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NATIONAL REGISTER

NPS FORM 10-900 (Rev. 8-86) OMB No. 1024-0018 [SD-SHPO # ECA-OH-597-1/89]  
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United States Department of the Interior -- National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES -- REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering "NA" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property  
historic name: Ward, Elbert and Harriet, Ranch  
other name/ site number: CU-EM-8

2. Location  
street & number: E. of Elk Mountain, S. of U. S. Hy. 16 /NA/ not for publication  
city, town: Custer /XX/ vicinity  
state: SOUTH DAKOTA code: SD county: Custer code: SD 033 zip code: 57730

3. Classification		Number of Resources within Property:		
Ownership of Property:	Category of Property	Contributing	Noncontributing	
/XX/ private	/ / building(s)	4	1	buildings
/ / public-local	/XX/ district			sites
/ / public-state	/ / site	2		structures
/ / public-federal	/ / structure			objects
	/ / object	6	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Ranches of Southwestern Custer County, SD

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

11. Form Prepared by  
name/title: Rebecca Sample Bernstein, Preservation Consultant  
organization: Custer County Board of Commissioner date: January 17, 1990  
street & number: 420 Mt. Rushmore Road telephone: 605-673-4815  
city or town: Custer state: SOUTH DAKOTA zip code: 57730

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property name

, Custer County  
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA  
state

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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      5/12/90 Date

S. H. O. H. S. H. O. State or Federal agency or 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 or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- \_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet
- \_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet
- \_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_\_ other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

*Mark J. Baker*      5 July 1990

*[Signature]* Signature of the Keeper      Date

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property name

, Custer  
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA  
state

6. Function or Use (enter categories from instructions)

Historic functions:

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

AGRICULTURE/Storage

AGRICULTURE/Animal Facility

AGRICULTURE/Agricultural Outbuilding

Current Functions:

VACANT/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials:

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone, Wood, Concrete

walls Asphalt

Wood

roof Asphalt, Wood

other Concrete, Stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance: /XX/ see continuation sheet

8. Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in

relation to other properties: / / / / /XX/

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria /XX/ A / /B / /C / /D

Criteria Considerations / /A / /B / /C / /D / /E / /F / /G

Areas of Significance (enter from instructions)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1916-1940

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Ward, Elbert

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations,  
and periods of significance noted above /XX/ see continuation sheet

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The Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch is located east of Elk Mountain and west of the National Forest Tee Pee Work Station, just south of U. S. Highway 16. The district consists of seven features built between 1916 and 1934. They are located on, and at the foot of, a small natural rise covered with trees.

List of Resources:

1. House: (Contributing), c. 1932-34; Oriented to the east, the two-story main house exhibits a complex roof line of two gables and a shed all covered with asphalt shingles. The frame walls are covered with brick pattern asphalt paper. The house rests on a rock and cement foundation.

The interior plan reflects the generally irregular massing of the house. A main door opens to the living room. To the south of the living room is the dining room and an enclosed porch. The kitchen opens to the west of the dining room with a step between the two rooms. A bedroom is located in the northwest corner. A hall between the bedroom and kitchen also provides access to a bathroom and to a stair leading to the second floor. The second floor consists of two bedrooms with a large walk-in closet between them. Significant interior features include hard wood floors, built-in pine cabinets, and plaster arches.

The windows are typical 1930s units with four vertical lights over one large light. Fenestration is fairly regular with a double set of windows to the north of the entrance vestibule.

2. Root Cellar: (Contributing), c. 1916-34; The root cellar is built into a sharp rise on the nearby hillside with a rock front wall. A vertical board door covers the opening. Limited deterioration has exposed large log beams that support the roof.

3. Milk House: (Contributing), c. 1916-34; The milk house is a rectangular pen, one-story building with a wood shingle gable roof. The wood frame structure is covered with vertical board siding and rests on a wood sill. It is not clear whether this building was used for milking or milk storage.

4. Privy: (Contributing), c. 1916-34; The privy is a wood frame one-story rectangular pen building with a gable roof. It rests on a wood sill and is covered in vertical boards.

5. Garage: (Noncontributing), c. 1932-34; The garage exists only as ruins. It was built into the hill with rocks lining the walls.

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6. Cistern: (Contributing), c. 1932-34; The cistern was particularly important, since no natural water source exists on the ranch. It is a big rectangular "box" cut into the top of a hill. A cement slab covers it, and a round door provides access. The cistern has a capacity of 2,000 gallons. Natural gravity provides running water to the house.

7. Chicken Coop: (Contributing), c. 1916-34; The chicken coop is a rectangular pen wood frame structure, with vertical boards on all but the southeast corner, which is covered with screen. It rests on a concrete block foundation. A shed roof caps the building.

Mrs. Ward had been educated in home economics and had a great deal of pride not only in the house but in the grounds surrounding it. This is evident in stone paths, garden plots, and a handsome wood pole clothesline, all located about the yard.

