

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received APR 13 1987

date entered MAY 14 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Circle Ranch

and/or common R.L. Miller Ranch

2. Location

street & number 4 miles southwest _____ not for publication

city, town Big Piney vicinity of

state Wyoming code 056 county Sublette code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Mildred Miller

street & number P.O. Box 789

city, town Big Piney vicinity of state Wyoming 83313

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Sublette County Clerk

street & number County Courthouse

city, town Pinedale state Wyoming 82941

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Sublette County CLG Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985-1986 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records SHPO Cultural Records Office

city, town Laramie state WY 82071

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____ n/a
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The historic Circle Ranch, also known as the R.L. Miller Ranch, is located about four miles southwest of Big Piney, Wyoming on the north bank of Middle Piney Creek. It is situated on a level, grassy meadow area within the floodplain of Middle Piney Creek. The site is treeless except for a small stand of spruce, cottonwood and willow trees planted around the main ranch house. The surrounding area is characterized by irrigated meadow land which slopes gently to the east. The foothills and higher peaks of the Wyoming Range rise above the plains in the distance to the west. A prominent flat-topped east-west ridge system lies to the south of Middle and South Piney Creeks. Ridgetops and non-irrigated areas are covered with low sagebrush and sparse prairie grasses. The Circle Ranch complex consists of fourteen buildings, eleven of which are considered to be contributing elements of the complex. The buildings in the complex are arranged in a U-shaped configuration with the open end of the U pointing eastward and bisected on an east-west line by a gravel drive. These buildings include a large wood frame ranch house built in 1905 with multiple clipped and full gable rooflines and narrow metal siding. The ranch house faces south and looks out upon several of the early and original log buildings of the complex and Middle Piney Creek in the distance. The house is surrounded on all sides by a fenced yard planted with spruces and pine trees, cottonwoods, willows and shrubbery. An evenly spaced row of four outbuildings lies south of the ranch house consisting of a wood frame garage with gambrel roof built in 1905, a hipped roof log pumphouse built in 1905, a hipped roof log storage house built in 1905, and a hipped roof log meathouse built in 1927 or 1928. The key buildings in the complex are two original log structures. The first was built by Nicolas Swan between 1878 and 1880. The second or more easterly building was the homestead cabin of Otto Leifer. It was built between 1878 and 1880 and is now used as the cookhouse. Other outbuildings forming the south arm of the U-shaped layout include a log bunkhouse (1905), a large log bunkhouse (1940s), a frame chicken coop (1930s), a log pig sty (an early structure but exact date unknown), an early log structure moved from another location in 1980, a frame bunkhouse built around 1980, and a log barn with gambrel roof built about 1910. The remainder of the ranch complex which forms the north arm of the U configuration consists of modern, noncontributing outbuildings and a dwelling and are not included in the district boundaries.

The Circle Ranch retains a high degree of physical integrity and integrity of setting, considering that it has been continuously occupied and has remained a working cattle ranch for over 100 years. All chronological phases of the Circle Ranch history are represented in the remaining structures, from the homestead cabins of Otto Leifer and Nicolas Swan to the extensive improvements made by James Mickelson in 1905 and thereafter, including the main ranch house, several outbuildings, and the large log barn in 1910. The buildings within the complex are described below; sequential numbers correspond with locations on the sketch map.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca. 1878

