

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch

other name/site number: Big Laramie Stage Station, Hart Ranch
48AB471

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2. Location

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street & number: 111 Hart Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Laramie

vicinity: N/A

state: WY county: Albany code: 001 zip code: 82070

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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.

[Signature] Signature of certifying official Date 1-29-82

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

- [x] entered in the National Register [Signature] 3/5/92 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):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Pedestrian-related
AGRICULTURE
DOMESTIC Single Dwelling
Current: DOMESTIC Sub: Single Dwelling
AGRICULTURE

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

OTHER: Log _____

Other Description: N/A _____

Materials: foundation NONE roof WOOD/Shingle
CONCRETE ASPHALT/Shingle
walls LOG other _____
CONCRETE

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

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8. Statement of Significance
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Statewide.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A _____

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A _____

Areas of Significance:

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
TRANSPORTATION
AGRICULTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1862-1942 _____

Significant Dates : N/A _____

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.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet.

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 -- Specify Repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: 4 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>13</u>	<u>441320</u>	<u>4565670</u>	B	<u>13</u>	<u>441200</u>	<u>4565440</u>
C	<u>13</u>	<u>441080</u>	<u>4565460</u>	D	<u>13</u>	<u>441180</u>	<u>4565730</u>

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Julie Francis, Teri Carroll, Tim Evans

Organization: Albany County Historic Preservation Board Date: June 1991

Street & Number: City/County Planning Office 405 Grand Telephone: 307-721-5286

City or Town: Laramie State: WY ZIP: 82070

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Section number 7

(Richardson's Ranch) Page # 1

The Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch is located approximately seven miles southwest of Laramie, Wyoming on the west side of the Big Laramie River. Situated on the open plains of the windswept Laramie Basin, the Richardson Ranch district includes seven buildings and one structure (Attachment 2). These include seven ranch buildings, of which six are considered contributing, and a corduroy road segment of the Overland Trail which marks the trail's crossing of the Big Laramie River. This structure is also considered contributing to the ranch's overall historic significance. The buildings and the one structure of Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch date from 1862 to the early 1980s, and they reflect the initial settlement of this locality and the evolution of a modern ranch.

Architecturally, the Richardson Ranch is best understood as a working ranch which has continually adapted to the changing necessities of ranch life. Old buildings have been altered or torn down and new ones built; this is the rule on any working ranch. Western ranches traditionally re-use materials, or use scrap materials, quite extensively. This is well-illustrated on the Richardson Ranch by the moving of abandoned log buildings onto the ranch from other areas (a practice common throughout the west), and by the use of slabs (left over from sawing logs into boards at local saw mills) to construct fences and several out-buildings.

The ranch exhibits a variety of different forms and construction techniques, representing the historical periods during which the ranch has existed. These include round and hewn logs; dovetail, square, and saddle-notched corners and box corners; vertical slab construction and frame construction; log houses traditional to Anglo-Americans and to Scandinavians; several types of fences; and outbuildings serving a variety of functions characteristic of a working ranch.

The ranch should be considered not just as a collection of buildings, but as a ranch landscape, including the standing buildings, foundations of buildings now gone, fences, roads, ditches, and the remains of the corduroy road. A map of the ranch lay-out is included with this nomination (Attachment 2).

The Richardson Ranch consists of seven buildings and one structure, as follows:

1. Main House (stage station) (contributing). This is a rectangular, one-story house, with three sections. Current dimensions are 40 feet 6 inches (west wall) by 32 feet (north wall). The L-shaped section, which is now the bedrooms, bathroom and living room (Attachment 3), was built in 1862 by workers hired by Ben Holladay. It is built of hand-hewn logs with square-notched corners (Attachment 4). Interior partitions are all of log, which are notched

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into the outer walls to make a very sturdy over-all structure. The section which is now the kitchen is an addition that was also built of hand-hewn logs in the nineteenth century, but with full dovetail corners. This addition consists only of south and east walls, and has been nailed (very sturdily, with square nails) into the walls of the main house. This area was originally used as a stable.

The area which is now the living room (Attachment 5) once consisted of a room to the south and a hallway to the north. The location of what was once an interior log wall is shown on the floorplan by a dotted line. The original front door was in the center of the west facade. This gave the house an "I-house" floorplan, with a central hallway and equal size rooms on either side. The doorway has been filled in with logs; inspection of the logs leads to the conclusion that there originally was no wall at all at the west entrance of the hallway, but instead an open central passage with a large log plate over the top to support the roof. This would have been a "dogtrot" house. The dogtrot house is a kind of folk architecture associated with the southern United States. It is extremely rare in the Rockies.

