

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

434
D
MAR 11 1991

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" 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 Quien Sabe Ranch
other names/site number 48FR2608

2. Location

street & number Quien Sabe Ranch Road N/A not for publication
city, town 18 miles northeast of Shoshoni X vicinity
state Wyoming code 56 county Fremont code 013 zip code 822649

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Pioneer Ranches/Farms in Fremont County, Wyoming, ca. 1865-1895
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

Thomas E. Marceau, DSHPO 2/15/91
Signature of certifying official Date

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.
 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): _____

Antoniotti 4/18/91

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC - single dwelling
 AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE - storage,
 animal facility, agricultural
 outbuilding

vacant/not in use

7. Description
 Architectural Classification
 (enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Other: Log vernacular

foundation stone
 walls log
 roof earth (bentonite)
 other bentonite chinking

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Quien Sabe Ranch is located in Fremont County, Wyoming, about eighteen miles northeast of the town of Shoshoni. This ranch complex is situated on the east flank of Copper Mountain and on the west bank of Hoodoo Creek. The ranch buildings are nestled between the creek on the east and a north-south trending finger ridge on the west that provides some protection from the prevailing west winds. The Quien Sabe Ranch is comprised of a core of original or early buildings that are no longer in use and are located in the west half of the complex and more modern buildings, barns, and corrals in the east half of the complex used in conjunction with the current ranching operation. The original buildings are all of log construction and consist of a ranch house and several outbuildings. There is a total of five buildings or sites, all of which are considered contributing elements of the complex. The key building in the original complex is a one-story gable-roofed hewn log ranch house, probably constructed in the 1880s. It is isolated from and southeast of the outbuildings and faces south onto an open meadow area. The outbuildings are arranged along the east base and slope of a low finger ridge. From south to north they consist of a sandstone building foundation where a wood frame structure once stood, a one-story gable-roofed log bunkhouse, a one-story gable-roofed log icehouse, a one-story gable-roofed log blacksmith shop, and a recently rebuilt log dugout. The exact construction date of these buildings is not known, but building techniques suggest that they are contemporary with the ranch house. The remaining buildings at the Quien Sabe Ranch consist of a log garage moved in from Tough Creek, a wood frame privy, a modern house trailer, a wood frame garage, and a wood frame ranch house constructed in 1945-46. These buildings are clustered in the southeast portion of the ranch complex. There is a barn and corral area located in the northeast portion of the complex. It consists of adjoining log barns constructed from miners' cabins hauled in from Hoodoo Creek on Copper Mountain in the 1970s. The corrals were also rebuilt at that time. These buildings have not been included within the district boundaries, either due to age or because they have been moved from other locations. The Quien Sabe Ranch has operated continuously as a cattle or sheep ranch for over one hundred years. It is located in a sparsely populated rugged foothill region that has received few modern intrusions, and therefore it retains good integrity of setting. The buildings within the district boundaries are all of similar log construction with sod roofs. Those buildings in

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Period of Significance

ca. 1880s-1939

Significant Dates

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Quien Sabe Ranch is historically significant for its association with pioneer ranching/farming in Fremont County, Wyoming. The hewn log ranch house and log outbuildings reflect the earliest period of ranching in what became northeastern Fremont County. The Quien Sabe Ranch retains good integrity of form, materials, and setting. It is the best preserved example of a nineteenth century stockraising homestead still remaining in this part of Fremont County.

Historical Background: The history of ranching and farming in Fremont County, Wyoming, is inextricably bound to the history of Euro-American settlement within the region that now encompasses Fremont County in the late nineteenth century. The three major catalysts for settlement were the Oregon Trail, which passed through the southern portion of Fremont County; the building of the first Transcontinental Railroad through southern Wyoming territory in 1867-68; and the discovery and development of gold deposits in the vicinity of South Pass in 1867-68. A secondary impetus for settlement was the creation of the Wind River Indian Reservation on the east flank of the Wind River Mountains in 1868. North-south transportation routes were soon established linking the South Pass gold fields and the reservation with the newly completed railroad. The pioneer stockmen of Fremont County consisted of two rather disparate groups. The first group consisted of the English and Scottish "cattle barons" who established large scale ranching enterprises, generally based along the Sweetwater River Valley. However, their cattle ranged as far north as Badwater Creek and the Copper Mountains. Many of these cattle barons were absentee owners who hired intermediaries to manage their properties. The second group of pioneer stockmen were the "jacks of all trades" who were first lured to the region by gold, working as miners, laborers, freighters, or merchants in the South Pass mines, and gradually evolved into stockmen. They often raised sheep as well as cattle and engaged in limited farming for basic food supply or to supplement their income. This group was more numerous and endured beyond the winter of 1886-86 that ruined many of

