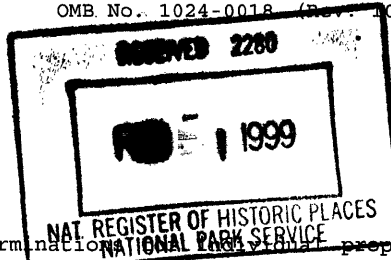


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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination of properties and districts. See instructions 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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name: Frey Ranch
other names/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number 1140 West Peckham Lane not for publication N/A
city or town Reno vicinity N/A
state Nevada code NV county Washoe code 031 zip code 89509

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility, meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. Jones SHPO 1-27-99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 3/5/99
_____ 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): _____

Beall Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling
AGRICULTURE Processing
DOMESTIC Hotel/Dude Ranch

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling
DOMESTIC Secondary structures

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN Vernacular/Folk Victorian

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/BRICK
roof WOOD (CEDAR) SHAKE
walls BRICK VENEER OVER WOOD FRAMING
other _____

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

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 a 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.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance 1870-1940

Significant Dates 1870; 1927

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) Enoch Morrill; Joseph Frey

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See attached.

9. Major Bibliographical References/bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets). See attached.

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.972 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>11</u>	<u>258550</u>	<u>4374410</u>	<u>3</u>
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.) See attached

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) See attached.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mella Rothwell Harmon, Historic Preservation Specialist
organization State Historic Preservation Office date October 6, 1998
street & number 100 N. Stewart St. telephone (702) 687-7601
city or town Carson City state NV zip code 89701

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Mrs. Betty Camp Bartholomew
street & number 1140 West Peckham Lane telephone (702) 825-2554
city or town Reno state NV zip code 89509

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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Description

The Frey Ranch is an agricultural complex associated with the early development of Reno and Washoe County. The ranch, established circa 1870, originally encompassed 240 acres south of Reno, Nevada. Although the ranch was originally established by Enoch Morrill, it is commonly known as the Frey Ranch, after the family that purchased the ranch in 1894. Three historic buildings survive from the ranch's periods of significance, the main ranch house, the cookhouse/bunkhouse, and the creamery/meathouse. A non-contributing three-car garage, built ca. 1965, is situated west of the main house. There are reports that old outbuildings related to the ranch still remain on surrounding parcels (Peek 1991). The property currently comprises less than one acre in an unincorporated area of Reno, at 1140 West Peckham Lane, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada (APN 23-490-03), in a portion of SE 1/4 NE 1/4 of Section 26, T.19N., R19E., M.D.M.

Currently, the grounds are landscaped with lawn, rose bushes, grape arbors, fruit and nut trees (some dating to the last century), and rare ornamental trees planted by the present owner. The courtyard, between the main house and the outbuildings, has been surfaced in brick, and a swan-shaped cement-lined pond was installed to the east of the cookhouse. The main house sits at the front of the parcel along West Peckham Lane, an unimproved gravel stretch of the road that services the residences along it. To the west of the main house is the non-contributing garage. Behind the main house, roughly aligned with the kitchen door, is the cookhouse, and west of the cookhouse is a small brick building that has been identified as the creamery and/or the meat house. The open space behind the garage and west of the creamery is covered with gravel and is used as a parking area. A white picket fence, which is a copy of the original, separates the grounds from the road. A length of the original (ca. 1870) fence is stored behind the garage.

The ranch buildings sit atop a geothermal field, which has historically, and presently, provided the ranch with hot water and space heat by way of artesian wells. In the courtyard behind the main building is an unusual trough-shaped cement and stone structure. This structure is approximately seven feet long, three feet high, and two feet wide. The inside is filled with cement and several iron pipes extend from it. The current owner, Mrs. Bartholomew, reported that this structure was built ca. 1925 and was used as a basin for washing clothes, among other uses. Mrs. Bartholomew also learned that it had been used as a place to boil pig carcasses in order to remove the skin more easily. Joseph Frey was known to have been a butcher, so this use seems plausible.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Description, continued

Main House: The main house is a large (3,400 square feet) vernacular Folk Victorian farmhouse, with a complex roofline and a decoratively-detailed porch extending along the east and north facades. The building is wood-framed with a veneer of red brick. It was built in several phases, as evidenced by subtle color changes in the brick, window glass material, and the roof line. Construction on the main house began some time between 1870 and 1875. It has been reported that the Morrill family lived in the basement, while the first level was under construction. The basement is deep and reveals the structural system of the house, which consists of 2-by-6 members in the floors and walls. The floor of the basement is covered in brick, which rests on several inches of sand. This was intended to function in the fashion of a French drain and allow any basement flooding to seep through the sand. Storage shelves constructed of brick line the basement walls. These broad shelves would keep supplies and other materials off the floor and dry. The basement is not heated by any external means, but the ambient air temperature is maintained at a constantly warm level as a result of the geothermal field.

