

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Holly SS Ranch Barn

other names/site number Double S Ranch Barn; 5PW192

2. Location

street & number 407 West Vinson [N/A] not for publication

city or town Holly [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Prowers code 099 zip code 81047

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title: Georgiana Cortezglio, State Historic Preservation Officer; Date: 12/16/03

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [X] entered in the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: 2/25/04

Holly SS Ranch Barn  
Name of Property

Prowers County, Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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 Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/Subsistence

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: gable roofed stone barn

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

Concrete

walls Limestone

roof Metal

Shingles

other Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Holly SS Ranch Barn

Prowers County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The 1879 SS Ranch barn is a 1½-story limestone structure with a modified rectilinear plan and a gabled roof. The main barn is rectilinear in plan with a tack room on the northeast corner of the barn, which modifies the plan and creates an "L-shaped" plan. The type of the barn is essentially "transverse crib," meaning that there is a central aisle with areas on either side for stalls or "cribs" on the lower level. Above the crib level is an unobstructed loft for hay storage, which is accessed by a steep stairway located near the north end of the barn. This type is said to have afforded western pioneer settlers the maximum flexibility in storage and sheltering capabilities as they developed their ranches.<sup>1</sup> The interior framing, including the floor of the hayloft and the roof assembly, are made of milled lumber. The rafters are of modern dimensional lumber secured by wire nails. The roof consists of wood shingles that has since been supplemented by a corrugated sheet metal overlay.

The barn is located on the south edge of the town of Holly, Colorado. With the exception of the original stone ranch house, it is the only building still extant on the ranch. The two aforementioned buildings are also the only buildings located south of the railroad tracks that run through the town on an east/west bearing. The stone ranch house stands approximately 100 yards to the west northwest of the location of the barn, and is not included in this nomination. There still exist corrals to the south and east of the barn, and the adjacent land is still used to graze cattle, although on a very small scale. The surrounding landscape consists of the wide-open prairies that give southeast Colorado its distinctiveness. The Arkansas River runs east/west and passes by to the south of the ranch buildings. The barn is no longer used in relation to ranching. The foundations of several buildings are still visible just to the north of the barn (see sketch map). The foundation closest to the barn is what remains of the blacksmith shop that once operated on the ranch, and the foundation further to the north is that of the land office and hotel operated by the Arkansas Valley Land and Cattle Company. The company used the building to entertain and woo prospective land buyers, and the large basement safe can still be seen with its 2 foot thick concrete walls and steel doors.<sup>2</sup>

The barn is in relatively good repair, although the stonework is beginning to show signs of degradation and there are two places (photos 8 & 22) where large holes have formed in the exterior walls. The southwest corner (photos 4, 5, & 12) of the barn also shows evidence of reconstruction, possibly due to the collapse of the wall in that location during a massive flood in Holly in 1965.<sup>3</sup> Along with its relatively good condition, the barn exhibits a high degree of integrity in that it has not been moved and it has been altered very minimally. Additionally, to a great extent, the materials with which the building was built are still extant. The setting of the barn, though significantly pared down from its heyday as a major cattle and hay producing ranch in the region, is largely the same. As one looks through the gun ports with the knowledge of what they were designed for, it is still possible to feel the sort of excitement and dread that the pioneer settlers might have felt in the 1870s.

**General Characteristics**

As noted above, the basic shape of the floor plan of the barn is rectangular, with a tack room attached to the northeast corner of the structure. The longitudinal axis of the barn runs north/south. The overall length of the barn is 68 feet and the width at the south end is 28½ feet. The width of the tack room is 13 feet, so that the overall width of the barn on the north end is 41½ feet. The length of the tack room is 21 feet (see Sketch Map). All of the exterior walls are constructed of native limestone and mortar which was originally made from mud and straw. The stone walls are nearly two feet thick, and on the interior, the mud mortar

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joints are still visible in many places. The number of distinct spaces on the ground, or crib, level is basically three: The large area for the stalls or grain storage, the tack room on the northeast corner, and a small room for tool storage next to the stairway in the northwest corner. The hay loft above consists of one space measuring 68 feet long by 28½ feet wide (see Sketch Map). The space is open except for a tin chimney protruding through the space. The openness of the loft is achieved by using rafters with collar ties that are about 8½ feet above the floor of the loft, while the tails of the rafters are secured to a wooden wall plate embedded in the masonry (photos 10, 14, 15, & 16) approximately 5 feet above the floor. The rafter configuration allowed full use of the loft space without having to build the masonry walls a full two stories in height.

On the ground level, there are three entrances into the barn. They consist, except for the southern entrance, of archways built of the same limestone. The doors are rectangular wooden sliding doors hung from a steel track mounted over the archways on the inside of the barn. The stone archways are also wood lined (photos 7 & 20). There is an entry at each end of the central aisle running longitudinally through the barn, and as noted above, the entry at the south end of the barn is rectilinear in shape (photo 3). Additional clearance was probably needed for wagon access and would have precluded using an archway in that location. There is also one that serves as the entry to the tack room. This archway does not contain a sliding door, but actually has a fixed wooden wall built into the opening, with a hinged wood door in the middle. There are small windows on either side of the door (photos 7 & 21). This room is accessed from outside the barn only (photo 1). The stone archways, and the rectilinear southern entrance, measure approximately 7½ feet wide by 6½ feet high. On the hay loft level there are two additional smaller archways. These openings measure approximately 4½ feet wide by 5 feet high, and would have been used to take hay in for storage at either end of the barn (photos 1 & 3). There is also an opening for venting the loft above the arch on the north end of the barn. It measures roughly 2 feet wide by 3 feet high. Along the east and west sides of the barn are a series of what appear to be small windows. They were actually designed to be gun ports to facilitate rifle protection of the ranch and its inhabitants. They measure approximately 18 inches wide by 12 inches high on the interior, and approximately 12 inches square on the exterior (photos 4, 17, 18, & 19). The tack room has a window that is slightly larger than the rest, and there is also a chimney (photos 4 & 22) suggesting that the room may have also been used as a bunk house when accommodations for the ranch cowboys were in short supply. It is also noteworthy that its interior is of finished plaster.