Builder/Architect Otto Leifer, James Mickelson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Circle Ranch is one of the most historically significant pioneer cattle ranches in the Big Piney region of Sublette County and in western Wyoming. It became one of the most economically successful and enduring cattle operations in Wyoming. The Circle Ranch provided an important economic base for the town of Big Piney and the surrounding ranching community. Furthermore, its owners served the community and state in political and business leadership roles. Today the Circle Ranch retains architecture and spatial orientation which reflect late 19th-early 20th century ranching practices. It was established by Otto Leifer in 1878 in an unsettled region nearly 100 miles from the nearest railhead. Despite the lack of nearby rail service, Leifer was able to build up a successful ranching operation. In 1895, he sold his ranch and livestock to a pioneer LaBarge rancher, James Mickelson. In a short period of time, Mickelson developed the Circle Ranch into the largest ranch in the region. He acquired many other area ranches and increased his cattle herd, so that at the time of his death in 1921, he owned over 20,000 acres of land and 6000 head of cattle. Mickelson was also active in the community and politics and served as a representative in the Wyoming State Legislature. The history of the Circle Ranch is conveyed by the architectural features remaining in the ranch complex. Otto Leifer's humble log homestead cabin is still used as a cookhouse, and the Nicolas Swan cabin, built perhaps as early as 1878, stands nearby. These cabins are the oldest known standing structures in Sublette County. Jim Mickelson's success is reflected in the large 1-1/2 story frame 15-room home which he built in 1905. Adjacent to the ranch house is a series of log and frame outbuildings and barns which were either built by Mickelson or by a team of local Danish and Scandanavian carpenters who were responsible for many of the more substantial log ranch houses and barns in the Green River Valley. A recent intensive historic ranch survey in Sublette County shows that 19th century pioneer homestead cabins such as the Leifer and Swan cabins were constructed from cottonwood found along major drainages. Later these temporary dwellings were replaced with more substantial pine log dwellings and barns. The pine logs were cut in the nearby mountains and floated downstream during the high water months in the spring. Stone masonry construction, which was common in southeastern Wyoming, was never prevalent in the Green River Valley. While the Circle Ranch house was modified by renovations in 1950, it is an integral part of the complex, reflecting the economic success of James Mickelson. It has served as the main residence for over 80 years. The Circle Ranch operated as a working cattle ranch for over 100 years and has been associated with members of the Mickelson family since 1895. Because of its physical integrity and integrity of setting, it retains a high degree of feeling and association with its past as one of the earliest and most successful western Wyoming cattle ranches.

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE ADDENDUM

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3.8

Quadrangle name Big Piney West, WY

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>6</u> <u>5</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>
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E	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>5</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
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F	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>5</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
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G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE ADDENDUM

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert G. Rosenberg

organization Historical Consultant date July 31, 1986

street & number 55 I-25 Service Road East telephone 632-1144

city or town Cheyenne, state Wyoming

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Robert G. Bush

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 7, 1987

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

<u>Julius Byers</u>	date	<u>5-14-87</u>
Keeper of the National Register		

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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The main ranch house (No. 1) was constructed by James Mickelson in 1905 and is the dominant feature of the ranch complex. It is a large 1-1/2 story rectangular-shaped woodframe structure (55'x 43') with multiple clipped and full gable roofs. The roof has been covered with asphalt shingles. The building faces south and rests on a concrete foundation and has a partial basement. The exterior walls were originally covered with wooden clapboard siding. However, this siding was replaced with large rectangular asphalt shingles in 1950. These shingles were in turn covered with white, narrow aluminum siding in the early 1980s. This siding more closely matches the original clapboard covering. The ranch house was remodeled in 1950. During the renovation, a brick fireplace was added to the livingroom and a large brick chimney to the east elevation. A wooden porch which extended across the east and south elevations was removed on the east and drastically reduced to a self-supporting leaning roof extending only a short distance past the width of the brick chimney. Two second floor windows on the east side were converted to doors which open onto small separate verandas enclosed with iron railings. One second floor window was converted in a similar manner on the west facade but has a larger veranda. Several windows were modified on the first floor, including the construction of small picture windows in the south and west elevations. A 20-light fixed window was added to the north elevation. A similar 15-light fixed window was added to the south elevation and a 10-light fixed window to the east elevation. All these alterations used existing windows. Two-light crank casement windows are generally used throughout the second floor. Twin 4-light French doors were installed as the main entrance on the south elevation. An enclosed gable vestibule was also added to the east elevation over an original entrance. In addition to the prominent brick chimney on the south elevation, there is an end brick chimney on the west elevation and an interior brick chimney protruding from the kitchen roof. There is a round decorative ventilator in the gable of the south elevation and an eye-shaped ventilator in the clipped gable on the east elevation.

The interior of the house on the ground floor consists of a large living room, den, formal dining room, kitchen, furnace room, back entry and bath. The second floor contains five bedrooms and two baths. There are two sets of wooden stairways with original wood banisters leading to the second floor. Portions of the original wooden moldings and baseboards remain throughout the interior. Ceilings have been dropped slightly, and wood floors with natural finishes are generally exposed throughout.