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.18

UTM References

A

1,3	25,75,6,0	4,80,87,2,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

C

1,3	25,76,5,0	4,80,87,9,5
-----	-----------	-------------

B

1,3	25,76,5,0	4,80,87,2,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

D

1,3	25,76,2,0	4,80,87,9,5
-----	-----------	-------------

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert G. Rosenberg, Historian
organization Rosenberg Historical Consultants date August 15, 1989
street & number 739 Crow Creek Road telephone 307-632-1144
city or town Cheyenne state Wyoming zip code 82009-9010

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2

the eastern portion of the complex generally consist of well maintained log and wood frame buildings and pole corrals. Although some of these buildings are less than fifty years of age or have been moved from other locations, they are similar in scale and materials and do not visually intrude upon the district or overall setting. The buildings within the district are described below. Sequential numbers correspond with locations on the sketch map, and contributing structures are shaded.

The main ranchhouse (No. 1) was probably constructed in the mid-1880s. It is a one-story hewn log building (56'x 17-1/2') with a gently pitched gable roof covered with bentonite clay. The building rests on a dry laid sandstone foundation. The walls are constructed with logs hewn on the inside and outside surfaces with corner post joints. Bentonite chinking was originally used to fill the gaps but has been covered with cement chinking. The walls are constructed with short segments of hewn logs so that corner post joints are used at regular intervals, even on the short dimensions. The horizontal logs have tenon notches on either end that fit into a channel in the horizontal hewn log member. However, instead of being mortised, this channel is created by nailing wood strips on either side. This technique may reflect a variation of the piece-sur-piece construction method most common in areas of French settlement. The roof is supported with log purlins and a ridgepole. The plate logs are hewn and rest directly on the corner posts. Slab logs and log poles are laid over the purlins to provide a base for the bentonite covering. Bentonite was commonly used for roofs and chinking in log cabins in areas where this clay-like material was abundant, because it is capable of absorbing large quantities of water without leaking. The interior of the building is divided into three rooms with log partitions and has tongue and groove wood flooring. There are three entrances in the south elevation and three boarded over window openings. Window and door frames are made from milled lumber. There are two metal stovepipe chimneys protruding from the roof. Numerous cut or square nails are evident throughout the building. The west portion of the north wall has been damaged by heavy equipment and is partially collapsed. This building has not been occupied since about 1946 when the new ranch house was finished. It is currently vacant. The ranch house has received no known modifications to the interior or exterior. It is therefore considered a strong contributing element to the district.

The outbuildings are all constructed with logs but use different construction techniques than the ranch house. This may be explained by more attention to detail and craftsmanship in the main dwelling, or the outbuildings may have been constructed by a different builder. Cut or square nails are in evidence in varying numbers in the outbuildings, suggesting an early building date probably contemporary with the ranch house.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

A building site (No. 2) consists of a single tier or course of slab sandstone, representing a portion of a former building foundation. Only the north and west walls are still in place (23' x 15'). A wood frame building used as a bunkhouse was formerly located at this location. It was torn down in the middle to late 1940s. No other information is available on this building site. It is considered a contributing element to the district.