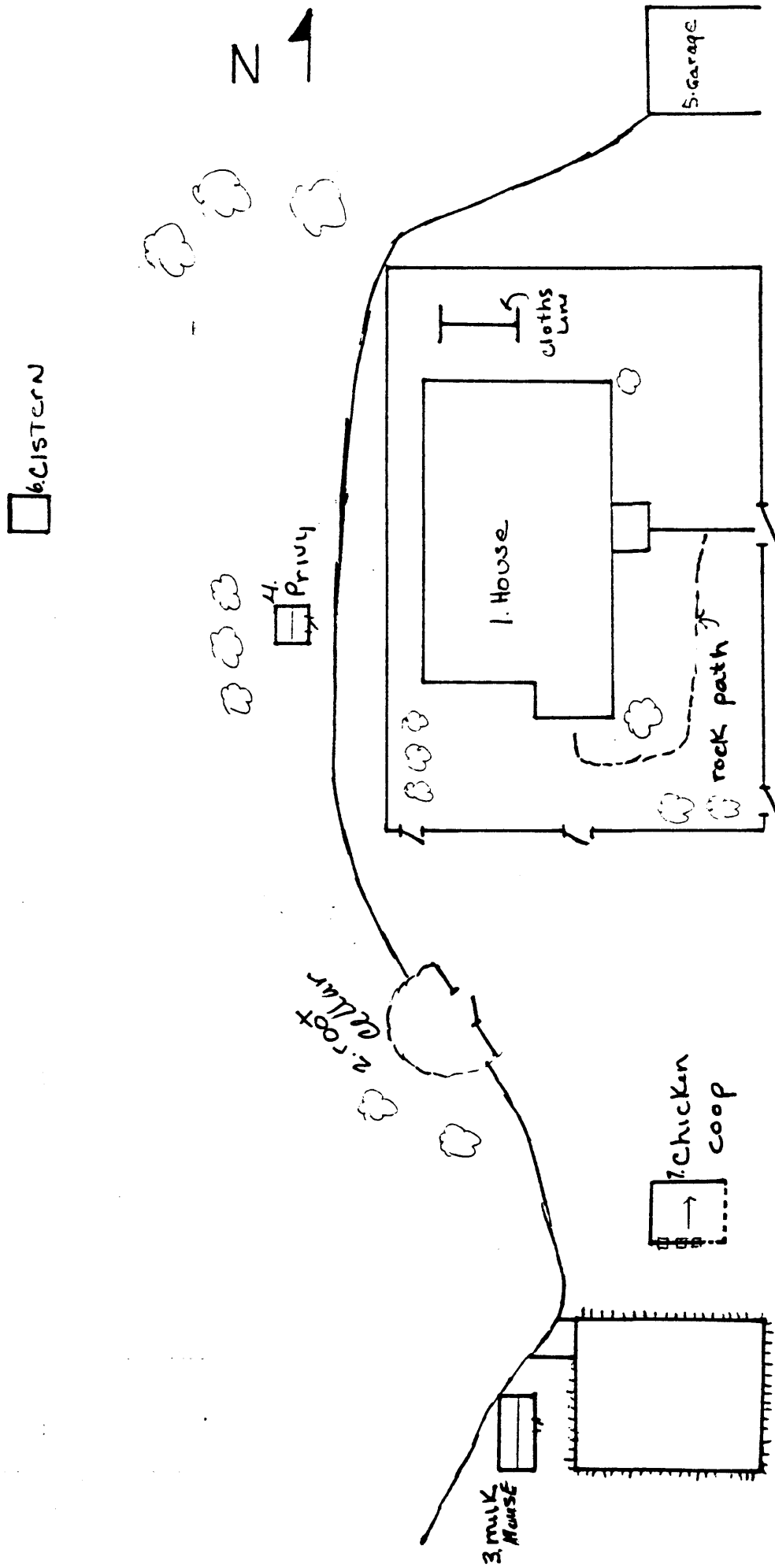
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WARD RANCH SITE MAP ON REVERSE SIDE



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Under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria, The Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch is significant in the area of Exploration/Settlement, because it represents the development of the legal homestead rancher in the southwestern corner of Custer County, South Dakota. In particular, this ranch represents one-claim homesteads after 1915/1916. Homestead ranchers were the first generation of settlers to make good and to continue to live on a homestead claim in this semiarid part of Custer County. The homestead rancher who lived on his/her property, as did the Ward family, represents a shift from the owners and workers of large cattle companies of the open range period who frequently lived in town.

Under the South Dakota State Historical Preservation Plan the nominated property relates to the historic contexts labeled: IV. Permanent Rural and Urban Pioneer Settlement, A. Claim Era; and IV. C. Permanent Farm and Ranch Development. This property relates to the local historic context and property type labeled: "Ranches of Southwestern Custer County, South Dakota."

Elbert Ward homesteaded this ranch in circa 1916. Sometime between 1932 and 1934, Mr. Ward married Harriet, with whom he was acquainted through their common church. When Harriet arrived in the Elk Mountain area, Elbert's home was a simple log shack. The young Mrs. Ward was very proud of her home economics education and refused to live in such a building. Consequently, Mr. Ward built a frame house incorporating the old log dwelling. It seems that Harriet's exposure to domestic science not only influenced her choice of house, but also influenced her choice of architectural details. The house has four over one double hung wood sash windows, a plastered arch between front rooms, nice wood floors, and built-in cabinetry, all very popular in the early thirties, but not typically found in houses of this area.