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Although the original exterior fabric of the building has been changed from wood clapboard siding to narrow aluminum siding, and window modifications occurred during the 1950 renovation, the ranch house is an essential member of the ranch complex and has been the main residence for over 80 years. It retains its essential building lines, scale and proportions both inside and outside. The original portion of the house is still recognizable in comparison with early photographs. Therefore the ranch house is considered a contributing element to the ranch complex.

The Nicolas Swan cabin (No. 2) is a one-story log cabin with gable roof (16'x 14') which was constructed by Nicolas Swan between 1878 and 1880. The walls consist of hewn cottonwood logs with half-dovetail notching. The roof is constructed with rough wood planks over log purlins and ridgepole and was originally covered with sod. There are wood doors on the east and west elevations and one window on the south elevation. The interior consists of one room with a dirt floor. The cabin is unoccupied but has been maintained by the owner because of its historical significance. The cabin is considered a contributing element to the ranch complex because of its high physical integrity and because it represents one of the oldest standing structures in Sublette County.

The Otto Leifer homestead cabin (No. 3) is a one-story log cabin (56'x 27') which was constructed by Otto Leifer in about 1878. The building has a gable roof with a leanto addition on the west side. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The original roof was covered with sod. Both round and hewn logs with half-dovetail notching were used in wall construction. A small log vestibule has been built onto the south facade which is not original. The southern third of the cabin is covered with board and batten siding which is consistent with early photographs of the Leifer cabin. There are two brick chimneys protruding from the roof. This building has been maintained by the owners as a cookhouse. A cement footer has been poured under the log walls to stabilize the structure, and portions of rotted logs have been removed and replaced. Windows consist of a variety of double-hung and fixed wood sash and frames. This building is considered a contributing element to the complex as it retains good physical integrity and was the first building constructed on the Circle Ranch. It is also one of the oldest surviving structures in Sublette County.

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The remaining contributing outbuildings, barns, and pole corrals which complete the ranch complex are of log construction and were designed and built either by the owners or locally-hired carpenters. The stock barns and corral are situated the greatest distance from the main ranch house. Building Nos. 9, 12 and 13 are considered non-contributing but non-obtrusive elements. They are either less than 50 years of age or have been moved onsite from other locations. However, they retain the same scale, proportions and materials as the other contributing structures in the complex.

4) MEATHOUSE (built: 1927 or 1928)

 Dimensions: 16'x 18' Stories: 1
 Orientation: east Rooms: 1
 Walls: logs, corners covered with wood trim; cement chinking
 Roof: hipped; wood shingles; wood cupola
 Doors: 2 wooden doors on east elevation
 Interior: occupied by large walkin freezer

5) STORAGE HOUSE (built: 1905)

 Dimensions: 25'6" square Stories: 1
 Orientation: east Rooms: 1
 Walls: logs, corners covered with wood trim; cement chinking;
 double thick; insulated with sawdust
 Roof: hipped; asphalt shingles; brick chimney
 Doors: large wood door on east elevation

6) PUMPHOUSE (built: 1905)

 Dimensions: 20' square Stories: 1
 Orientation: east Rooms: 1
 Walls: log, corners covered with wood trim; cement chinking
 Roof: hipped; asphalt shingles; brick chimney
 Doors: wood door on east elevation
 Windows: one-light fixed on east elevation

7) GARAGE (built: 1905)

 Dimensions: 23'x 25' (original portion) Stories: 1
 23'x 19' (modern addition) Rooms: 2
 Orientation: east
 Walls: frame; board and batten siding
 Roof: gambrel; asphalt shingles
 Doors: two overhead garage doors in east elevation
 Windows: 2 over 2-light double-hung and 4-light fixed

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8) BUNKHOUSE (built: 1905)

Dimensions: 20'x 22' Stories: 1
Orientation: south Rooms: 1
Walls: hewn log with half-dovetail notching; cement chinking;
board and batten siding in gables
Roof: gable; asphalt shingles; brick chimney
Doors: wood door on south elevation
Windows: 2 over 2-light double-hung on east elevation

9) BUNKHOUSE (built: ca. 1940s), Non-contributing/non-intrusive

Dimensions: 28'x 32' Stories: 1
Orientation: north Rooms: 1
Walls: log with square notching; wood shingles in gables
Roof: gable; asphalt shingles; cement block chimney
Windows: 2 over 2-light double-hung

10) CHICKEN COOP (built ca. 1930s)

Dimensions: 19'x 16' Stories: 1
Orientation: south Rooms: 1
Walls: frame; clapboard siding
Roof: split leanto; asphalt shingles

11) PIG PEN (built: not known)

Dimensions: 13' square Stories: 1
Orientation: south Rooms: 1
Walls: logs with half-dovetail notching; mud chinking
Roof: gable; metal sheeting
Note: This building was undoubtedly built as an early
dwelling or bunkhouse and later converted to its present use.