The exterior of the building, as mentioned previously, is covered in a brick veneer laid in American bond. An L-shaped porch extends from more than halfway along the north elevation around the northeast corner and the full length of the original east elevation. (A small addition was added in the 1920s on the south elevation at the southeast corner of the building.) The porch's shed roof is only slightly sloped and its slender, square wooden posts are topped with decorative scroll brackets. Small scrollwork pendants hang from the fascia between the posts. Balusters in the porch railing are decorative turned spindles. Over the porch on the east side, which may have been the original entry, there is a small balcony accessed through a gabled dormer window that opens as a door. Evidence of the balcony railing exists, but it appears to have been sawed off at its base.

The structure was constructed in four phases, and the resulting floor plan is irregular, asymmetrical, and roughly L-shaped. Fenestration in the original section consists of two-over-two, double-hung windows, framed by lintels and slightly projecting sills. Later sections of the dwelling include two-over-two double-hung windows with simple surrounds topped with segmental arch openings. Doors in the structure mirror the window configurations, some with angular frames and others topped with graceful arched transoms. The roof line reflects the various construction episodes. The steeply-pitched roof is sheathed in small cedar shakes. It projects slightly and has boxed eaves. Besides the dormer that opens onto the small balcony on the east side, there is a dormer penetrating the roof line

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Description, continued

on the south side of the original section. Two simple, interior brick chimneys punctuate the gable roof and the porch serves to unify the four construction phases. Off the south (rear) elevation is a large deck that is accessed through doors on the second floor. It is not known when the deck was built, but probably not before the dude ranch phase of the building's history, which began in the 1920s.

The main floor of the dwelling comprises over 1,700 square feet and includes an entrance hall, two parlors, a dining room, kitchen and mud room, two bathrooms, a bedroom, and a sun room. The original kitchen consisted of banks of storage cabinets and a large wood cook stove (no sink or drain board). The bulk of the food preparation activities took place in the cookhouse behind. The kitchen has since been modernized. The second floor currently consists of four bedrooms, a laundry room, and three bathrooms. Originally the second story comprised two large dormitories (one for the girls and one for the boys—the Freys had 10 children), and the maids' quarters (the Freys retained two Irish housekeepers). The second story is accessed by a steep straight stair case that ends at the balcony door/window on the east elevation. The large attic can be accessed through a scuttle in the ceiling.

The building originally had only one closet, and no inside toilets. The first indoor bathroom was constructed in the 1920s by Jack Frey, who had converted the property into a dude ranch for divorce seekers who were thronging to Reno for its famous quick divorces. It was Jack who subdivided the second floor into separate bedrooms, and he converted the eastern entry hall into the bathroom, which reportedly serviced as many as 20 divorce-seekers at one time. The bathroom could be reached from the hallway that runs along the staircase without passing through any other room. Jack Frey maximized his rental potential by converting the parlors and the dining room into apartments for the divorce trade and by building an addition along the south wall of each end of the building to create a sun room. The rustic cookhouse, located behind the main house, served as the dining room for the divorce-seekers. The large bell atop the main house (reportedly the school bell from the old Franktown school) called the guests to meals.

Cookhouse/Bunkhouse: This building has been described variously as the cookhouse and the bunk house, and it likely served both purposes simultaneously, until the divorce trade days. As might be expected, it is more rustic than the grand main house. It is a single-story, wood-framed building

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Description, continued

with suggestions of two construction phases. The original block of the building consists of three-bays, is cross-gabled and was probably built during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. A ventilating gablet sits at the peak of the long gable of the composition-shingle-covered roof. Fenestration consists of double-wide, six-over-six casement windows with simple surrounds. The building was originally sheathed in horizontal board-and-batten, with plain corner boards, but this treatment remains only at the northern end. Damaged areas have been replaced with horizontal tongue-and-groove siding.

The building encompasses approximately 900 square feet of interior space. Although it has been converted to a residential unit, the original interior configuration was gleaned by the owner before the renovation began. The kitchen was located in the northern end. The kitchen door to the main house is directly across the courtyard and would have been readily accessible to the kitchen help. It has been reported that the Frey Ranch employed Chinese cooks during its working ranch days (personal communication, Betty Bartholomew, September 16, 1998). Behind the kitchen in the cookhouse is a large room that served as the dining room, presumably for the field hands, and later for the coterie of divorce-seekers. Along the south end is a shed-roofed addition that has been converted to a modern kitchen. Originally it was a large, enclosed (or partially-enclosed) porch. Daughters of Jack Frey have reported that it was on this porch that they sat shucking corn and shelling peas for the divorce-seekers' meals (personal communication, Betty Bartholomew, September 16, 1998).

