Form No. 10-306 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 6 1984
DATE ENTERED JUN 21 1984

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC: James Cant Ranch Historic District

AND/OR COMMON: Sheep Rock Unit of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Oregon Rte. 19 — __NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Dayville — X VICINITY OF — CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2nd

STATE: Oregon — CODE: — COUNTY: Grant — CODE:

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	X MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)* National Park Service - Pacific Northwest Region

STREET & NUMBER: 2001 - 6th Avenue - Westin Building, Room 1920

CITY, TOWN: Seattle, — __ VICINITY OF — STATE: Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Grant County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: Rte. 395

CITY, TOWN: Canyon City — STATE: OR

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Classified Structures Field Inventory - NPS

DATE: 1976/Updated 1983 — X FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: NPS - Pacific Northwest Region

CITY, TOWN: Seattle, — STATE: WA

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	X DETERIORATED	UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	RUINS	X ALTERED	MOVED DATE
X FAIR	UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

7. Cant Ranch: Physical Description

The Cant Ranch is situated along the bottomlands of the natural basin formed by the John Day River that has traditionally been called Turtle Cove. The ranch's irrigated fields extend approximately 2-1/4 miles north from the exit of Picture Gorge, varying in width from a few feet to a couple hundred yards. Rising steeply to the east and the west from the edge of these fields are the basalt escarpments that define the basin. Beyond these escarpments are elements of the Blue Mountain range that rings the basin. The most dramatic local prominence is Sheep Rock, which rises to 3360' directly southeast of the ranch buildings. The greenbelt formed by the ranch's irrigated fields distinctly contrasts with the dusky colors and sparse vegetation of the surrounding hills.

The ranch complex is situated on the west bank of the John Day River. It now includes 11 structures: ranch house, barn and sheepshearing stalls, cabin, bunkhouse, privy, chicken coop, feed storage shed, workshop, shed, sheep pens, and watchman's hut. The cabin, a small, one-room, one-story log structure originally built over a dirt-wall cellar, is the oldest building in the group.[1] Dating from the Officer homestead period (c. 1881-1910), it was used by the Cant family primarily for storage of supplies and foodstuffs. Pack horses were tied up outside of it to be loaded with supplies for the sheepherders.

The most prominent building is the main ranch house. Built circa 1915-18,[2] it is an imposing 2-1/2-story, hip-roofed structure, with drop siding and porches that extend the full-length of the east and west elevations and approximately halfway along the north and south. The central plan incorporates a central stairhall running west to east, living room, dining room, kitchen, parlor, bedroom, baths and storage on the first floor; six bedrooms and a bath on the second; and a large open room in the attic story. Family sources maintain that the plan is based on a design from The Radford American Homes, a book of 100 house plans published in 1903 by the Radford Architectural Company of Chicago, Illinois. A review of the copy of the book still in family hands suggests that Cant's carpenters--Andrew Cress and Clarence Bisbee--may have taken ideas from several plans (for example, Nos. 126, 142, and 560) and combined them to arrive at the final plan for the Cant House. At present the house is used as a visitors' facility, with exhibits on the first floor, offices on the second, and storage on the third.

North of the main house is the barn, built circa 1920. One and one-half stories high and 120 feet long, it is timber-framed with vertical board siding and a wood-shingled gable roof. The twelve-bay interior encloses a series of holding pens and stalls. Attached to the north elevation is a one-story rectangular structure, approximately 60' long and 20' wide, which is divided into stalls for sheep shearing. Sections of the shearing equipment are still in place. Additional wood frame sheep pens northwest of the barn are on the verge of collapse. East of the barn is a small, one-room, wood frame hut that housed sheepherders during lambing season. To the west of the barn is the workshop and a small storage shed. Both are one-story, wood frame, shingle-roofed structures. The workshop has been rehabilitated for use as a park maintenance facility.

Privy
Sheep pens

Other outbuildings in the complex--the chicken coop, feed storage shed, bunkhouse, and privy--are in proximity to the house. All are of similar wood frame, shingled-roof construction. All but the privy have received new roofs in the last 5 years and are in active use. The bunkhouse has been rehabilitated to house exhibits; chickens occupy the chicken coop; and the feed shed is used to store maintenance equipment.

The irrigated fields on the east side of the river, across from the main complex, were reached by two small, hand-operated cable cars erected by the Cant family. The closest is approximately 1/4 mile south of the main house; the other is another mile to the south. Only the cable car closest to the house is still operable. Northeast of the ranch on the east bank is a small, one-story, wood frame structure with vertical board siding known as Christina's Cabin. The history of the cabin is somewhat obscure, but it may have been originally built to establish a homestead claim for Cant's oldest daughter. It is now in deteriorated condition.

The Cant Ranch is one of the best-preserved examples of the early 20th century ranching operations in the John Day River Valley. The National Park Service has included the structures on its List of Classified Structures and has actively taken steps to stabilize and preserve the key buildings. The main house, bunkhouse, cabin, feed storage shed and workshop are all in good-to-excellent condition; the barn and sheep shearing stalls, chicken coop, shed, and watchman's hut are in fair-to-good condition; and the privy and sheep pens are in poor condition. Further study of the barn is planned to determine what steps will be necessary to insure its future structural stability.

In addition to these structures, the National Park Service also purchased a collection of historic farm implements and machinery from James Cant, Jr., in January 1978. These items have been cataloged and key pieces of equipment are undergoing stabilization for future use in the interpretation of ranch life.

The area defined by the boundaries established in this nomination is that in which the activities of the ranching operation were historically focused. It includes all of the remaining structures of the ranch complex and the system of ditches and irrigated fields along the John Day River that supported the home operation. It should be noted that included within the boundary is the Sheep Rock Overlook, a 3-acre area directly off of Route 19, approximately 1/2 mile south of the ranch buildings. The overlook is a popular stop for visitors to observe the area's spectacular scenery. It is also the proposed site for the Monument's Thomas Condon Visitor Center, the construction of which is as yet unscheduled. Preliminary planning, however, has emphasized the need for a sensitive design that will present a minimal intrusion on the natural and cultural resources of the Sheep Rock Unit of the park. In addition, its completion will result in the removal of NPS offices and paleontological exhibits from the main house and permit the development of an enhanced program for interpreting local ranching history.

Also included within the proposed boundaries are 10 acres owned by James Cant, Jr. NPS holds a scenic easement on the property, thus protecting the physical and visual integrity of the parcel within the district. Mr. Cant will be contacted as part of the legal review of the nomination to provide him with an opportunity to comment on the inclusion of his property as part of the listed district.

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1. During the 1983 stabilization and rehabilitation of the cabin, it was necessary to construct some partial concrete footings where the eroding dirt walls threatened the cabin's stability. These footings are visible only from inside the cellar.

2. Different informants have provided several different dates within this time frame for construction of the house. Research conducted in 1983 in Grant County tax and assessment records failed to pinpoint the date of construction any more precisely than 1915-20 (when the assessed value of improvements on the parcel where the main ranch complex is located was increased from $250 to $1,000), because of the county's 5-year assessment schedule.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	X AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	X EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1910-1934 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Cress/Bisbee

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE ATTACHED SHEET.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY APPROX. 200 acres

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A				B			
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

SEE ATTACHED SHEET

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
Stephanie Toothman, Ph.D., Regional Historian

DATE
1983

ORGANIZATION
National Park Service

TELEPHONE
FTS 8-399-0791

STREET & NUMBER
2001 - 6th Avenue, Westin Building, Room 1920

CITY OR TOWN
Seattle,

STATE
WA

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X NO ____ NONE ____

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ____ National ✓ State ____ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Chief Historian

DATE June 7, 1984

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 6/21/1984

~~ATTEST~~:

DATE

for KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 899-214

8. Cant Ranch: Statement of Significance

The Cant Ranch has been a local landmark in the John Day River Valley of eastern Oregon since the construction of its imposing main house was completed circa 1918. Nestled below Sheep Rock along the John Day River, just north of Picture Gorge, the ranch is one of the most intact remaining examples of early 20th century ranching operations in the valley.[3] The Sheep Rock Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, in which the ranch is located, incorporates the initial 357 acres in Grant County purchased by James Cant, Sr., in 1910. In addition to the main house, the ranch complex still includes the barn, sheepshearing stalls (among the best preserved of their type still known to exist in the region), watchman's hut, bunkhouse, and an assortment of outbuildings. James Cant, Sr., a Scottish immigrant, became one of the more prominent ranchers in the valley. The ranch remained in the Cant family until it was purchased by the National Park Service in 1975, 3 years after Cant's death at age 92.

The land on which the Cant Ranch was built was first homesteaded by Floyd Officer, a member of one of the first families to settle in the John Day River Valley. Officer moved to his claim from the Dayville area (about 5 miles to the east) circa 1881[4] The small log cabin standing behind the main house is the only structure known to remain from the Officer homestead. Officer's daughter recalls that the cabin was used for storage and that the family lived in a larger log house that stood southwest of the cabin.[5] The log house was taken down by the Cant family circa 1919 following the construction of the present main house.[6]

Floyd Officer sold his homestead to James Cant, Sr., and Johnny Mason in 1910 for $4,000.[7] Cant, who arrived in eastern Oregon in 1905, was part of a wave of Scottish migrants that settled in the John Day River valley at the turn-of-the-century. Many, like Cant, got their start by working for other already-established ranchers, usually fellow Scots. Cant was hired by Alexander Murray, who had one of the larger ranches in the area and was known in the community for his efforts in bringing his countrymen to the States.[8] Cant worked for Murray from 1905-1910, taking as his wages 50 percent of the lamb crop to build his own band.[9]

Cant came to the States experienced in dealing with stock operations. His parents owned a butcher shop and stockyard in Scotland, and he had worked for several years, beginning in 1900, for a Scottish stock firm, traveling to Portugal and Argentina to purchase merino bucks. He had also briefly been in business for himself in Argentina, raising mules for military use during the Boer War.[10]

Cant's future wife, Elizabeth Grant, also immigrated to Oregon from Scotland, arriving in 1907.[11] Married in 1908, the Cants both continued to work on the Murray Ranch--she as a cook--for 2 more years. When they were ready to set up their own operation, they purchased the Officer homestead and moved into the log house on the property with their first-born, James Cant, Jr.

Over the next six decades, the Cant operation expanded ten-fold. A 1965 article in the Western Livestock Journal reported that the ranch consisted of 6500 acres of deeded land plus 4500 acres leased from BLM; another 600 acres within the Thomas Condon Fossil Beds had recently been purchased by the State of Oregon for a park.[12] During the peak of the sheep operation, Cant ran bands on leased mountain ranges in the Malheur National Forest. Many thousands more sheep from neighboring ranches annually came through the shearing pens. Along with many of their neighbors, the Cants switched to a cattle operation in the mid-forties. Low wool prices and the difficulty of locating good herders had made sheep ranching increasingly unprofitable.[13] The Journal reported in 1965 that the Cant Ranch was producing 500-600 head of cattle annually.

The Cants were prominent members of the valley community.[14] Cant, Sr., was a member, often a founder, of numerous community organizations and business associations, including the Oregon Wool Growers' Association; the Grant County Stockgrowers' Association; the Patrons of Husbandry, Grange No. 627; and the Cattle and Horse Raisers' Association of Oregon; and served as District Clerk for the local school district.[15] He and his family were noted for their hospitality. Travelers through the valley were welcomed and given a meal and, when needed, a bed. When Oregon Route 19 was constructed, Mrs. Cant boarded the road crews. Family members recall that the need to accommodate the frequent travelers and houseguests was one of the reasons Cant built such a large house. With seven bedrooms, each large enough to accommodate two beds, he was confident that his family would not have to give up their beds when guests arrived.

The upper basin area's first school was started at the Cant Ranch in 1919. Classes were first held in the old log house; shortly afterwards, when the Cants decided to tear that house down, the school was moved to the third floor of the new house. School was taught by a young woman from Kentucky whose aunt was the wife of one of the neighboring ranchers; she boarded with the Cants and, several years later, married Cant's cousin.[16]

The third floor of the main house, and the grounds of the ranch, were also the scene of many social gatherings for the Scottish community. Bagpipes and kilts were often brought out for these occasions and the thick Scottish accents that many of the original settlers never lost are recalled by surviving participants.

The ranch is now part of the Sheep Rock Unit of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The monument was established by Congress in 1974 to preserve one of the nation's most important deposits of mammalian fossils--a unique uninterrupted seven-million-year fossil record. The State of Oregon began purchasing land in the vicinity in the 1930s to preserve these deposits through the establishment of State Parks; one of these purchases was the above-mentioned 600 acres acquired from the Cants. Sections of these State lands were incorporated within the National Monument. Today, the ranch headquarters serves as a visitor center, offering exhibits on geology and local ranching history.

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3. The John Day River Valley has not been surveyed by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office for the purposes of identifying, evaluating and nominating eligible structures to the National Register of Historic Places. This evaluation of the significance of the Cant Ranch is based on several sources: a review of the properties in the area that have been recorded by the SHPO; interviews with park staff, local informants and an Oregon State researcher, all of whom are familiar with the area and its ranching history; review of written references to the ranch and the Cant family; and a partial windshield survey of the valley.

4. Interview with Eva Officer Murray (June 9, 1982) recorded by Royal G. Jackson, Oregon State University. Although the Officer family may have moved to their homestead claim in the early 1880s, Floyd Officer did not record his claim under the provisions of the 1862 Homestead Act until 1899 (Grant County Deed Record Book K, p. 263: Homestead Certificate #3131, 160 acres, January 30, 1899; on file at the Grant County Courthouse, Canyon City, Oregon).

5. Eva Officer Murray interview (June 9, 1982).

6. Interviews with Stella Pigg Munro (June 24, 1982) and James Cant, Jr., (July 10, 1982), recorded by Royal G. Jackson, Oregon State University.

7. Floyd L. Officer and Sylvia A. Officer to James Cant and John Mason, 357.41 acres, Grant County, Oregon, for $4,000, recorded in Grant County Deed Record 27, p. 609, July 7, 1910. Officer sold an additional 320 acres in adjacent Wheeler County to Cant and Mason on the same date (Grant County Mortgages Book I, p. 162). Total transaction was for 677.41 acres plus water rights for the sum of $6,900. Cant bought out John Mason's one-half individual interest in the land in 1915 for $10.00 (Grant County Deed Record 30, p. 388: March 10, 1914).