12) SHED (built: not known) Non-contributing/non-intrusive

Dimensions: approximately 18'x 20' Stories: 1
Orientation: south Rooms: 1
Walls: log with half-dovetail notching
Roof: gable; tarpaper
Note: This log building was moved to this location from another
ranch in 1980.

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13) UTILITY SHED (built: 1980) Non-contributing/non-intrusive

Dimensions: approximately 40'x 20' Stories: 1
Orientation: north
Walls: frame; board and batten siding
Roof: gable; asphalt shingles

14) STOCK BARN (built: ca. 1910)

Dimensions: 60'x 41' Stories: 1
Orientation: south
Walls: lower walls of log; notching covered with trim
upper portion and gables are frame; board and batten
siding
Roof: gambrel; sheet metal
Doors: large sliding wood doors on east and west elevations;
double loft doors above
Windows: decorative 6-light window in east and west gables
Interior: wood plank floor; stalls facing a central aisle; loft
above

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they had two children, James Francis and Mildred.

James Mickelson continued to increase his ranch holdings, buying the two Swan ranches, the Fish Ranch, the Nichols Ranch, the Sykes Ranch, the Dunham and Winkleman Ranches, the Angus Flying V, and others. He built a large wood frame ranch house in 1905, and many of the outbuildings were also built at that time. In 1910, he employed Chris Brandt and Nels Christiansen to build the large stock barn with the gambrel roof which is still in use. Brandt and Christiansen were prominent local carpenters who built many of the more substantial log ranch houses and barns in the area such as the New Fork dance hall and the Three Bar ranch house. By 1915, James Mickelson was the largest individual taxpayer in what was then Lincoln County, with an assessed valuation of \$239,144. At the time of his death in 1921, he had built the ranch to around 20,000 acres and 6000 head of Hereford cattle.

Mickelson was also active in local affairs and politics. He was President of the Big Piney State Bank, Vice President of the Evanston National, and Director of the Pinedale State Bank. He served as Representative in the Wyoming State Legislature in 1916-17, and was chosen as a Presidential Elector in the Harding election. He was also a trustee and founding member of the Congregational Church in Big Piney. James Mickelson died of stomach cancer after an extended illness on September 17, 1921 at the age of 54. His obituary states that at the time of his death he was the largest land and cattle owner and the largest individual tax payer in the State of Wyoming. Mrs. Mickelson married James P. Jensen in 1928. They spent the winters in California and their summers on the Circle Ranch. She passed away on August 24, 1943. James Francis Mickelson had been assisting his father in the management of the Circle Ranch before his death in 1921. He managed the Circle Ranch in partnership with James Jensen. In 1925, he acquired the 67 Ranch, one of the earliest ranches in the area, from Amos W. Smith. In 1944, Mildred Mickelson Miller and her husband Robert L. Miller moved into the large ranch house on the Circle Ranch after the death of her mother. The Millers took over management of the ranch. The Millers obtained the 67 brand from James F. Mickelson and his son Gordon who were in partnership. The 67 Ranch then used the old Circle brand with an added slash. Under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Miller, the ranch holdings were increased to include the Scott Ranch, the Todd Ranch, the Ball Ranch (later sold) and several grazing sections. Mrs. Miller renovated the large ranch house in 1950 and continued to manage the ranch holdings after her husband's death. She has preserved and maintained the Nicolas Swan cabin and the Otto Leifer cabin due to her interest in the history of the ranch. The Circle Ranch has been operated continuously as a cattle ranch for over 100 years and since 1895 by members of the Mickelson family.

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Otto Leifer was a native German who came to the Big Piney country as a single man in his thirties. He came with his father to America when he was four years old. They settled first in Baltimore and then Frederick County, Maryland. His father returned to Germany when Otto was eight and left him to grow to manhood alone. Leifer began his journey west, but attended school in Fremont, Iowa for one year. He then joined a wagon train bound for Oregon and arrived in the fall of 1861. He engaged in various occupations, including working as a teamster and miner in Virginia City, Montana. In 1865 he began ranching in the Bitter Root Valley.

