

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name White Horse Ranch
other names/site number NEHBS # BD00-68

2. Location

street & number Rt. 1, Box 20 n/a not for publication
city, town Naper X vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Boyd code 015 zip code 68755

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district		_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James A. Hansen May 9, 1990
Signature of certifying official Date
Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Beth Boland 7/5/90
 See continuation sheet. _____
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. _____
 determined not eligible for the National Register. _____
 removed from the National Register. _____
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: business

Agriculture: animal facility

Recreation and Culture: auditorium

Commerce/Trade: department store

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Wood: weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Metal

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The White Horse Ranch covers approximately 2,400 acres of beautiful rolling sand hills along the Niobrara River in Boyd County, Nebraska. The ranch was founded by Cal and Ruth Thompson in 1936. This nomination comprises a forty acre tract of land that contains all of the representative buildings, including the ranch office, general store, two barns, two sheds and the ranch house, all of which were built in the 1890s as part of an earlier ranch operation. Structural and historical integrity is good for all seven contributing buildings. Restoration plans by the current owner are now underway.

The remaining seven contributing buildings (see Sketch Map 1-7) all date from the period of the White Horse Ranch's significance, its founding in 1936.

1. The old Wright Ranch cream station was used as the office (photos 2, 3) of the White Horse Ranch. A clapboard, one and one-half story building with concrete block foundation and asphalt shingle gable roof, Caleb Thompson died here in 1963. Its principal distinguishing characteristic is a covered stairway to the upper level in the rear. The office, approximately 10' x 14', has a storm cellar with outside access only.

2. The horsebarn (photos 6, 7), with shiplap wood siding, has a concrete foundation and standing seam tin gambrel roof. The barn is 62' wide and 48' long, with 16' x 48' shed roof additions on either side. There are eleven horse stalls and a feed room in the center section of the barn. The south addition is divided into three large stalls; the north addition has two storage rooms. The 30' x 48' loft was used for hay storage.

3. The 20' x 24' wood clapboard house (photo 1) has one story and a wood shingle hip roof with dormers in the ends of the attic. There is a closed-in porch measuring 10' x 24' on the south side of the house. There are two bedrooms in the north corners, a dining room, and a small kitchen.

 See continuation sheet

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4. The store building (photo 4) has a corrugated iron gable roof and a concrete block foundation. The wood frame building has been sheathed with brick patterned, pressed tin panels. The store, facing south, has a symmetrical false front with a door and four windows. There is a door in the back on the east side. The store building is 24' wide x 36' long.

5. The long barn (photos 8, 9) was originally built for cattle. Caleb and Ruth Thompson converted it into a recreation hall. Cal used the north exterior of it to paint a folk art mural of scenery around the White Horse Ranch, including the Niobrara River and the ranch itself. The mural, 110' long, has been restored. Cal also painted a huge horseshoe over the east entrance for good luck to the performers.

This building was used for public gatherings and meetings, including amateur theatricals, and other entertainment for the huge crowds such as music and dances. The 100' long building is 22' wide. A 12' wide stage runs along the east end. There is a balcony area at the west end, 25' deep, which is a remnant of the original hayloft removed by the Thompsons. Public access was through a sliding door in the center of the long south wall. Of clapboard-sheathed frame construction, it has an asphalt shingle roof gable and concrete foundation.

6. East of the store stands a clapboard sided frame 24' x 36' building (photo 5) with gable roof and a lean-to shed measuring 12' x 24' on the back. This was a tack and harness shed and was later used as a garage. There is a sliding door and a set of double doors on the east side.

7. Further east is a clapboard sided frame 16' x 24' building (photo 7) with gable roof, and one set of double doors in one end. This was a wagon shed and garage.

Other features:

Northeast of the long barn were a circus ring and other equine training apparatuses.

