to landforms and weather patterns. The siting of all three complexes in close proximity to the river was a further response to natural features, namely the availability of water for domestic and livestock purposes. The integrity of the landscape is strong. The natural setting is virtually unchanged from the era when the Riddle brothers lived at these sites. In spite of the elements of consideration of the historic, rural landscape, this nomination is brought forward as a Historic District. The identification of significance and historical assessment have determined this approach.

The assessment of the features in the Riddle Ranch Historic District also weighed Criterion D. There is a potential that historical archaeological investigations "may be likely to yield" information important in history. An extensive array of tools, historic era garbage, and other artifacts scattered at each complex of buildings suggests that data recovery can occur. The BLM did not apply Criterion D at this time because no testing has occurred. The BLM will take into account archaeological potentials as it formulates its management plan for the Riddle Ranch Historic District and contiguous lands along the Little Blitzen River.

The Riddle Ranch Historic District is located in T33S, R32 3/4E, Secs. 30, 31, 32, 33, W. M. The Fred Riddle ranch buildings stand on the north bank of the Little Blitzen River in Section 31, one and a half miles east of its confluence with the Donner und Blitzen River. The Benjamin A. Riddle ranch buildings stand nearly a mile farther upstream in the SW4 of Section 32. The Walter S. Riddle building stands one and one-half miles farther upstream in the NE4 of Section 33. East of the Riddle Ranch the slopes of Steens Mountain level out. Amid a setting of juniper and sagebrush are bluebunch wheatgrass and other forage for livestock. The margins of the Little Blitzen, irrigated by diversion ditches and gravity flow of water, produce lush meadows. This was the setting which drew Fred, Ben, and Walter Riddle early in the twentieth century.

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The date of the settlement of the Riddles in the Little Blitzen region is unknown. They had resided at Happy Valley in the Harney Basin in the 1870s. In 1900 Walter and Fred Riddle resided at Riddle, Oregon. Sometime subsequent to 1900, however, the Riddle brothers located on the slopes of Steens Mountain. In October, 1912, Rodolf and Ganong of the General Land Office ran the subdivisions of Township 33S, R32 3/4 East. During their survey they noted the following settlers:

- ° W[alter] B. Riddle, SW4NE4, Sec. 33
- ° B[enjamin] A. Riddle, NW4SW4, Sec. 32
- ° Geo[rge] Riddle, NE4SE4, Sec. 19
- ° Dick Scott, SW4SE4, Sec. 30

(Rodolf and Ganong 1912)

The cadastral surveyors probably erred in the entry of the name "Dick Scott" on their map. Neither land records, census records, nor oral informants identify a Dick Scott. It is believed that the entry should have read Scott Catterson (Davis 1987; Shull 1987). In 1900 Catterson was a stockman and general rancher, age 26, born in Iowa. He lived in the Diamond Precinct. Marjorie (Smyth) Shull, whose father George Smyth was a first cousin to the Riddle brothers, recalled in 1987 that Scott Catterson first claimed the land at the site of the Riddle Ranch buildings, possessing a squatter's claim. Catterson erected the first house on the site, presumably the log lower story of the house yet standing. Subsequently the Riddles obtained Catterson's squatter's claim. Assisted by Tice Shull, who married Pearl Smyth, they enlarged the building (Shull 1987).

The Riddles could not secure title to any lands on the Little Blitzen until the completion of the cadastral surveys. Once the surveys were done, they moved steadily under the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862.

Table 1

Riddle Homesteads and Cash Entries, T33S, R32 3/4E, W.M., 1915-16

Date	Land Description	Type of Entry	Owner
2/2/1915	NESE, Sec. 31 NESE, NWSE, SWSE, SESE, Sec. 32	Homestead	Benjamin A. Riddle

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2/2/1915	SWNE, NESW, NWSW, NWSE, Sec. 33	Homestead	Walter S. Riddle
4/19/1915	NESE, NWSE, SWSE, SESE, Sec. 19 NWNE, Sec. 30	Cash	Fred Riddle
11/7/1916	NESE, SWSE, SESE, Sec. 32	Cash	Fred Riddle
11/7/1916	NWNE, SWNE, SENE, Sec. 31	Cash	Fred Riddle

Presumably Fred Riddle had already exercised his homestead option in some other area and thus secured his lands through cash entry. Neither the claim of George Riddle at Desert Meadow nor that of Carrie (Riddle) Parsley appeared in the land records. Fred Riddle's purchase in 1915 of lands in Section 19, however, included the Desert Meadow site of "Geo. Riddle's House" (Bureau of Land Management n.d.a, n.d.b).