The barn is a gable-roofed structure, and as referred to above, the assembly consists of 2 x 6 inch wood rafters and collar ties. The roof sheathing consists of 1 x 6 inch boards laid across the rafters. The next layer is comprised of wooden shingles. There is a 12 inch eave on each side of the barn, with exposed rafters and a 4 inch wide fascia board.

The framing that supports the floor of the hay loft, as well as the floor itself, is also made of wood. The framing consists of post and beam construction supporting 2 x 6 inch floor joists. There are two rows of the post and beam construction running the length of the barn (photos 9 & 18). The floor joists support 1 x 6 inch tongue and groove boards which make up the floor of the hay loft.

**Specific Features**

The most distinctive architectural features of the barn are the stone archways built into the north and south elevations (photos 1 & 3). Though at first glance they are largely decorative, they had a very pragmatic

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purpose as well. Timber was (and still is) relatively scarce in southeastern Colorado. A Roman arch would have been much easier and cheaper to employ than a lintel for spanning the door openings. With the majority of the barn built of stone, a stone or wood lintel would have had to have been very large and expensive to support the weight from above. The one place where an exception seems to have been made was at the south end of the barn, on the ground level. The steel lintel employed at that location seems smaller than should be normally required, but the stone archway directly above, at the loft level, probably deflects most of the dead load of the stonework around the opening below.

It is interesting to note that the wooden lining in each of the stone archways was made from a single piece of wood, and "bent" to fit the curve of the archway (photo 21). The bending of a 1½ inch thick piece of lumber was accomplished by sawing kerfs into the wood at regular intervals, about an inch apart, until the blade was within about 1/8 of an inch of going through. This gave the wood the flexibility and the room to bend.

It is also noteworthy that the barn does exhibit at least one element that seems more decorative than it is pragmatic. On each of the exterior corners of the barn, decorative quoins have been employed (photos 3, 5, & 6). They are very subtle, as the hammered texture does not diverge much from the rest of the field-dressed limestone. It is interesting, nonetheless, that a utilitarian structure such as a barn would feature such a distinctly decorative element. The quoins do have a practical purpose as well. They are larger than the rest of the masonry elements, and thus fortified the corners of the barn. The quoins speak to the level of craftsmanship employed in the building of the Holly SS Ranch buildings. They were an opportunity to express pride in one's workmanship, even when there were no other buildings with which to be compared.

The post and beam construction on the interior of the barn (photo 13) employs a half-lap scarf joint at the point where the beams are spliced together. The small window openings on the east and west sides are flared wider on the interior than on the exterior (photo 19).

The sliding doors that were mounted in the archways are constructed of a 2 x 6 inch lumber frame, with 1 x 6-inch tongue and groove boards mounted to the frame at a 45° angle.

The SS Ranch brand is still extant on the keystone above the archway leading into the tack room (photos 7 & 20).

**Alterations**

A roofed lean-to was added to the east side of the structure in approximately 1950. The area covered by the new roof was 13 feet wide by 47 feet long. Presumably this would have been done to afford livestock more protection from the weather on the leeward side of the building.

In the late 1940s or early 1950s some of the window/gun ports on the west side of the barn were enlarged to accommodate the use of grain augers. This probably signifies that the barn was used primarily for grain storage after that date.

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*Holly SS Ranch headquarters about 1900*

*Source: Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library*

There is a concrete base around the entire perimeter of the barn, as well as a concrete floor. The 3 to 3½ foot high concrete wall was probably poured to bolster the strength of the masonry wall. It is also likely that the existing concrete floor was added to the structure at about the same time. The date of the improvements is unknown.

All of the exterior mortar joints show a replacement of the original mud mortar with a cementitious one. Again, this was likely done to bolster the strength of the masonry wall, and the date(s) of the improvement is unknown. It likely was an ongoing process. In the gables the original mud mortar has been replaced on both the inside and outside.

The entire roofing system is composed of modern dimensional lumber and wire nails. These materials, along with the total mortar replacement in the gables, indicate a major reconstruction of the upper portion of the barn. This may have been necessitated by catastrophic damage inflicted by fire or tornado in the 1940s or 1950s. No physical evidence of fire is visible. It is also possible that the upper portion of the barn may have failed as a result of deferred maintenance or structural deficiencies in the original design or materials. Historic photos indicate that the exterior appearance of the barn has not been significantly altered by the reconstruction.

Corrugated metal sheeting covers a layer of wood shingles. This was likely done to make the barn more weather-tight. The date of the improvement is unknown.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup>Vlach, John Michael. *Barns*. Library of Congress, Washington D.C. 2003. pp.227, 388

<sup>2</sup>Interview of Wes & Pat Campbell conducted by Troy R. Tengwall. 29 May 2003.

<sup>3</sup>Interview of William Wilson Jr. conducted by Troy R. Tengwall. 29 May 2003.