8. Stella Pigg Munro interview (June 24, 1982).

9. Western Livestock Journal (January 20, 1965), p. 10. (Interview with James Cant, Sr., who was being honored by the Malheur National Forest as its oldest permittee).

10. James Cant, Jr., interview (July 10, 1982).

11. "Elizabeth F. Cant" (1973 newspaper obituary on file at Cant Ranch Visitor's Center).

12. Western Livestock Journal (January 20, 1965), p. 10.

13. Dick Lawton, "Long History of Cant Ranch to end soon," Code 11 (April 1976) 16-17.

14. Stella Pigg Munro interview (June 24, 1982).

15. Receipts, clippings, and other miscellaneous documents pertaining to the Cant Family on file at Cant Ranch Visitor's Center.

16. Stella Pigg Munro interview (June 24, 1982).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Grant County, Oregon. Deed Record Books K, p. 263; 27, p. 609; 30, p. 388; and Mortgage Record Book I, p. 162. On file at Grant County Courthouse, Canyon City, Oregon.

Jackson, Royal G. Interviews with James Cant, Jr., Lillian Mascall, Eva Officer Murray and Stella Pigg Munro, 1982-1983. Transcripts on file at Department of Resource Recreation Management, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.

Lawton, Dick. "Long history of Cant ranch to end soon." Code 11 (April 1976) 16-17.

Miscellaneous Biographical Items related to the Cant Family on file at Cant Ranch Visitor's Center, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

Radford Architectural Company. The Radford American Homes. Chicago: 1903.

Western Livestock Journal (January 20, 1965) 10+.

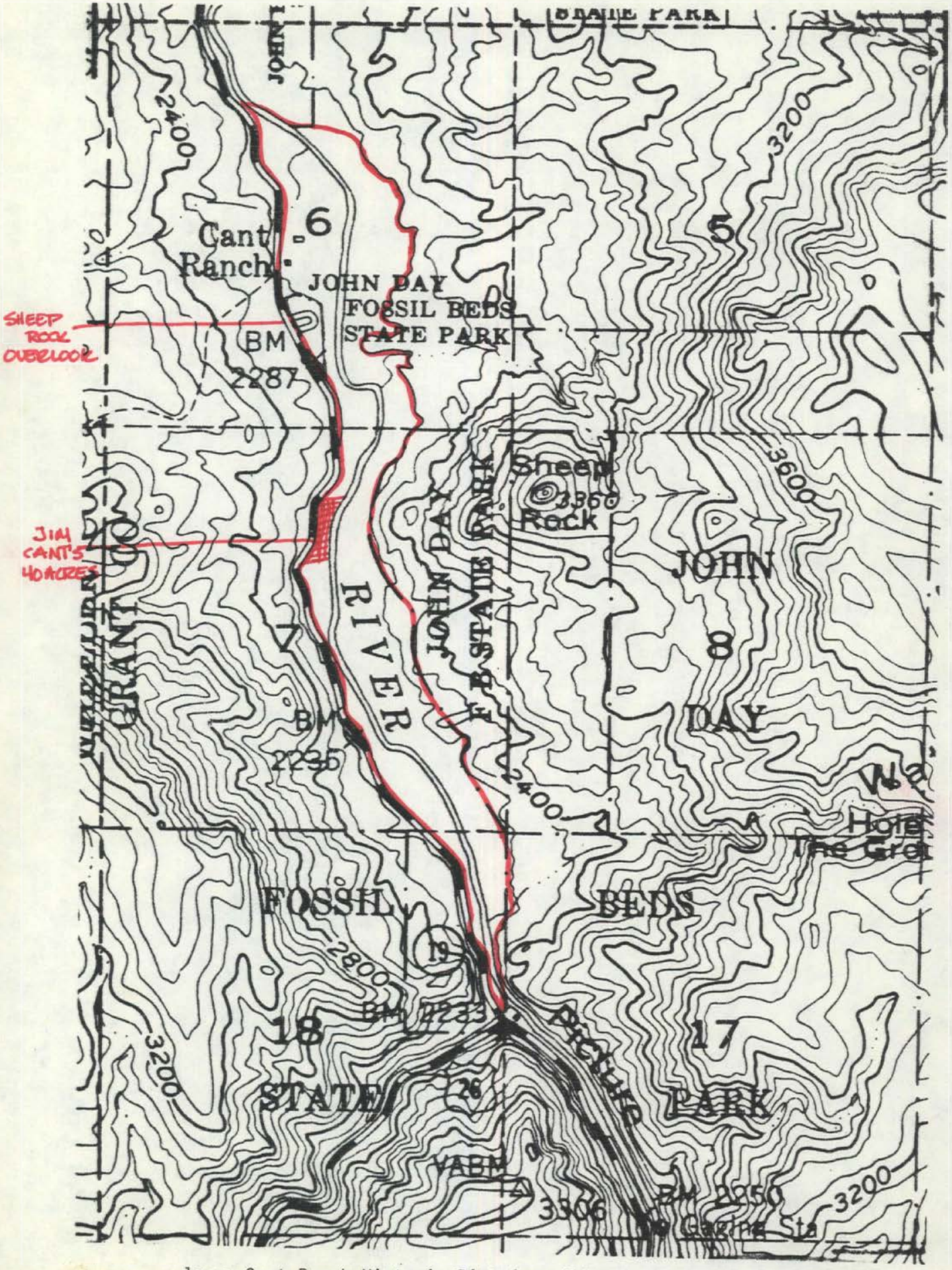
Section 10:Geographical Data

Acreage: approximately 200 acres

UTM References:
A. 11/291000/4936700
B. 11/291250/4936475
C. 11/291300/4935650
D. 11/291700/4933850
E. 11/291750/4933250
F. 11/290800/4934850
G. 11/290600/4936800

Quad: Picture Gorge, Oreg.
1:62,500

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary begins at the confluence of Rock Creek and the John Day River and proceeds in a northwesterly direction along the easternmost irrigation ditch to a juniper tree northeast of Christina's cabin and there turns west along an old fenceline to a point where the John Day River and the highway (Rt. 19) meet, just north of the Cant Ranch, then turns south and proceeds in a southeasterly direction along the highway until it meets the starting point at the confluence of Rock Creek and the John Day River.



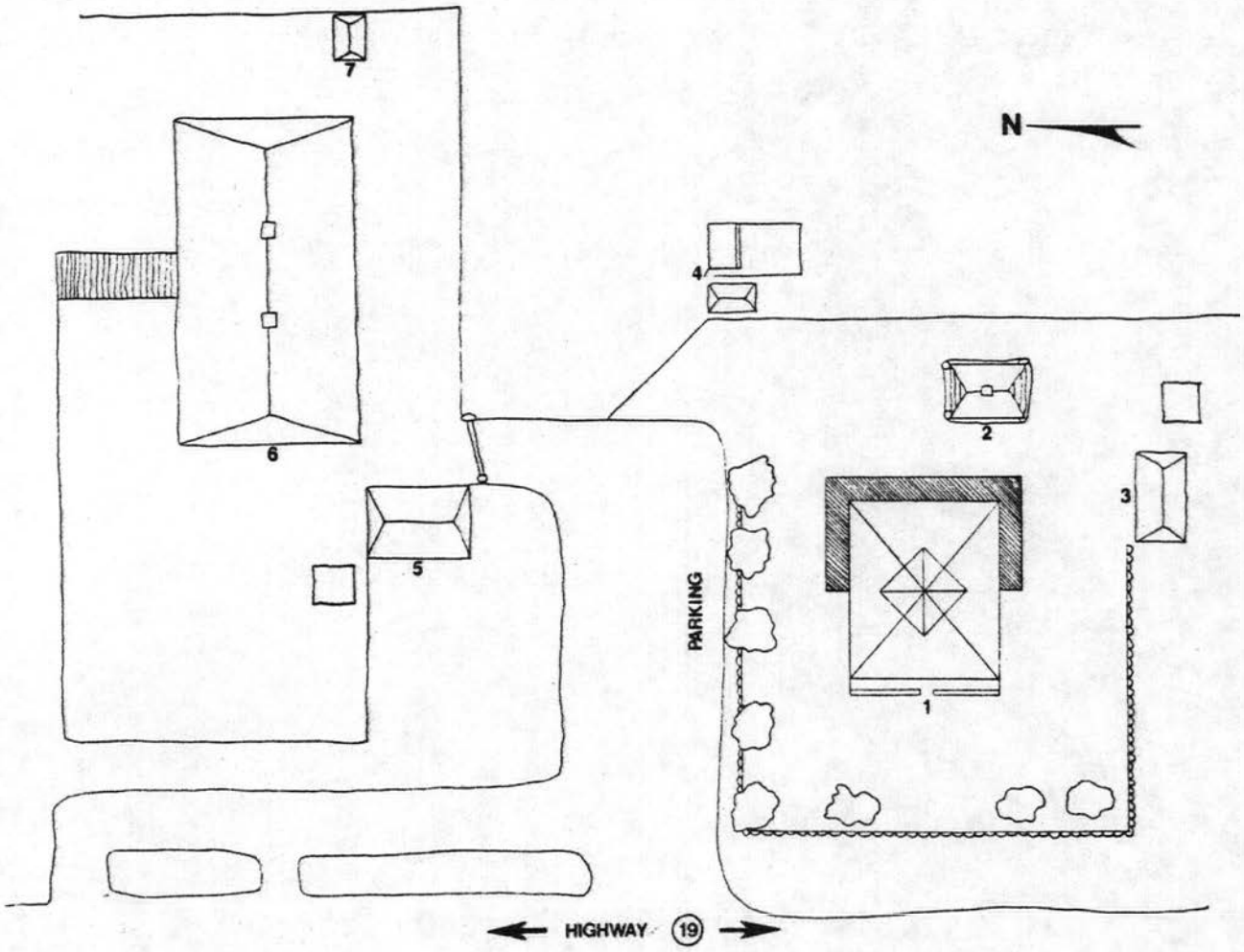
James Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds NM

MAIN RANCH COMPLEX
JAMES CANT RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT
JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NM, OREGON

KEY:

1. Main Ranch House
2. Log Cabin
3. Bunkhouse
   (Privy is southeast of bunkhouse)
4. Feed Storage Shed and Chicken Coop
5. Workshop
   (small shed is north of shop)
6. Barn with Sheepshearing Pens
7. Watchman's Hut

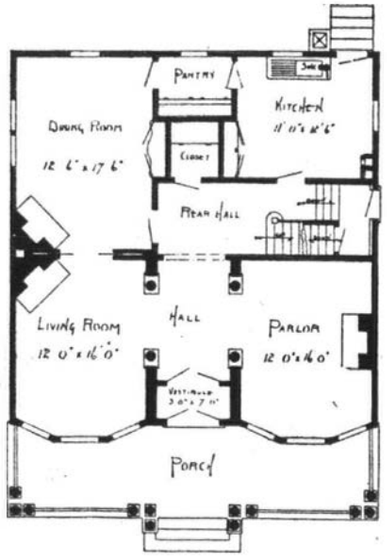
Note: sheepholding pens are northwest of barn



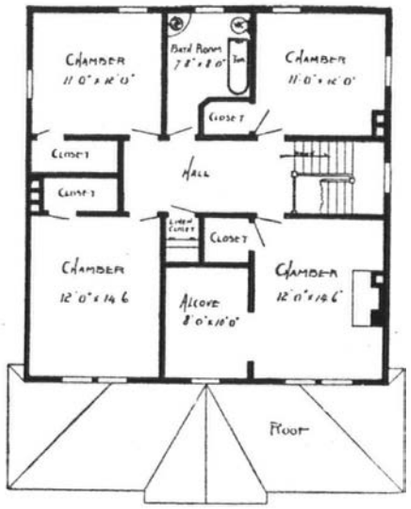
RECEIVED BY | DATE | TIME

Our blue prints show every line

Floor Plans of Design No. 142



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Size: Width, 34 feet; length, 35 feet 6 inches, exclusive of porch

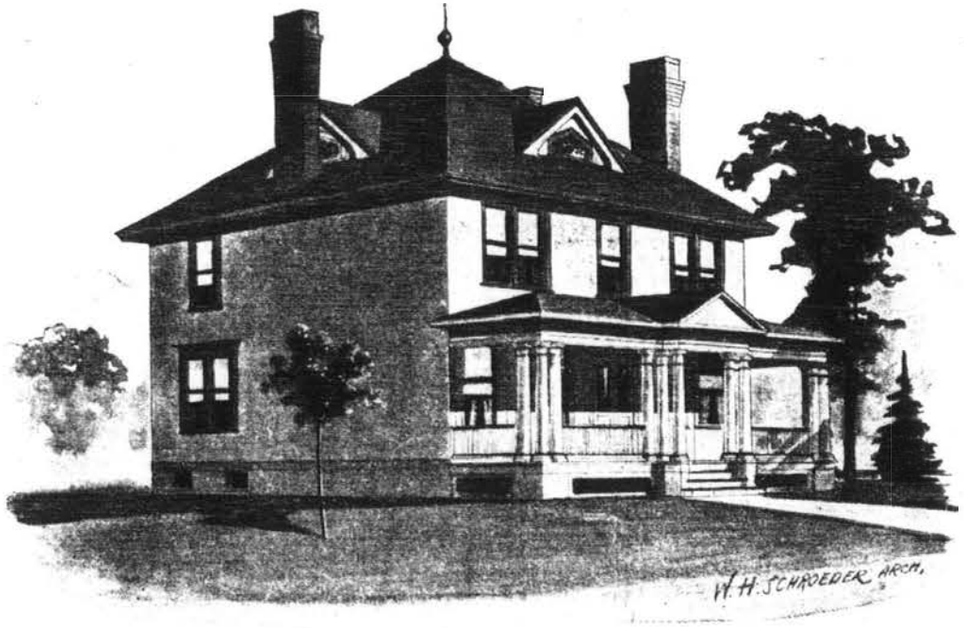
See opposite page for perspective of this house

Blue prints consist of cellar and foundation plan; roof plan; first and second floor plans; front, rear, two side elevations; wall sections and all necessary interior details. Specifications consist of about twenty pages of typewritten matter.