These land holdings enabled the Riddles to exploit a fairly large area of public domain. By holding these tracts and securing additional properties on February 4, 1920 (in Secs. 28 and 33) and on May 26, 1926 (in Secs. 17, 20, and 21), they held meadowland, water sources, and a near monopoly on surrounding public acreage [See Fig. 1]. The remote location of their properties mitigated against significant outside intrusion. The Riddle holdings by 1926 nearly locked up the southwestern corner of T33S, R32 3/4E, W. M.

Benjamin A. Riddle committed suicide on March 25, 1915, at Crane Hot Springs. He died intestate, leaving his real property $(S_{2}^{1}SW_{4}^{1},$ NW4NW4 of Sec. 32; NE4SE4, Sec. 31) to his father, T. Stilly Riddle. His father, a widower, sold this tract for \$5,000 to Walter S. and Fred Riddle on October 5, 1931, a transactions left unrecorded until 1951 (Harney County Clerk n.d.[53]:119; Davis 1987).

Walter and Fred Riddle lived together at the Riddle Ranch, the site originally taken as a squatter's claim by Scott Catterson. The brothers primarily operated a cattle ranch. Walter rode the range, while Fred milked, tended the chickens, and cooked. The Riddle brothers made their own butter and kept a sourdough starter for biscuits, reportedly "specialities" of the ranch, at least to the children of their Smyth cousins who visited the Little Blitzen in the 1920s and the 1930s. In

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spite of difficult winters and their isolation, the Riddle brothers lived year-round on their ranch. Their mailing address was Blitzen, Oregon. Occasionally they ran a few sheep, commonly referred to as "bummers." When they began their operations they concentrated on horses, but following World War I and the advent of mechanized transportation, they shifted to cattle production (Shull 1987; Hardin 1987).

The Riddle brothers developed some interesting reputations. Marie Hardin, whose mother was a first cousin, recalled that the two men were avid readers and kept their lonely house well-stocked with reading material. She thought that one or both of the brothers had attended the Normal School at Ashland. She also remembered that they produced notorious coffee. They started with a pot and threw in grounds and water. They never emptied the grounds until, after repeated brewings, they had entirely filled the coffee pot. They just added a few more spoonfuls of coffee each time (Hardin 1987).

John Scharff recalled that the Riddle brothers used the juniper post and willow pole corrals on the south bank of the Little Blitzen below their house to separate their livestock (Scharff 1987). Marcus Haines mentioned that the brothers were something of a local scandal for their treatment of livestock. "You could lose half your cattle and make more money than feeding them," Walt Riddle once told him. Haines observed that the Riddle brothers starved more cattle to death than perhaps any other stockmen in Harney County (Haines 1987).

The Riddle brothers were the third generation of their family to settle on the Oregon frontier. The mid-nineteenth century was a period of restlessness and expansion of Euro-Americans across North America. Several factors contributed to these events. They included the resolution of the "Oregon Question" and the acquisition in 1846 of the Pacific Northwest by the United States, the Mexican War of 1846-48 and the subsequent acquisition of California and the Southwest in 1848, the discovery of gold in California, favorable publicity about the West and its resources, scientific accounts documenting fertile land and healthy climates, and increasingly generous land laws passed by Congress.

The impetus for the Riddle family to emigrate to Oregon was the assurance of a friend that the Pacific Northwest was the ideal place for settlement. George W. Riddle later recalled:

In the fall of 1850, Isaac Constant, a near neighbor, whose farm

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joined ours, returned from Oregon. He had crossed the plains with ox teams in 1848 and returned with saddle and pack horses. It is needless to say that Mr. Constant was the center of interest for the neighborhood with his glowing accounts of the beauty of the country, the mildness of the climate, the fertility of the soil, and the fact that a man and wife were entitled to a half section of land to be selected by themselves in a new country where the hand of the white man had not yet made his mark. Mr. Constant also brought some gold dust which I remember was shown in a glass dish, which existed and fired the imagination.