These changes (taking out the interior wall and filling in the front facade) were made at an uncertain date, but definitely before the turn of the century, probably earlier (as evidenced by the use of square nails in the filled-in front entrance).

Mortar chinking was used between the logs in all sections of the house, with poles and other small fragments of pine filling larger gaps (Attachment 6). The chinking has been replaced or reinforced as needed over the years, most recently with concrete, but much of the original chinking remains. Both sections are very sturdy and well-built, exhibiting fine craftsmanship, and are in very good condition. Square nails are visible throughout, including the filled-in area of the west facade. The sunroom and laundry room are wooden frame structures, added in 1909-10 (Attachment 7). They give the house its current rectangular shape.

The wooden board floor is supported by pine pole floor joists, but there is no foundation. Although the lack of a foundation has caused the floor to sag slightly in a few places, this is not a serious problem. There does not seem to be any damage from rotting or insects.

The roof was originally covered with hand-hewn shingles. These shingles are still in place, but have been covered with asphalt shingles. As shown on the floorplan, the house now has two doors and eight windows in the older sections, plus the sun room is surrounded by windows. Windows in the older sections are double-hung with six panes on each sash. The sun room has continuous, four-paned "ribbon" windows.

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The original L-shaped house had roof ridge-lines oriented north-south over the living room and east-west over the bedrooms. The roof ends in gables on the south and east sides, with a hip where the two roof-lines joined on the northeast corner. The kitchen has a south-sloping shed roof. The sun room has an east-sloping shed roof.

There is a large fireplace and chimney, centered at the south end of the living room; two smaller chimneys exist near the north end (shown on the floorplan). All chimneys are built with single-stack brick.

Plumbing was installed in 1909-10 and is still operating. Electrical wiring, telephone wiring and a television antenna have since been added.

The building has a great deal of integrity and is in remarkably good condition. The only major change to the nineteenth century building is the sun room added in 1909-10; this did not change the older building in any significant way, but simply added to it. The sunroom can itself be considered part of the historic building. The house still closely resembles its appearance as of 1910.

2. POLO BARN (contributing). The polo barn (Attachment 8) was built in 1910. It is a two-story structure built into an east-facing bank, so that the upper story is ground-level to the west and the basement is ground-level to the east facing the Laramie River (Attachment 9). It measures 30 feet by 24 feet. The basement walls, floor and foundation are solid, cast-in-place concrete. The basement is divided into two rooms, north and south, at different levels (the north room is about five feet lower), and with no connecting door. The south room can be entered by a door and stairway on the south wall, slightly to right of center (Attachment 10). The north room can be entered by a door opening directly into the basement on the east side, near the northeast corner. There are no windows. The south room is a stable and tack room; the north room is a "root cellar" used to store food and other objects.

The polo barn is wood frame and the main roof is hipped with an intersecting gable facing west, on the south end of the west facade. The left side of the west facade is a garage door; the right side contains three windows, of different types and at different levels. The north facade has a door on the left side and two windows to the right. The south facade contains no windows or doors. The east facade has four windows, of different types and at different levels.

The interior of the top story is on two levels, like the bottom story. The garage to the north was built for a model-T Ford. The room on the south was originally an office, but is now used for storage. It has no exterior door,

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but is connected to the garage by an interior door and stair. Its floor is about two feet higher than the floor of the garage.

The upper story is currently white-washed. The roof is asphalt shingles. Currently, the downstairs is still used as a stable and the garage area as a garage; the rest of the barn is used for storage.

3. "DAMN GOOD SHED" (contributing). This frame shed with vertical slab walls is of uncertain date, but definitely built before 1930, possibly as early as 1918. It is rectangular, measuring 49 feet 5 inches by 14 feet 5 inches. The long sides face east and west. There are two doors on the east side, one at either end (the one at the north end is double) and one door on the south side. All doors are of board and batten construction. There are no windows. The low, gabled roof parallels the long sides of the building and is covered with vertical slabs. The roof ridge is supported by six interior posts which are spaced at even intervals along the length of the shed.

There is no foundation and no floor. There is an enclosed area at the south end of the west side. It measures fifteen feet east-west by twenty feet north-south. Its south and west boundaries are vertical board fences; its east boundary is the shed and it is open to the north.