Creamery/Meat House: Some mystery surrounds this small building. It has variously been referred to as the creamery and the meat house. Jack Frey's daughters, in a meeting with the present owner, have referred to a smoke house that sat behind the main house, but it is unclear whether the building no longer exists or if it was this one. It is known, however, that the Frey Ranch supplied dairy products to Virginia City during the Comstock mining boom period, and that Joseph Frey, who was a butcher by trade, processed sausage and bacon on his ranch. This small building, recently converted to a studio apartment, is constructed in a manner that suggests it could have served both functions.

The building is less than 500 square feet in size and is located behind the main house, west of the cookhouse. It appears to have been built during the 1870s, based on the similarity of the bricks to the original section of the main house. The building has a composition-shingled hipped roof with a

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Description, continued

single stacked brick chimney. The roof barely overhangs and has boxed eaves. The windows and the single door are arched with molded surrounds. The building includes floor level air vents, designed to cool the building.

Garage: The three-car garage is located to the west of the main house. It has been reported to have been built in the 1940s, 1963, or 1965. Whatever the case, it is considered a non-contributing building. The building had three metal roll-up garage doors and is clad in brick. The steeply-pitched gable roof is sheathed in composition shingle and at the gable ends there is wide, horizontal siding. High in the east gable end there is an aluminum framed window with insert mullions. On the ground level, the windows are aluminum slider, and there are walk-through doors on the east and south elevations.

The Frey Ranch was in serious disrepair when the Camp family purchased it in 1989. In the 1960s, the main house had been converted to apartments and it sustained severe damage by tenants over the years. Several floors had been torn up and the interior was painted navy blue and black. The Camp family undertook an extensive renovation of the building, taking every care to retain historic elements. When this was not possible the Camp's employed artisans to replicate original materials and details (Peek 1991). Today, the buildings and grounds are in excellent condition and the integrity that was lost through years of neglect has been restored.

In general, the property fully retains six of the seven aspects of integrity necessary for National Register eligibility, including location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Integrity of setting has been impaired to a degree by the effects of urban development and the reduction of the original ranch to a mere one-acre parcel. That notwithstanding, the remaining buildings clearly reflect their original purpose through design and arrangement. The Frey Ranch clearly retains the identity for which it is significant.

Significance

The Frey Ranch is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the development of agriculture and irrigation in the Truckee Meadows during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and for its role in Reno's famous divorce trade during the 1920s and 1930s. The

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Section 8 Page 6

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

Frey Ranch supplied dairy products, meat, and agricultural goods to the Comstock Mining District, which was designated as the Virginia City National Historic Landmark in 1961 for its significance in the history of the United States for the wealth of gold and silver mined and milled there, and for the events and personalities surrounding it.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Reno had begun to establish itself as a divorce colony because of its liberal divorce laws. In 1927, the divorce laws were made even more liberal, and Reno won the title of Divorce Mecca of the World. In 1931, with the disastrous effects of the Great Depression affecting the country, the Nevada Legislature passed an even more liberal divorce law, reducing the waiting period from three months to six weeks. It was largely the divorce trade that helped Reno through the Great Depression. The owners of the Frey Ranch quickly saw the efficacy of participating in the trade in the late 1920s, when the ranch was turned into a dude ranch catering to divorce-seekers.

The Frey Ranch is also eligible for listing under Criterion B for its association with Enoch Morrill, a locally-prominent rancher, who established the Frey Ranch and helped develop the Last Chance Ditch, and for its association with Joseph and Louisa Frey, and Jack Frey. Joseph Frey was a prominent rancher and butcher, who developed a wealthy cattle empire on two ranches in Washoe County. His wife, Louisa, owned acreage surrounding the house on the Frey Ranch, from which any money she earned was hers to manage. Louisa grew apples and walnuts on her plot and was famous for her apple cider. With the money she earned from her orchards, she put all ten of her children through college. Joseph and Louisa's youngest son, Jack Frey, converted the ranch into an early dude ranch to exploit the divorce trade. Dude ranches were a relatively new concept in the late 1920s and Jack saw the facility of combining a "wild west" experience with the ready market of divorce-seekers.