Holly SS Ranch Barn  
Name of Property

Prowers County, Colorado  
County/State

**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.

**Criteria Considerations**

(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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture  
Architecture  
Settlement/Exploration

**Periods of Significance**

1879-1903

**Significant Dates**

1879  
1883  
1903

**Significant Person(s)**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Gores, John  
Holly, Hiram S.

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  
Colorado Historical Society

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1879 Holly SS Ranch Barn is significant under criterion A, in the area of agriculture, for its representation of the earliest period of settlement and development of Prowers County by farmers and ranchers. The barn is associated with one of the earliest and largest cattle ranches in the region, and as such, reflects the early history of agricultural development in Prowers County. In a larger context, it is also significant in its representation of a shift in attitudes as the American west, and Colorado in particular, was settled. Sole dependence on mining ventures eventually gave up ground to agricultural development as settlers realized that ranching could potentially be as lucrative. The barn is also significant under criterion A, in the area of exploration and settlement, due to its association with the ranch, which effectively served as a community center for farmers and ranchers in the region. The ultimate inception of the *town* of Holly, Colorado was an outgrowth of the Holly SS Ranch. Lastly, the barn is significant under criterion C, in the area of architecture, as it is one of the earliest and most well preserved extant stone barns in southeast Colorado, displaying the construction techniques, architectural details, and material usage of the pioneering period in Colorado. The barn was intended as a utilitarian structure, but exhibits decorative elements, such as quoins and Roman arches, that illustrate the level of pride-in-craftsmanship that the builders expressed in the structure. The wood framing in the barn consists of milled lumber. That the barn is constructed primarily of local limestone demonstrates a blend of local tradition and practical good sense. Materials close at hand were favored over those that required shipping. Native stone construction constitutes an important late nineteenth and early twentieth century building tradition in southeastern Colorado.

**Historical Context**

The Holly SS Ranch Barn was built in 1879 by a miner turned rancher named Hiram S. Holly.<sup>1</sup> He was born in Stanford, Fairfield County, Connecticut, July 13, 1843. He worked on a farm until he turned fifteen, at which time he joined the army. Holly served in the Twenty-eighth Connecticut Volunteer Infantry for one year, after which time he went to New York City for six months and Tennessee for approximately one year. After his stint in Tennessee, Holly left for the west and Colorado. His first employment was in North Empire as an engineer in a quartz mill. He eventually ran the mill himself and had men out prospecting for him. In 1868, Holly set out for Arizona under the auspices of mining, but he returned to Gilpin County, in Colorado. Again, he migrated to a quartz mill, where he ran Whitcomb's mill until he leased a mill of his own, the New Bedford, in Nevada Gulch. In 1870, Holly sold out to his partner and went to Black Hawk, Colorado, where he leased another mill, with Theodore E. Wheeler, which he managed until the spring of 1871. It was during that time that Holly abandoned milling and mining to pursue ranching on the eastern plains of Colorado, in what was then Bent County.<sup>2</sup>

It was with Theodore Wheeler and a second partner, Dennis Sullivan, that Holly left Nevadaville and the mining business for the eastern part of what is now Prowers County (formerly Bent County), in southeastern Colorado. The three men formed the SS Cattle Company and bought land in the county in 1871.<sup>3</sup> The SS Ranch came to be one of the largest cattle ranches in the west. The number of cattle owned under the "SS" brand amounted to about 35,000 at one time. The ranch employed between thirty and sixty cowboys, cooks, and foremen during the summer harvest months, and between seven and thirteen men worked the ranch year round. Holly guaranteed his ranching success by accumulating land that included water frontage, and within ten years, he had acquired thirty miles of frontage on the Arkansas River and the same amount on Sand Creek. The total pasture land said to have been under the control of the SS Ranch reached 2,500,000 acres at one time. Holly's principal vehicle for acquiring land was the Homestead Act.



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Since a single person could only file for one homestead of 160 acres, he had a limitation to skirt. He did so by hiring cowpunchers to file claims and then turn the land over to him. The improvements required before a claim could be "proved up" included a marker (a rock), a tree (newly planted), and a dwelling. Holly got around the most difficult of these by having a cook shack built on wheels. When the time came to testify that the requisite improvements were indeed in place, the shack was hauled out to the claim in question, and truthful (marginally) testimony could be made.<sup>4</sup>

Part of the pasture land under the control of the SS Ranch abutted the area known to cowpunchers as the "Battleground." This was the location of the controversial November 29, 1864, Sand Creek Massacre carried out by Colonel John Chivington and the First Colorado Volunteer Cavalry against a village of about 500 Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. In the surprise attack and massacre, over 160 Indians – under the protection of the Army and flying the national flag – were killed. The event led to a national uproar and the long-term delay of Colorado's entry as a new state.<sup>5</sup>

When the Holly SS Ranch was established a mere seven years later, tensions were still high. The prevailing climate of fear and mistrust likely had a tangible impact on the architecture of the 1879 barn. In a 1951 article in *Colorado Magazine*, Lamar *Daily News* editor Helen Collins wrote that the barn's porthole windows were built into the limestone walls ostensibly to facilitate light and air circulation. However, Fred Gores, who was four years old when his family moved to Holly's ranch and whose father, John, built the stone barn and ranch house along with Hiram Holly in 1879, claimed in 1951 that the openings were for rifle protection "just in case there should be an Indian raid."<sup>6</sup> Instructions circulated to everyone on the ranch were that in the "...event of an Indian scare, all hands should rush to the barn.... Depredations were constantly made by the Indians, and it was only at the risk of life that any person could go beyond sight of the settlements."<sup>7</sup>

References to masonry barns being used, or at least designed, as defensive shelter against Indian attack are not uncommon in accounts of early western settlement. While usually more myth than fact, the claim for the SS Ranch Barn needs to be thoughtfully considered within the context of tribal and military contacts during the 1860s and 1870s along the lower Arkansas River valley.

The ancestor post of the current Fort Lyon in Bent County was established along the north side of the Arkansas River on the route of the Santa Fe Trail, about a mile west of Bent's Fort and sixty miles west of present day Holly. It was one of few military posts along the western half of the Santa Fe Trail, and one of the earliest in the new territory. It was from Fort Lyon that Chivington launched his 1864 attack on Sand Creek.