This shed has been used at different times for cattle, sheep and horses. The north and south ends are currently used as stables, the middle section to store hay and animal feed. The shed is in good condition, although some of the fence around the enclosed area is falling in. It is a good example of the vertical slab shed, which is a form of folk architecture common in the west. It represents skilled, durable construction which makes use of waste materials.

4. SHOP AND MACHINE SHED (non-contributing). This rectangular, board and batten shed was built in 1980. It measures 96 feet 8 inches by 32 feet 8 inches. It has a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles and is open to the east for use as a garage. The shop is enclosed and is in the north side of the building.

Because of its recent construction date, this is not a contributing structure. However, its general shape and use are traditional. A working ranch must constantly erect new structures or transform old structures; since this shed is an essential part of the modern working ranch, it is not an inappropriate intrusion.

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5. LOG CABIN (contributing). This one-room cabin immediately northwest of the 1980s garage is made from round pine logs (Attachment 11). The cabin measures 12 feet 9 inches (east and west walls) by 20 feet 4 inches (north and south walls). The older part of the cabin extends fifteen feet from the west side and has box corners. The newer part (the east end) has saddle-notched corners; the logs protrude a foot beyond the notching. The logs in the old and new sections are nailed together, with a board between them. The cabin is eight feet eight inches high (to the top of the wall). There is a door at the center of the east side, and small windows on the north and west sides.

There is no foundation, but there are log floor joists supporting a floor of wooden boards. The roof is wooden boards supported by log pole purlins, covered with asphalt shingles. The cabin was heated by a wood stove; the stove pipe protrudes from the roof.

This cabin (the original, older part) was moved to the ranch from Fox Park, Wyoming in the 1930s. Fox Park is in the foothills of the Medicine Bow mountains, about thirty miles to the west of the ranch. A logging and mining area, it went through a number of booms and busts, which caused many log structures to be built and abandoned. The original date of construction of the cabin is unknown. It was disassembled, the logs numbered, and reassembled at the ranch; all of the logs are from the original building, and the numbers are still visible. (This same moving process was also used for structures #6 and #7.) The new part of the cabin (the east end) was built in 1971. This cabin has always been used as a bunkhouse.

It has been a common practice on Wyoming ranches to move abandoned buildings onto ranch sites rather than building new structures. This conserves materials and involves less work, since constructing a new building would involve cutting down pine trees in the mountains, hauling them to the ranch, cutting and shaping them, notching, etc. This is a kind of folk architectural practice which is comparable to other methods of re-using materials, such as making outbuildings from railroad ties or slabs from saw mills, or making quilts or rag rugs from scraps of materials. Therefore this does not have a negative impact on the historic integrity of the buildings.

6. "THE LONG SHED (contributing)." This structure (Attachment 12) is built from round pine logs. The logs are flattened on the inside; their ends are hewn, with square-notched corners (Attachment 13). It is rectangular, measuring 56 feet 8 inches on the east and west sides, 21 feet 1 inch on the north and south sides. The gable roof has pine-pole purlins and is covered with tin sheeting. The sheeting was installed in 1967; previously it was covered with boards. There are two doors on the east side, at the north and south ends. There are three windows on the east side, one each on the other

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three sides. There is no foundation or floor, except for the meat room at the south end, which had a cast-in-place concrete floor put in when the building was moved to site in the 1930s.

This structure, like the log cabin, was moved to the ranch from Fox Park in the 1930s. (Please see the discussion of moving abandoned buildings onto ranches in the description of structure #5, above.) This building was put together from two log buildings taken from Fox Park. As was the case with structure #5, the logs were disassembled and numbered; the numbers are still visible. The original date of construction of the two buildings is unknown. The structure has two rooms which correspond to the two original buildings. The north room is forty feet from north to south, the south room is sixteen feet. The south wall of the northern log building has now become the interior partition between the rooms. The north wall of the south building was apparently removed, and the east and west walls were nailed into the corners of the other structure.

On the ranch, it was originally intended as a dining room and dance hall for dudes. The north room has been used as a chicken coop and calving shed; the south room is used as a meat room.

7. "THE LITTLE CABIN" (contributing). This structure (Attachments 14 & 15) is made from round logs, with box corners. The roof is of sawn boards supported by pine pole purlins, covered with asphalt shingles. The cabin measures 16 feet (east and west walls) by 13 feet 6 inches (north and south walls). In addition, the roof extends over the front door another 5 feet 8 inches. There is a wooden board floor supported by pine pole joists, with no foundation. The door is in the center of the east wall, with a small window in the south wall.