The Frey Ranch is significant under National Register Criterion C, as well. The main ranch house is an excellent example of Folk Victorian architecture that combines decorative details with a pragmatic floor plan, site orientation, and utilization of the geothermal field to heat the house and the water supply.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

Criterion A - Nevada History

The land along the Truckee River was inhabited by Washoe and Paiute peoples when the first white men passed through in the 1840s. In the late 1840s and 1850s, thousands of emigrants crossed the Sierra Nevada to the gold fields of California. The travelers would remain a few days in the Truckee Meadows to allow their animals to feed on the native grasses. The first permanent white settlement along the Truckee River was Jamison's Station. Jamison was a Mormon, who was among the Mormon contingent sent in 1855 by Brigham Young to establish agricultural settlements in the western part of Utah Territory. Later, Young recalled his followers to Salt Lake City, and non-Mormons, or gentiles, took over the places established by the Mormons. Agriculture in the Truckee Meadows developed as emigrants established ranches and stations along the travel routes to harvest native grasses for their animals as they made their way to the California Gold Rush (Angel 1881:623).

The first herd of cattle was driven into the Truckee Meadows by Granville W. Huffaker in 1858. Huffaker established his ranch and station at the intersection of north-south and east-west travel routes. Huffaker Station grew to contain a post office, hotels, saloons, express yards, and livery stables, with as many as 300 people living around it by the mid-1860s. Alfalfa was introduced into the valley around 1863 by rancher, Peleg Brown¹, and many ranchers turned to that endeavor, resulting in the production of many thousands of tons of alfalfa hay (Townley 1983).

The lush fields of the Truckee meadows offered excellent conditions for cattle and sheep grazing and the development of certain crops, and with the discovery of gold and silver on the Comstock, the number of settlers to the area increased. With the population growth in the Truckee Meadows and the rapid development of the Comstock, the demand for agricultural products and livestock increased, as well. Besides alfalfa, other crops grown in the area were barley, oats, and vegetables, and orchards produced excellent crops of cherries, apples, pears, and peaches. These agricultural products, as well as dairy products, meat, and wool, found ready markets in the Comstock and other Nevada and California mining areas, and with the commencement of the Transcontinental Railroad, markets in other parts of the country were tapped (Angel 1881).

¹ The Peleg Brown Ranch was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1994.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

With the great success of agriculture, landowners took to irrigating their fields in order to increase the productivity of their land, and several significant irrigation ditches were built that served the farmers along their lengths. The first major irrigation ditch in the Truckee Meadows was the seven-mile-long Cochrane and Longley Ditch, built in 1864, running from Reno Bridge to Huffaker's. Other important ditches feeding agricultural land south of Reno include the Lake ditch, owned by Myron Lake (who also owned a ranch south of Reno near the Frey Ranch), the South Side Canal, and the Last Chance Ditch that ran thirteen miles from the Truckee River near Verdi (west of Reno) toward Steamboat Springs. A consortium of farmers, including Enoch Morrill, the first owner of the Frey Ranch, built the Last Chance Ditch in 1876, at a cost of \$15,000 (another source gives a \$40,000 cost [Wren 1904:634]) (Angel 1881:634). Water is still a rare and important commodity in the Truckee Meadows, and many of the early ditches remain in use today for agricultural and domestic use.

Reno was established when the Central Pacific Railroad laid its tracks along the Truckee River in 1868-1869. Reno became an important freight and passenger center and grew rapidly. The railroad opened wider markets for the agricultural products of the Truckee Meadows. Through the boom and bust cycles of mining on the Comstock, the shipment of beef from Reno to California kept Reno afloat economically. There was a huge market for sheep, as well. Sheep were first introduced to the Truckee Meadows in 1867 by D.C. Wheeler, who brought them from Oregon (Koval and Boyne 1994).

By the 1870s, agriculture had developed into a lucrative industry. In his book, *Tough Little Town on the Truckee* (1983:124), John Townley describes the ranches in the Truckee Meadows:

The 1870s census provides interesting statistics on the valley. Only fifty-odd ranches shares the Meadows, each spread over hundreds of acres of pasture and alfalfa patches. Half of Washoe County's 3,091 residents found homes in the valley, with two of three inhabitants counted in Reno's precincts. Of the 505 rural residents, men outnumbered women three to one. It was a young population, too, with almost a third of all locals under twenty-one and only one in ten forty-five. Occupants typified a farming area with only ten percent of valley residents employed at the hamlets of Glendale, Huffaker's or Steamboat - the rest were on the land.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

The typical ranch, called farms by census enumerators, appeared almost self-sufficient. Headed usually by man and wife, including relatives and numerous children, many also kept two or more laborers and their families. Ranch headquarters often had carpenters or other craftsmen in residence. Chinese cooks were popular, as were female "housekeepers." The typical ranch contained a half-dozen residents at minimum, with blends of generations, birthplaces, and languages--a third were foreign-born.

