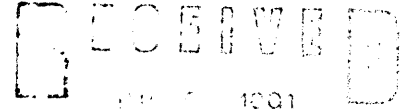


NPS Form 10-9000
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Noble Horse barn

other name/site number: Bass Barn

2. Location

street & number: Reynolds Creek

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Murphy

vicinity: X

state: ID

county: Owyhee

code: 073

zip code: 83650

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building(s)

Number of Resources within Property:

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing: 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

Ronald J. Green Signature of certifying official 6/25/91 Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Antonieta Ace 8/7/91
 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): _____

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: animal facility

Current: AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE Sub: animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER: horse barn

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation stone roof wood/shingle
walls wood other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: AGRICULTURE
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period(s) of Significance: 1898-1906

Significant Dates : 1898

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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 -- Specify Repository: _____

 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: Less than 1 acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>11</u>	<u>520150</u>	<u>4784775</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

 11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Karen Bass, owner & Linda Morton-Keithley, Oral Historian

Organization: Idaho State Historical Society Date: April 10, 1991

Street & Number: 210 Main St. Telephone: (208) 334-3863

City or Town: Boise State: ID Zip: 83702

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Noble Horse Barn

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Constructed sometime prior to 1898 to house horses, hay and ranch supplies, the Noble barn is used by its current owners, the Bass family, for storing hay and tack, and for the housing and feeding of calves and heifers. Except for minor modifications to the interior floor plan, no changes have been made to the barn.

The Noble horse barn is a rectangular, two-story, braced-frame structure with a gable roof on the central block, and symmetrical, dropped, shed-roof lean-to's to each side. Its proportions are 75 feet long, 65 feet wide, and 40 feet high. It sits on a dry-laid, coursed, rough-cut stone foundation.

The roof has wood shingles, and a square cupola with gable roof is centrally located on the roof ridge. The shiplap wood siding is painted "barn red," and window openings and doors are trimmed with white paint.

Each gable end has a double, side-hinge hay door in the upper level. A hay track extends out from above the door. There is no hay door hood. On each side of the hay door is a four-light, fixed window set parallel to the roof line. (Being slightly rectangular, these windows are not true diamond shape.) On the lower level of each gable end is a centrally located track door. The south (main) door is flanked on the west (left) by a rectangular window opening.

The south (main) lean-to ends have a track door to the east (right) and a double, side-hinge door to the west (left). Above each door and toward the center of the building is a rectangular window opening. The north lean-to ends each have a track door, and a rectangular window opening above and toward the center of the building.

The sides of the barn are identical, each having six rectangular window openings and two track doors placed in the following pattern: two windows, one door, two windows, one door, two windows.

The lower level of the central block includes a center alleyway extending the length of the building. (see floor plan) On the west (left) side is a paneled office (now used for storage), enclosed grain storeroom (now used as a tack room), stairway to the upper level, small storage room, and four double horse stalls with feed bunks. On the east (right) side is a large, open tack area, and what appears to have been five double horse stalls with feed bunks. Several of the partitions and bunks have been removed. The upper level of the central block is open, for storage of hay.

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Noble Horse Barn

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The east (right) lean-to contains eight double horse stalls with feed bunks, and an alleyway along the exterior wall of the structure. The west (left) lean-to is roughly divided into three large open areas.

The central block was originally floored with wide wooden planks; a portion of this flooring remains. The two lean-to ends have dirt floors. Beams and trusses are held together with wooden pegs. The wood used to construct the barn is said to have come from Dry Buck, an area near Sweet, Idaho, some seventy miles north of Reynolds Creek.

Immediately surrounding the barn are corrals, a loading chute, and branding area with two squeeze chutes. Also in the near vicinity are a blacksmith shop, now used for storage; modern garage/shop; abandoned butcher shed/ice house; abandoned outhouse; abandoned chicken house; and modern ranch house (built on the site of the original ranch house which was destroyed by fire in 1981. A portion of the original house remains and has been incorporated into the modern house.)

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The Noble horse barn is eligible for inclusion on the National Register under criterion A. The barn is associated with the early settlement and development of Owyhee County, and particularly with the sheep industry in the Reynolds Creek area. Its documentation provides a better knowledge of the workings of a large sheep operation in southwest Idaho at the turn of the century.