Seasonal flooding of the Arkansas was a regular threat, and the winter of 1867 was such that the fort was severely damaged. General Orders No. 43 from the Department of the Missouri came on March 18, 1867, to move the post to safer ground, and a site about 20 miles upriver was selected for the new construction. Moving on June 9, 1867, the troops settled in a tent camp near the mouth of the Purgatoire River and set to work on the new post. This new fort was sited as a command for the expansive territory of eastern Colorado, western Oklahoma, and southwestern Kansas, and would provide troops for expeditions into Texas and New Mexico within the year.

Although rarely present at Fort Lyon, the presence of Indian peoples in the region of southeast Colorado territory and its surroundings was the most important reason for the founding of the first Fort Lyon, and

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for the continuing U.S. Army activity at the second Fort Lyon. Located along the Arkansas River, in a valley containing rich natural resources valued by Indian groups, travelers along the Santa Fe Trail, and early Euro-American communities and settlers, the fort served as both defense and deterrence in relations with Indian peoples. By its site selection, the fort confirmed the continuing American conflict with Indian communities and the role of the military in internal defense. Fort Lyon served as a base of regular military scouting, local defense and regional communication about the actions and movements of Indian groups in a broad region which included portions of Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Texas, and Kansas.

Less than a year after the establishment of the second fort in 1867, news about Indian groups in the area began to appear in fort correspondence and post returns. While none were reported in the region in April 1868, rumors surfaced by the following month. Of the few recorded instances of the presence of Indians at the site, the mid-July 1868 visit by Satanta and 107 of his people was significant. Commanding Officer General Penrose reported the event in a letter to the Assistant Adjutant of the Division of the Upper Arkansas, stating that the group:

arrived on the opposite side of the river from my post on the 18<sup>th</sup> day July. About 15 or 20 of them crossed the river and asked to see me. Having no interpreter Robt Bent lent me his services. Satanta had little to say food apparently being the object of his visit. He said he had some from the Cimmaron near the mountains where he had been to try and see the Utes to make peace with them. He had not succeeded. ... [discussion of property damage by Indians] ... Satanta has told me a falsehood about where he has been and I am of the opinion that his trip up here was merely to find out the conditions of the country. ... I would not allow him to inspect my Post. Rations were furnished him and his people for 10 (ten) days.

Indian groups became more significant as a focus of regional and military attention in the fall came. Communication problems were noted in late August when "...owing to Indian troubles the Mails are irregular and uncertain." An increasing number of letters from the post during September and early October tell of concerns which led to several scouting expeditions into the local region, and eventually the arrival of several companies of troops as part of a winter campaign. Local fear of Indians was expressed by the *Colorado Chieftain* of Pueblo when it noted that Penrose might "strike a decisive blow and relieve us from the fear of Indian incursions for a long time."

The remaining months of the year, and the first few of 1869 witnessed the most intense military activity of the fort's history. Beginning in September, frequent raids by Indian bands on local settlements demanded the action of the troops who previously had focused upon site construction, regional patrols and security of mails and shipping. The small community of Boggsville was the first to be attacked close to Fort Lyon, and Penrose, setting out instantly and engaging a group of the Indians, lost two soldiers before returning to the fort. The following month, a wagon train was attacked, and a woman and child taken captive. Troops from the fort again set out in pursuit.

By November, word came of a major campaign under the direction of Commanding General Philip Sheridan to follow and subdue the Cheyenne and their allies in their winter camps of northern Texas and western Oklahoma. A three-pronged attack force was mobilized and Fort Lyon swelled as cavalry and infantry gathered in anticipation of the winter march. Setting out in two columns from Fort Lyon on November 10 and December 2, the troops hit near-blizzard conditions as they moved south. By the time

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the weather eased, news came from the column under the command of George Custer that he had attacked and destroyed the Cheyenne camp along Washita Creek, Oklahoma, ending the need for the broader campaign. Cold and hungry, the troops from Fort Lyon returned home.

Indian peoples remained an active presence in the Fort's life into the mid-1870s, as reflected in the Post Returns of 1873 when four expeditions were sent from Fort Lyon in search of reported Indians in the Arkansas drainage. In the September Post Return under "Activities," it was noted that Lt. George S. Anderson and 55 troops left the post "in pursuit of Cheyenne Indians reported as having committed depredations in the locality of the Two Buttes. He found the report to be true, but the Indians having left that country, he returned."

Throughout the years 1873 and 1874, the post returns report scouting expeditions or detachments sent in search of Indian bands in the region, but the safe completion of the railroad lines along the Arkansas River ensured more regional stability. Like many other posts with access to rail lines, Fort Lyon received orders to utilize the new transportation network to more quickly arrive near locales of Indian problems. By 1875, few incidents regarding Indians were noted in reports or correspondence, and by the end of the decade, Indian peoples had been removed from all of the area surrounding Fort Lyon. However, as late as September 1882, two companies of the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry at the site were ordered to:

proceed tomorrow morning by rail to Granada, Colorado, and scout from there south, and try to intercept a party of Cheyenne Indians said to be in that region going north. If the Indians are met, they will be stopped and sent back to their reservation. If they decline to go, they will be forced back. No violence will however be used if it can be helped.

The significance of Indian peoples to the history of Fort Lyon cannot be overestimated, as their presence and activity in the region was the core reason for the founding of both this fort and its predecessor. While few incidents are noted for Indian visits to the post, the Army's mandate to protect settlers, commerce and transportation from Indians was its principal function in the territory.<sup>8</sup>

Taking their lead from the actions of the U.S. Army at Fort Lyon, Holly and Gores had every reason to believe that an Indian attack constituted a realistic threat along the Arkansas River in the 1870s. Though there is no evidence that the SS Ranch Barn ever served as a defensive structure, there is also little reason to dismiss Fred Gores's claim that defensive considerations entered into the plans for the barn's construction.