In 1878, Leifer came to Wyoming from Idaho with Edward Swan and Swan's sons Ezra, Grant and Nicolas. They filed on adjoining homesteads along Middle Piney Creek. They later drove in a herd of 1700 cattle to stock their ranches. Otto Leifer used the Circle brand, and the Swans used the PL brand. These two brands were among the earliest in what is now Sublette County. Leifer built a log homestead cabin near a small log cabin put up by Nicolas Swan. Both the Leifer cabin and the Swan cabin still stand on the Circle Ranch. The Leifer cabin is still in use as a cookhouse. Leifer and Swan were among the earliest residents of this isolated area. These pioneer settlers were forced to bring in their goods from Green River City by wagon until the building of the Oregon Shortline in 1881-1882. Opal then became the nearest rail stop, a distance of about 35 miles by the Opal Wagon Road. Leifer continued to engage in ranching in the Big Piney country. In March 1887 he married Delia M. Sollers, a native of Virginia. In 1895 or 1896, Leifer was forced by his wife's poor health to move to Salt Lake City. He engaged in the real estate and mining business there, and his wife died on July 7, 1902. After his wife died, he married Oriana Sullivan of Kansas, but he died shortly after of a heart attack in October 1903.

Before leaving the Big Piney area, he sold his ranch to a pioneer rancher from the LaBarge area, James Mickelson, in November 1895. James Mickelson was a Dane who emigrated to America in 1882 at the age of sixteen. He joined his two brothers Soren and Rasmus who had preceded him to Rock Springs. He came to the Green River country shortly after to work for Ariel Hanson on a ranch on LaBarge Creek. He also worked for the N.S. Miller family who were also Danes. He and his brother Rasmus filed on homesteads on LaBarge Creek in 1884. In 1890 he became foreman of the famous Spur Ranch. The preceding year he had lost most of his own cattle in the severe blizzards that winter. In 1895, he purchased the Otto Leifer Ranch and cattle for \$40,000. The down payment was borrowed from his brother Rasmus, and the remainder of the payment was made through cattle sales over the next three years. Mickelson was able to make his payments on time and maintain the same size herd that he started with at the end of this period. He used Otto Leifer's Circle brand. He later used the C Bar N ($\frac{C}{N}$) brand. Once he was well established, he married Mildred Avery of Iowa on November 3, 1899 and