In the plans we illustrate, the prospective builder is sure to find some plan which will meet his requirements. If, however, no plan proves satisfactory, the ideas advanced in these illustrations are well worth the price of the book.

and figure perfect and distinct

Price of Plans and Specifications
$5.00



House Design No. 142

See opposite page for floor plans of this house

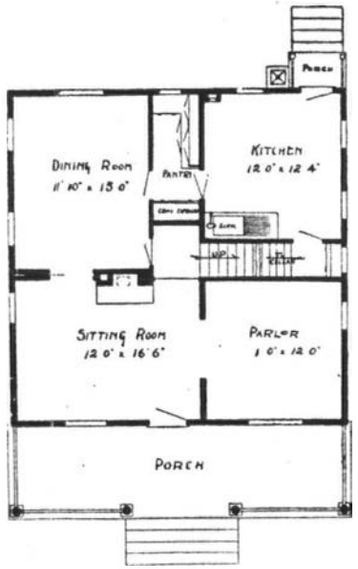
Full and complete working plans and specifications of this house will be furnished for $5.00. Cost of this house is from about $2,100.00 to about $2,350.00, according to the locality in which it is built.

Ask your Insurance Agent about our fire insurance adjustment. We know that he will heartily approve of it. Insurance companies do not hesitate to pay claims when proof is abundant. All they want is what is right.

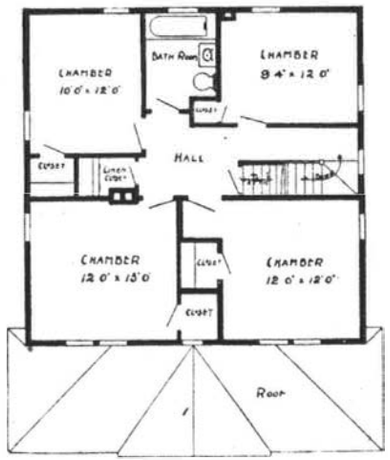
James Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds NM, OR

From: The Radford American Homes, published by Radford Architectural Co., Chicago, 1903.

Floor Plans of Design No. 126



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Size: Width, 29 feet 6 inches; length, 28 feet 6 inches, exclusive of porches

See opposite page for perspective of this house

Blue prints consist of cellar and foundation plan; roof and attic; first and second floor plans; front, rear, two side elevations; wall sections and all necessary interior details. Specifications consist of about twenty pages of typewritten matter.

These working plans and specifications can be made the basis of contract between contractor and home builder. They will prevent mistakes which cost money, and they will prevent disputes which are never settled satisfactorily to both parties.

Price of Plans and Specifications $5.00

House Design No. 126

See opposite page for floor plans of this house

Full and complete working plans and specifications of this house will be furnished for $5.00. Cost of this house is from about $2,200.00 to about $2,450.00, according to the locality in which it is built.

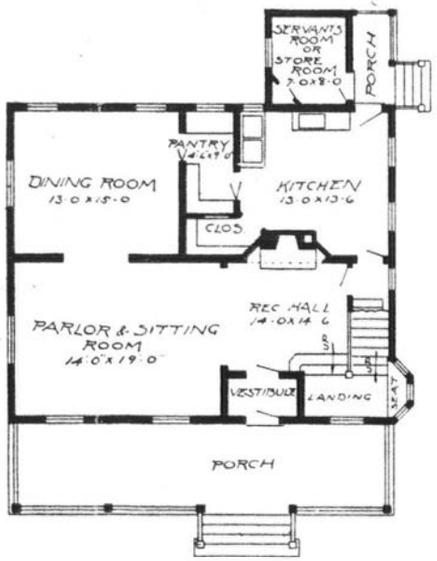
Without one cent of expense to you and without a particle of trouble, we keep a complete record of your plan, so that in time of loss, we furnish free of cost, the only reliable means to adjust your insurance.

James Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds NM, OR

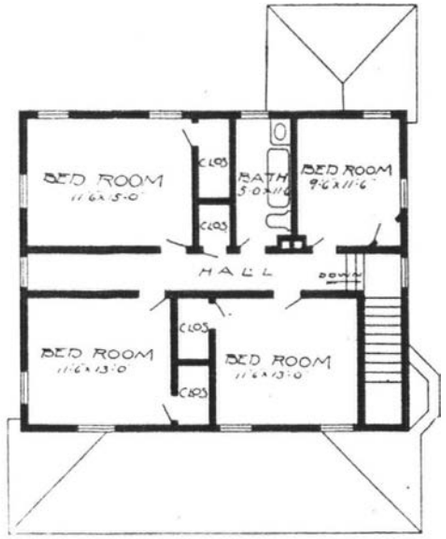
From: The Radford American Homes, published by Radford Architectural Co., Chicago, 1903.

Indefinite or partial instructions

Floor Plans of Design No. 566



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Size: Width, 35 feet; length, 28 feet 6 inches, exclusive of porches

See opposite page for perspective of this house

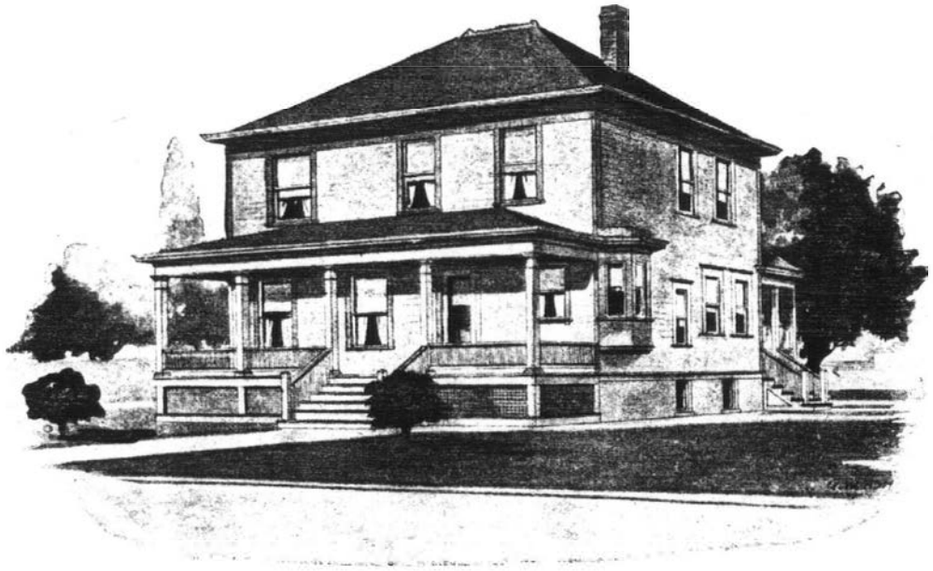
Blue prints consist of cellar and foundation plan; roof plan; first and second floor plans; front, rear, two side elevations; wall sections and all necessary interior details. Specifications consist of about twenty pages of typewritten matter.

Our plans are all substantially and artistically bound in cloth and waterproof paper. The specifications are bound in the same manner, and the two make a uniform set, worth many times the cost.

James Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds NM, OR

are always expensive for the builder

Price of Plans and Specifications $5.00



House Design No. 566

See opposite page for floor plans of this house

Full and complete working plans and specifications of this house will be furnished for $5.00. Cost of this house is from about $1,950.00 to about $2,200.00, according to the locality in which it is built.

We want to assure our customers that they run no risk in ordering plans at a distance. We guarantee our plans to be complete, accurate and as well prepared as any you have ever received.

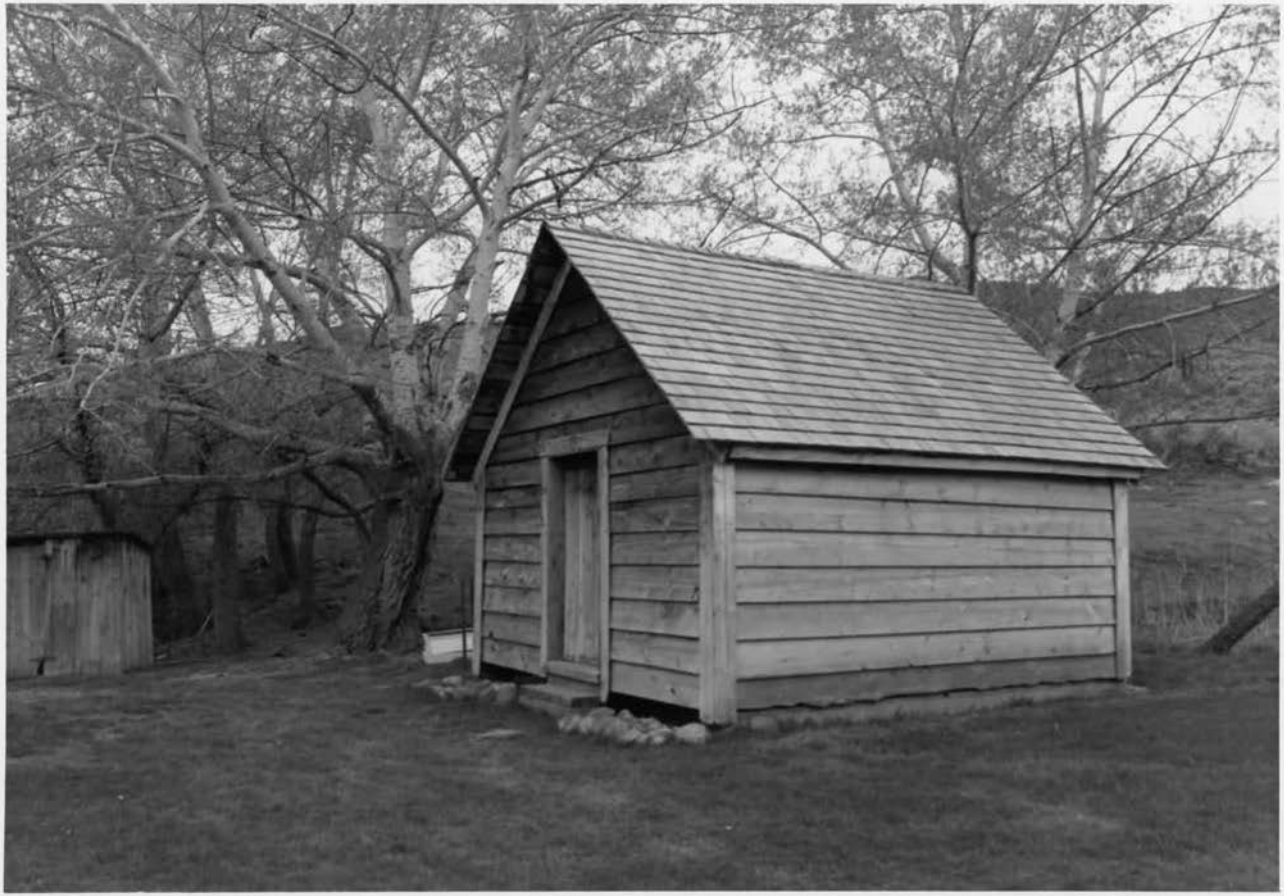
From: The Radford American Homes, published by Radford Architectural Co., Chicago, 1903.

James Cant Ranch Historic District
(main house in foreground)
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#34/NPS-PNRO
Looking northeast from Rte. 19
Photo # 1

Main House
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#30/NPS-PNRO
Looking east from Rte. 19
Photo #2

Main House and Log Cabin
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#29/NPS-PNRO
Looking northeast from Rte. 19
Photo #3

Main House (rear) and Log Cabin
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#20/NPS-PNRO
Looking southwest
Photo #4

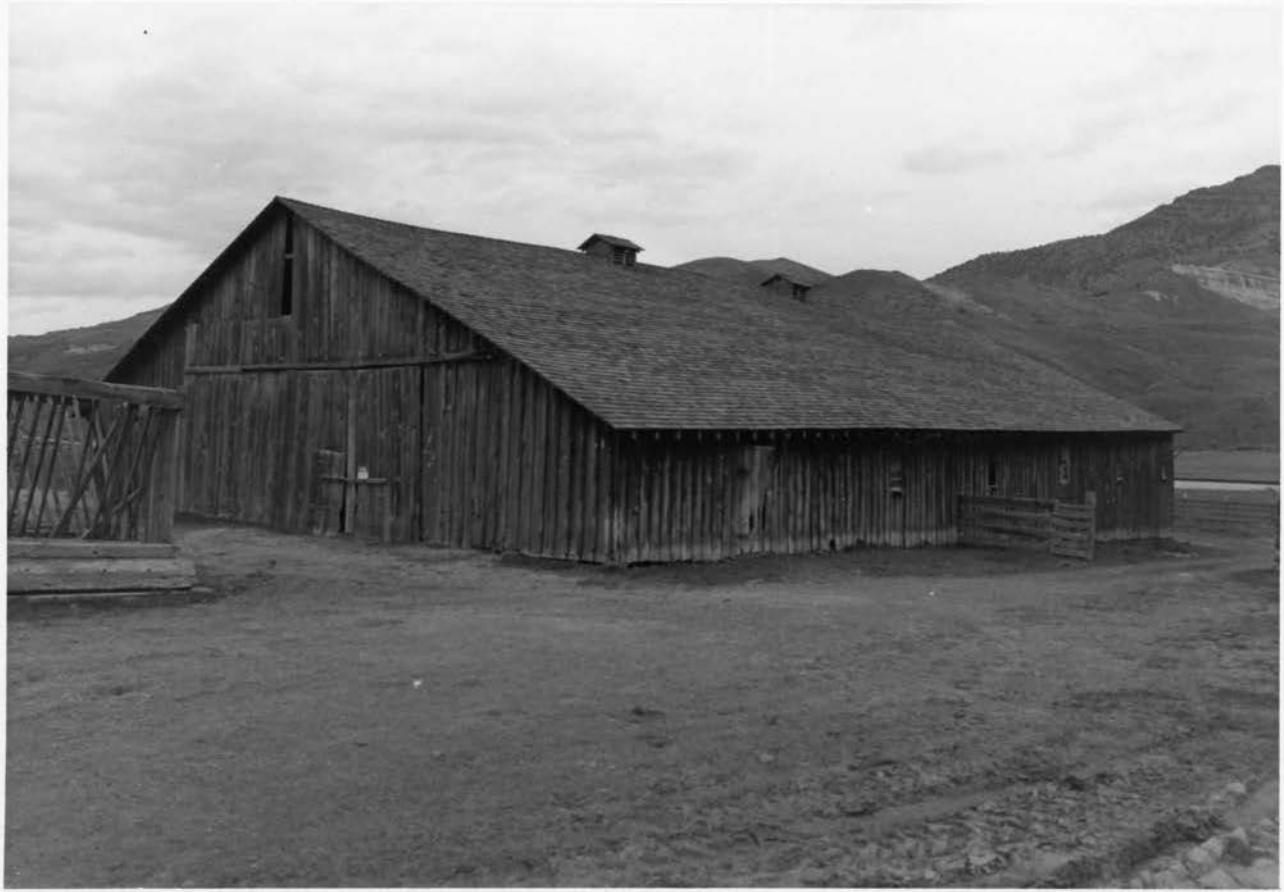


Privy and Bunkhouse (l-r)
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#25/NPS-PNRO
Looking southwest
Photo # 5