During the pioneering era, "...ranch headquarters acted as community centers, not only for those employed at the ranch, but also for neighboring homesteads. The centers not only provided many services, but in many cases, sold supplies and food. The SS Ranch was one of these community centers, or services centers, that grew to be the small town of Holly."<sup>9</sup> That the ranch was, at once, both a community center and a major employer of the region naturally drew many people to congregate on or near the ranch. As much as was possible, Hiram Holly accommodated his employees on the ranch itself. He is said to have erected "...several small houses for people who were working on the ranch."<sup>10</sup>

In the sense that the SS Ranch was a community center, it also provided a sort of outreach through its employees. "Then, as now, *cowboy* was a glamorous word. And the lads did their best to live up to their impressive reputation. Cowboys on the big ranch considered themselves uncles by adoption to the children

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of the little village and the outlying settlers. They conveyed the children home on horseback whenever high winds or blizzards made rough going for little legs." Folks in the surrounding area were also the occasional recipients of the kindness of ranch cowboys, and on at least one occasion they are said to have risked life and limb to save a young teacher and her tubercular sister from their collapsed soddy after a particularly heavy snowfall. Furthermore, at Christmastime, Santa Claus always found the schoolhouse on the ranch property. "The SS Ranch folk saw to it that there was always a big Christmas tree. Folks from near and far brought presents for their own families and cowboys in the region never let anyone go away without gifts. Needy families would find fuel and food waiting for them at home after the Christmas Eve program."<sup>11</sup> The SS Ranch had a real and lasting impact on the formation of the community that would eventually become the *town* of Holly, Colorado.

In 1883, Hiram Holly sold the SS Ranch to a British company, the Arkansas Valley Land and Cattle Company. An interesting aspect of the SS Ranch is that neither Holly nor his partners had a lasting impact on the development of the area, despite early involvement in the Bent-Prowers Cattle and Horse Growers and the Colorado Cattlemen's Associations. "...It is the cowboys and the foremen of the Holly Ranch who live in the legends and memories of the county."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it was to a great extent, ranch employees that were responsible for creating the infrastructure that would enable the community to continue to grow and prosper. For example, John Gores, an SS Ranch carpenter credited with building the stone barn and main house on the SS Ranch, also ran the area's blacksmithery. A large part of Gores's income came from land-seekers heading further west in search of prosperity. The Santa Fe railroad had arrived in area in the mid-1870s. Despite the developing rail travel, the journey west was usually still done by trail and was so arduous, cows, as well as horses and oxen, were shod, creating a steady workload for the shop. C.L. McPherson, SS Ranch bookkeeper, also ran the community's only store. It was a commissary that had everything from red hair ribbons to potatoes and onions. C.L. McPherson was also the first postmaster of the town when the post office was established in 1880. Later, in 1897, he built the first commercial building in the town, a grocery store. Furthermore, when Holly sold the SS Ranch to the Arkansas Valley Land and Cattle Company, McPherson was hired by that company to continue keeping the books. Several men who were employed by the SS Ranch at the time of its sale still lived in Holly when its first history was written in 1904. They were: John Gores, Charlie Gores, Dutch John Luke, J.W. Lyon, Lish House, Ben Riley, Kid Baxter, and C.L. McPherson.<sup>13</sup>

The year 1896 appears to have been a catalytic one in the development of Holly, Colorado. In July of that year the company which had constructed the great irrigation system for the irrigation and reclamation of Prowers County established its main office in Holly. At that time the company was known as the Amity Land and Irrigation Company (later the Amity Land Company). The Great Plains Water Storage Company (later the Great Plains Water Company) was formed about the same time for the purpose of developing the reservoirs required to complement the irrigation system. The investment in the area by these companies would appear to have given the residents of Holly and the outlying areas confidence that the community would be a permanent one, for in December of the same year, a townsman named Ed Tuttle bought the first lot in Holly. Not everyone, though, believed in Holly's viability. When it was rumored that a lot had been sold in Holly, and that a town was in the making, other towns in the Arkansas Valley considered that a tremendous joke had been perpetrated. Soon after, however, folks began to trickle in from the surrounding country, and "...took a liking to the prospect which Holly had for making a town."<sup>14</sup> One of those to make the move into Holly was George Hollis. In the fall of 1896, he took everything with him including his store building when he left Greeley County. As C.L. McPherson's new grocery was still under construction at the time, it was actually Hollis' store that was in operation first. Holly also saw the foundation of its first

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new hotel building laid in February of 1897. The owners were Mr. and Mrs. Lew Millinger, and the progress of the construction was excitedly reported in the newly christened Holly Chieftain, the local newspaper. Mrs. Millinger reported that "by the time the sides were up...there was a heavy demand for rooms. Planks were laid across the upper beams, and there the hordes of Easterners pouring in, in answer to the advertisements of the land company, felt themselves lucky to have a cot bed under the open sky."<sup>16</sup> The excitement surrounding Holly continued to swell, and people continued to inundate the town, most often with belongings *and* a house on wheels:

For months after the immigration commenced, from one to two houses per day would appear over the rise in the mesa, and the citizens who had already arrived would congregate around the post office and wonder whose building that was. The horizon was watched for buildings as is the ocean for ships that are due. At one time, all the houses in the townsite except Mr. McPherson's store and the Holly Hotel had been moved in on wheels...<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1903, Holly was incorporated and the legacy of the Holly SS Ranch was ensured. It should be noted that many of those seated in the first official town organization also had ties to the SS Ranch. This summer, Holly will celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> year of existence as a town. The Holly SS Ranch has not changed hands many times, given its age of 132 years. As has been stated above, Hiram S. Holly started the ranch in 1871. He raised cattle and hay on it until he sold out to the Arkansas Valley Land and Cattle Company in 1883. That company worked the ranch until it was sold to William Wilson in the early 1940s. William Wilson acquired from the Arkansas Valley Land and Cattle Company approximately 400 acres of land, the stone ranch house, and the stone barn. In April 1989, William Wilson sold the land and the stone barn to Darla Hammit and her husband. After the death of her husband a short time later, Hammit was remarried and became Darla Bradshaw. She also relocated to Texas. She currently owns the stone barn and surrounding land. The stone ranch house was passed on to William Wilson Jr., and he still owns and lives in the house.<sup>18</sup>