The log bunkhouse (No. 3) was constructed at an unknown date but is considered to be contemporary with the ranch house. It is a one-story log building (15' x 14') with a gently pitched gable roof covered with bentonite clay. The walls are constructed with peeled round logs with square notched joints and bentonite clay chinking held in place with wood strips. The roof is supported with log purlins and a ridgepole. Log poles have been laid across the purlins to support a layer of bentonite. There is an entrance with a wood plank door centered in the south elevation. There is a small window opening that has been boarded over in the east elevation. The interior of the bunkhouse has a wood floor and the remnants of a cast iron woodstove. Some cut or square nails were used in the construction of this building. The bunkhouse is still in good condition although vacant, and has received no known modifications since it was built. It is therefore considered a strong contributing element to the district.

The icehouse (No. 4) was constructed at an unknown date but is considered to be contemporary with the ranch house. It is a one-story log building (16' x 13') with a gently pitched gable roof covered with bentonite clay. The walls are constructed with peeled round logs with saddle notched joints and bentonite chinking held in place with wood strips. Many of the logs were chopped instead of sawn, and the inside surfaces of the logs have been hewn. There are two doors in the east elevation. The inner door is an old panel wood door with original hardware. The outer door is constructed with wood planks. There is a four-light fixed window in the same elevation boarded over on the inside. The roof is supported with log purlins and a ridgepole. Rough sawn planks are laid over the purlins to create a base for the bentonite roof covering. The interior of the icehouse has a dirt floor. The icehouse may have originally been a cabin that was converted. It has not been used as an icehouse since 1942. It was most recently used as a chicken house, but is now used only for storage. The icehouse is in fair to good condition and has received no known major modifications since it was constructed. It is therefore considered a strong contributing element to the district.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

The blacksmith shop (No. 5) was constructed at an unknown date but is considered to be contemporary with the ranch house. It is a one-story log building (30' x 16') with a gently pitched gable roof covered with bentonite clay. The building is partially dug into a ridge slope. The walls are constructed with peeled round logs with saddle notched joints and bentonite clay chinking held in place with wood strips and patched with cement. The roof is supported with log purlins and a ridgepole. Log poles are laid across the purlins to provide a base for the bentonite covering. There is a wooden barn door in the east elevation that once slid on metal tracks. There are small window openings in the south and west elevations without sash. There are the remnants of a stone hearth for the forge, a wooden work table, and a dirt floor in the interior of the building. A metal stovepipe protrudes from the roof. The blacksmith shop was used until the 1960s and is in fair condition and has received no known major modifications since it was built. It is therefore considered a strong contributing element to the district.

The remaining structure in the original ranch complex is a dugout. It is located northeast of the blacksmith shop. It is constructed with logs and dug into the ridge slope. It has a flat roof supported by logs and heaped over with dirt. It was used for food storage and reportedly had gun ports for defense. Unfortunately, it was completely rebuilt in the 1980s. Therefore, it has been excluded from the district boundaries. It is similar in appearance to the original structure and does not detract from the overall setting of the eligible buildings.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

the European interests. This group settled the Lander Valley and the Wind River Valley in addition to settling along the Sweetwater River and Beaver Creek. The eastcentral and northeastern portions of Fremont County were generally settled at a later date because of the lack of year-round water sources.

However, the Bridger Mountains (of which Copper Mountain is a part) contained a number of drainages favorable to ranching. It was here that three Englishmen, Harry Jevons, Richard Ashworth, and Richard Berry, established a cattle ranching operation in about 1883. Their cattle ranged from Nowater Creek in the Bighorn Basin south to the Big Wind River and along the south side of Copper Mountain. They established their headquarters on Hoodoo Creek, the beginnings of the Quien Sabe Ranch.

Richard Ashworth was already well known in the Big Horn Basin. In 1881, he and James C. Johnson started a cattle ranch along the Greybull River. Ashworth had started cattle ranching in the Basin on the advice of a countryman, Captain Henry Belknap. Ashworth used the Cheyenne Club as an address, and the partners used the milliron brand. Ashworth and Johnson also started the Hoodoo Ranch on Sage Creek. Although he was a foreigner, Ashworth was respected and well liked by the other cattlemen in the region.

Tradition suggests that Mexican cabaleros lived on the Quien Sabe Ranch prior to the Englishmen, engaging in the sale of stolen horses. Either the Englishmen drove them off or hired some on as ranch hands. The name of the ranch "Quien Sabe" (Who knows?) is said to have evolved from the Mexicans' reply to questions put to them by the management. The Englishmen established the "J" brand for their operation.