Chicken Coop and Feed Storage Shed
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#18/NPS-PNRO
Looking southeast
Photo # 6

Workshop
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#17/NPS-PNRO
Looking northeast
Photo #7

Workshop and shed
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#15/NPS-PNRO
Looking south
Photo #8



Barn
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#11/NPS-PNRO
Looking northeast
Photo #9

Barn and Sheepshearing Pens
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman/1983/neg.#5/NPS-PNRO
Looking southwest
Photo #10

Watchman's Hut
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S. Toothman,1983/neg.#7/NPS-PNRO
Looking southeast
Photo #11

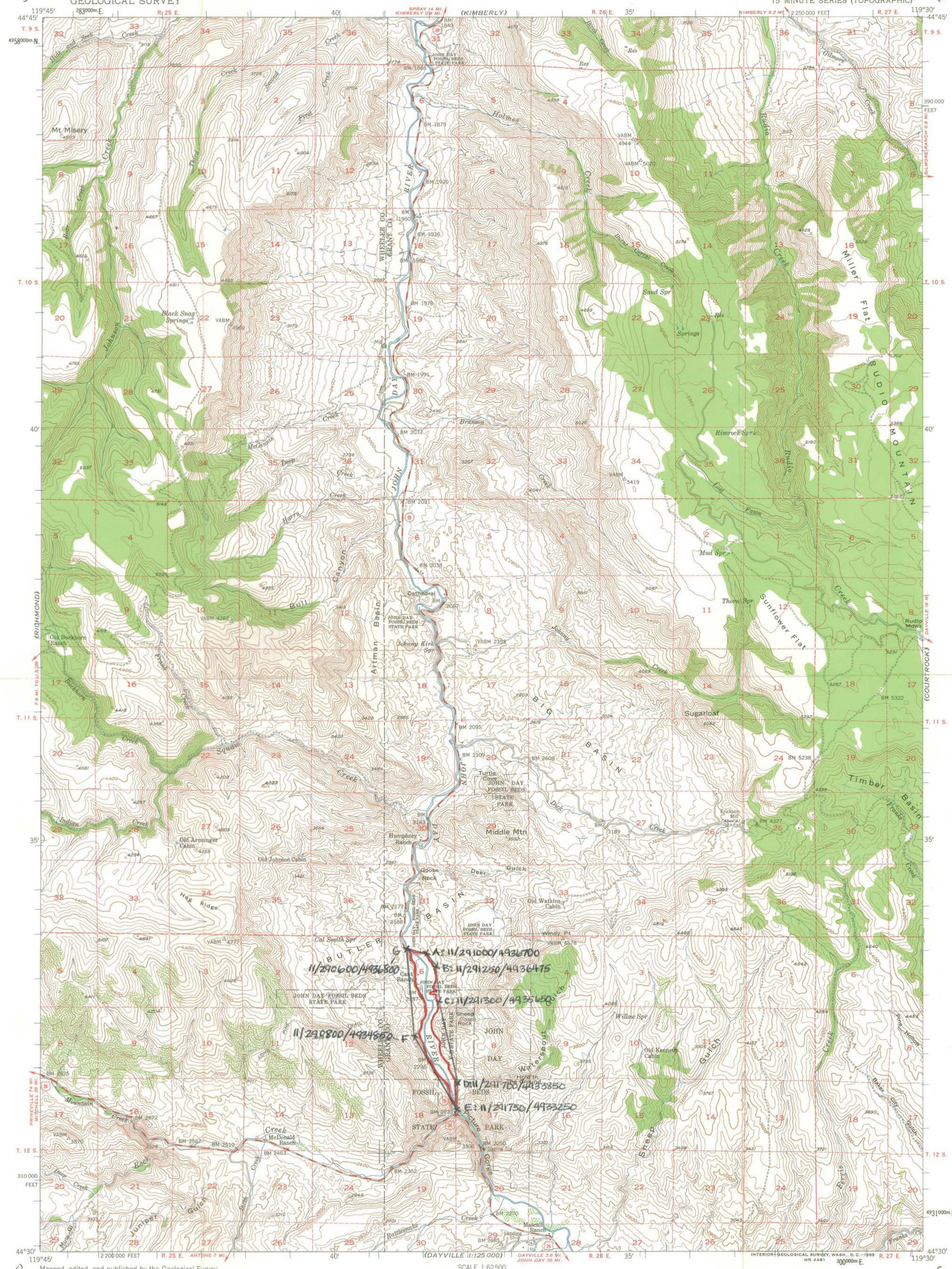
Sheep Pens
James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds NM, Oregon
S.Toothman/1983/neg.#2/NPS-PNRO
Looking northeast
Photo #12

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

PICTURE GORGE QUADRANGLE

OREGON

15 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1946. Field check 1953

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Oregon coordinate system, north zone

Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 11, shown in blue

James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, OR

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER 25, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PICTURE GORGE, OREG.
N4430—W11930/15
1953

National Register of Historic Places

Note to the record

Additional Documentation: 2014

NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

84003000

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AUG - 2 2013

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Cant Ranch Historic District (amendment)

other names/site number Sheep Rock Unit, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

2. Location

street & number Oregon Hwy. 19 ☐ not for publication

city or town Dayville ☐ vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Grant code 023 zip code 97825

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** X **statewide** X **local**

Robert L Motter / Deputy FPO — August 2, 2013

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

National Park Service

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

[signature] — 2-11-13

Signature of commenting official — Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer — Oregon State Historic Preservation Office

Title — State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) Additional Documentation Approved

Jeff Edson H. Beall — 9.18.13

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [x] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [x] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	1	buildings
7		sites
4		structures
		objects
11	1	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

11

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE
DOMESTIC

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LANDSCAPE
RECREATION AND CULTURE
AGRICULTURE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH/EARLY 20TH CENTURY/Pattern book

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete, Stone
walls: Weatherboard, Log
roof: Shingle
other:

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The 200-acre Cant Ranch Historic District contains the core of Cant Ranch, an early twentieth century sheep ranch in the John Day River Valley of north central Oregon. Since its acquisition by the National Park Service (NPS) in 1976, the ranch has been a part of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The Cant Ranch serves as administrative headquarters for the entire monument, and as its primary point of visitor contact. Interpretive displays and programs, visitor services, NPS offices, and maintenance facilities are all located within the historic ranch complex. Approximately two hundred acres of the Cant Ranch are now included within the boundaries of the historic district.

The Cant Ranch Historic District encompasses twenty-two contributing resources. Eleven of these were included in the original nomination, while there are seven sites and four structures that are included in this amendment. Many of these elements have been restored to the sheep-ranching period of the 1920s. The ranch has been, to some degree, incrementally modified over the past twenty years to accommodate visitor, administrative and maintenance functions, but the overall organization of the historic landscape, and the structural fabric of the ranch, have been largely preserved. As a whole, the district still displays strong integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The ranch remains an important local landmark and agricultural landscape. The surviving buildings, structures, and landscape features of the historic district serve to illustrate over one hundred years of ranching tradition in the John Day country.

This nomination is an amendment. The original nomination focuses largely on the ranch's buildings, and it lacks a specific count of contributing and non-contributing resources. This amendment seeks to add a cultural landscape component to the nomination by describing landscape features found on the ranch, and by counting as contributing a number of structures and sites not discussed in the original nomination. Section 7 of this amendment specifies contributing and non-contributing resources. The boundary remains the same.

Narrative Description

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE
EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1890-1946

Significant Dates

1890, 1910, 1918, 1946

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The period begins in 1890, when Floyd Officer settled the land that is now known as Cant Ranch. It ends in 1946, when the Cant family ceased raising sheep. This is a revised period of significance. The original nomination, prepared in 1984, listed the period of significance as 1900-1975. However, there are two extant buildings, the log cabin and the feed shed, that may date to the 1890s, and 1890 is a significant date in the property's history for the reason stated above. The new period of significance ends in 1946, rather than 1975. The original nomination did not include Criteria Consideration G as a justification for including an ending date that falls within the last 50 years. The date was originally chosen simply because the NPS purchased the property in 1975. Furthermore, there are no extant historic resources from after 1946.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 under Criterion A and Criterion C.

The Cant Ranch Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with settlement and agricultural development in the John Day River Valley of north central Oregon. The Cant Ranch Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the state level of significance in 1984.Two primary Euro-American settlement patterns in the region are aptly represented by the two families who owned and developed the ranch over its eighty-five year history and in the physical characteristics of the ranch. The Floyd Officer family exemplifies the post-1860s eastward migration of second and third generation Oregon pioneers from the Willamette Valley, and the subsequent development of livestock ranching east of the Cascade Mountains. The James Cant family typifies the somewhat later influx of first generation Scottish immigrants into the upper John Day Basin. These newcomers were experienced sheepherders and came to participate in the boom years of sheep ranching, from 1890 to 1910.

The property illustrates the dramatic evolution of agriculture in the region between 1890 and the mid-twentieth century. The development of the ranch reflects larger economic cycles and shifting land use patterns in north central Oregon agriculture during this time period—from subsistence homesteading and the grazing of livestock on public lands, to the profitability of specialized sheep ranching and the cultivation of riverine hay crops, to the resurgence of cattle ranching around World War Two. Beginning as a remote and rudimentary homestead with a self-sufficient economy, the Cant Ranch was adapted and greatly expanded in the early decades of the twentieth century to become one of the most successful sheep ranching operations in the valley.

The Cant Ranch is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for local significance. Both the structural fabric of the ranch and the features of its larger landscape illustrate deliberate design decisions common to late nineteenth and early twentieth-century ranching operations in central and eastern Oregon. Ample evidence remains—of overall landscape organization, response to natural features, land use, circulation, vegetation patterns, buildings, structures, and small scale features—to visually convey the story of the ranch over time. Even with recent adaptations by the NPS to accommodate visitors, the ranch still presents a significant and distinguishable entity and evokes a strong sense of time and place. The physical remains of the Officer homestead era and the Cant sheep ranching era retain strong integrity to the historic period.

Cant Ranch is the only ranch in Grant County, Oregon, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also the only remaining home or ranch from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries within the boundaries of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Not only is it the only ranch listed on the National Register in the 4,529 square mile county, there are few ranching properties in all of East-Central Oregon on the National Register. Roba Ranch, in Crook County (east of Grant County) has been listed on the National

Register, but with only four contributing resources: a house, a barn, a privy and a pump house. Cant Ranch contains twenty-four contributing resources and also better represents an early twentieth century ranch. Cant Ranch and Roba Ranch are located over 100 miles apart by paved road. The David L. Shirk ranch in Lake County in southeastern Oregon has also been listed on the National Register. It contains fourteen contributing resources, ten fewer than Cant Ranch, and the Shirk Ranch was a horse rather than cattle and sheep ranch. It lies almost 300 miles by road south of Cant Ranch.

Potentially historic properties in east-central Oregon not listed on the National Register include the R.W. Campbell House and Barn, in Wheeler County, east of Grant County. The two buildings date from the 1880s, but the property was a stage and freight stop rather than a ranch. The McCall Ranch, in Crook County (also east of Grant County) includes four potentially contributing resources that date from the first two decades of the twentieth century. However, the owners were part of a wealthy copper mining family, and as a result of their higher socio-economic status, the ranch was built and operated in much different manner than the Cant Family. The Cant Ranch remains a rare and excellent example in eastern Oregon of ranching during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and it stands apart from other historic or potentially historic ranches in the region for the number of contributing resources and the integrity of these resources.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See continuation sheet

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Beckham, Stephen Dow. *Rocks and Hard Places: Historical Overview of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.* Draft manuscript. 1998.

List of Classified Structures, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Seattle, WA: National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region. Updated 1984.

Luxenberg, Gretchen. HABS Report No. OR-142. Seattle, WA: National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region. 1988.

Mark, Stephen R. *Floating in the Stream of Time: An Administrative History of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.* Seattle, WA: National Park Service, Pacific West Field Area - Columbia-Cascades Cluster. 1996.

Peting, Donald. *Historic Structures Preservation Guide: James Cant Ranch Historic District.* Seattle, WA: National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region. 1986.

Taylor, Terri and Cathy Gilbert. *Cultural Landscape Report: Cant Ranch Historic District.* Seattle, WA: National Park Service, Columbia Cascades System Support Office. 1996.