**Peripheral Historical Context**

There is said to have been a third stone building constructed on the SS Ranch by Hiram Holly. It was a spring house and was located south of the ranch house on Wild Horse Creek. The area was known in those days as Warm Spring due to its habit of remaining unfrozen year round. Buffalo and antelope reportedly congregated from hundreds of miles around for the accessible water in the cold winter months. The spring was also a favorite camping spot for travelers on the Santa Fe Trail making the trip to Fort Bent, approximately 10 miles east of where La Junta is now located. At that time, Fort Bent offered the only real safety for white settlers in the region, and it was the ultimate destination of all travelers coming through the area. Warm Spring, however, due to its proximity to the SS Ranch, offered at least a semblance of safety and respite for weary travelers. The spring was about 40 miles east of Fort Bent, and made a good resting place the night preceding arrival at the fort.<sup>19</sup>

Fred H. Pomeroy was the first foreman on the SS Ranch. He worked in that capacity from 1871 until at least 1881. However, before he worked for Holly, he worked in Denver as a freighter, and before that in the mountains at a quartz mill. In 1864, after viewing the remains of three families murdered in Indian attacks along the Plate River, he became enraged and enlisted in one of the companies of hundred-day volunteers under Colonel Chivington. He later participated in the Sand Creek Massacre.<sup>20</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Accounts vary as to when Holly established the SS Ranch. While 1871 appears to be a plausible date, accounts also indicate that the stone barn was constructed only after John Gores came to the ranch in 1879.

<sup>2</sup>Bowman, Charles W. *The History of Bent County*. Rootsweb Biographies. Hiram S. Holly. Electronic. Retrieved 21 February 2003. <[http://www.rootsweb.com/~cootero/history/bent1881\\_bio21.htm](http://www.rootsweb.com/~cootero/history/bent1881_bio21.htm)>

<sup>3</sup>*Interview of Mrs. Susan Tucker Shanstrom conducted by Margaret Merrill*. 9 January 1934. C.W.A.

Prowers and Clear Creek Counties. Box 355 1-63. Colorado State Historical Society: Stephen Hart Library. pp.1-3

<sup>4</sup>Betz, Ava. *A Prowers County History*. pp. 273

<sup>5</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Volume 8. No. 2.

Betz, Ava. *A Prowers County History*. pp. 270-272. *November 29, 1864 – Sand Creek Massacre*. Northern Cheyenne Sand Creek Massacre Site Project. Copyright©2001, Catapult Media. Electronic. Last Updated 7 Sept 2001. Retrieved 16 Apr 2003.

<<http://www.sandcreek.org/Massacre/massacreindex.htm>>. Kathy Lingo, Anne Bond and Dulaney Barclay, "Fort Lyon," National Register of Historic Places nomination, July 24, 2003.

<sup>6</sup>Collins, Helen Fletcher. "The Beginning of Holly" Colorado Magazine. Jan 1951 Vol.28. No.1. pp.52.

<sup>7</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Vol.8. No. 2. pp.24-25

<sup>8</sup>The entire section on the history of Fort Lyon came from Kathy Lingo, Anne Bond and Dulaney Barclay, "Fort Lyon," National Register of Historic Places nomination, July 24, 2003.

<sup>9</sup>Leigh, Kathy. *A Brief History of Holly*. History of Holly, Colorado. Copyright©1999, Kathy Leigh. Electronic. Retrieved 21 Feb 2003. <<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/7375/history.html>>

<sup>10</sup>*Interview of Mrs. Susan Tucker Shanstrom conducted by Margaret Merrill*. 9 January 1934. C.W.A.

Prowers and Clear Creek Counties. Box 355 1-63. Colorado State Historical Society: Stephen Hart Library. pp.2

<sup>11</sup>Collins, Helen Fletcher. "The Beginning of Holly" Colorado Magazine. Jan 1951 Vol.28. No.1. pp.54

<sup>12</sup>Betz, Ava. *A Prowers County History*. pp. 272

<sup>13</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Volume 8. No. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Volume 8. No. 2.

<sup>15</sup>Collins, Helen Fletcher. "The Beginning of Holly" Colorado Magazine. Jan 1951 Vol.28. No.1. pp.52-53

<sup>16</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Volume 8. No. 2.

<sup>17</sup>*Interview of William Wilson Jr. conducted by Troy R. Tengwall & Patt & Wes Campbell*. 29 May 2003.

*Interview of Darla Bradshaw conducted by Pat Campbell*. 28 May 2003.

<sup>18</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Volume 8. No. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Wiley, William. *History of Holly*. The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904. Volume 8. No. 2.

<sup>20</sup>Betz, Ava. *A Prowers County History*. pp. 275

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Collins, Helen Fletcher. *The Beginning of Holly*. Colorado Magazine. Vol.28 No.1 Jan 1951 pp.50-57

*Interview of Darla Bradshaw conducted by Patt Campbell*. 28 May 2003.

*Interview of Wes & Patt Campbell conducted by Troy R. Tengwall*. 29 May 2003.

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*Interview of Mrs. Susan Tucker Shanstrom conducted by Margaret Merrill.* 9 January 1934. C.W.A. Prowers and Clear Creek Counties. Box 355 1-63. Colorado State Historical Society: Stephen Hart Library.

*Interview of William Wilson Jr. conducted by Troy R. Tengwall & Patt & Wes Campbell.* 29 May 2003.