This is a typical Scandinavian tie-hack cabin (a folk architecture form which evolved into the "Rocky Mountain cabin"). It was moved onto the ranch during the 1930s, from Fox Park. For the practice of moving abandoned buildings onto ranches, see the description of structure #5, above. It has in the past been used as a bunkhouse, but is currently used for storage.

8. Overland Trail segment (contributing). Approximately 300 feet north of the main ranch buildings and between the modern two-track road and the Big Laramie River lies an intact section of the Overland Trail (Attachment 16). This is a corduroy road which marks the crossing of the Big Laramie River by the Overland Trail. The road was built up to prevent wagons, stages, livestock, and travelers from sinking into the boggy bottoms west of the Big Laramie River, and it marks the only visible remains of the Overland Trail in the immediate area. At the eastern end, adjacent to the river, the Trail has been built up close to six feet. This segment was built at a gentle grade; at

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the western end, the road is raised only about one foot. West of this point, the Overland Trail leads onto the drier upland prairie, and all tracks or ruts have disappeared. Total length of this preserved segment is about 225 feet. At the eastern end, it is about 30 feet wide and narrows to about 12 feet at the western end. Presumably built of perpendicularly piled layers of logs, only the uppermost layer remains visible beneath the lush grass cover of the modern floodplain. The logs forming this layer are about 8 to 10 feet long and are 10 inches in diameter. They have been placed perpendicular to the long axis of the trail segment, to form the bumpy surface of a corduroy road. Although the logs have deteriorated due to the wet ground and a covering of surface vegetation, this segment is still clearly visible because of its raised grade. It is one of the best preserved sections of the Overland Trail in this portion of Wyoming, and is one of the few examples of corduroy road construction known in the State.

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Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch is significant under criterion A by virtue of its association with the exploration and settlement of Albany County and the State of Wyoming and the development of the agriculture industry. Serving as a home station on the Overland Trail, the Big Laramie Stage Station was one of the first permanent Euro-american settlements in the region. It became one of the first cattle ranches in the region and continues as a modern working ranch. The contributing buildings and structures of the Big Laramie Stage Station represent the evolution of the agriculture industry from the initial founding of the stage station and first permanent settlement to the development of the modern ranch.

Exploration/Settlement and Transportation

Numerous explorations by the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers mapped much of Wyoming and the western territories prior to permanent Euro-american settlement during the 1840s. The military was charged with protecting emigrants traveling through these regions and with improving transcontinental communications.

To protect emigrants traveling the Oregon Trail, Captain Howard Stansbury and a group of Topographical Engineers scouted alternative routes and potential fort sites in 1849. Accompanied by Jim Bridger, Stansbury completed an exploration trip to the west coast, and on his return in 1850 he travelled along a southern Wyoming route (Gray 1978:88). Stansbury recognized the possibility of this southerly route as an alternative to the Oregon Trail. He submitted a favorable report, stating that this route was at least 60 miles shorter than the Oregon Trail between Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger (Rosenberg 1989:2-3).

During the 1850s, communication between the east and west coasts became increasingly important, and the United States awarded mail contracts to private companies. In 1858, John Hockaday was awarded a mail contract which he subsequently sold to Russell, Majors, and Waddell. This firm freighted supplies for the U.S. Army along the Oregon Trail. In addition, once the Civil War broke out, mail traveling to the Pacific Coast along the Santa Fe Trail could not be safeguarded. Consequently, the Butterfield Company subcontracted their mail route to Russell, Majors, and Waddell. However, Russell, Majors, and Waddell experienced financial difficulties, largely because of their investment in the Pony Express. With financial assistance from Ben Holladay,

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they survived through 1861. However, late in the winter, the firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell failed, and on March 21, 1862, Ben Holladay bought its equipment at public sale (Beard 1933:118).

Holladay changed the name of the line to the Overland Stage Line or the Overland Stage Company, and because of Indian "depredations" along the Orgeon Trail, he planned to move the route south to the southern route scouted by Stansbury in 1850. This route, which was known as the Overland Trail, followed the South Platte River to the mouth of the Cache la Poudre River and up the valley of a tributary to the famous Virginia Dale. The line crossed the Black Hills (now known as the Laramie Range), traversed the Laramie Plains, rounded Elk Mountain, and descended to the North Platte River at a point near the mouth of Sage Creek. After crossing the North Platte, the road led westward across Bridger's Pass, crossed the Red Desert, followed Bitter Creek to the Green River, and then went upstream along the Black's Fork to Fort Bridger (Hafen 1926:231).