Fremont County courthouse records provide additional information about the early operation of the Quien Sabe Ranch. In 1885, James Pickles sold seventeen thirty-seconds, which was his share of the cattle herd, to Wilfred Jevons. The herd consisted of about 1,350 head grazing on Badwater Creek branded with the "J" on the left side and the "J" on the left thigh; also 70 head of horses branded "J" on the left shoulder. Tom Osborne witnessed this transaction. He later became the owner of the Quien Sabe.

On April 4, 1887, Richard L.F. Berry agreed to give one-half interest in cattle branded "J" to Wilfred Jevons. In November 1888, Jevons sold "1,400 head of neat cattle," the ranch on Hoodoo Creek, house, stock, harness, tools, and machinery to Richard Berry. In May 1890, Jevons in turn sold the ranch to Richard Ashworth. At this time

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

it was stated that "Wilfred Jevons was acting as attorney for Harry Jevons." In 1894, Ashworth sold the ranch back to Jevons with additional cattle branded " " and horses with the milliron brand. Finally, Jevons deeded the land to Edward Ashworth of England to guarantee a loan of \$4,747.62 at ten percent interest from Clay and Forrester of Chicago. At least two sources verify that Jevons later committed suicide after gambling away his remaining funds in Vick Arland's saloon near present-day Meeteetse.

It is not known when the English interest in the Quien Sabe Ranch ended. The ranch entered a shadowy period until John and Eliza Johnson recorded a patent for it in 1906. However, it appears that Tom Osborne was the next owner. Osborne provides the chief link between Robert LeRoy Parker, or Butch Cassidy, and the Quien Sabe Ranch. The link was established by Lulu Parker Betensen, Butch Cassidy's sister, in a book she wrote in 1975. In her book she published a letter written by Bill Marion of Lander, Wyoming, on April 1, 1968. Marion states that Tom Osborne owned the Quien Sabe Ranch in 1893 and was swindled into signing over the deed by a man named Thorn. Osborne subsequently learned he had been swindled out of his ranch and shot Thorn. He was sentenced to seven years in the penitentiary and during the interim deeded the ranch over to Butch Cassidy. According to Marion, Cassidy held the ranch for Osborne until he was pardoned and released, then deeded it back to him. Unfortunately, none of these legal or extralegal transactions can be verified. However, Osborne's relationship to the Quien Sabe Ranch is corroborated by Charles A. Hett, an early settler in the area. Hett stated that in 1896 Tom Osborne hired him to take him to the Quien Sabe Ranch. He also stated that two brothers, John and Gus Johnson, owned the ranch at that time. Official field notes from the U.S. Government survey in 1897 state: "The only settler (in the township) is Gus Johnson in Section 34." The General Land Office plat that resulted from this survey depicts Johnson's house, barn, and fence at the location of the Quien Sabe Ranch. John S. Johnson's "X" brand (address, Lost Cabin) was recorded in the 1902 Wyoming brand book. It was John Johnson who subsequently patented the property in 1906. Hett was hired by the Johnson brothers to trap wolves. He stayed with his wife and two children on the ranch for 14 months. He stated that during this time numerous cattle rustlers frequented the ranch. He mentioned one incident in which several of the rustlers from the Quien Sabe Ranch stole cattle from the Embar roundup on Badwater Creek and butchered and sold the meat. However, he never mentioned the name Butch Cassidy in association with the Quien Sabe Ranch during this time period. Therefore, it appears that Butch Cassidy's relationship to the Quien Sabe Ranch, especially ownership, must remain in the tradition of oral history until documentation can verify it. However, it is evident that

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4

the Quien Sabe Ranch was a gathering place for rustlers and outlaws during this time period.