In May of 1863, a group of twenty-nine prospectors left Placerville, in the Boise Basin, and traveled to what was to become Owyhee County in southwestern Idaho (refer to map). Among the group was A. J. Reynolds, for whom both the creek and the town would be named. After crossing the Snake River, the men followed Reynolds Creek into the Owyhee mountains, dropped over a divide into the Jordan Creek (named for the group's leader) drainage and did, indeed, discover placer gold. The area would later become known for its hardrock mining of gold and silver.

As others followed the group into the area, eventually establishing Silver City as the county seat and center of supplies and diversions for the miners, the primary stage and freight route continued to follow Reynolds Creek. It was not until the late 1890's that this route was supplanted, when the town of Murphy (about ten miles to the east) was established as the railhead for the Boise, Nampa, and Owyhee Railroad (BN&O). Subsequent traffic to Silver City and the mining camps traveled through Murphy, rather than Reynolds Creek.

Thomas Carson, one of the original "Twenty-Nine," established a stage stop and toll road on Reynolds Creek, some fifteen miles north of Silver City, shortly after his arrival. Although Carson died in 1865, subsequent owners of his property and other early settlers found that the area was also suitable for stock raising, hay, grain, fruit and vegetable farming. It was a common pattern of development for the early agricultural communities of the county, such as Reynolds Creek, Sinker Creek, Oreana, Cow Creek, and Castle Creek, to find a ready market for their produce in Silver City and the other mining camps.

Although mining would continue to be a major economic force in the county until shortly after 1900, cattle and sheep became increasingly important throughout the 1870's, 1880's, and 1890's. The first recorded herd of cattle was trailed into Owyhee County, from Texas, in 1869. Stock growers found the native grasses and white sage to be an excellent forage. Cattle numbers rose to an estimated high of 100,000 in 1888-1889, when a particularly severe winter forced many cattle ranchers out

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of business.

Robert Noble's 1914 obituary credited him with bringing the first band of sheep into Owyhee County; this information has not been verified. Tax assessment records do not exist for the years prior to 1883, and year-end compilations of total stock numbers (for the years of interest to this study) are extant only for 1884 and 1894 through 1898. The 1884 assessment shows 23,242 sheep and 32,330 cattle in the county; by 1894, the ratio had reversed to 109,166 sheep and only 10,566 cattle. These figures reversed again in the twentieth century. Today, the economy of the county is based on one silver and gold mine, cattle ranching, and farming.

Reynolds Creek never developed into a major town, although the 1898 population was listed as two hundred. The BN&O Railroad entered Owyhee County in this year, so this was possibly the largest population for the community, since the stage and freight lines would soon be moving to Murphy. At that time, there were three hotel/stage stops, several saloons, a post office, blacksmith shop, school, and numerous ranches, including that of Robert Noble.

Robert Noble was born in Cumberland, England, on October 14, 1844. The Noble family left England in 1854, settling first in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, and later, Tonawanda, New York. With little education and few financial resources or personal contacts, Robert emigrated to Idaho in 1870, working a short time as a ferry tender on the Snake River, and for several years at a Boise ranch.

About 1874, Noble moved to Reynolds Creek in Owyhee County. He worked a short time for rancher Peter Peters and in 1877 or 1878, married Peters' daughter, Anna. With money saved from his ranch job in Boise and proceeds from the sale of cattle given as a wedding present by Anna's father, Noble bought a band of sheep and began to develop his own operation.

County records show that Noble's taxes were assessed on herds varying from 1,100 sheep in 1883 to 48,000 in 1905. Various newspaper accounts suggest that he may have had as many as 70,000 sheep or more. During the years for which figures have been compiled, Noble owned from 4.5 to 34.6% of the recorded number of sheep in Owyhee County. He eventually owned two parcels of land at Reynolds Creek, in addition to properties in the Oreana area, about thirty miles to the east, and along

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Section number 8 Noble Horse Barn

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the Snake River, all in Owyhee County. Noble also ran sheep in partnership with several other ranchers in the county, and held mortgages on a number of local ranches. As did any rancher during this time period, Noble owned mules and numerous work, saddle, and stock horses. Again, county assessment records show him with five to six mules at any given time and from seven (1883) to six hundred and fifty (1904) head of horses.