Leigh, Kathy. *A Brief History of Holly.* History of Holly, Colorado. Copyright©1999, Kathy Leigh. Electronic. Retrieved 21 Feb 2003. <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/7375/history.html>>

Lingo, Kathy, Anne Bond and Dulaney Barclay, "Fort Lyon," National Register of Historic Places nomination, July 24, 2003. Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society.

*November 29, 1864 – Sand Creek Massacre.* Northern Cheyenne Sand Creek Massacre Site Project. Copyright©2001, Catapult Media. Electronic. Last Updated 7 Sept 2001. Retrieved 16 Apr 2003. <<http://www.sandcreek.org/Massacre/massacreindex.htm>>

Vlach, John Michael. *Barns.* Library of Congress, Washington D.C. 2003. pp.227, 388

Wiley, William. *History of Holly.* The Holly Chieftain. 19 February 1904.

Holly SS Ranch Barn  
Name of Property

Prowers County, Colorado  
County/State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 752485 4214937 (NAD27)  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Troy R. Tengwall

organization University of Colorado at Denver

date 30 May 2003

street & number 4674 White Rock Circle, #12

telephone 303-960-8995

city or town Boulder

state CO

zip code 80301

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

##### 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.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

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

name Darla Bradshaw

street & number Box 76

telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Adrian

state Texas

zip code 79001

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA****VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The northwest corner of the barn is located 514 feet from a U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey Benchmark (Q 39 1933) located on the southeast end of the railroad depot in Holly. The northwest corner of the barn is on an azimuth bearing of 170° (10° east of south) from the benchmark. From the northwest corner of the barn, the boundary proceeds 68 feet south (180°) along the west wall of the barn, 41½ feet east (90°) along the south wall of the barn and along the edge of the lean-to roof, 68 feet north (0°) along the edge of the lean-to roof and the east wall of the barn, and 41½ feet west (180°) along the north wall of the barn to the beginning point. The boundary is thus defined as the aforementioned dimensions plus ten feet all sides of the structure. The boundary therefore is 88 feet in the north-south direction, and 61½ feet in the east-west direction.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary of the barn was drawn to include only the structure of the barn itself, and to exclude surrounding land and the still extant stone ranch house. The historic integrity of the ranch house has not yet been fully explored and verified, and for the purposes of this nomination is not included within the boundary description.

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## PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1- 22:

Name of Property: Holly SS Ranch Barn  
 Location: Prowers County, Colorado  
 Photographer: Troy R. Tengwall  
 Date of Photographs: 24 March 2003  
 Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
 Colorado Historical Society

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	North elevation of barn (camera south)
2	East elevation of barn (camera west)
3	South elevation of barn (camera north)
4	West elevation of barn (camera east)
5	Southwest corner of barn showing quoin detail (camera northeast)
6	Southeast corner of barn showing shed roof addition and quoins (camera northwest)
7	Stone detail of northeast arched doorway (camera southeast)
8	Northwest corner of barn showing deterioration of stonework
9	Interior of barn, lower level (camera north)
10	Interior of barn, loft level (camera north)
11	Detail of roof framing on loft level
12	Detail of stone repair, loft level, southwest corner (camera southwest)
13	Detail of post and half-lap beam framing, lower level
14	Detail of roof framing, loft level (camera east)
15	Detail of wall plate and rafter connection, loft level (camera east)
16	Detail of wall plate and rafter connection, loft level (camera east)
17	East elevation of barn showing shed roof addition and gun ports (camera sw)
18	Interior showing framing detail and gun ports, lower level (camera southeast)
19	Detail of gun port (camera west)
20	Detail of archway keystone with "SS" brand
21	Detail of wooden archway casing, showing saw kerfs facilitating curve (camera sw)
22	Northeast corner of barn showing deterioration of stonework (camera west)