Between March and July of 1862, Holladay employed crews to construct stage stations along the Overland Trail. The stations were established at intervals of 10 to 15 miles. Every 50 miles or so were "home stations" where a driver's route ended and passengers could obtain meals. These included sleeping rooms, dining room, telegraph office, barn, etc. Intervening stations were known as "swing stations" and consisted of a stable, granary, and a room for one or two stock tenders.

Holladay operated the line until the latter part of 1866, when he sold his entire overland mail holdings; the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company, the Overland Mail Company, the Pioneer Stage Company, and Wells Fargo and Company were consolidated under the name of Wells Fargo and Company (Hafen 1926:317). Wells Fargo stages travelled along the Overland Trail until 1869, when Wells Fargo began running stages between the termini of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads. When the transcontinental railroad was completed, it spelled the end of commercial transcontinental overland stage traffic.

Two features at Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch represent the early settlement and transportation era. These include the stage station, now used as the main residence, and an intact Overland Trail segment. The Big Laramie Stage Station, now the main residence, was one of the Overland Trail home stations, built where the Overland Trail crosses the Big Laramie River. It was built sometime prior to July, 1862, when the Overland Trail was opened, and it became one of the first settlements on the Laramie Plains. Documentation as to the specific facilities at the Big Laramie Stage Station has not yet been discovered. At a minimum, it would have consisted of a structure with facilities for the station master, passengers, and livestock. The site is shown

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on early maps (Myers 1869, see Attachment 17) as "stage station", and according to W. O. Owens (n.d.), Tom Alsop was the station master.

The corduroy road was built at the crossing on the west side of the Big Laramie River. The specific facilities at the crossing are unknown. However, the corduroy road was built up from the low-lying floodplain and solid ground in order to keep wagons from getting stuck. It is made of 8 to 10 foot long logs 10 inches in diameter. The logs have been stacked and layed side by side to provide a solid base for traffic. The lower end of this segment, closest to the river, has been built up nearly 6 feet above the floodplain.

Agriculture/the Cattle Industry

The cattle raising frontier was initiated in Wyoming in 1830 when Captain William Sublette brought three beef cattle and one milk cow to the Wind River Rendezvous (Burroughs 1971:10). This frontier developed as thousands of cattle were driven over the Oregon-California-Utah Trail in the 1840s and 1850s and over the Overland Trail in the early 1860s. Station masters along the trails supplied cattle and provisions to emigrants and freighters, and they also traded worn-out emigrant stock for goods and livestock. They would then winter the cattle on the range to sell the next spring to the emigrants.

In this manner, some of the stage stations provided the first seeds for the development of the stockraising industry on the High Plains. According to Hafen (1926:305), much of the hay used to feed livestock along the Overland Trail was grown by the station masters. As an example, Phillip Mandel, station master at the Little Laramie Stage Station, was cutting hay when attacked by Indians in 1862 (Coutant 1899:397). In addition, station masters, such as Mandel, often acquired herds by keeping footsore oxen left at the stations. They allowed the stock to graze on the surrounding open range and heal, and subsequently sold the animals to later travelers along the Trail (Burns 1955:13). In essence, some of the station masters became the first cattle brokers, and once the stage lines went out of business, they homesteaded the land surrounding the original stage stations.

Although pioneering efforts were started in western Wyoming, the focus of the cattle industry was in southeastern Wyoming. Seth Ward first wintered several hundred work cattle in the Chugwater Valley in 1853, and Alexander Morris wintered a herd of 300 head in 1854 that grew to thousands over the next 10 years. In 1862, the Homestead Act enabled ranchers to obtain 160 acres of free land; additional acreage could be acquired under the Timber Culture Act of 1873 (160 acres), the Preemption Act of 1841 (160 acres at \$1.25/acre), and the Desert Land Act of 1877 (640 acres at \$1.25/acre). Homesteading ranchers

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usually patented land along a waterway to use as a base of operations, while grazing their cattle on the surrounding public domain.

Trail drives from Texas across Wyoming began in 1866 as the southern markets for Texas cattle had dried up during the Civil War. The arrival of the Union Pacific Railroad in Wyoming territory during 1867-1868 promoted a cattle boom as the Texas cattle were driven north, fattened on Wyoming grass, and shipped by railroad to the eastern markets. The nutritious prairie grasses permitted year-round grazing on the unfenced prairie, and as a result ranches were organized.