Toothman, Stephanie. "James Cant Ranch Historic District" National Register Nomination. Seattle, WA: National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region. 1983.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
_X_previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
_X_recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #__OR-142_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
_X_Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: **John Day Fossil Beds National Monument**

10. Geographical Data

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
UTM References:
Quadrangle: Picture Gorge West, Oregon (1: 24,000)
A. 11 – 289794-4937516
B. 11 – 289968-4935706
C. 11 – 290724-4933901
D. 11 – 290330-4935369
E. 11 – 290408-4936450
F. 11 – 290369-4937196

Verbal Boundary Description
The proposed boundary begins at the confluence of Rock Creek and the John Day River, crosses the river and proceeds generally to the north-northwest along the toe of the slope at the easternmost edge of the Titanic irrigation ditch, to a point directly east of Christina's cabin. The boundary then turns northwesterly along the north side of the cabin, crosses the John Day River, and continues along the western bank of the river to the northwest. At a point where the John Day River and Highway 19 meet, approximately 2000 feet northwest of the farmstead complex, the boundary turns south and proceeds to the south-southeast along the centerline of the highway to point of beginning at the confluence of Rock Creek and the John Day River.

Boundary Justification
This boundary reflects the maximum extent of irrigated lands at the Cant Ranch, from the date of construction of the Titanic ditch in 1912, until the close of the family cattle-ranching operation in 1975. Excluded from the district is the twelve-acre Morrison Field, located over one-half mile distant to the north from the ranch proper, and separated from it by a narrow stretch of uncultivated land between the John Day River and Highway 19. It includes all lands, buildings and structures associated with the period of significance which retain integrity.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title_ Written by Florence K. Lentz, 1998; Updated by Christy Avery, 2013

organization National Park Service date July 2013

Cant Ranch Historic District
Name of Property

Grant Co., Oregon
County and State

street & number 909 1st Ave, 5th Floor telephone 206-227-0262
city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98104
e-mail

Additional Documentation

- **Maps**
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items**

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Cant Ranch Historic District

City or Vicinity: Dayville

County: Grant State: OR

Photographer: Jason Biscomb, National Park Service

Date Photographed: June 2-3, 2008

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0001: Ranch complex; Cant Ranch house on left, sheep barn on right. Camera facing southwest

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0002: Ranch complex; sheep barn and corrals. Camera facing east.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0003: Cant House: Cant House, West Façade. Camera Facing east.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0004: Cant Ranch house and yard. Camera facing southeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0005: Log Cabin, north façade. Camera facing southwest.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0006: Christina's Cabin, located in Field #4. South elevation. Camera facing northeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0007: Bunkhouse, north facade. Camera facing south.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0008: Feed rack and barn, west facade. Camera facing northeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0009: Sheep shearing sheds, west façade. Camera facing east

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0010: Workshop, east facade and south elevation. Camera facing northwest.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0011: Watchman's Hut, west façade and south elevation. Camera facing southeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0012: Storage shed behind bunkhouse, north elevation. Camera facing south.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0013: Chicken coop, east façade. Camera facing west.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0014: Stone pillars on the west side of the Cant Ranch yard. Camera facing east

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0015: Rock Creek Irrigation Ditch, west of the ranch house. Camera facing south.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0016: Titanic Irrigation Ditch, on the eastern edge of Field #4.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0017: Post and pole fence, west of the sheep barn. Camera facing northeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0018: Vertical board fence, north of the sheep shearing pens. Camera facing northeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0019: The upper orchard and an example of the horizontal board fencing found on the ranch. Camera facing southeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0020: Lower Orchard. Camera facing south.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0021: Upper orchard, with workshop in the background. Camera facing west.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0022: Feed storage shed, north façade. The chicken coop is on the left and the lower orchard is in the background. Camera facing southeast.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0023: View across Field No. 1 toward the barn and ranch house. Camera facing north.

OR_Grant County_Cant Ranch Historic District_0024: Cable car crossing, looking west across the John Day River to Field No. 4.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

The Cant Ranch Historic District lies within the boundaries of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in north central Oregon. The ranch is located along Highway 19 between the towns of Dayville and Kimberly. Cant Ranch, a primary cultural resource within the park, is one of the most intact examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century ranching operations remaining in the John Day River Valley. The ranch also contains a wealth of paleontological resources. The Cant Ranch Historic District contains the core two hundred acres of Cant Ranch. Since its acquisition by the National Park Service (NPS) in 1976, the ranch has been a part of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Congress authorized creation of this monument in 1974 for the purpose of preserving and interpreting the extensive Tertiary Period fossil record found in the geologic formations of the area. Today the monument comprises three noncontiguous units: the Clarno and Painted Hills Units in Wheeler County, and the Sheep Rock Unit in Grant County where the Cant Ranch Historic District is located. Cant Ranch serves as administrative headquarters for the entire monument. Interpretive displays and programs, visitor services, NPS offices, and maintenance facilities are all located within the historic ranch complex.

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, the larger John Day River Basin has been internationally recognized as a preeminent paleontological resource area. Sculpted exposures of volcanic rock in the John Day River Valley contain some of the richest fossil beds in the world. This record of evolutionary change, exceptional in its continuity and duration, reveals coherent evidence of diverse plant and animal life, ancient habitats, and the dynamic processes that shaped them. Four consecutive geological epochs spanning some forty million years of earth's history are represented within the 14,400 acres of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

Approximately two hundred acres of the Cant Ranch are now included within the boundaries of the historic district. In its heyday, however, the ranch was much larger, consisting of 6500 acres of deeded land, and 4500 acres of grazing land leased from the Bureau of Land Management. The NPS initially purchased 878 acres of the ranch in 1976. At the core of this acquisition were the ranch complex and the agricultural fields along the John Day River, now a part of the designated historic district.

The Cant Ranch Historic District encompasses twenty-four contributing resources: ten buildings, seven sites (including some landscape features), and seven structures. Some were constructed during the tenure of Floyd Officer, between 1890 and 1910, while others were built by James Cant and family between 1910 and 1946. Many of these elements have been restored to their 1920s appearance. The ranch has been, to some degree, incrementally modified over the past twenty years to accommodate visitor, administrative and maintenance functions, but the overall organization of the historic landscape, and the structural fabric of the ranch, have been largely preserved. As a whole, the district still displays strong integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The ranch remains an important local landmark and agricultural landscape. The surviving buildings, structures, and landscape features of the historic district serve to illustrate over one hundred years of ranching tradition in the John Day country.

Setting

The Cant Ranch is situated along the bottomlands of the John Day River in a natural basin known as Turtle Cove, and more specifically, Butler Basin. The property's irrigated fields extend for a little over two miles north from the river's exit at Picture Gorge, a steep basalt canyon known for its aboriginal pictographs. North of the gorge, the narrow valley floor varies in width from four hundred to eighteen hundred feet. Escarpments of basalt and multi-colored ash beds border the bottomlands to the east and west. Beyond these ridges are elements of the Blue Mountain Range which rings the basin. The most dramatic local prominence is Sheep Rock, rising 3360 feet directly southeast of the ranch complex.

The ranch's structural center—the heart of the historic district—is located on the west side of the John Day River along Oregon Highway 19. The Cant House itself was completed in 1918, and served as the primary family residence from that point forward. This substantial two and one-half story dwelling has been restored to its 1920s appearance. It now functions as the monument's headquarters and cultural museum, housing NPS offices and interpretive displays.

North of the Cant House is the main entry and visitor parking lot. Additional parking for recreational vehicles and buses lies adjacent to the entry, along Highway 19. A landscaped lawn surrounds the house and is fenced on three sides, offering shady picnic tables for summertime visitors. Historic ornamental vegetation consists of mature white poplar and Chinese elm trees, along with lilac shrubbery. South of the house a small spring waters a grove of native black cottonwoods and willows.

To the rear of the main house are various outbuildings, including a log cabin and feed shed which date from the Floyd Officer homestead period, prior to the arrival of the Cant family in 1910. Later structures include a bunkhouse, a chicken house, and a small shed, all simple wood-frame buildings with gable or shed roofs. The log cabin and bunkhouse have been restored and are used for interpreting the history of the working ranch. Together with the remnants of an early Officer-era fruit orchard east of the house (known as the Lower Orchard), this cluster of contributing features helps to interpret the domestic history of the ranch.

Remnants of a second orchard, planted by the Cant family in the 1930s or 1940s (known as the Upper Orchard) still stand northeast of the house adjacent to the barn complex. Along the east end of that orchard, early Cant family farm implements are displayed to explain the story of ranching in the valley. The orchard is considered part of the primary visitor use area, and is visually tied to the Cant House and its dependencies by an extension of the irrigated lawn.

North of the house, and partially separated from it by the visitor parking lot, is a second building cluster historically devoted to the livestock operations of the ranch. Visitor access to some of these buildings is limited. The main barn, built about 1920, is a one and one-half story wood frame structure with vertical siding. It has been stabilized and restored on its exterior, and it is currently open to the public. An open sheep-shearing shed to the north is open to the public as well. Three historic corrals, two feed racks, and associated outbuildings remain standing around the barn, including a sheep-shearing shed, workshop, and watchman's hut. The workshop is now used as a meeting/conference room and the others for interpreting the history of the working ranch.

Small scale features from the sheep ranching era can also be found throughout the historic district, each of them illustrative of important activities. Several styles of fencing and gates, built to delineate corrals and haystack yards, and to set off domestic areas, are extant. One feed rack close to the barn survives from this period. Evidence of the impact of Oregon Highway 19, built through the ranch in the mid-1920s and improved in the 1930s, can be seen in the raised grade that cuts off use of the earlier ornamental stone gate at the front of the house, and in the remnant of earlier highway alignment that bends to the northeast, just past the barn.

North of the barn cluster, at a somewhat lower elevation, is a non-contributing modern maintenance facility. Because of its siting and its design, this large building is not generally visible to the visiting public and does not intrude upon the historic scene.

Beyond the structural complex, four historically irrigated fields within the boundaries of the historic district illustrate the large-scale agricultural operations typically associated with ranches along the John Day River. The two earliest fields lie west of the river. These were watered by the Rock Creek irrigation ditch and first cultivated by the Officer family prior to 1910. Two fields on the east side of the river were put into production by the Cant family after construction of the Titanic irrigation ditch in 1912.

Currently, all four fields are under cultivation, as part of an NPS historic property leasing program initiated in 1984. Portions of the Rock Creek irrigation ditch remain functional. The Titanic ditch still irrigates Field No. 3, but has been abandoned from its original intake at Picture Gorge to the pump site at the south end of Field No. 3. Besides important components of the historic irrigation system, the agricultural fields retain significant cultural features such as cable car crossings along the river, and the remnants of haystack yards.

Contributing Buildings

The Cant House, Log Cabin, Bunkhouse, Shed, Chicken House, Feed Shed, Barn and Sheep Shearing Sheds, both cable cars, Watchman's Hut, Christina's Cabin and Workshop were previously counted but not adequately described in the original nomination.

Cant House: This two and one-half story wood-frame farm house, built in 1918, is said to have been based on several plans found in the pattern book *The Radford American Homes*, published in 1903 by the Radford Architectural Company. The Cant family employed local carpenters and used locally-milled wood in its construction. The house was designed to accommodate the large Cant family and their many visitors. The ground floor contained a parlor, living room, dining room, kitchen, office, washroom and one bedroom, and the upstairs included six bedrooms and a bath. Interior walls were of 12-inch boards finished in cloth and wallpaper. The house was heated by three big wood stoves, with a cook stove in the kitchen. A 110-volt Kohler generator provided power to the house, which was wired for electricity from the outset. In the early 1920s, indoor plumbing was installed. Few other alterations were made during the Cant family's ownership. In the 1930s, however, a second story sleeping porch was enclosed above the porch on the main (west) elevation. The family used the attic story as a schoolroom and dance hall.

The Cant house rests on a concrete perimeter foundation, and measures approximately 40 feet by 45

feet in plan. The house features a hipped roof with cedar shingles and three dormers, beveled shiplap siding, and two bay windows at the ground floor level. The exterior is dominated on its west façade by an open, full-width front porch with a second floor deck and balustrade, and by screen-enclosed porches that wrap around the other three sides of the house. Windows are fitted with one-over-one double hung sash. The main front door has sidelights and a single upper pane of etched glazing depicting a young girl holding a lamb.

In May of 1977, the Cant house began serving as the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument visitor center. The house was reroofed, painted, rewired, and insulated at that time. The Cant family's sleeping porch addition was removed in order to return the house to its 1920s appearance. On the interior, visitor restrooms were created out of the old ranch office and washroom; sheetrock and paneling cover some original wall surfaces. With the construction and opening of the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center in 2005, the Cant Ranch house is no longer the park's visitor center and most of the paleontology facilities have been removed from the outbuildings. It now functions as the monument's headquarters and cultural museum, housing NPS offices and interpretive displays.

Log Cabin: Built in the late 1890s or early 1900s, the log cabin is only one of two buildings in the historic district to survive from the Officer homestead period. It is located just east of the main house. The original use of the cabin is uncertain, but the Cant family used it for storage of supplies and foodstuffs. Pack horses were tied up here to be loaded with provisions for the sheepherders. The cabin was originally built over a dirt-walled cellar. By the time of NPS acquisition, the cabin had been roofed with corrugated metal.

A one-room, one-story log structure measuring approximately 12 feet by 17 feet, the cabin has vertical board and batten in the gable ends. In 1983, the NPS completed stabilization and rehabilitation of the cabin. Some partial concrete footings were installed, visible only from inside the cellar. The cabin was reroofed with cedar shingles and its deteriorated logs and chinking replaced. In 2005, some logs and flooring were replaced.

Bunkhouse: A one-story, wood-frame structure with horizontal beveled siding, the bunkhouse is located southeast of the Cant house. It was built in the early 1930s to house the hired hands who worked at the ranch. At the time of NPS acquisition, the interior of the bunkhouse featured horizontal tongue-in-groove boards finished with wallpaper, a wood slat ceiling covered with cardboard, and linoleum flooring.

Rehabilitation work in 1981-1982 consisted of reroofing with cedar shingles, installing wood sills and concealed concrete foundation blocks, and creating a new ceiling, walls, and floors fashioned of rough-sawn lumber from neighboring structures.

Shed: The shed, built in the 1920s, is a small wood-frame, shed-roofed structure approximately 6 feet by 6 feet in dimension. It has vertical board and batten siding and a cedar shingle roof. This outbuilding was probably used as an incubation shed after the chicken house was moved to its present location north of the orchard. The feed shed is actively used for interpretation.

