

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Sierra Bonita Ranch

AND/DR COMMON  
The Hooker Ranch

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Willcox (27 mi. NW)  VICINITY OF 3rd  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Arizona CODE 04 COUNTY Cochise/Graham CODE 003/009

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

### CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

### OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE

BOTH

### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

### STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- YES RESTRICTED
- YES UNRESTRICTED
- NO

### ACCESSIBLE

### PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER Ranch

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. Jacqueline Hooker Hughes and Mr. Charles Hooker Davis

STREET & NUMBER  
Box 188

CITY, TOWN Willcox VICINITY OF STATE Arizona 85643

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, COUNTY Courthouse  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

STREET & NUMBER  
Graham County

CITY, TOWN Safford STATE Arizona

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MDVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPDSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sierra Bonita ranch house is a fully articulated country hacienda built around a long, rectangular patio. The three-sided structure follows the hacienda plan; the fourth side is enclosed by a wall, beyond which stand some of the many ranch buildings. The exterior walls of the house were built of a double row of adobe bricks 16 feet high and 20 inches thick. While the roof is almost flat, it slopes slightly toward the patio for drainage, and a low parapet surrounds the roof on all three sides for possible defense. Continuing the fortress design, there were originally no exterior windows in the house, all of the openings being onto the patio, with access to the house through a gate in the wall of the carriage courtyard, long since closed up. The hacienda form ususally has few exterior openings, but the Hooker house was built with none because it lay across the main trail used by the Apache for raiding into Mexico. Hooker, however, had an understanding with the Apache and had few problems with them.

A portal with a wooden floor surrounded three sides of the patio, giving shade and providing the illusion of coolness; the wooden floor has been replaced by concrete. The patio once contained a well, windmill, and root cellar, providing an interior water supply and food storage in case of attack. The well is long since capped, and the root cellar closed off. The patio is now in grass with a brick planter where the entrance to the root cellar once was.

Inside the house along the northeast side are three bedrooms and a parlor. Adjacent to the bedrooms was a bathroom with the first Victorian scroll-foot bathtub in the valley. Colonel Hooker's bedroom is now a billiard room, although the furniture from the room is in another bedroom on the northeast side of the house. East of the parlor, which still contains Hooker's roll-top desk, is the family dining room, and adjacent to that the family kitchen and pantry open into a second kitchen and the dining room once used by the ranch hands. Next to the most westerly of the bedrooms stand the workroom and storage room. The adjacent stable provided space for 17 horses, box stalls for stallions, and a tack room, for Hooker was fond of blooded stock and often hosted races on his half-mile track.

The house was the nerve center of a complex of other ranch buildings. Southwest of the house was a large adobe corral for holding cattle, as many as 3000 head, some say. Other nearby corrals, both adobe and plank, held the horse remuda. Close by is a rare structure for the Southwest: a barn built mostly of wood, with a gabled roof, and the legend "Sierra Bonita Ranch 1872" lettered above the doors, a legend recently refurbished for the ranch's centennial. To the north was a large adobe corral for the storage of hay.

North of the workroom and outside the main house complex stands an adobe bunkhouse that housed the ranch hands. It retains its tin roof, but it is deteriorating at the southeast end. A modern brick guest room has been added to the northwest end.

CONTINUED

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Ranching
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1872

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Col. Henry C. Hooker founded the Sierra Bonita Ranch in 1872. It was the first permanent American cattle ranch in Arizona, and the first one to introduce graded stock into the territory. The Sierra Bonita and later ranches in Arizona were founded to feed the army posts, mining camps, and Indian agencies in the territory. Thus was laid the basis for the Arizona cattle industry. Beginning in 1867 Colonel Hooker became the most important military beef contractor in Arizona. He drove up to 15,500 cattle to Arizona holding ranges each year, there to await orders from army camps and Indian agencies. In 1872 one of his trail herds stampeded into the Sulphur Springs Valley. Impressed by this location, Hooker founded the Sierra Bonita Ranch there, on the site of a former Spanish hacienda which had been destroyed by the Apache in the early 1800's. Hooker's ranch house was an adobe fortress, for he too was harrassed, first by Apaches, later by the gangs of cutthroats and rustlers who infested the Sulphur Springs Valley.

The Sierra Bonita was watered by five springs and numerous cienegas and wells. This water gave Hooker control of a range some 20 miles long and 30 miles wide. The Sierra Bonita, at an elevation of 4,000 feet escaped extremes of heat and cold and was an ideal breeding range. A number of Hooker's outlying ranches specialized in breeding, holding stock, and grazing lands. With the importation of Hereford graded stock in the eighties, Hooker improved his ranches, fenced portions of land, and planted alfalfa and other hay crops.

Hooker was one of the few Arizona ranchers to survive the disastrous drought of 1891. He formed the Sierra Bonita Land and Stock Company with capital of \$500,000 and bought out surrounding ranchers, extending his range to 250,000 acres carrying 20,000 head. At the time of his death in 1907 Hooker was the cattle king of Arizona. So he had been for 40 years.