Not a great deal is known about the early physical appearance of the Noble ranch. An 1884 lithograph shows a modest frame dwelling surrounded by fruit trees, with one fair-sized outbuilding, which is not believed to be the horse barn, a short distance away. A woman is visible in the door of the house and a man stands in the foreground surrounded by eight sheep and a dog. The publication in which the lithograph appeared calls Noble:

..the owner of about 18,000 sheep and lambs, and this season sheared over 80,000 pounds of wool--the largest amount ever sheared in Idaho from sheep belonging to one man in one season.... He has a young orchard of 250 trees, including apples, prunes, pears, plums, and small fruit. 1

An 1898 history of Owyhee County included a photograph of the ranch showing the horse barn, the ranch house with attached bunkhouse (destroyed by fire in 1981), one small outbuilding, and possibly several small lean-to's. This publication described Noble as "...engaged in sheepraising, in which he has since continued with marked success...." His occupation was given as "wool grower." 2

U.S. Census records indicate what little is now known about Noble's management style, his employees, and their work. The 1880 Census lists Robert, Anna, a son, a daughter, and fourteen men as one dwelling unit. Five of the men were Chinese--one serving as cook and four as shepherds. The other nine men were of Anglo-American stock: one worked as a stock herder, another as stock raiser, and the remaining seven were identified as "works on farm."

The 1900 census lists Robert, Anna, three daughters, four sons, Robert's sister, a female school teacher, two Chinese servants, and thirty male "boarders." There were nineteen farm laborers, seven sheep camp tenders, two day laborers, and a vaquero.

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Noble's activities were occasionally reported in the Idaho Avalanche (Silver City), and items often began, "Robert Noble, the Owyhee sheep baron," or, "Robert Noble, the bonanza sheep king." In 1890, when reporting an attack on Noble by a disgruntled employee, the newspaper referred to the rancher as:

...perhaps the wealthiest stockman in Idaho.... He is such a genial jolly good fellow that he is very popular in spite of the fact that cattle and horsemen and ranchers all hate a band of sheep and generally carry their dislike to the owner as well. 3

The article further noted that Noble owned some 50,000 sheep and employed about thirty men to care for them.

Despite this general popularity, Noble was known locally as a frugal man. Stories have been passed down about the low wages he paid, and about the location of his wool shed which is no longer standing. Used for storage, the shed is said to have been located directly above a natural spring, allowing the wool to absorb moisture, thus increasing its weight prior to sale.

Noble and his family apparently moved to Boise in 1906. He was actively involved with the Boise Valley Electric Railway Company from 1906 until 1911, and also purchased stock in the Idaho Trust and Savings Bank, later becoming its president. He had extensive real estate holdings in the Boise valley. The 1917 Decree of Distribution on file in Owyhee County indicates that he also owned mining and water rights in the county and owned property in Silver City. At the time of his death in 1914, Noble's wealth was estimated at \$3,000,000.

The horse barn is a tangible reminder of the role Noble played in settling and developing the sheep ranch at Reynolds Creek, and as the foundation of his later business success in Boise. Known to have been in existence in 1898, when a photograph of the structure appeared in a locally published book, the barn continues to be used by the current owners as an agricultural structure. Imposing in size, it is indicative of the type of building necessary for care and housing of the stock required to develop a successful ranching operation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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FOOTNOTES

1

History of Idaho Territory, San Francisco, California: Wallace W. Elliott & Co., publishers, 1884, p. 261.

2

Historical, Descriptive and Commercial Directory of Owyhee County, Idaho, Silver City, Idaho: Press of the Owyhee Avalanche, January, 1898, p. 131.

3

"An Assault on Robert R. Noble" in The Idaho Avalanche, November 29, 1890, p. 4.

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Bass, Dick, informal conversation with the author, Reynolds Creek, June 29, 1990

Bird, Annie Laurie, My Home Town (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1968)

French, Hiram T., History of Idaho, vol. II (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1914)

Hawley, James H., ed., History of Idaho, vol. II (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1920)

History of Idaho Territory (San Francisco: Wallace W. Elliott & Company, Publishers, 1884)

Hurley, Dan, interviewed by Jackie Day-Ames (Boise: Idaho Oral History Center, 1976)

Idaho Avalanche (Silver City) March 3, 1883, November 29, 1890, April 15, 1893, (also known as Owyhee Avalanche, Weekly Avalanche)

Idaho Statesman November 6, 1914

Owyhee County, Deed Records, Miscellaneous Records, Patent Records and Tax Assessment Record (Silver City)

Press of the Owyhee Avalanche, A Historical, Descriptive and Commercial Directory of Owyhee County, Idaho (Silver City: Press of the Owyhee Avalanche, 1898)