Between the 1860 and 1920 censuses growth of agriculture in the Truckee Meadows, and elsewhere in Nevada, was reported. In 1860, the total number of farms in Nevada was 91, with 14,132 acres. By 1910 the number of farms had grown to 2,689, for a total of 752,117 acres. The 1920 census showed an increase in the number of farms, at 3163, but the total acreage had decreased to 594,741 acres (Koval and Boyne 1994). About this time, the prominence of agriculture in the economy of the Truckee Meadows began to wain as a result of the effects of increased urbanization, the divorce trade that was so significant during the first half of the century, the development of the tourism industry, and the deleterious effects of the Great Depression.

Nevada had made a name for itself in 1900 when its first celebrity divorce took place. Reno's divorce laws were relatively lenient at the time and England's Second Earl Russell, a member of the House of Lords, came to Genoa to obtain a divorce from Lady Russell, so he could marry a young woman named Mollie. The legality of a Nevada divorce was challenged, however, when Lord Russell was arrested for bigamy upon his return to England. Lord Russell's well-publicized divorce was followed by another high-profile divorce involving the president of United States Steel Corporation, William Ellis Corey, who came to Reno for his divorce in 1906. Corey's divorce was scandalous and received nationwide publicity. As shocking as it was, Corey's divorce facilitated the the birth of the Reno divorce colony. Hollywood added to the titillating press from Nevada, when America's sweetheart, Mary Pickford, came to Minden to obtain a divorce from her actor husband, Owen Moore². In 1911, Reno lawyer, W.H. Schnitzer published and distributed a pamphlet entitled, *Divorce Practice and Procedure Under the Laws of the State of Nevada with Notes and Decisions*. Schnitzer advertised his pamphlet in newspapers from New York to San Francisco. Reno was Nevada's largest city at the

² Mary Pickford divorced Moore in order to marry dashing actor, Douglas Fairbanks

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10

Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

time, and received the bulk of the divorce trade. Schnitzer was disbarred for his efforts, but his advertising and the general publicity catapulted Reno into the lofty status of Divorce Mecca (Harmon 1998).

Except for a two-year period, when the residency requirement was increased to one year (with noticeably disastrous economic effects), the waiting period for a Nevada divorce was six months. In 1927, during a period of competition among several states for the migratory divorce trade, the Nevada legislature shortened the residency period to three months. This act boosted the industry and divorce-seekers flocked to Reno. This same year, Nevada got its first dude ranch, when Reverend Brewster Adams, who had just returned from a visit to the Eaton Dude Ranch in Wyoming, suggested to the owner of the Hardscrabble Ranch, near Pyramid Lake, that Nevada needed a dude ranch. The Hardscrabble's owner, Neil West, built a row of ten cabins on his property, shortened the name of his ranch to the TH, and opened for business. West charged his guests thirty-five dollars per week, which included two meals a day and the use of a horse. It quickly became clear to West that there was a ready market with the growing number of divorce-seekers, and the divorce ranch was born (Harmon 1998).

Dude ranching developed in Montana in the late nineteenth century offering healthy outdoor activities and the romance of the old west. Dude ranches initially attracted men for hunting and fishing expeditions, but in 1902, several partners in the Carnegie Steel Company made a pack trip to Yellowstone Park, where they stayed at the Custer Trail Ranch. Several women came along on the trip. Nevada discovered early on that lonely women and handsome cowboys made a lucrative mix. In the beginning, Nevada's divorce ranches were rather crude and rustic affairs, and were side operations of working ranches (Harmon 1998).

In 1931, Nevada was beginning to feel the effects of the Great Depression. Mining was in a slump, and a devastating drought had seriously damaged crops, and sheep and cattle herds. Seeking a means to ameliorate the growing poverty in the State, the Nevada legislature revised its divorce law once again. This time, it shortened the residency requirement to six weeks and made the grounds for divorce more lenient. This act served to open the divorce flood gates. During the summer of 1931 so many divorce-seekers were in Reno that accommodations were scarce. Some visitors, including women with small children, were forced to camp along the Truckee River until a room could be

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Significance, continued

found. Over the ten years between 1929 and 1939, more than 30,000 divorces were granted by the Washoe County courts. Divorce ranches proliferated through the 1930s and many new ones were built strictly as dude ranches (Harmon 1998). *A Guide to the Silver State*, prepared by the Federal Writers' Project (1940), described the guest ranch phenomenon: "US 395 goes south through the fertile Truckee Valley with signs on both sides of the road advertising 'Guest Ranches' for divorce-seekers who prefer the moonlight and tree toads and the smell of the countryside to the gay spots of the Biggest Little City in the World." After World War II the divorce industry continued, but in the ensuing years Las Vegas usurped Reno's divorce mecca reputation, and as other states liberalized their divorce laws, there ceased to be a reason for a migratory divorce trade, and Reno's divorce industry ceased, as well (Harmon 1998).