In 1907, Emil Thoren acquired the Quien Sabe Ranch. It has remained in the Thoren family since that date. Thoren hailed from Kansas and had come to Sweetwater County in 1892 and to Fremont County in 1904. He married Elsie Crowley, whose family homesteaded on nearby Tough Creek. Emil's son Dennis continued to operate the ranch after Emil's death. Dennis and his wife had two sons, William and Donald. They continued managing the ranch after their father died in the 1940s. They are co-owners and have a limited partnership in the Quien Sabe Ranch and associated holdings acquired throughout the Thoren period of ownership. The Thoren family continued to live on the Quien Sabe Ranch until 1952 when they began leasing it. The Thorens are primarily cattle ranchers, although Emil had raised both cattle and sheep.

The Quien Sabe Ranch has a long and colorful history beginning with the English cattle barons of the 1880s, a shadowy period as a headquarters for outlaws and cattle rustlers in the 1890s and early 1900s, and a prolonged period of single family ownership beginning in 1907. It represents one of the earliest stockraising operations in northern Fremont County. It has operated continuously as a livestock ranch for over one hundred years, yet still retains the original ranch house and several important early or original outbuildings. It retains a high degree of integrity of setting, location, design, workmanship, materials, and feeling and association, and therefore meets the requirements for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

Betenson, Lula Parker (as told to Dora Flack). Butch Cassidy, My Brother. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975.

Bureau of Land Management, BLM Master Title Plats, Historical Indices, Tract Books, and General Land Office Plats. Cheyenne: BLM Land Office.

_____. Original Field Notes of the Survey of T40N-R93W, conducted in 1897 by Edward F. Stahle, Deputy Surveyor. Cheyenne: BLM Land Office.

Fremont County Courthouse, Record of Documents, Book A. Lander: Fremont County Courthouse.

Pointer, Larry. In Search of Butch Cassidy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977.

Thoren, Frances. "The Quien Sabe Ranch to the Year 1906," in Exploring Fremont County History edited by Loren Jost. Riverton: Western Wyoming College, 1985.

_____. Personal Communication, Quien Sabe Ranch, 6/12/89.

Walker, Tacetta B. Stories of Early Days in Wyoming--Big Horn Basin. Casper, Wyoming: Prairie Publishing Company, 1936.

Wasden, David J. From Beaver to Oil: A Century in the Development of Wyoming's Big Horn Basin. Cheyenne: Pioneer Printing & Stationery Co., 1973.

Wyoming State Archives, Museums, & Historical Department, "Official List of Brands in Wyoming, 1902." Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives, Museums, & Historical Department.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