In the 1870s and 1880s foreign capital was invested in the Wyoming cattle industry and syndicate ranches began. British and Scottish interests invested \$45,000,000 in the American cattle business, much of it in the Wyoming Territory. The Oregon and Overland Trails were used to drive cattle from Oregon through Wyoming to the east. The Wyoming Stockgrowers Association was formed and dominated local government until the 1890s. The first cattle roundup conducted under the regulations of the Stockgrowers Association was in 1884.

Competition and an increase in cattle diseases led to the erection of barbed wire fences in Wyoming. The continually growing cattle herds rapidly overstocked the range, and the hard winters of 1884 and 1887 caused tremendous losses of cattle. The open range system collapsed as the large companies withdrew and paved the way for small ranchers. The Johnson County War of 1892 was the result of the conflict between the large ranchers and small operators.

The late nineteenth and first portion of the twentieth century was the golden age of the ranching industry. Smaller herds of cattle were kept in fenced pastures, and ranchers grew hay and alfalfa for winter food. Despite conflict with sheepmen over grazing, cattlemen continued to prosper until the severe winter of 1912. This signalled the great emigration of homesteaders. Their inevitable fencing of the land from 1917 to 1924 ended any concept of open range.

The history of Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch reflects many of these developments. The Big Laramie Stage Station began its days as a working ranch in much the manner described above. According to Burns (1955:12), Tom Alsop had been in the country since 1860 as a foreman for a string of bull teams belonging to Ed Creighton. In December of 1863, when returning to Omaha from Salt Lake, Alsop and his men were caught in a blizzard on Sherman Hill. They abandoned their wagons, turned the stock loose, and traveled on to Omaha on horseback. In the spring of 1864, Alsop returned to find the oxen healthy and fat on Sand Creek.

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Also, Creighton, and Charlie Hutton (another Creighton employee) started in the ranching business with headquarters at the Big Laramie Stage Station, some eight miles southwest of Laramie City (Laramie Daily Boomerang, January 8, 1889). Creighton, for whom Creighton University in Omaha is named, obtained financing for the operation from the Kountze brothers and the First National Bank of Omaha (Gressley 1966:96).

Tom Alsoop raised horses, cattle, and sheep (Burns 1955:12-13). He bred high class Morgan horses, which were used for pulling street cars in large eastern cities, including Omaha. Tom Alsoop was one of the first men to have sheep as well as cattle; in 1870 the partnership of Creighton, Hutton, and Alsoop brought 3000 head of sheep to Laramie from Iowa. Alsoop also served as the first Albany County vice-president of the Wyoming Stock Graziers Association (Burns 1955:64).

Charlie Hutton (Burns 1955:146-148) was a freighter prior to his ranching career. He apparently squatted on the east side of the Big Laramie River near the stage station in 1864. In 1868, he entered into partnership with Creighton and Alsoop. Charlie Hutton was one of four Laramie pioneers who sponsored the organizational meeting on April 14, 1871 of the Wyoming Stock Graziers Association. Charlie Hutton was one member of the committee which drafted the constitution of this organization that presaged the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association (Burroughs 1971:34; Burns 1955:63-64).

Edward Creighton died in 1874 and the partnership was dissolved. Alsoop took the ranch on the west side of the river, while Hutton took the portion on the east side (Burns 1955:12). According to Burns (1955: 149), Ora Haley owned the heart brand, and he was in partnership with Charlie Hutton. It is perhaps because of this brand that the name Heart Ranch came to be applied to the ranch on the east side of the river. Somewhere along the line, the Heart or Hart Ranch name was also applied to the ranch on the west side of the river. According to Thobro Therkildsen, former property owner, the Hart Ranch name was also an acronym for Hutton, Alsoop, and Creighton (M. Richardson, personal communication).

In 1880, Alsoop sold his ranch on the west side of the river to Henry Balch and Daniel Bacon, who were from Boston. The partnership was organized into the Riverside Livestock Company in 1885 (Burns 1955:139- 142). It was under the auspices of this company that many small ranches were consolidated. Headquarters for the company was the Riverside Ranch, some 20 miles southwest of Laramie. The holdings at the Big Laramie Stage Station were a satellite operation for the larger company. Even though part of the Riverside Livestock Company, the Big Laramie Stage Station continued to be known as the Heart or Hart Ranch.