Very few ranch structures associated with Reno's divorce industry remain. In addition to urban development, which has taken over thousands of acres of former agricultural land, fires have destroyed several of the oldest divorce ranch facilities. The TH ranch, which was once owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., burned to the ground leaving a few foundations to mark its existence. The Del Monte Ranch, once the ranch house of prominent Reno citizen, Myron Lake, burned in 1947, killing a divorcee (*Nevada State Journal* 1947). The details of the fire support the reputation many divorce ranches had for promoting loose morals among their patrons. The fire began, apparently, by a divorcee who was smoking in bed. The ranch's bartender (who was arrested at the time of the fire for lewdness, because he was found naked outside the building), reported that the divorcee died because she refused to jump out of the window without any clothes on (*Nevada State Journal* 1947). Her latent sense of propriety cost her her life. The Del Monte Ranch property is now a shopping center, but a large fir tree that once stood near the house remains. Although colorful tales of divorce-seeker antics at the Frey Ranch have not been located, the ranch is a rare relic of a significant aspect of Reno's history.

In the 1927, the Lincoln Highway, which ran through Reno, was inaugurated and automobile tourism began to be an economic force. Also, in 1931 the Nevada legislature re-legalized gambling. Little economic benefit was derived from that act during the Depression, but with the end of World War II, easy automobile access to Reno's gambling halls thrust that industry into the forefront of the local economy. To be sure there was still agriculture in the outlying areas, but Reno's city limits were extending outward and much agricultural land was given over to housing developments and shopping

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

centers. This suburbanization resulted in the breaking up of vast tracts of farm land. Presently, farming and ranching continues to a lesser degree in islands surrounded by suburbia. Many ranchers made their families financially secure by parceling off their acreage to developers. This is how it came to be that the Frey Ranch, originally a large landholding, occupies a one-acre parcel surrounded by residential developments.

Criterion B - Important People

Enoch Morrill was born in Maine, where his father was a farmer and blacksmith. He sailed to California in 1862, via the Isthmus of Panama. Upon arriving in San Francisco, he proceeded to Yuba City, California, where he took up work chopping cord wood. In the spring of 1863, he moved to Aurora, Nevada, enticed by the mining boom there. He stayed in Aurora until 1865, working in the mines, and later shipping and hauling cordwood. He left Aurora for Washoe County, where he was profitably engaged in logging and teaming to meet the lumber needs of the booming Comstock. Having made a considerable sum of money, he went to the Pit River in Modoc County, California, where he became involved in the sheep and cattle business. He stayed in Modoc County for three years, returning to Washoe County in 1868. Enoch Morrill purchased 240 acres in Washoe County, four miles south of Reno, at some time between 1868 and 1870. The land was covered in sagebrush, which he cleared. He and his neighbors built the Last Chance Ditch to irrigate the farm land along the ditch's thirteen-mile length (Angel 1881).

His participation in the construction of the Last Chance Ditch is significant for the contribution the ditch has made to the development of agriculture in the Truckee Meadows. Morrill's ranch was surrounded by operations owned by other significant individuals, including George Peckham, Governor John Sparks, and Myron Lake. Morrill built his brick residence, around 1875, as well as other farm buildings. He married Mary Addie Morton in 1880. They had four children. Morrill was a successful farmer and sold his ranch "to good advantage" to Joseph Frey in 1894 (Wren 1904:634). Morrill and his family moved to a beautiful residence at the corner of Virginia and Liberty Streets in Reno, where he continued to be a prominent local businessman. He invested in 555 acres on the north side of Reno that were platted into valuable lots called the Morrill and Smith Addition. On this tract Morrill erected a warehouse, a mill, and other buildings. During his lifetime, he was considered a "substantial citizen" and a leading pioneer of the state (Wren 1904:634).

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

Joseph Frey was born in Alsace, France in 1834. He came to the United States at the age of 15. He went first to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he worked as a gardener for seven months, and then to New Orleans, Louisiana, where he took up the butcher's trade. Frey came West overland by wagon train with 180 wagons in 1854. He spent six months in California, then moved to Genoa, a Mormon settlement in Utah Territory, in 1855. He spent a year in Genoa and went to Placerville, California until 1859. Little is known about his earliest activities in California or Genoa, but in 1860 he purchased a farm in Franktown, Washoe Valley, Nevada. Frey was a farmer and butcher in Franktown, and became a prominent citizen. During the 1860s and 1870s, he served on the Washoe County Board of Commissioners, the Washoe County Grand Jury, and was school trustee for the Franktown School District. He was also involved in an important lawsuit, with other Washoe Valley farmers, against the Marlette Fluming Company over water rights (Angel 1881; *Nevada State Journal* var.). In November 1862, Frey married Louisa (Luisa or Louise) Schaffer, from Darmstadt, Germany. The Frey's had twelve children, although two died in childhood. They lived on their Franktown ranch until 1879 when they moved to Reno. It is not known how long Joseph continued to own his Franktown Ranch, but at some time during the 1890s there was a landslide on Slide Mountain, west of the ranch, that carried the Frey house down the canyon and deposited it on top of Frank Dickinson's house. There ensued an interesting court case surrounding ownership of the topmost building. After a four-day trial, the jury awarded ownership to Dickinson, but what became of either house has been lost to history (Earl 1978).