Stanke, Jerry (ed.), "Michael Ignatius Jordan" in Owyhee Outpost, number 5 (Murphy: Owyhee County Historical Society, April 1974)

Stanke, Jerry, "Con Shea and His Sister" in Owyhee Outpost, number 2 (Murphy: Owyhee County Historical Society, April 1971)

Vermaas, Gary, "The Murphy Branch" in Owyhee Outpost, number 12 (Murphy: Owyhee County Historical Society, April 1981)

Williams, Marjorie, "The Carson-Gardner Ranch" in Owyhee Outpost, number 12 (Murphy: Owyhee County Historical Society, April 1981)

NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

W1/2, SW1/4, NE1/4, SE1/4, Sec. 25, T2S, R4W

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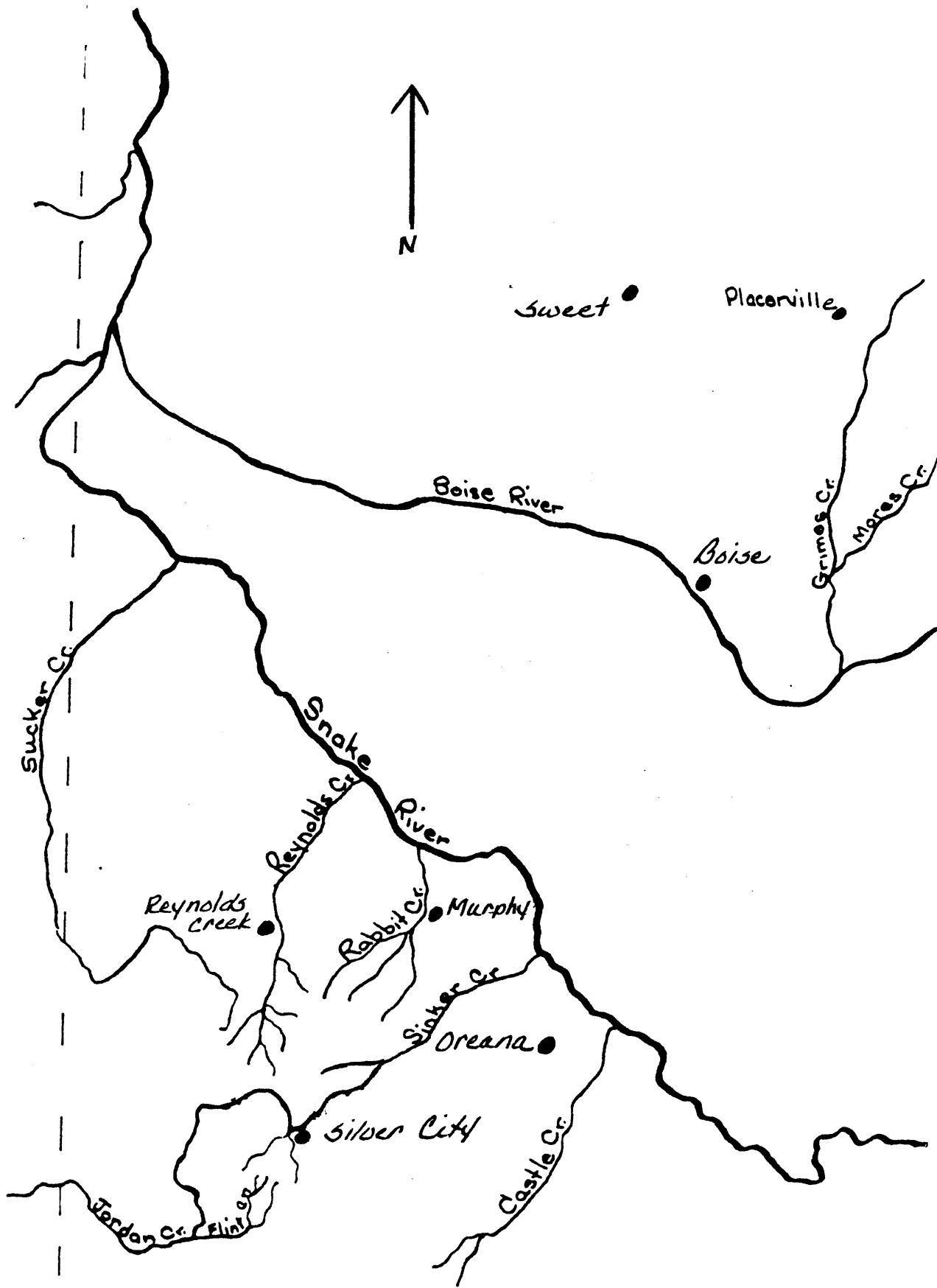
Section number 10

Noble Horse Barn

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the barn which has historically been part of the Noble parcel.