Chicken House: The chicken house was built in the 1910s or 1920s, and was first located somewhere near the barn. The structure is a simple, wood-framed structure with a shed roof, vertical board siding, and cedar shingle roofing, which was restored in 1982. It measures approximately 4 feet by 16 feet in plan. It was moved southeast of the main house and finally to its present location at the northwest corner of the lower orchard in the 1950s. At that time it was also reduced to half its original size. The NPS still housed chickens there through the 1980s and, while this is no longer the case, the outbuilding still contributes to the interpretation of the ranch.

Feed Shed: Situated next to the chicken house, the feed shed, built between 1890 and 1910, is believed to date from the Floyd Officer homestead era at the ranch. The feed shed is a one-room gable-roofed structure with horizontal board and batten siding. Its dimensions are 7 feet by 12 feet. Originally the building served as the Officer family's cellar and was located west of the main house. It was moved north of the log cabin during the Cant sheep ranching period and converted to storage. After 1946, it was relocated to its present spot and used as a feed shed. Its cedar shingle roofing was restored by the NPS in 1981-1982. The feed shed is actively used for interpretation.

Barn and Sheep Shearing Sheds: The main barn, built in the 1920s, stands north of the house. Built during the sheep ranching era, the barn is of timber-frame construction, and rests on a stone and wood post foundation. Its dimensions in plan are 66 feet by 120 feet. Historically, the twelve-bay interior contained horse and mule stalls, a tack room, and milking stations on the southwest side. A loft in the southeast corner was used to store grain, and the loose hay was stacked in the center of the west half of the barn. Along the north side was "sheep alley" with pens for ewes and single lambs along the outer wall and larger pens for ewes with twins across the aisle. Outside along the northwest side was a chute for loading sheep, which is no longer extant. The exterior of the barn today retains its 1920s massing, vertical board and batten siding, gabled wood-shingled roof and ridge vents, and multi-paned windows.

Attached to the north elevation are sheep shearing pens housed in a one-story, open-walled structure 20 by 60 feet in dimension. Ten shearing stalls and a waiting aisle flank a central alley. The sheep-shearing pens, which have shearing equipment still in place, are among the best-preserved resources of their type in the region. The barn and sheep shearing shed function as interpretive components of the ranch and are open to the public.

Watchman's Hut: A small, crudely built shelter for the use of hired hands during lambing season, the watchman's hut measures approximately 6 by 12 feet. It is believed to have been built around the same time as the barn, in the 1920s. The hut has cedar shingle roofing and board and batten siding. In 2005, the NPS replaced some of the flooring and substructure of the hut. Today the structure is used for interpretive purposes.

Workshop: The workshop was built in the 1920s. The building is a wood-frame, gable-roofed structure with horizontal beveled wood siding and wood shingle roofing. It measures approximately 19 by 33 feet. Until the completion of the monument's maintenance shop, this building served as the primary NPS

maintenance facility. It now houses meeting and conference space.

Christina's Cabin: This small, one-story wood-frame structure with vertical board siding, built in 1932, stands on the opposite bank of the John Day River from the ranch complex. It was built as a homesteading cabin for the Cant's daughter Christina. Although the homestead claim was never filed, the cabin is known to have been used in later years for storing agricultural equipment. The cabin was restored in 1986 and is used to interpret the history of the ranch. In 2005, it was reroofed and resided.

Contributing Sites

Yard and Vegetation: Both the Officer family and the Cant family planted ornamental vegetation in and around the ranch house complex. Some native riparian vegetation in the form of cottonwood trees also remains at the spring along the south edge of the yard. White poplars from the Officer era, and elm trees, lilacs, and spirea from the Cant period are still extant. Most of the trees show evidence of pollarding, a form of heavy pruning commonly practiced in the John Day Valley. The lawn around the main house dates to the Cant era, but has been greatly enlarged by the NPS.

Lower Orchard: During the Officer homestead era (between 1890 and 1910) an orchard was planted downslope (east) of the ranch house. This was later referred to as the Lower Orchard. Around fifteen of the original peach, pear, plum, apple and apricot trees still survive (originally one-third of the orchard's original size). Since NPS acquisition, dying trees have been removed, and twenty new fruit trees planted. During the summer months, the Lower Orchard is used to pasture sheep for interpretive purposes.

Upper Orchard: Planted by the Cant family during the sheep ranching era, the Upper Orchard stands south of the barn. Between 1910 and 1940, when it was planted, it consisted of about twenty-seven apple, peach, and plum trees, one-third of which remain standing. Interpretive displays of Cant family ranching equipment are now arranged along the north side of the orchard.

Field No. 1: This field, first plowed and planted around 1900, was established by the Officer family and has remained in continuous use since that time. The 17-acre field is located directly north and east of the structural complex, on the west side of the John Day River. Rock Creek irrigation ditch borders the west side of the field and has historically provided water to the field. Currently the field is in full agricultural production of alfalfa, clover, and grass hay. Due to ditch failure, it is now irrigated by sprinkler.

Field No. 2: This is the second oldest of the agricultural fields associated with the ranch, established by the Officer family in 1902. It is the southernmost field in the historic district, situated on the west side of the river. Twelve acres in size, the field is irrigated by Rock Creek ditch on the west and produces grass hay. Near the north end of the field is a cable car river crossing, constructed by the Cants in the 1940s.

Field No. 3: This 29-acre field lies on the east side of the John Day River. It was probably first used by the Cant family around 1925. The field produces grass hay for cultivation and is irrigated by the restored Titanic ditch. The field has three haystack yards, and a cable car river crossing that connects to Field No.

2.

Field No. 4: This 16-acre field is located on the east side of the river, opposite the ranch complex. It was first used by the Cant family around 1925. Historic features within the field include Titanic Ditch, a haystack yard up slope of the ditch, Christina's cabin, and a cable car river crossings installed by the Cants in the 1920s. The field is leased and has been reseeded in alfalfa, clover and grass. The field produces grass hay and is irrigated with sprinklers.

Contributing Structures:

Feed Racks: Two wooden feed racks survive from the Cant sheep ranching period. The largest is located west of the barn, and measures 9 feet by 16 feet. It is V-shaped, with no roof. In 2004, the feed rack was dismantled and most of the wood was replaced due to deterioration, though the metal hardware was reused.

The smaller feed rack stands northeast of the barn and measures 6 feet by 9 feet. It contains a feed trough with a V-shaped rack above. It has closed ends and no roof. Like the larger feed rack, in 2004, the feed rack was dismantled and most of the wood was replaced, though the heavier metal hardware was reused.

Fences and Gates: Fences were used throughout the historic period to delineate corrals, haystack yards, cattle chutes, and boundaries. Various fencing types were used, of which many examples remain today within the historic district. These included wooden post and pole (rail), post and horizontal board, vertical board, picket, wood post with wire mesh, and wood post with barbed wire. Often these fences were rustic in appearance, built of whatever materials were available and readily adapted to new uses. The house itself was surrounded with a wood post and wire mesh fence, with an entry gate flanked by stone pillars constructed by local mason Angus Morrison.

Since the acquisition of the ranch in 1976, the NPS has removed some early fencing, and created a few new enclosures with non-historic fencing. However, many original fences and gates have been retained and repaired in styles used during the ranch's operation; this includes 1,900 linear feet of fencing. Fences still standing today include corrals of several different fencing types near the barn, a cattle chute along Highway 19, the wire fence enclosure and stone gate pillars around the house, and remnants of the four haystack yards. Overall, the fences reflect the character of the ranch during its period of significance. The fences are counted as a single contributing structure.

Cable Cars: Two wood and metal cable cars provided passenger access across the John Day River. Both are metal frame structures with metal pulleys on wire cables. The lower cable car was built during the 1920s. It stands just south of the structural complex and connects to Field No. 4 on the east side of the river. The original car has been replaced in kind. It has metal sides, flooring, and wood seats; it is nearly identical to the original car. There is a wooden landing platform on either bank.

The upper cable car, built in the 1940s, is still extant, provides access from Field No. 2 to the south

end of Field No. 3. It has metal mesh sides and flooring, with wooden seats. Both cable cars are fully operable.

Rock Creek Ditch: Two primary irrigation ditches extend the length of the historic district on the east and west sides of the John Day River. The earlier of the two, Rock Creek ditch, originated at the confluence of Rock Creek and the river and continued past the Officer family homestead north to Goose Rock on the Finlay Morrison homestead. The hand-dug ditch followed the base of the hills and alluvial fans that bordered the river valley, with lateral ditches carrying water to the fields.

Various improvements were made to Rock Creek ditch over the years. Portions of the south half of the ditch are concrete-lined. To maintain the viability of continuing irrigation of the west side fields, the NPS installed buried PVC piping along a segment of the ditch just south of the Cant ranch structural complex, following the historic ditch channel. Rock Creek Ditch is currently operable to the north end of the ranch complex.

Titanic Ditch: A second irrigation ditch was constructed on the east side of the John Day River by the Cant family in 1912. This ditch, dubbed the "Titanic" after the famous ship that sank that same year, increased the ranch's cultivated land by some seventy-three acres. The ditch was constructed by hand using a V-shaped plow. Due to the steep topography, a considerable amount of cutting and berming was required to create a useful grade. This ditch was used to irrigate Fields Nos. 3 and 4 throughout the Cant cattle ranching period, after 1946, and into the NPS era.

In 1983, use of the original diversion point was discontinued due to washouts and erosion problems, and a new pump was installed at the south end of Field No. 3. Around 1990, the entire historic ditch was abandoned, and a new, much shorter ditch dug along its base to irrigate Field No. 3. Today, one section of the Titanic Ditch along Field No. 3 is used and other sections of it are in poor condition or missing except for the section along Field No. 4, which was restored in 2011.

Non-Contributing Buildings:

Maintenance shop: In 1996, the NPS completed construction of a new maintenance shop north of the historic ranch complex, within the boundaries of the historic district. The shop is located adjacent to and below the grade of Highway 19, and is not visible from the Cant Ranch complex. The building is a single-story, wood-frame building with board and batten siding, and a low-pitched, standing seam metal roof. Irregular massing, multi-paned window sash, and muted colors ensure the building does not detract from the character of the historic district.

Settlement and Development in the John Day Valley

Native peoples have lived in what is now Oregon for more than 10,000 years. The upper John Day Basin is a transition zone between two traditional culture areas defined by physiography and linguistics—the Columbia Plateau and the Great Basin. Although territorial boundaries fluctuated over time, the Tenino, the John Day, and the Wyampam Indians (collectively known as the Western Columbia River Sahaptins) and the Northern Paiute are thought to have been most closely connected with the lands now a part of John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The land that became a part of the Cant Ranch is within territory ceded by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs by treaty in 1855.

A gold strike on Canyon Creek in 1862 first drew miners to the upper John Day Basin. The towns of Canyon City and John Day took shape as local service centers for mining activity in the Blue Mountains. The demand for provisions resulted in limited settlement along the route of The Dalles Military Road, a hastily built supply line between the mining region and the Columbia River. When the gold boom subsided in the late 1860s, the area's population declined. Most settlers to Oregon Territory still preferred the fertile Willamette Valley west of the Cascades.

The Homestead Act of 1862 spurred new settlement throughout the inland West and in eastern Oregon. Word soon spread of the abundant grasslands in Grant and Wheeler Counties, and of their suitability for stock-raising. Euro-American settlers had reached the vicinity of what is now John Day Fossil Beds National Monument by 1868. From about 1870, second generation Oregon settlers from the Willamette Valley migrated to eastern Oregon, bringing with them herds of livestock for fattening on the lush native grass. Many immigrants to north-central Oregon had their origins in the Ohio Valley and the South. By 1880, census records indicate that a majority of the area's residents were born in Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois and Ohio. They brought with them agricultural backgrounds and affiliations with the Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches. A second wave of newcomers to the upper basin from 1890 to 1910 came to work as sheepherders directly from Scotland, Ireland, England, and Germany.

The land along the John Day River north of Picture Gorge was particularly difficult to access and for this reason was bypassed by The Dalles Military Road. In 1864, local resident Sam Snook led Thomas Condon, a geologist and Congregational minister from The Dalles, on a fossil hunting trip into two remote natural basins just north of the gorge. Condon named the area Turtle Cove. Through Condon, leading paleontologists continued to explore Turtle Cove from the 1870s on, but settlement came slowly to these hidden pockets of the valley. William R. Mascall and Frank Butler were two of the earliest permanent white settlers to the area. In 1890, Floyd Lee Officer homesteaded the land which became part of the Cant Ranch.

Floyd Officer was the grandson of James Officer and Evelyn Cooley Officer, early Oregon pioneers who settled in the Willamette Valley in 1845. Floyd's father, Eli Casey Officer, was one of the original settlers and livestock ranchers in the John Day Valley. Eli and his brothers had migrated east from the Willamette in 1861, bringing the first flock of sheep to the area and helping to organize and develop Grant County. On a claim one-half mile from the present-day town of Dayville, Eli

Officer raised sheep and cattle, later relocating downriver into Butler Basin and establishing a second claim. Floyd Lee Officer learned the livestock business on the family ranch. When he was about twenty years of age, he acquired his own land in Butler Basin in Section 6, T12 S, R26E, began to make the required homestead improvements, and built up a sheep and cattle operation. Seven years later, on January 30, 1898, he was issued his homestead patent (Serial no. 3131) for 160 acres.

That same year, Floyd Officer married Sylvia Fitzgerald, a widow with four children. Over the next decade, the family grew to include eight children. In 1910, after twenty years of work on the Butler Basin spread, the Officer family purchased and relocated to another livestock ranch closer to schools in Dayville. Like his father and grandfather before him, Floyd Officer was recognized in his own time for his substantial contributions to the settlement of Oregon, and for his role in the development of Grant County.

James Cant, second owner of the ranch at Butler Basin, was born and raised in Scotland where he learned the livestock business in his family's butcher shop and stockyard. At the age of twenty-one he set out for Portugal and Argentina to purchase merino bucks for a Scottish stock company. In 1905, he emigrated to the John Day Country in eastern Oregon, and went to work for a fellow Scotsman, Alexander Murray. Like many of his countrymen, Cant gained a foothold in the business locally by working for an established rancher, taking part of his pay in sheep to build up his own band. During this period he sent for his Scottish sweetheart Elizabeth Grant, and they were married in Canyon City. In 1910, having acquired enough money and sheep to make a start in the business, James Cant and his partner John Mason purchased the Officer homestead.