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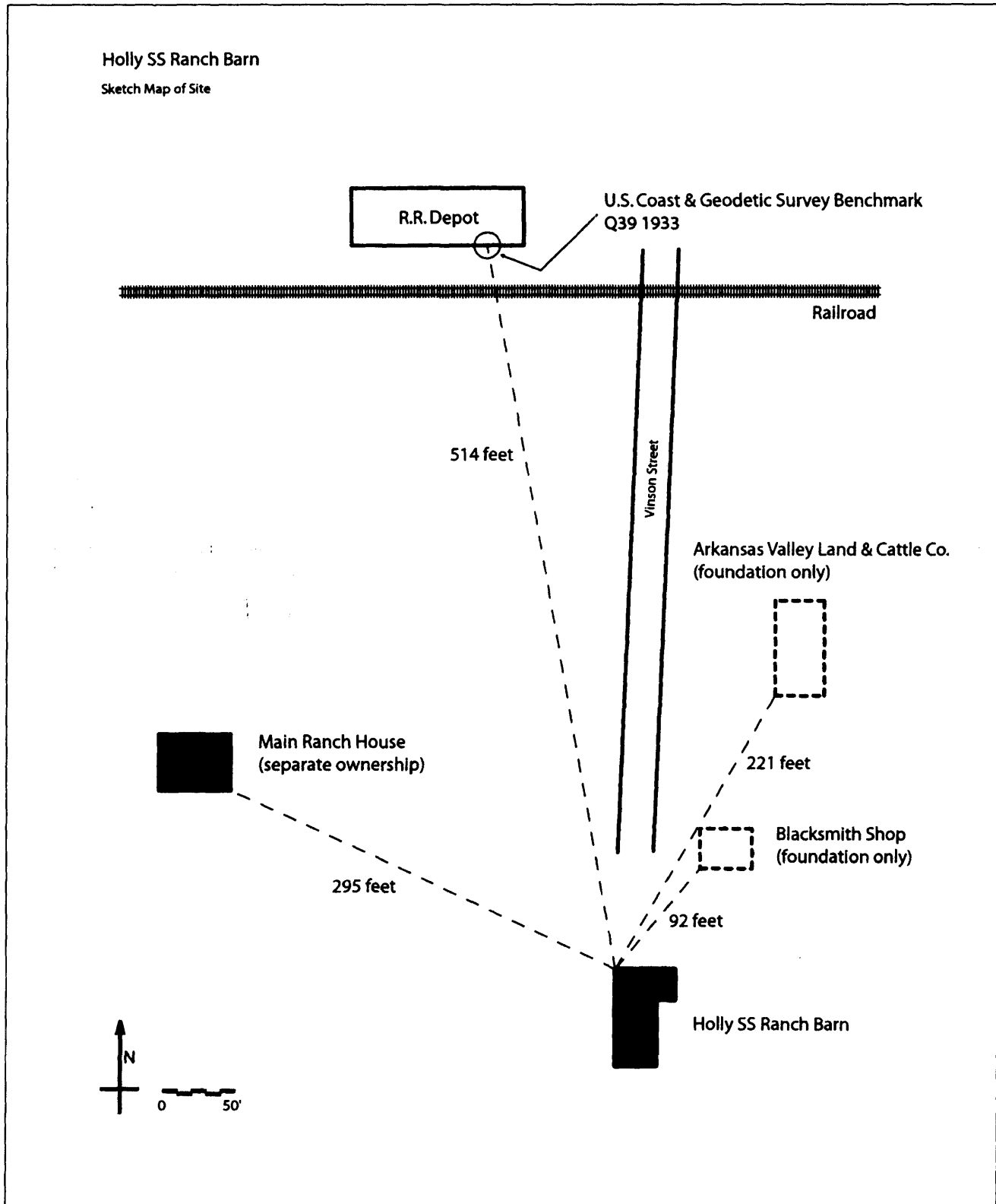
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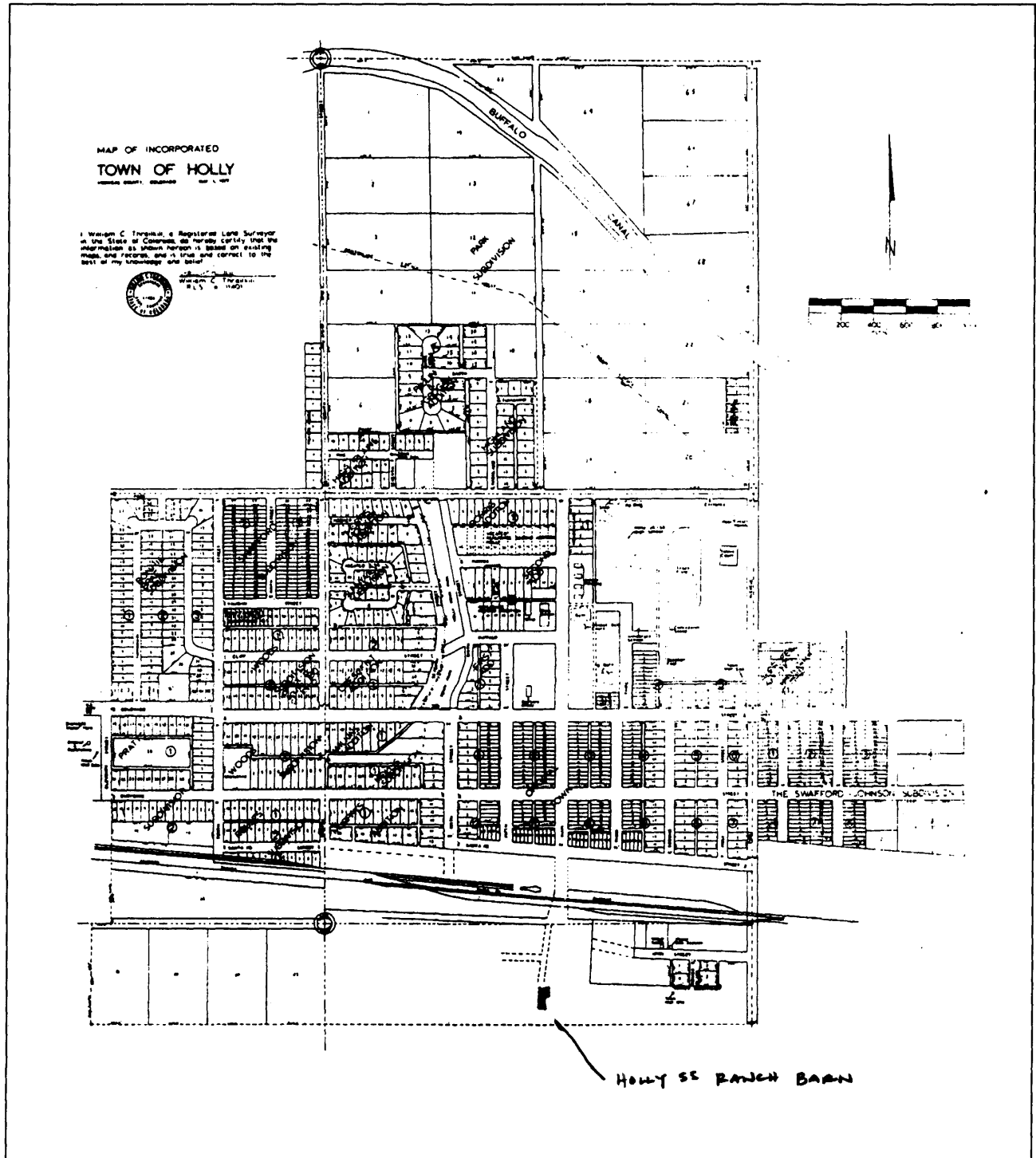
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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Holly East Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 / 752485E / 4214937N (NAD27)  
PLSS: 6<sup>th</sup> PM, T23S, R42W, Sec.15  
SE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$ ; SW $\frac{1}{4}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$   
Elevation: 3,390 feet