N

Sweet

Placerville

Boise River

Boise

Grimes Cr.

Moses Cr.

Sucker Cr.

Snoke River

Reynolds Cr.

Reynolds Creek

Rabbit Cr.

Murphy

Sinker Cr.

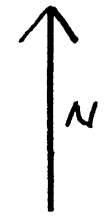
Oreana

Silver City

Jordan Cr. Flint Cr.

Castle Cr.

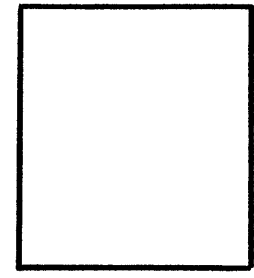
Reynolds Creek



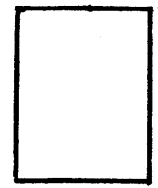
Blacksmith Shop



Horse Barn



Shop



Ice House/
Butchering Shed



Wool Storage Shed (approx.)

Bunkhouse



Ranch House

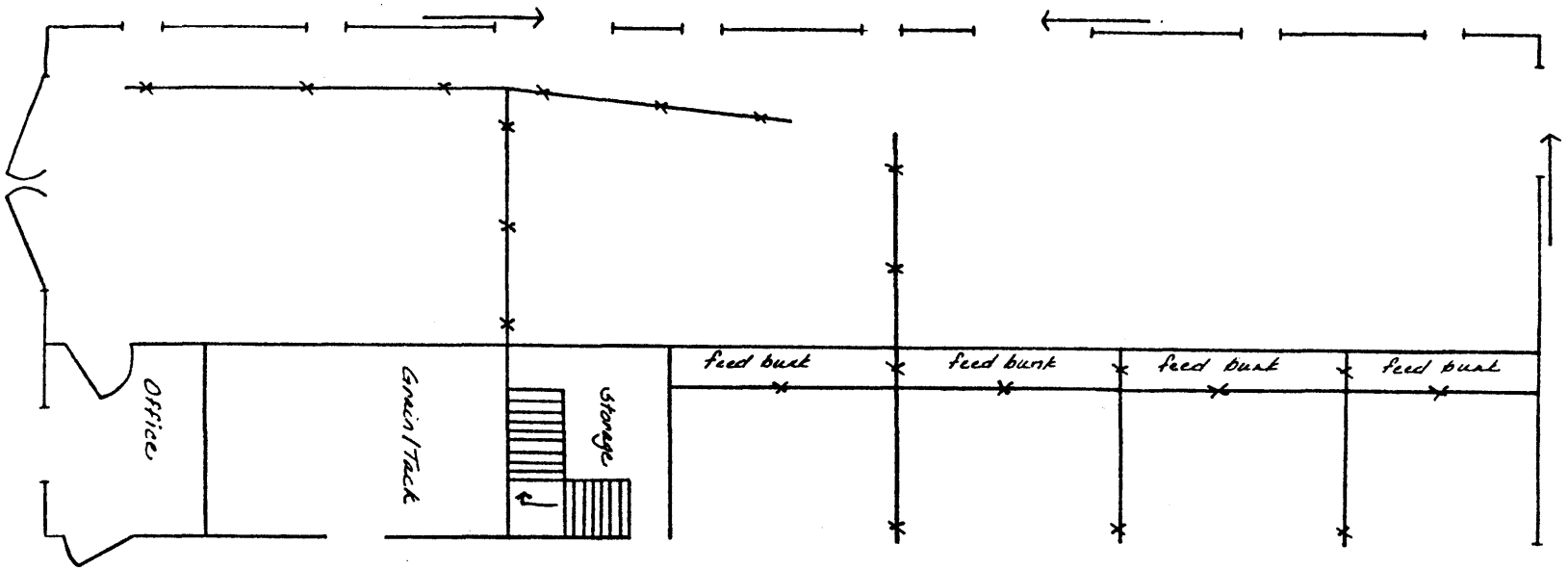


Outhouse



Chicken House





* partial height

Noble Barn

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