James and Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Cant and their four children were prominent members of the local Scottish community. Because of the strategic location and spaciousness of their home, the Cant Ranch was something of a social gathering place for travelers, visitors, and family. Elizabeth Cant was known for her hospitality, and for the ready help she extended to neighbors in hard times. James Cant was a reputable businessman and respected sheep rancher, as well as a founding member and active participant in community organizations such as the Oregon Wool Grower's Association, the Grant County Stockgrowers' Association, and the Cattle and Horse Raisers' Association. He was also a member of Grange No. 627, and served as District Clerk for the local school district. Upon their deaths in 1972 and 1973, both Cants were remembered for their long and significant roles in the settlement of the upper John Day Valley. Their home, the Cant Ranch, best represents the place where the Cants mad their contributions to settlement and commerce in the John Day Valley.

Agricultural Development in the John Day Valley

Early agriculture in Grant County took shape in the 1860s in response to a demand for provisions in remote mining communities such as Canyon City. A mix of livestock and grain production prevailed on each homestead, with families dependent upon some grazing animals, a kitchen garden, and a dooryard orchard. Limited access to markets created a largely local economy that slowed after the gold rush. But ranching revived by the late 1870s as news spread of the abundant summer grazing in the surrounding

hills and mountains. In fact, livestock ranching grew so rapidly throughout the region that overgrazing began to take a toll on native grasslands. Until about 1890, cattle were more numerous than sheep.

Floyd Officer's early homestead reflected many of these aspects of self-sufficiency. The farm remained isolated, as no good road was cut through Picture Gorge until the early 1920s. Sylvia Officer made occasional trips to Dayville on horseback for minor supplies in exchange for butter and eggs produced on the ranch. Major supplies, however, had to be hauled in by horse and wagon from The Dalles or Heppner twice a year. Food for the family was largely grown at the ranch, from a large vegetable garden and an orchard of apple, peach, pear, apricot, and plum trees. Floyd Officer raised both sheep and cattle commercially, in addition to the pigs, chickens, sheep, and cattle grown for the use of the family.

Sheep ranching gained a firmer foothold throughout eastern Oregon after 1880, following the imposition of a tariff on foreign wool. In the 1890s and into the first decade of the 20th century, "stub lines" reached south into sheep territory from the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company's main tracks on the south bank of the Columbia River. An influx of European sheepherders in the upper John Day Basin around the turn of the century reflected the many opportunities opening in the local expansion of sheep operations. The height of sheep ranching as a predominant agricultural activity in the region occurred between 1890 and 1910.

Ranchers grazed their flocks on the public domain. At first, the plentiful bunchgrass on the open range made it unnecessary to bring the sheep to the ranch in the winter. Often the bands ranged far from the home ranch which was typically situated along the river, close to a spring or tributary stream. Water rights were critical to controlling the surrounding land base. By 1900, sheep and cattle had seriously depleted the resources of the rangelands in the upper John Day Basin. This made necessary the cultivation of hay on bottomlands along the river. Simple flood irrigation systems were constructed by hand along the edges of the valley floor.

When Floyd Officer began to develop his Butler Basin homestead late in 1890, he brought with him both sheep and cattle. By the time he sold the ranch in 1910, however, his was clearly a commercial sheep operation. At that time he owned one band of sheep (1200 animals), some cattle, and 357 acres of land in Grant County. As the grasslands depleted, Officer cultivated hay fields along the west side of the river to provide supplemental feed for his livestock. To water the fields he acquired water rights for a diversion from Rock Creek in 1899 and constructed a ditch that ran north with laterals reaching down into the fields. These ditches were hand-dug using a sixteen-foot 2 x 4 with a level affixed to it to maintain the necessary gradient. Fifty-five acres of land were put into production, for hay and possibly for grain. In 1902, Officer acquired additional water rights for a spring west of the ranch for domestic irrigation.

Certain remnants of the Officer family homestead are still very much discernible. Factors which influenced the original site selection are intact and form the large-scale framework of the cultural landscape today. The siting of the homestead responded to natural resources necessary for survival—a structural complex built above the flood plain and adjacent to a natural spring, wood for the construction

of structures, a hill for protection from winter storms, rich bottomlands for cultivation bordering the river, topography suitable for flood irrigation, and miles of nearby range lands for livestock.

The overall functional and locational organization of the main building complex was also established by Floyd Officer. This pattern determined all later development at the ranch, and remains in place today. Domestic agriculture and subsistence functions were grouped in a cluster at the south side of the complex, next to the spring and wooded ravine. These natural features, as well as a log storage cabin, cellar, and fruit orchard planted during that era, still survive. A second cluster at the north side of the complex related to the working operation of the ranch, and this pattern also endured through the Cant's ownership. Officer first cultivated the bottomlands on the west side of the river, now known as Fields No. 1 and No. 2, and he constructed the Rock Creek irrigation ditch. These features are prominent elements of the historic district.

James Cant Sheep Ranching Era, 1910-1946

James Cant arrived in the John Day Valley, and began his work in the sheep ranching business during its heyday in 1905. When he acquired the Officer homestead in 1910 for $4000, he brought with him his own sheep with the intent of specializing in this type of ranching. Cant soon doubled the irrigated acreage of the ranch by acquiring water rights for a diversion near the mouth of Picture Gorge. The Titanic ditch was hand dug in 1912 along the east side of the river using a V-shaped plow. As on all ranches in the valley, maintenance of the irrigation ditches was a labor-intensive and never-ending task. The Cants grew alfalfa hay, rotated every third year with barley and oats. Two to three cuttings of hay were made each summer. Even with the majority of their irrigated bottomland in hay production, the Cants always purchased additional hay from local ranchers to feed their growing flocks of sheep over the winter months.

The Cants built a spacious hipped roof house in 1918, and it became a local landmark in the John Day Valley. The design of the residence appears to have been based upon plans and elevations from a period architectural pattern book that is still in the possession of the Cant Family, and this demonstrates the widespread availability of these kinds of vernacular building aids in the region. Although larger than a typical family dwelling in this area, the Cant House illustrates the ranch's strategic location as a stopping point for travelers at the mouth of Picture Gorge, as well as the Cant family's reputation for hospitality. The family also built a barn and sheep shearing pens at this time, and these are among the best preserved examples of essential sheep raising functions in the region. Numerous extant outbuildings in the main structural complex, such as the feed racks, the Watchman's Hut, the workshop, the feed shed, and the bunkhouse outbuildings were built in the 1920s and early 1930s; these still clearly reflect the practice of sheep ranching in that era.

In order to stay in business in the twentieth century, many ranchers in the region greatly increased their numbers of livestock and vastly expanded the size of the ranch holdings. This practice was encouraged by the Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909, which allowed settlers to secure an additional 320 acres beyond their original claim, and the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916, which permitted filing on an additional 640 acres of the public domain. During this time period, ranchers attempted to buy up failed

homesteads and vied, sometimes violently, for control of water rights and diminishing access to strategic public rangelands.

James Cant, too, steadily increased the size of his flocks and his private land holdings. At the height of their operation, the Cants owned two bands of sheep, or 2400 animals. This was considered a moderate-sized operation for that area. Sheep ranching practices at the Cant Ranch were typical of other operations in Central Oregon. The yearly cycle remained the same, with both lambing and shearing occurring in the spring. After the Cants built their own sheep shearing pens, neighboring ranchers brought their flocks to the Butler Basin ranch as well. Sheep shearing crews of eight to twelve men were boarded at the Cant Ranch during this season. The wool was loaded on wagons or trucks and shipped to the railroad at Heppner and later to Prairie City. In mid-June, all but the yearlings were trailed to Cant's leased forest allotment in the Aldrich Mountains for summer grazing. By late September, the sheep returned to the home range for the winter feeding.

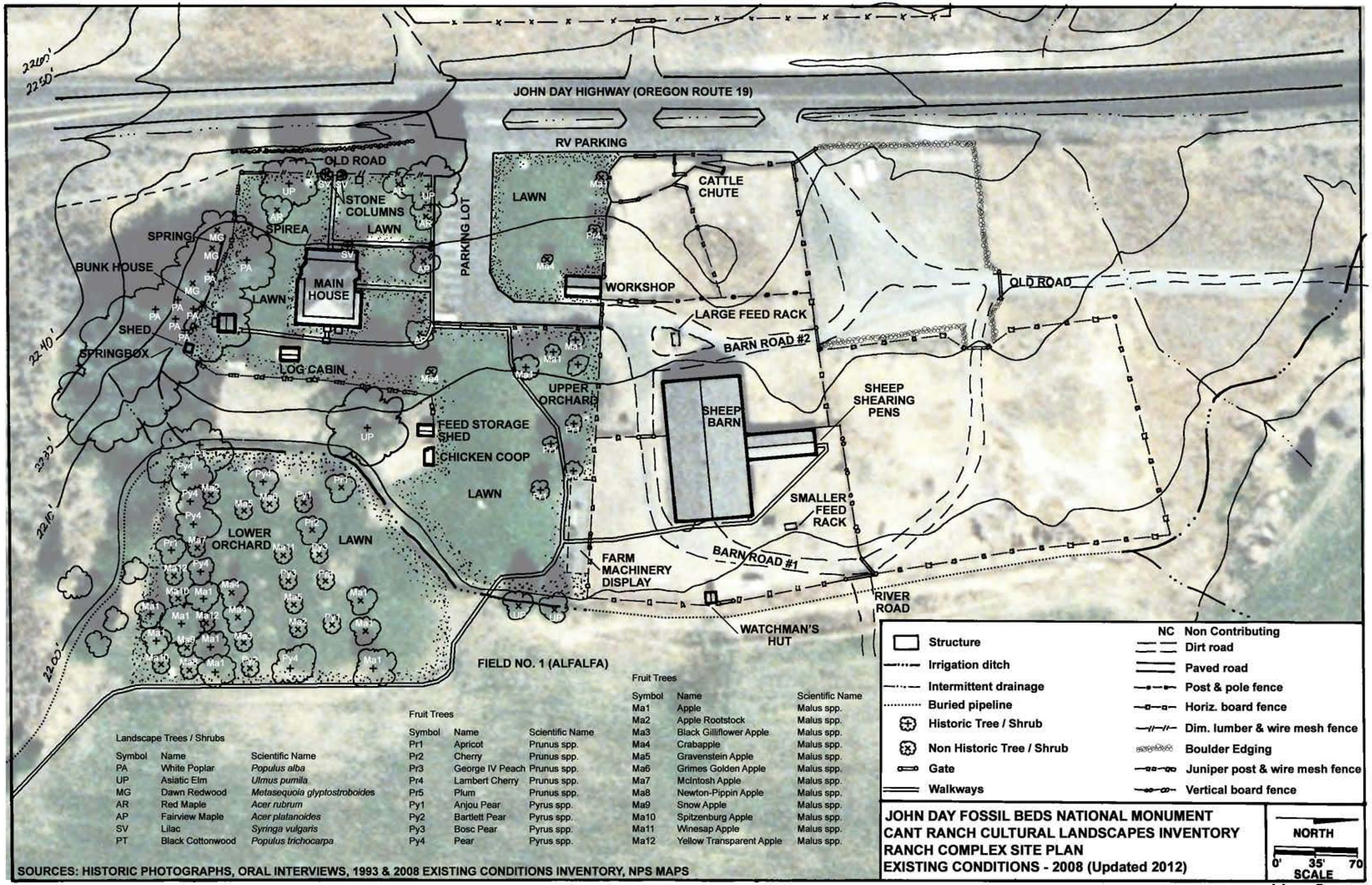
The Cants continued to improve the ranch and expanded land uses during their sheep ranching period. The upper orchard was planted during this time, as was much of the domestic vegetation around the house. Shade trees typical of eastern Oregon ranches—elm, white poplar, and black locust—still survive, as do ornamentals such as lilacs, honeysuckle, and spirea. The same overall plant palette can be observed at other older ranches in the area. As their flocks grew, the Cants doubled their cultivated acreage with Fields No. 3 and 4 to increase their hay production capacity. Two cable cars across the river were constructed in the 1920s and 1940s for better access to the fields.

Dust bowl conditions prevailed in the arid West during the 1920s and 1930s and prices dropped. Sheep ranchers struggled to survive, often through loans from the Production Credit Association, or through the unpaid labor of family members. Shifting market values, and the implementation of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 which favored cattle leases over sheep, influenced a gradual swing back to cattle ranching. By the end of World War Two, many ranchers in the upper John Day Valley had switched over to cattle raising, adapting their existing sheep facilities to new use.

Cant Ranch, 1946-1976

The Cant family began raising cattle instead of sheep in 1946, when they could no longer find skilled sheep herders and hired help. This new era of operation continued for nearly thirty years. During this time, the ranch was modernized with commercial electricity and refrigeration, and highway access through the basin was improved. Hay production continued in the irrigated bottomlands. Soon after switching to cattle, the Cants traded their Aldrich allotment for another at Murderer's Creek, and continued to expand their own holdings to accommodate increasing herds and to avoid overuse of the land. By 1965, the ranch consisted of 6500 acres of deeded land, as well as 4500 acres leased from the Bureau of Land Management. At that time, the Cant Ranch produced five to six hundred head of cattle annually. The National Park Service purchased the property in 1976 for inclusion in John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

The cattle ranching era at the Cant Ranch left later buildings and features that depict post-war changes in the character of ranching in the region. Adapting existing sheep facilities to cattle use was the usual, thrifty approach. Moved and/or adapted outbuildings at the Cant Ranch include the chicken house, and the cellar (converted to a feed shed). New buildings were put up as needed, including a workshop, a new chicken house, and an incubation shed. Corrals were made taller, and cattle loading chutes built. Later elements of the cattle-ranching era overlay the remnants of earlier periods, and do not detract from the overall integrity of the historic district. Together, they combine to offer visitors a rich physical record of the evolution of ranching in the John Day Valley.