Constant, a well-to-do Illinois farmer, put his property up for sale and expressed his determination to move to Oregon. Inspired by his words and actions, William H. and Maximilla (Bouseman) Riddle, grandparents of the Riddle brothers on the Little Blitzen River, took similar action, sold their farm of 200 acres on the Sangamon River for \$3,000, and spent the winter of 1850-51 preparing for their trip across the plains (Riddle 1953:10).

The Riddles, unlike thousands of other overland travelers, selected the less frequently used Applegate Trail or Southern Emigrant Route. They left the Oregon Trail near Fort Hall and took a wide swing to the south through the northern Great Basin and into the Klamath lakes region before entering southwestern Oregon. The Riddles left Illinois in the first week of April, 1851, and arrived in the Cow Creek Valley on the South Umpqua on September 20. George Riddle remarked: "We had had five months and two weeks of continuous travel. We had encountered floods and deserts. We had endured heat, dust, thirst and hunger. We had run the gauntlet (as you might say) of hostile Indians, but we had arrived at our destination without loss of any of our family or suffering any serious illness" (Riddle 1953:42).

The Riddles were an extended family at the time of their emigration.

Table 2

Members of Riddle Family Emigrating to Oregon in 1851

Name	Age	Relationship to Head of Household
Riddle, William H.	45	Head of Household
Riddle, Maximilla	42	Wife

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Chapman, Artinecia Chapman, John	? ?	Daughter and a recent widow Grandson; son of Artinecia Chapman
Riddle, Isabella	18	Daughter
Riddle, William H.	13	Son; died in 1857
Riddle, George W.	11	Son
Riddle, Abner	9	Son
Riddle, John Bouseman	7	Son
Riddle, Anna M.	4	Daughter
Riddle, Tobias Stilly	2	Son
McGill, Lucinda	45	Half sister of Maximilla Riddle
Hall, Onna	11	Cousin to the Riddle children

In addition to this contingent of thirteen related individuals, the Riddle party included Newton and George Bramson, Jack Middleton, and Herman F. and Charles Reinhart, teamsters and stock managers. They helped drive the three wagons, carriage, and forty head of cattle the Riddles took to Oregon (Riddle 1953:11; Reinhart 1962:9).

William H. and Maximilla Riddle settled on the west bank of lower Cow Creek, a site subsequently known as the Riddle Valley and the general locale by 1884 of Riddle, Oregon. They filed for lands under the Oregon Donation Land Act (1850). William Riddle, a blacksmith and farmer, was a widower by 1860 when enumerated by the census taker (Bureau of the Census 1870). Ten years later, age 73, Riddle resided in the home of Watson Wynatt. Living nearby in "District 45 Precinct" were many of this descendants (Bureau of the Census 1880).

Missing in 1880 from the expanding Riddle clan was the family of Tobias Stilly Riddle. Stilly Riddle, as he was commonly known, had emigrated from Douglas County to the Harney Basin in 1872. His move was in conjunction with his father-in-law George A. Smyth and his large family. Smyth, originally a settler in the Willamette Valley, was attracted by the grasslands of the Harney Basin. He and his wife, their unmarried sons George A., D. H., and Presley, their son John and his wife, their son-in-law John S. Miller, and their son-in-law Stilly Riddle and his wife, Sarah, all made this move. The Smyths and Riddles settled at Warm Springs but the heavy snowfall of the winter of 1873-74 persuaded them to find another location. Ultimately the Smyths and the Riddles settled at Happy Valley where Smyth and Riddle creeks bear their names (Brimlow 1951:58-60; Anonymous 1902:635).