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By the turn of the twentieth century, the Hart Ranch was being sold piecemeal to satisfy various debts and trust deeds. D.C. Buntin and James Caldwell bought the parcel including the headquarters for the Hart Ranch at the Big Laramie Stage Station in 1904. Buntin was a banker in Nashville, Tennessee and a land promoter in Albany County, Wyoming. Caldwell was his father-in-law. The Hart Ranch was just one of many properties held by Buntin, Caldwell, and other Tennesseans. These individuals were also financially involved in land speculation. They financed construction of irrigation ditches from Lake Hattie to undeveloped farms on the Big Laramie River, in hopes of selling the land at high prices (T. Carroll, personal communication, 1991). In keeping with the general prosperity of the cattle industry and eastern money, polo was the rage; breeding polo ponies, Buntin and Caldwell set out to build one of the finest polo ranches in the country.

It was at this time that the polo barn was built. It contains ample feed storage, automatic gravity feeders, a stable with drains, and a full basement. The basement has a shallow well with a 1000 gallon water tank. This tank was under compressed air pressure, and according to the parents of Marge Richardson (the present owner), this was provided by a local boy with a tire pump.

Buntin and Caldwell also remodeled the old stage station at this same time in order to upgrade the living quarters. The pressurized water from the polo barn was piped to the main residence. Thus, what had been the Big Laramie Stage Station on the Overland Trail became one of the first houses with indoor plumbing on the Big Laramie River. Buntin and Caldwell also added the sun porch to the original log structure and the double fireplace and chimney to the bedrooms.

Caldwell evidently got too heavily involved in speculation with members of the Harding administration (M. Carroll, personal communication to Marge Richardson). Soon after the Teapot Dome scandal broke, he committed suicide in Tennessee. The property was put into receivership and purchased by Otto Clausen in 1929.

Although the outbreak of World War I brought exceptional prosperity to Wyoming cattlemen, economic depression struck in 1919 through 1923, and urban dwellers reduced meat consumption. Larger cattle ranches broke up, and family ranches began to replace the larger outfits. Maintenance feeding became an economic necessity. The Great Depression hit in 1929, and by 1932 ranchers were experiencing the worst depression of their history. The Federal Surplus Relief Corporation purchased cattle and sheep from failing ranches and slaughtered many on the range. As cattle prices dropped, the weather worsened, with water sources drying up, dust covering everything, and feed crops almost non-existent. In 1934, the Taylor Grazing Act withdrew from entry practically

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all unappropriated and unreserved public domain, turning it into grazing land to be leased.

Unfortunately for Otto Clausen, his timing was poor. His dream was a dude ranch, perhaps in keeping with the general prosperity of the 1920s. He purchased three log buildings from Fox Park. The style of two of these structures indicates their original use as tie hack cabins in the Snowy Range. They were one room structures intended for use as guest cabins. The third building was a long, multi-roomed log structure intended for use as a dance hall. All three log buildings were dismantled, the logs numbered, shipped, and reassembled at the ranch on the Big Laramie River. However, the Great Depression erased any demand for dude ranch vacations. Clausen held on with subsistence farming and hay production until 1944, growing potatoes and raising a few cows for cream, all for personal consumption.

T.H. and Ella Therkildsen purchased the ranch in 1944. They made only a few modifications to the original stage station; the fireplace in the living room was built by the son of the mason who built the double bedroom fireplaces in the 1920s. The Therkildsen's held the ranch for nearly 30 years, when it was passed on to L.R. and Marge T. Richardson (the Therkildsen's daughter) in 1974. Since that time, there have been no major changes or renovations. The current property owner has been carefully maintaining the property as a historic site, and the modern ranch reflects continuity from the past to the present.