Landscape Trees / Shrubs

Symbol	Name	Scientific Name
PA	White Poplar	*Populus alba*
UP	Asiatic Elm	*Ulmus pumila*
MG	Dawn Redwood	*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*
AR	Red Maple	*Acer rubrum*
AP	Fairview Maple	*Acer platanoides*
SV	Lilac	*Syringa vulgaris*
PT	Black Cottonwood	*Populus trichocarpa*

Fruit Trees

Symbol	Name	Scientific Name
Pr1	Apricot	Prunus spp.
Pr2	Cherry	Prunus spp.
Pr3	George IV Peach	Prunus spp.
Pr4	Lambert Cherry	Prunus spp.
Pr5	Plum	Prunus spp.
Py1	Anjou Pear	Pyrus spp.
Py2	Bartlett Pear	Pyrus spp.
Py3	Bosc Pear	Pyrus spp.
Py4	Pear	Pyrus spp.

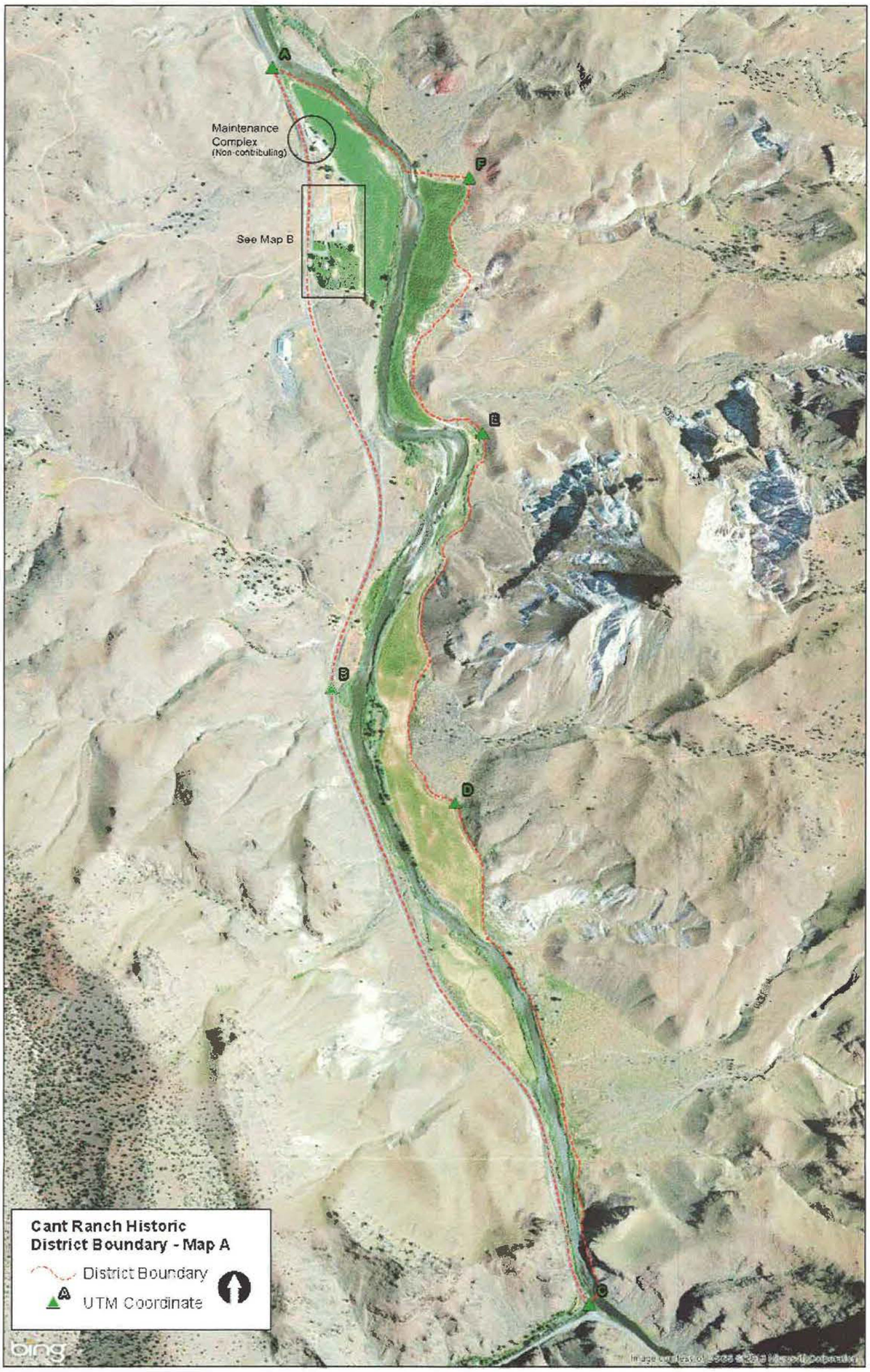
Fruit Trees

Symbol	Name	Scientific Name
Ma1	Apple	Malus spp.
Ma2	Apple Rootstock	Malus spp.
Ma3	Black Gilliflower Apple	Malus spp.
Ma4	Crabapple	Malus spp.
Ma5	Gravenstein Apple	Malus spp.
Ma6	Grimes Golden Apple	Malus spp.
Ma7	McIntosh Apple	Malus spp.
Ma8	Newton-Pippin Apple	Malus spp.
Ma9	Snow Apple	Malus spp.
Ma10	Spitzenburg Apple	Malus spp.
Ma11	Winesap Apple	Malus spp.
Ma12	Yellow Transparent Apple	Malus spp.

SOURCES: HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS, ORAL INTERVIEWS, 1993 & 2008 EXISTING CONDITIONS INVENTORY, NPS MAPS

JOHN DAY FOSSIL BEDS NATIONAL MONUMENT
CANT RANCH CULTURAL LANDSCAPES INVENTORY
RANCH COMPLEX SITE PLAN
EXISTING CONDITIONS - 2008 (Updated 2012)

Map B


A
Maintenance
Complex
(Non-contributing)
F
See Map B
E
B
D
C
Cant Ranch Historic
District Boundary - Map A
District Boundary
A
UTM Coordinate
bing

91-11440

5

National Register of Historic Places
Memo to File

Correspondence

The Correspondence consists of communications from (and possibly to) the nominating authority, notes from the staff of the National Register of Historic Places, and/or other material the National Register of Historic Places received associated with the property.
Correspondence may also include information from other sources, drafts of the nomination, letters of support or objection, memorandums, and ephemera which document the efforts to recognize the property.

WASO Form - 177
("R" June 1984)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

waived 15-day commenting period

Cant, James, Ranch Historic District
Grant County
OREGON

Substantive Review

Working No. 6/6/84
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.5.85
Date Due:
Action: ✓ ACCEPT 6-21-84
___ RETURN
___ REJECT
Federal Agency: NPS

☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☑ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:
The James Cant Ranch Historic District is locally significant for its historical associations with the settlement of this region of Oregon and for its importance as an architectural significant agricultural complex that reflects the work culture of ~~an~~ early 20th century sheep ranching in the west Called regional historian S. Toothman and clarified period of significance which ends in mid-1930s due to the fact significance is keyed to the development of sheep ranching. Called Ed Bearss to OK ~~xxx~~ change of date on ~~fxx~~ form from 1975 to 1934 for specific dates of period of significance.

Recom./Criteria Accept A, C
Reviewer Bishop
Discipline Historian
Date 6/20/84
___ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: ___ technical corrections cited below
___ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ unaltered	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ altered	☐ moved date ___
☐ fair	☐ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet

File with informal NPS nomination review fact sheets

H30(418)

MAR 8 1984

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region

From: Chief Historian

Subject: Preliminary Review of National Register Nomination Form, James Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

Enclosed please find a copy of the subject National Register Nomination Form. It has been reviewed by Chief of Registration Shull and her staff and their comments are found on the attached Evaluation/Return Sheet. My staff has penciled in the the margins of the form a few minor editorial notations.

Both the National Register Staff and I wish to commend Regional Historian Toothman for providing us with a comprehensive and well written document.

/s/ Edwin C. Bearss

Enclosures

cc: 418
422 Stamm
413 Ms. Shull
400 Reading File
001 Reading File
ECBearss:kpj:03/07/84
(4A)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

TELEPHONE REPORT

DATE 3/25/84
TIME OF CALL 2 30 AM PM

1. CALL ☐ TO: ☒ FROM (Name)
Stephanie Toothman

2. ADDRESS (Tel. No. if needed)
Seattle · NPS · Reg. Of.

3. SUBJECT, PROJECT NO., ETC.
James Cant Ranch H.D.
Oregon

4. DETAILS OF DISCUSSION

Stephanie is requesting that the Federal Register commenting period be waived for the nomination in order to ~~[illegible]~~ qualify the property for the NPS leasing program, as soon as possible. I said that there seemed to be sufficient reason to request the waiver and would see that the notice was made and that the property was acted on as soon as possible.

Ed Bearss will be delivering the nomination to us, as soon as possible next week, likely.

NAME OF PERSON PLACING/RECEIVING CALL	TITLE	OFFICE
L McClelland	A Dist	

FHR-8-227
June 1978

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30(418)

JUN 1 1984

Memorandum

To: Chief of Registration Shull, Interagency Resources Division

From: Chief Historian

Subject: Nomination of James Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, to the National Register of Historic Places

Enclosed please find a copy of the subject form which is herewith submitted for inclusion in the National Register.

The documentation has been revised to incorporate the recommendations by your staff and my office in our preliminary review of the nomination. In addition, the revised nomination has been concurred with by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer following the recommendation by the Oregon State Review Board.

As the Pacific Northwest Regional Office is currently solicting bids to lease portions of the district for grazing purposes under the Historic Property Leasing Program, anything you can do to expedite the listing of this property will be appreciated.

Edwin C. Bearss

Enclosure

James Cant Ranch Historic District
John Day Fossil Beds National Monument

List of Photographs

1. Main house in foreground, barn in distance

2. Main house, front/west elevation

3. Main house (looking from northwest toward house), log cabin in rear

4. Main house, rear and north elevations; log cabin

5. Left, privy; right, bunkhouse

6. Left, chicken coop; right, feed storage shed; Sheep Rock in the background

7. Workshop

8. Left, workshop, north elevation; right, outbuilding

9. Barn, south and west elevations

10. Barn and sheepshearing pens

11. Watchman's hut

12. Sheep pens

Note: all photographs are labeled as illustrated on photograph 1 on the reverse side.

Norma - This is the nomination that Stephanie Toothman needs expedited -- need signature as soon as possible.

Historic property lease is pending.

(See Linda McClelland for details)

JG

343 8163

The 15-day commenting period for the following property is to be waived in order to ~~xxxix~~ permit a agreement which ~~was~~ for will ~~[illegible]~~ assist in the property's preservation leasing ~~portions of the area/grazing~~ purposes.

OREGON

Grant County
Dayville vicinity, Cant, James, Ranch Historic District, OR 19

Oregon
John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department
State Historic Preservation Office
725 Summer St NE, Ste C
Salem, OR 97301-1266
(503) 986-0671
Fax (503) 986-0793
www.oregonheritage.org

February 11, 2013

Christy Avery, Historian
National Park Service
Pacific West Region Office – Seattle
909 First Avenue, Fifth Floor
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

RE Cant Ranch Historic District, National Register of Historic Places nomination amendment

Dear Ms. Avery:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Cant Ranch Historic District nomination amendment. We appreciate the Park Service's commitment to this historic resource and applaud the agency's fine work documenting the district. At this time our office offers no further comments.

Please find enclosed a signed copy of the National Register form and a set of photographs. Our office needs only a single copy of the printed photos for our files.

Please contact Ian Johnson at (503) 986-0678 if you have any further questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Roger Roper
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Pacific West Region
909 First Avenue, Fifth Floor
Seattle, Washington 98104-1060

Memorandum

August 1, 2013

To: Robert Sutton, Chief Historian

From: Christy Avery, Historian

Subject: Cant Ranch National Register of Historic Places Amendment

I am pleased to forward to you the National Register of Historic Places nomination form (amendment) for the Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, in Grant County, Oregon.

The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in 1984. However, since that time, our understanding of cultural landscapes has broadened, and this amendment includes resources not described or counted in the original. Furthermore, the original nomination does not adequately specify contributing and non-contributing resources. This amendment seeks to provide a more thorough description of the landscape features of the ranch, and an accurate count of contributing and non-contributing resources. The district boundary has not changed.

The following materials are enclosed:

- 1 copy of the amendment, including the National Register form, and continuation sheets for Section 7 and Section 8
- 1 set of labeled archival photographs
- One cd containing a Microsoft Word version of the amendment
- One cd containing photographs in TIFF format
- 1 copy of the Cant Ranch Historic District Boundary (Map A)
- 1 copy of the Cant Ranch Complex Site Plan (Map B)

The Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer has concurred with our findings in the amendment and that these forms meet standards for documentation. The signed cover form is enclosed. The SHPO has retained a complete copy of the package, including photographs. The SHPO indicated that since this was an amendment, and that there is already a USGS map associated with the nomination on file and the boundaries have not changed, the NPS will not need to provide another USGS map.

If you have any questions about this submittal, please contact Christy Avery at 206-220-4127 or Christine_Avery@nps.gov.

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

RECEIVED 2280
AUG - 2 2013
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

August 2, 2013

Memorandum

To: Acting Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places

From: Deputy Federal Preservation Officer, National Park Service

Subject: Additional Documentation for Cant Ranch Historic District, John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, Grant County, Oregon

I am forwarding Additional Documentation for the National Register Nomination for the Cant Ranch Historic District in John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. The district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in 1984. This form provides an improved description of the ranch's landscape features, a thorough count of all contributing and non-contributing resources, and improved maps and site plans. The Park History Program has reviewed the form and found the property eligible under Criteria A and C, with areas of significance of Agriculture, Exploration/Settlement, and Architecture.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Cant, James, Ranch Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OREGON, Grant

DATE RECEIVED: 8/02/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/18/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 84003000

NOMINATOR: FEDERAL

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT 9-18-13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Additional Documentation Approved

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.