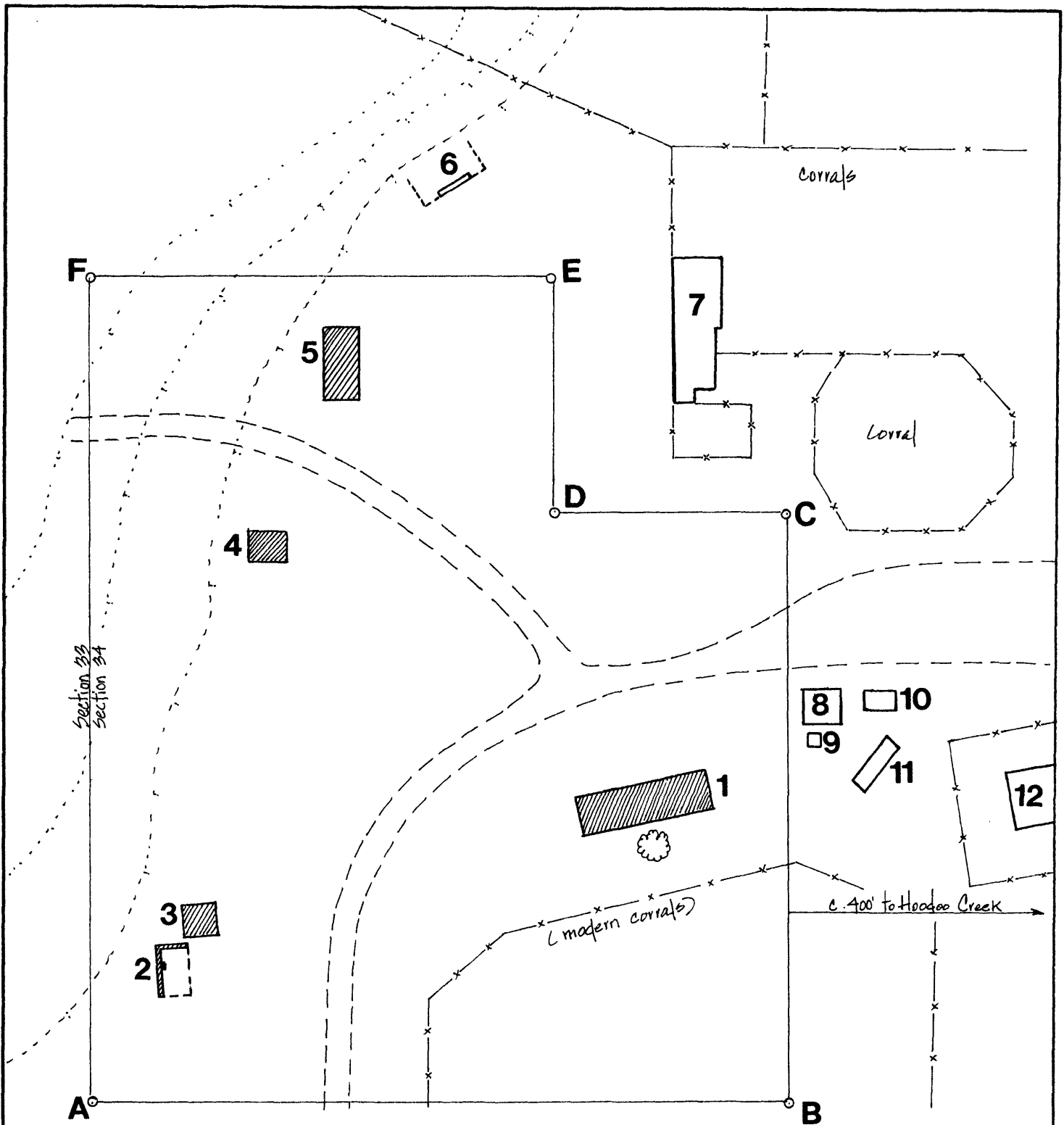
UTM References: E. 13/257620/4808825 F. 13/257560/4808825

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at Point A (see accompanying map), a point 450 feet due north of the west quarter-quarter marker on the common line between Sections 33 and 34, T40N-R93W, proceed due east (AZ. 90 degrees) approximately 300 feet to Point B. From Point B, proceed due north (AZ. 0 or 360 degrees) for approximately 250 feet to Point C. From Point C, proceed due west (AZ. 270 degrees) approximately 100 feet to Point D. From Point D, proceed due north (AZ. 0 or 360 degrees) approximately 100 feet to Point E. From Point E, proceed due west (AZ. 270 degrees) approximately 200 feet to Point F. From Point F, proceed due south (AZ. 180 degrees) approximately 350 feet along the common line between Sections 33 and 34 back to Point A.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the significant historic buildings in the Quien Sabe Ranch complex. In the absence of logical geographical and man-made boundaries such as fencelines and roads, the basis of the boundary is geodetic points established along the common line between Sections 33 and 34, which also forms the west boundary of the district. The remaining points are established in relation to the section line and are also geodetic points reproducible on the ground through standard survey procedures. This boundary separates the modern elements of the complex from the original or early core of buildings, yet provides enough space to maintain overall setting.



QUIEN SABE RANCH (48FR2608)

- 1. hewn log ranch house
- 2. sandstone foundation
- 3. log bunkhouse
- 4. log icehouse
- 5. log blacksmith shop
- 6. rebuilt log dugout
- 7. reconstructed barn (moved)
- 8. log garage (moved)
- 9. wood frame privy
- 10. wood frame garage
- 11. modern house trailer
- 12. wood frame ranch house (c.1945)

- access & driveways
- contours
- o- proposed N.R. boundary
- x-x fences and corrals
- ▨ contributing elements
- non-contributing elements (approx. location and scale)