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Verbal Boundary Description

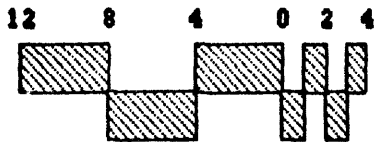
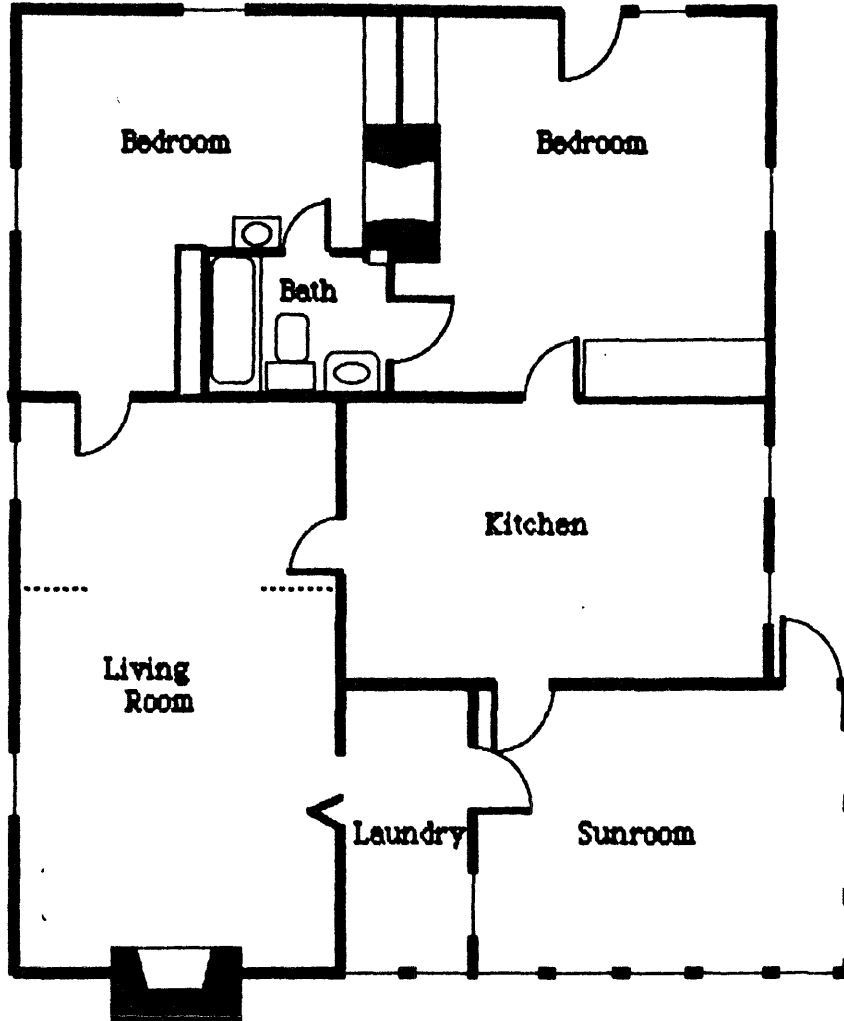
The boundary begins (UTM POINT A) at a point on the west bank of the Laramie River which marks the original crossing of the Laramie River by the Overland Trail. This point is adjacent to the northeastern corner of the corduroy road segment of the Overland Trail (see Attachment 2). The boundary proceeds south along the west bank of the Laramie River for approximately 540 feet to an arbitrary point. This point (UTM POINT B) is 105 feet due south of the southeast corner of the polo barn. The boundary proceeds due west for approximately 210 feet to an arbitrary point (UTM POINT C). From this point, the boundary turns generally north and runs along the west side of the ranch complex for about 600 feet to a point (UTM POINT D) on the west side of the two-track road leading into the ranch, opposite the northwestern corner of the Overland Trail segment. From this point, the boundary proceeds slightly south of east for about 270 feet along the north side of the corduroy road to the Laramie River (UTM POINT A).

Boundary Justification

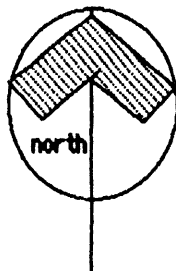
This generally rectangular shaped boundary encompasses the visible remains of the crossing of the Laramie River by the Overland Trail and an extremely well preserved segment of the trail, the low pasture lands immediately south of the crossing, and the buildings of the Richardson's Overland Trail Ranch complex. The Laramie River defines the eastern boundary of the district. This natural boundary corresponds to historic land ownership and division between ranches. The southern and western boundaries have been arbitrarily defined to encompass all the contributing buildings of the ranch complex. Open prairie occurs to both the south and west of the main ranch complex. The northern boundary follows the north edge of the Overland Trail segment. Because of the low boggy conditions adjacent to the Laramie River, the corduroy road segment was built and effectively confined traffic to this route. The land is higher and drier to the west, and visible segments of the trail are no longer visible west of the modern two-track into the ranch.

Additionally, the USGS topographic map shows the stage station on the east side of the Laramie River. This corresponds to foundations associated with the Bath Ranch. The historic sources cited in this nomination, as well as maps from as early as 1869 (see Attachment 17) indicate the original stage station to have been on the west side of the Big Laramie River.

ATTACHMENT 3



Graphic Scale in feet



**Richardson Overland
Trail Ranch**

Albany County Wyoming

Albany County Historic Preservation
Board

September 30, 1989

Measured & Drawn by: J.O. Rose