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Table 3

Family of Stilly and Sarah (Smyth) Riddle

Tobias Stilly Riddle = (1) Sarah Jane Smyth = (2) Alamarine ? b. Aug. 31, 1849, I11. b. Aug. 25, 1850 b. Feb., 1852, Iowa d. Feb. 21, 1933, Ore. d. Oct. 25, 1890 d. ? Children: (1) Carrie L. Riddle = ? Parsley b. Aug. 13, 1869, Ore. (2) Walter S. Riddle (bachelor) b. Aug. 22, 1872, Ore. d. Nov. 14, 1950 (3) Frederick Riddle (bachelor) b. Apr. 3, 1874, Warm Springs, Harney Co., Ore. d. Sept. 7, 1957 (4) Eva Riddle = ? Arzner b. May 17, 1876, Happy Valley Precinct, Harney Co., Ore. d. July 27, 1966 (5) Benjamin Riddle (bachelor) b. May 15, 1880 d. Mar. 26, 1927 (6) Presley Riddle b. Aug. 3, 1882, Wyoming d. 1937 (7) Dewey Riddle b. July 14, 1886, Canyonville, Douglas Co., Ore. (8) Helen Riddle = ? Johnson b. Jan. 31, 1887, Canyonville, Douglas Co., Ore. (Shull 1987; Bureau of the Census 1870, 1900)

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Peter French entered the Harney Basin shortly after Riddle and saw the tremendous potentials of the region. Backed by California capital and possessing an expansive vision, French bought out Riddle for \$30,000 in gold. As one writer observed, Stilly and Sarah Riddle were now "free to do as they pleased; so they decided to return to Riddle, where Stilley's father, mother, sisters and brothers lived. The youth who had left home with nothing more than a horse, a saddle, and a bedroll, was returning with a wife, seven children, and a fortune" (Hall 1975).

In the 1880s Stilly Riddle took his family to Wyoming where reportedly Presley Riddle was born in 1882. By 1886 the Riddles had returned to the South Umpqua region. Dewey Riddle was born in Canyonville in 1886 and Helen Riddle was born there in 1887. Following the death of Sarah Jane (Smyth) Riddle in 1890, Stilly Riddle married a woman named Alamarine. In 1900 Stilly and his second wife resided at Riddle, Oregon. Their household included Presley Riddle, age 17, Stilly [Dewey ?] Riddle, age 15, and Helen Riddle, age 13 (Bureau of the Census 1900). Stilly Riddle died in Douglas County, Oregon, on February 21, 1933 (Shull 1987).

In 1900 a number of Stilly Riddle's children, in addition to the three minors who lived with him and his second wife, also lived in Douglas County.

Table 4

Walter Riddle Household, Riddle Precinct, Douglas Co., 1900

Name	Gender	Birth	date	Age	Birthplace	Profession
Riddle, Walter	М	Aug.,	1872	27	Ore.	Farmer
Riddle, Carrie	F	Aug.,	1870	29	Ore.	·
[Widow of a man	named Pa:	rsley;	had a	ı dau	ghter, Venet	a Parsley]
Riddle, Fred	М	Apr.,	1874	20	Ore.	Farm Laborer
Riddle, Vanita S.	F	July,	1895	4	Ore.	
[Vanita Parsley,	, a niece	of Wa	lter F	Riddl	e]	

(Bureau of the Census 1900)

Three of the sons of Stilly and Sarah (Smyth) Riddle were involved in ranching on the Little Blitzen River during the first half of the twentieth century. These were Benjamin A. Riddle, Fred Riddle, and

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Walter S. Riddle. The Riddle's sister, Carrie (Riddle) Parsley, filed for lands at the mouth of the Little Blitzen Gorge. Another relative and perhaps a cousin, George Riddle, erected a house on his claim at Desert Meadow, about a mile north of the Riddle Ranch (Rodolf & Ganong 1912; Shull 1987; Hardin 1987; Davis 1987).

The Riddle family emigrated to Oregon as a clan. The numerous descendants of the thirteen children born to William H. and Maximilla Riddle constituted an important element of the population of southern Douglas County in the late nineteenth century. The Stilly and Sarah Riddle family pioneered in the Harney Basin in 1870s. Sarah (Smyth) Riddle's father, George C. Smyth, and her brother, John Smyth, were murdered at Happy Valley by the Bannock Indians during the war of 1878 (Anonymous 1902:635). Early in the twentieth century four of the Riddles' children returned to the region and for more than forty years the bachelor Riddle brothers operated the Riddle Ranch on the southwestern slopes of Steens Mountain.