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Interviews

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Collections

University of Wyoming, James Mickelson Collection, Account No. 815. One box of materials containing two business account books, cancelled checks, bills, receipts, bank statements and business correspondence; obituary, brand certificate, Forest grazing permits, and photographs. University of Wyoming Archives-American Heritage Center, Laramie.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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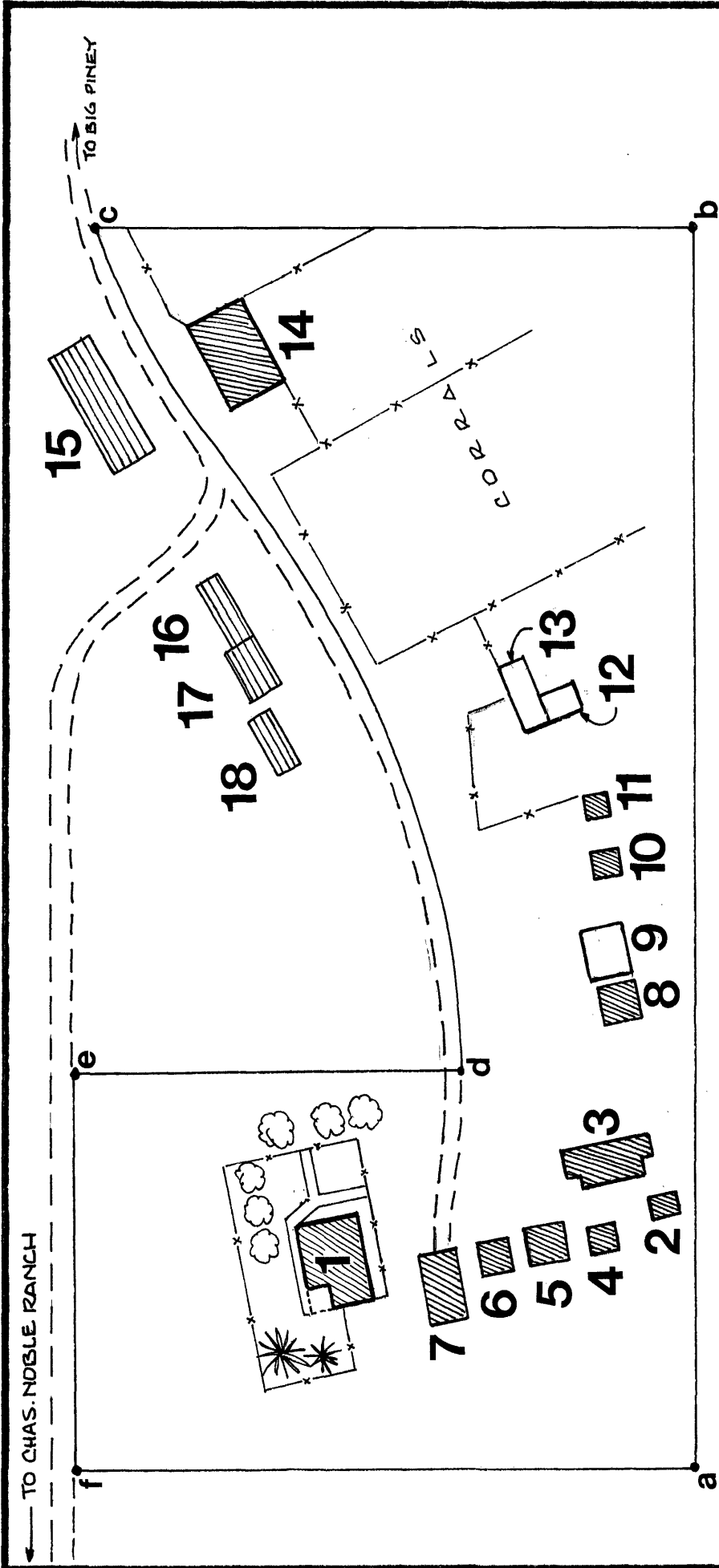
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Continuation sheet Verbal Boundary Description Item number 10

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Beginning at Point A (see accompanying map) about 200 feet due east of the southwest corner of Section 3 and on the common line between Sections 3 and 10, proceed due east (AZ 90°) along said line for a distance of about 800 feet to Point B. Proceed due north (AZ 0° or 360°) for about 400 feet to Point C, an arbitrary point where the boundary line crosses the gravel road to the Circle Ranch. Proceed southwesterly along the south side of the gravel drive about 600 feet to Point D, an arbitrary point located along the gravel drive approximately 200 feet southeast (AZ 130°) of the southeast corner of the main ranch house (Building #1). From Point D proceed due north (AZ 0° or 360°) for a distance of about 350 feet to Point E. Point E is located where the boundary line intersects a gravel ranch road. Proceed due west (AZ 270°) along this road for a distance of about 250 ft to Point F, also located on the east-west trending ranch road. Proceed due south (AZ 180°) for a distance of about 400 feet back to Point A.

This boundary forms a rough L-shaped configuration that encompasses the significant historic buildings in the Circle Ranch complex and includes a portion of the surrounding meadows, pastures, and corrals as well as stands of trees planted by the Mickelson family around the main ranch house which are an integral part of the complex. The south boundary line uses the existing common line between Sections 3 and 10. The irregular north line uses existing ranch roads and/or arbitrary points along these roads. The remainder of the connecting boundary lines are used to exclude non-contributing structures and non-essential acreage.



THE R.L. MILLER/CIRCLE RANCH (48 SU 537)

- 1. main ranch house
- 2. Nicolas Swan cabin
- 3. Otto Leifer homestead cabin
- 4. meathouse
- 5. storage house
- 6. pumphouse
- 7. garage
- 8. bunkhouse
- 9. bunkhouse
- 10. chicken coop
- 11. pig pen
- 12. shed
- 13. utility shed
- 14. stock barn
- 15. modern metal barn
- 16. woodframe open shed
- 17. log workshop
- 18. woodframe dwelling

-  Non-contributing buildings within proposed National Register boundary
-  Contributing buildings within proposed National Register boundary
-  Buildings outside the proposed National Register boundary