At the time the house was enlarged, Mr. Ward also built the 2,000 gallon cistern on top of the hill. The cistern was high enough above the house that gravity could produce running water for the functions of the household. Water for the cistern was hauled from Newcastle, Wyoming.

Mrs. Ward was also very proud of the area immediately around the house. She had a local craftsman Frank Scott lay out a rock garden. Unfortunately, many of the rocks have been removed by vandals. She laid Black Hills rose quartz in paths from the main gate to the front and side doors. She planted many flower beds in the yard. A fence was erected to protect the yard from roaming cattle.

The Wards were one of only two black families living in western Custer County during the homesteading years. Elbert Ward's parents lived in Custer, and their two sons and one daughter all homesteaded in the Elk Mountain area. The



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other black family in the area were the Kerchevals, who were reportedly descendants of Lt. Col. George Custer's cook. They also settled in the Elk Mountain area.

Elbert Ward died in the late 1970s. Harriet Ward sold the property to LDS Incorporated in the 1980s with the provision that the main house and outbuildings remain in her possession until her death. Mrs. Ward presently resides at the Colonial Manor Nursing home in Custer.

The period of significance of the nominated property extends from the date of its founding and construction of the oldest extant contributing resources in 1916 to 1940, the established 50-year cut-off date for the National Register.

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property name

, Custer  
county

, SOUTH DAKOTA  
state

9. Major Bibliographical References

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Previous documentation by 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:

- /XX/ State historic preservation office
- / / Other State agency
- / / Federal agency
- / / Local government
- / / University
- / / Other

Specify repository:

South Dakota Historical Preservation Center

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property:

UTM References:

A = / / / / / /	B = / / / / / /
C = / / / / / /	D = / / / / / /
ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING

Quad:

Scale:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

Boundary Justification:

/XX/ see continuation sheet

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Brown, Mabel. "Not Much Doing at Dewey." Bits and Pieces, Your Own Western History Magazine. Vol 3, no.10., 1967.

Kraenzel, Carl Frederick. The Great Plains in Transition. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955.

Lee, Bob, and Dick Williams. The Last Grass Frontier, The South Dakota Stock Grower Heritage. Sturgis, South Dakota: Black Hills Publishers, Inc., 1964.

Schell, Herbert Samuel. History of South Dakota. 3rd. ed., rev.: Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975.

Sundstrom, Jessie Y., ed. Custer County History to 1976. Custer, South Dakota: Custer County Historical Society, (printed by Rapid City, South Dakota, Printing, Inc.), 1977.

Personal and Telephone Interviews by Rebecca Sample Bernstein, Summer/Fall, 1988:

Harry Mann, Newcastle, Wyoming.

Hoyt Nicholas, Custer, South Dakota.

William Stearns, Newcastle, Wyoming.

Jessie Sundstrom, Custer South Dakota.

Harriet Ward, Custer, South Dakota.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 6 acres.

UTM REFERENCES: Since the appropriate U.S.G.S. quad map does not have UTM marks for calculating the UTM references of the nominated property, those references have been calculated in longitude and latitude.

References: 103 degrees 58 minutes 10 seconds longitude/  
43 degrees 42 minutes 20 seconds latitude.

Jewel Cave NW Quad. (1955), scale: 1:24000.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nominated property is bounded by a set of imaginary lines that intersect to form a rectangle around the ranch district. The northern boundary line lies 40 meters north of the northernmost wall of the House (resource # 1) and runs parallel to that wall. The eastern boundary line lies 20 meters east of the easternmost wall of the House and runs parallel to that wall. The southern boundary line lies 10 meters south of the southernmost wall of the Milk House (resource # 3) and runs parallel to that wall. The western boundary line lies 10 meters west of the west edge of the Cistern (resource # 6) and runs parallel to that wall. The ranch is located in the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 14, Township 4 South, Range 1 East, (Black Hills Meridian) in Custer County, South Dakota.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The boundary lines of the nominated property are set to include all features of the ranch complex, but to exclude pasture land and any public roadways.

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1.

Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch  
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein  
June 1988  
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center  
House (resource no. 1), east elevation, camera facing west.  
Photo No. 1

2.

Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch  
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein  
June 1988  
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center  
House (resource no. 1), south and east elevations,  
camera facing northwest  
Photo No. 2

3.

Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch  
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein  
June 1988  
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center  
Privy (resource no. 4), north and east elevations,  
camera facing southwest  
Photo No. 3

4.

Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch  
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein  
June 1988  
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center  
Root cellar (resource no. 2), north elevation,  
camera facing south  
Photo No. 4

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5.  
Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch  
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein  
June 1988  
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center  
Chicken coop (resource no. 7), south and east elevations,  
camera facing northwest  
Photo No. 5

6.  
Elbert and Harriet Ward Ranch  
Custer Vicinity, Custer County, South Dakota  
by Rebecca Sample Bernstein  
June 1988  
Neg: State Historical Preservation Center  
Milk house (resource no. 3), east elevation,  
camera facing west  
Photo No. 6