In the 1950s old age overtook the two, surviving Riddle brothers. Walter, who eventually moved to a nursing home in Douglas or Josephine County, sold his lands on December 27, 1949, to Earl G. Robinson. He disposed of Lots 1 & 2, Sec. 3, T33S, R32 3/4E; SW4SW4, Sec. 2, Lots 3, 4, SE4NW4, S4NE4, E42SE4, Sec. 3 (Harney County Clerk n.d.[51]:730). Fred Riddle disposed of his holdings on September 3, 1952. He sold a variety of properties to Rex and Ethel Clemens of the Rex Clemens Ranch, Inc. These holdings included the 346.87 acres, Tax Lot No. 1600, where stood the Riddle Ranch buildings (Harney County Clerk n.d.[55]:546-47; [82]:83).

Rex Clemens (born in 1901), a lumberman from Philomath, Oregon, was intrigued with Harney County and entering the ranching business. Commencing in 1959 he employed Glen and Helen Davis to run summer stock on the Riddle Ranch. The Davises continued this enterprise for the next 23 years, retiring in 1982, but returning for the summers of 1983 and 1987. Following Clemens' death, his widow decided to dispose of the Riddle Ranch and sold it to the Bureau of Land Management. The properties included a newer house constructed by the Clemens' about a mile up the Little Blitzen River on the south side (Clemens 1987; Davis 1987).

Walter Riddle died on November 14, 1950. His brother, Fred, died at age 85 on September 7, 1957. Fred Riddle, who died in a Medford rest home, was one of the oldest natives of Harney County, having been born

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at Warm Springs in 1874. His obituary noted: "When Riddle was 21 he and his brother, Walter, took homesteads in the west end of the Steens Mountains and spent more than 50 years in the cattle business together." Fred Riddle was survived by a brother Dewey, who lived in Palm Springs, and sisters, Helen R. Johnson of Billings, Montana, and Eva Arzner of Myrtle Creek (Anonymous 1957).

The buildings in the Riddle Ranch Historic District survive in various states of repair. Some, such as those at the Fred Riddle place, are in good condition. Others, at the Walter and Benjamin Riddle headquarters, are in disrepair. In spite of the deterioration of these structures, they retain sufficient character and appearance that they would be readily recognized by their builders. These buildings document the use of local materials and ingenuity of untrained carpenters who had to fend for themselves on their remote land claims in Oregon's High Desert of the early twentieth century. These buildings are associated with the family of earliest settlers in the Harney Basin and tie to the Riddle family which was in the first wave of settlers in the South Umpqua watershed in western Oregon.

The ranch buildings have excellent integrity of site, materials, and location. They are aesthetically and historically interesting and call to mind the era of isolated ranching on the rangelands of the American West. None of the three features identified as "noncontributing" detracts from the historical setting. The collapsed cooler at the at the Benjamin A. Riddle place is virtually invisible. The collapsed chicken house at the Fred Riddle place is largely concealed by rocks and junipers. The bath house at that site is an unobtrusive, low profile building of unpainted, weathered boards largely hidden in a grove of willows on the margin of the river.

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Courthouse, Burns, Ore.

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Shull, Marjorie (Smyth)

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MS notes in possession of Stephen Dow Beckham, Lake Oswego, Ore.

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UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
E) F) G) I) J)	11 11 11 11 11 11	357730 358940 358915 358510 358500 355300	4725610 4725590 4724790 4724790 4724390 4724460
K) L)	11 11	355320 354910	4725660 4725670

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property, as depicted on the enclosed USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangles (Fish Lake, Oregon, 1968; Tombstone Canyon, Oregon, 1968), is legally described as follows:

Willamette Meridian

T. 33 S., R. 32 3/4E., sec. 30, SE¹₄SW⁴₄ and S¹₂SE¹₄; sec. 31, E¹₂ and NE¹₄NW⁴₄; sec. 32, S¹₂; sec. 33, SW⁴₄NE¹₄, S¹₂NW⁴₄, SW⁴₄, and NW⁴₄SE¹₄.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Riddle Ranch Historic District is a visual boundary which includes the original homestead structures and all related buildings, including all contributing and noncontributing structures. Also included within the boundary are those intervening lands that have historically been associated with these properties and that directly contribute to their historic significance. Therefore, the boundary encompasses contributing portions of the Little Blitzen River, and extends to the flanking ridgetops that overlook the ranchhold so as to convey the setting for the historic activities that were carried out by the Riddle brothers. The included structures and lands are those that retain historic integrity. SCHEMATIC LOCATION MAP: RIDDLE RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT



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street & number HC 74-12533 Highway 20 West	telephone (503) 573-5241
city or town Hines	state OR zip code 97738

Riddle Ranch Historic District BLM, Burns District, Oregon List of Photographs (NRHP) 1. Frederick Riddle House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SWASE4, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northwest: East (side) and south (front) elevations Photograph No. 1 (Neg. No. Beckham-15): Schematic Location Map, No. 1 2. Frederick Riddle House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SW%SE%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northeast: West (side) and south (front) elevations Photograph No. 2 (Neg. No. Beckham-18): Schematic Location Map, No. 1 3. Frederick Riddle Cooler, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SW4SE4, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to north: South (front) elevation Photograph No. 3 (Neg. No. Beckham-21): Schematic Location Map, No. 2 4. Frederick Riddle Bunkhouse, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SW4SE%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northeast: South (front) and west (side) elevations Photograph No. 4 (Neg. No. Beckham-19): Schematic Location Map, No. 3 5. Frederick Riddle Chicken House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SW4SE4, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to north: South (front) elevation Photograph No. 5 (Neg. No. Beckham-22): Schematic Location Map, No. 4 6. Frederick Riddle Storage Building and Tack Room, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SE%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northwest: South (front) and east (side) elevations Photograph No. 6 (Neg. No. Beckham-1): Schematic Location Map, No. 5

Riddle Ranch Historic District BLM, Burns District, Oregon List of Photographs (NRHP) 7. Barn, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SE%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northeast: South (front) and west (side) elevations Photograph No. 7 (Neg. No. Beckham-6): Schematic Location Map, No. 6 8. Frederick Riddle Willow Pole Corral, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SE%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to west: West wall Photograph No. 8 (Neg. No. Beckham-14): Schematic Location Map, No. 7 9. Frederick Riddle Juniper Post Corral, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 30, SE%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Stephen Dow Beckham June 17, 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northeast: East wall Photograph No. 9 (Neg. No. Beckham-16): Schematic Location Map, No. 7 10. Benjamin A. Riddle House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 32, NW%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Bruce Marc Crespin October 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to west: East (front) elevation Photograph No. 10 (Neg. No. Crespin-22): Schematic Location Map, No. 9 11. Benjamin A. Riddle House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 32, NW%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Bruce Marc Crespin October 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northeast: South (side) and west (rear) elevations Photograph No. 11 (Neg. No. Crespin-18): Schematic Location Map, No. 9 12. Benjamin A. Riddle Cooler, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 32, NW4SW4, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Bruce Marc Crespin October 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northwest: Substructure remnants Photograph No. 12 (Neg. No. Crespin-23): Schematic Location Map, No. 10

13. Benjamin A. Riddle Stone Building, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 32, NW%SW%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Bruce Marc Crespin October 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to east: West (side) elevation Photograph No. 13 (Neg. No. Crespin-13): Schematic Location Map, No. 11.

Riddle Ranch Historic District BLM, Burns District, Oregon List of Photographs (NRHP)

14. Walter S. Riddle House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 33, SW%NE%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Bruce Marc Crespin October 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northeast: South (side) and west (front) elevations Photograph No. 14 (Neg. No. Crespin-2): Schematic Location Map, No. 12

15. Walter S. Riddle House, Riddle Ranch Historic District T. 33 S., R. 32% E., Sec. 33, SW4NE%, W.M.; Harney Co., OR. Bruce Marc Crespin October 1987 BLM, Burns District Office, Hines, OR. View to northwest: South (side) and east (rear) elevations Photograph No. 15 (Neg. No. Crespin-8): Schematic Location Map, No. 12