In 1879, Joseph Frey moved his family to a farm on Hunter Lake Drive in Reno. His purpose for the move was to afford his children better educational opportunities. Little is known about this ranch, but he presumably ran cattle on it and grew alfalfa. Frey continued to serve on the County Board of Commissioners during his years on the Hunter Lake Drive ranch. In 1894, Joseph and Louisa purchased the 240-acre ranch from Enoch Morrill. The large brick house, with its two upstairs dormitories and maids' quarters, must have suited the family, which now included 10 children. Morrill had most of his land under cultivation, but the Frey's expanded the operation. Since Frey was a butcher by trade, he grew alfalfa on his land, raised cattle and hogs for meat, and supplied dairy products to markets as distant as Virginia City. The Freys first grew fruit and nut trees on their Franktown Ranch, and Louisa established orchards on the new ranch, as well. Louisa was famous for her apples and apple cider. Visitors to the ranch were favored with a cup of her fresh cider, and when there were neighborhood get-togethers, Louisa would bring a large wooden bowl full of

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

chopped apples and walnuts in a tangy dressing (personal communication, Betty Bartholomew, September 16, 1998).

The Frey's granddaughters visited the current owner of the ranch and provided their reminiscences of the ranch and their grandparents. They reported that Louisa Frey held separate title to a portion of the ranch where she had her orchards, and her earnings were hers to manage. Reportedly, she used her money to send her children to college. An unidentified and undated article, which may have been written after Joseph's death in 1915, described Louisa Frey's ranch. The article indicated that Mrs. Frey was the owner of 240 acres in Washoe County, irrigated by the Last Chance Ditch. The article further stated that Mrs. Frey had 120 acres in alfalfa that produced 300 tons per year, to feed cattle and sheep. She had 20 acres in wheat, producing 83 bushels per year; six acres in oats, at 80 bushels per year; and produced 1,000 boxes of apples per year from her orchards. In addition, she grew vegetables, put up ham and bacon (killing 300 hogs per year), and sold milk to Virginia City. The article stated: "She grew everything they eat except tea, coffee, and sugar" (Anonymous n.d.).

Joseph died in 1915 at the age of 81, and Louise died on August 1, 1917 at the age of 76. Both are buried in the Masonic cemetery in Reno, and Louisa's obituary described her as "one of the oldest and best known residents" (*Nevada State Journal* 8/2/17). Joseph and Louisa's ranch passed on to their children and in 1924, son, Leo Frey filed a cattle brand application under the name of his mother's estate, indicating the ranch was still actively operating as a cattle ranch. About 1927, when the concept of dude ranches for divorce-seekers was being tested in earnest around Reno, the youngest Frey son, Jack, decided to participate. He turned every room in the house into a bedroom (accommodating up to 20 people at a time), added the ranch's first indoor bathroom, and began operating a dude ranch. The ranch offered a western experience with real cattle and real cowboys. Meals were served at one large table in the old cookhouse, and Jack's children were pressed into service, preparing food and generally looking after the guests. It is not known how long the ranch operated in this fashion, but Jack's name appears at the Frey Ranch in the 1944 Polk Directory, but after that the name disappears (Polk var.).

The Morrills and the Freys were important families in Washoe County history. The Frey Ranch stands as a testament to the perspicacity of these early settlers to improve sagebrush-covered land

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Significance, continued

into agricultural success, and later, during the Great Depression, to exploit opportunities afforded by the divorce trade.

Criterion C - Architecture

The Frey Ranch is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C as an excellent example of vernacular Folk Victorian architecture characteristic of late-nineteenth-century agricultural development in Western Nevada. Seven extant farmhouses from this region and time period have been previously listed in the National Register³, demonstrating a regional tradition of vernacular rendering that draws on various elements within the broader Victorian context. It may seem odd to attribute stylistic significance to a building that has been classified as vernacular, but, in the absence of formal design, a clear sense of purpose in the building's layout and decoration can be discerned. In the seven cases mentioned above, the builder's self-perception can be identified in the decorative styles chosen. Such is the case with the Frey house, as well. These examples lend support to Thomas Hubka's contention that: "Folk designers have seldom been granted design method because most researchers have failed (or never attempted) to place a human designing mind behind these structures and failed to see folk architecture as the product of real people making real design decisions" (Hubka 1986:427).