The Sierra Bonita is an operating cattle ranch still in the Hooker family. The adobe ranch house has been remodelled inside but still retains the fortress-like appearance of early days. Surrounding the ranch house, which is shaded by gigantic cottonwoods, are the original adobe corrals, bunkhouses, and barns. The integrity of the site is exceptional in three ways: continuity, appearance of the buildings, and magnificent setting.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 320 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 2	5, 9, 1	2, 0, 0	3, 5, 9, 6	7, 5, 0	B	1, 2	5, 9, 1	2, 0, 0	3, 5, 9, 7	6, 5, 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	
C	1, 2	5, 8, 9	6, 0, 0	3, 5, 9, 7	6, 5, 0	D	1, 2	5, 8, 9	6, 0, 0	3, 5, 9, 6	7, 5, 0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

N. 1/2 of Section 6, TWP 11S, R. 23 E.

### Boundary Justification

The 320 acres included within the landmark boundary includes all of the ranch buildings.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Marilynn Larew, Historian; original form prepared by William Brown, July 17, 1963

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey Division, National Park Service

DATE

6/20/77

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

D.C. 20240

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

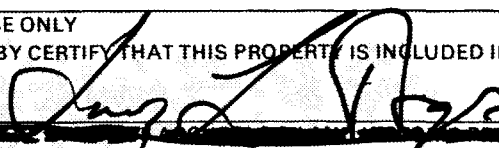
FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER



DATE

9/8/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

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The main house has been altered inside over the years. Exterior windows and doors have been cut, including a picture window in the family dining room, said to have been cut by Hooker himself after the Apache threat had subsided.

The main house and outbuildings are in good condition; the adobe of the corrals and the bunkhouse is deteriorating as time and weather take their toll. The ranch includes some 39,000 acres of land owned by the Hooker descendants, but the whole ranch, including leased land, is over 50,000 acres, which is used for grazing and growing hay and alfalfa. The family still occupy the house.

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**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

Barnes, Will C., Arizona Place Names (Tucson, 1960).

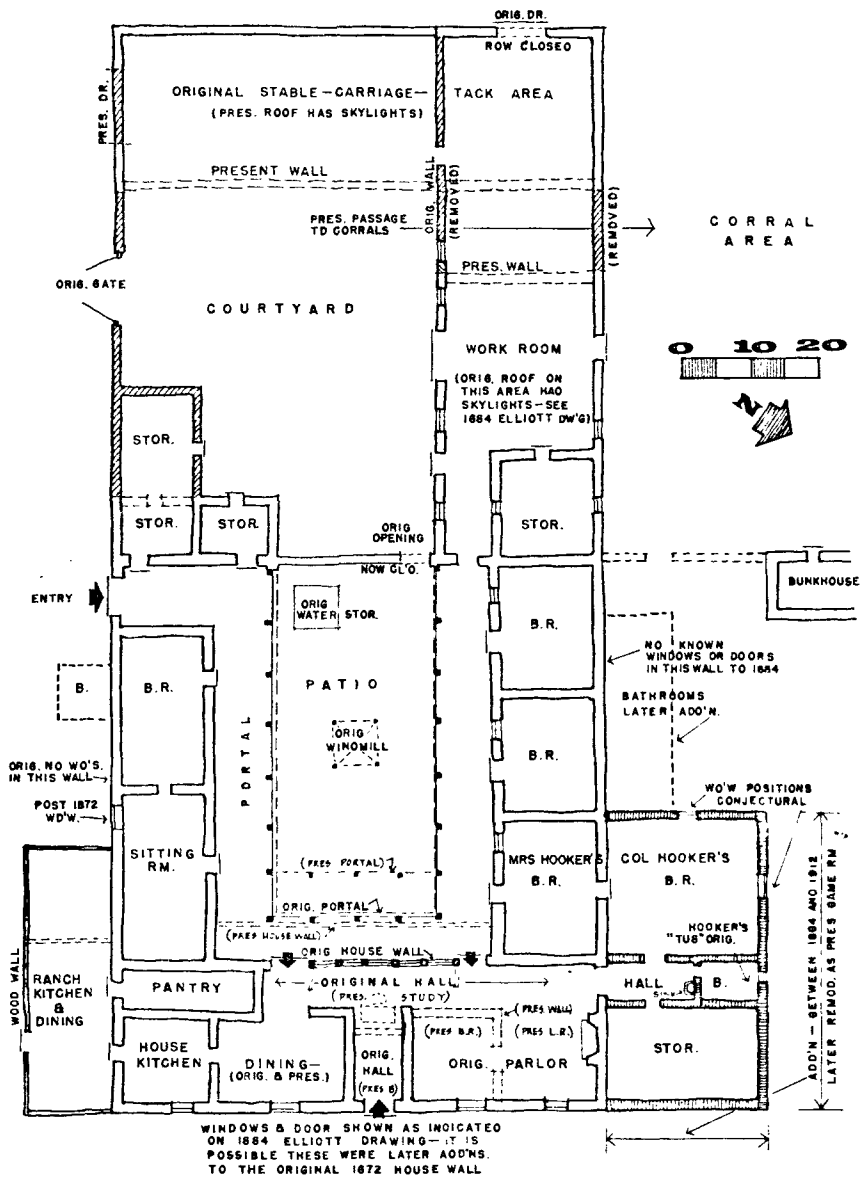
Haskett, Bert, "Early History of the Cattle Industry in Arizona," Arizona Historical Review, VI (1935), p. 3.

Hinton, Richard J., The Hand-Book of Arizona (San Francisco, 1878).

Peplow, Edward H., Jr., History of Arizona, 2 vols. (New York, 1958).

Stewart, Janet Ann, Arizona Ranch Houses: Southern Territorial Styles, 1867-1900 (Tucson, 1974), pp. 33-41.

Wagoner, J. J., "History of the Cattle Industry in Southern Arizona, 1540-1940," University of Arizona Bulletin, XXIII (April 1952).



*The Sierra Bonita ranch house - the 1872 floor plan with later changes indicated, including alterations after 1884 and up to 1971.*