Vernacular architecture has been given more attention in the past few years as an architectural form that merits study and documentation. In particular, the nineteenth-century farmhouse has been identified as ripe for analysis because of the threat these resources face from urban growth. In 1986, Fred Peterson stated, "The nineteenth-century American farm home is a vanishing phenomenon that merits recognition and evaluation as a significant part of American architecture and culture" (Peterson 1986:434). Toward this end, the Frey Ranch complex provides important information to aid our understanding of vernacular architecture in Western Nevada.

³ The seven previously-listed ranch properties are: Bower's Mansion, Washoe Valley; Winter's Ranch, Washoe Valley; The Cliff Ranch, Washoe Valley; The Peleg Brown Ranch, Reno; The Alamo Ranch (originally located next to the Frey Ranch), Pleasant Valley; Buckland Station, Lyon County; and the Dangberg Home Ranch, Carson Valley.

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Significance, continued

The main house at the Frey Ranch was built in several stages by Enoch Morrill, who established the 240-acre ranch ca. 1870. Morrill hailed from Patten, Penobscot County, Maine, where he was raised with his eight siblings on the family farm. It was most likely from that experience that Morrill developed his notion of appropriate farmhouse architecture. Morrill, however, faced farming in an environment different from his father's. Although Peterson was writing about Midwestern farm homes (which indeed developed in a frontier context), the following quotation can be applied to Nevada farm architecture, as well: "On the one hand, the dominant Anglo-Saxon aesthetic and ethic established ideals of soundness, stability, picturesque beauty, and sentiment as necessary qualities of the American home. On the other hand, the yeoman confronted realities of the new land and created a homestead according to standards of economy and expediency" (Peterson 1986:434). Where the Nevada experience diverges from this model, is that Nevada during the last quarter of the nineteenth-century was populated largely by individuals who traded the relative safety of their home states for the chance to acquire unimaginable wealth in western mining districts. Even those who practiced agriculture prospered from the markets provided by gold and silver fever. Thus, the successful farmer would feel impelled to display his success, if not by the grandness of his home, than through some design element that would mark his accomplishments.

Nevada vernacular farm architecture of this period exhibited a variety of style elements, including Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate. For his ranch home, Enoch Morrill chose Victorian massing, decorated with spindle-work along the L-shaped porch reminiscent of the Stick style, and arched window and door surrounds, following the Italianate style. Joseph and Louisa Frey were also successful farmers, with a large family. The Morrill home must have satisfied the Freys on several levels when they purchased it in 1894. It was large enough for their brood, it was a productive farm property providing range land for stock, fields for alfalfa and grains, and orchards for Louisa's apple business. It also provided a stylistic elegance that would demonstrate their success to the world.

The Frey Ranch, then, is significant for its architecture, as an example of a local tradition that decorated utilitarian vernacular forms with a variety of style elements that the builders would have encountered in other parts of the country prior to settling in Nevada. The Frey Ranch also demonstrates its qualities of economy and expediency through its functional plan, site orientation, and its placement over and utilization of the geothermal field.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

APN 23-490-03, situated at 1140 West Peckham Lane, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

Boundary Justification

The remaining three buildings of the Frey Ranch are situated within the boundaries of APN 23-490-03, in a portion of SE 1/4 NE 1/4 of Section 26, T.19N., R19E., M.D.M.

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Frey Ranch, Reno, Washoe County, Nevada

The following information applies to photographs 1-8:

Name of Property: Frey Ranch
Location of Property: Reno, Washoe County, Nevada
Location of Negatives: State Historic Preservation Office
100 N. Stewart Street
Carson City, NV 89701
Name of Photographer: Mella Rothwell Harmon
Date of Photograph: September 16, 1998

Photograph 1: Main house at the Frey Ranch, facing south
Photograph 2: Front façade of the main house at the Frey Ranch, facing southeast
Photograph 3: Front elevation of west wing of the main house at the Frey Ranch, facing south
Photograph 4: Rear elevation of the main house at the Frey Ranch, facing northwest
Photograph 5: Courtyard behind the main house at the Frey Ranch, showing the geothermally-heated wash basin, facing west
Photograph 6: The front façade of the cookhouse at the Frey Ranch, facing northeast
Photograph 7: South elevation of the cookhouse at the Frey Ranch, facing northeast
Photograph 8: Creamery/Meat house at the Frey Ranch, facing north