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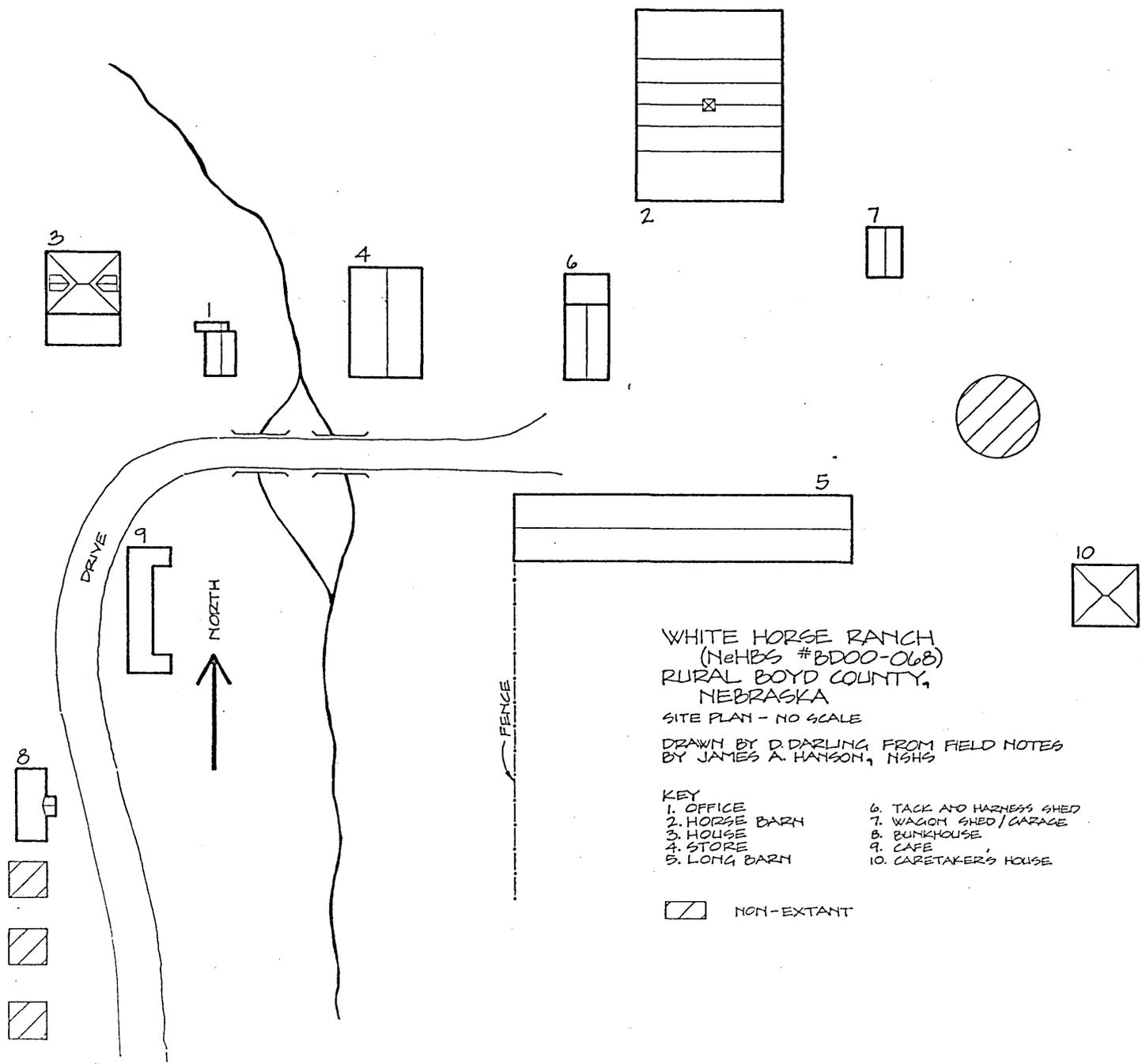
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Five quonset huts used as dormitories and a dining hall or cafe were built in the 1940's along a small natural drainage about a hundred yards southwest of the long barn. There was also a clear level parking area for visitors and for horse trailers. One of the "bunk houses" is still extant (8). It measures 12' x 28' with a 4' x 6' protected entryway. The cafe also survives (9). It is 100' long and 19' wide, including two shedroof additions on either end.

A two story stucco-covered frame house for a caretaker was begun ten years ago to the southeast of the ranch complex (10). It is incomplete and uninhabited at this time.

The contributing buildings (1 through 7 above), vacant since Cal Thompson's death, are now being restored and maintained by local citizens, including several women who participated in the ranch's riding school and horse troupe.



WHITE HORSE RANCH
 (NEHBS #BD00-068)
 RURAL BOYD COUNTY,
 NEBRASKA

SITE PLAN - NO SCALE

DRAWN BY D. DARLING, FROM FIELD NOTES
 BY JAMES A. HANSON, NSHG

- KEY
- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1. OFFICE | 6. TACK AND HARNESS SHED |
| 2. HORSE BARN | 7. WAGON SHED / GARAGE |
| 3. HOUSE | 8. BUNKHOUSE |
| 4. STORE | 9. CAFE |
| 5. LONG BARN | 10. CARETAKER'S HOUSE |

 NON-EXTANT

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Period of Significance

1936

Significant Dates

1936

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

The White Horse Ranch is of national significance in the area of agriculture (Criterion A) as the place of origin of a registered breed of horse, the American Albino or American White. This is apparently the only registered breed of livestock developed exclusively in Nebraska.

The date of the founding of the White Horse Ranch, 1936, coincides with the creation of the American Albino registry. Both were the result of the efforts of Caleb or Cal Thompson and his second wife, Ruth, who developed the breed with Cal's brother, Hudson, on their ranches near Merriman between 1917 and 1936.

Caleb or Cal Thompson, born at West Point, Nebraska, in 1892, showed a strong early interest in purebred animals and raising registered livestock. In 1917, he and his twin brother, Hudson, purchased "Old King," an outstanding pure white stallion with pink skin but normal eyes, from a doctor in Illinois. The albino, of mixed Arabian and Morgan ancestry, was a splendid showhorse and was used as a stud. Cal began keeping some track of Old King's progeny. In six generations, the Thompson brothers had a pure strain of albino horses without pink eyes.

After the death of his wife, Cal Thompson married Ruth Hackenberg in 1934 and they moved from Merriman to Naper in 1936 where they acquired an existing ranch along the Niobrara. They founded the American Albino Horse Club, later called the American Albino Association, and developed the White Horse Ranch as a working ranch and showplace along the albino theme. All livestock and pets, including dogs, cats, canaries, cattle, peafowl, geese, ducks, and horses, were white. All riding equipment, vehicles, and buildings were the same color.

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Cal and Ruth began a formal registry of Old King's descendants in 1936. The first registered horse, Snowchief II, was mounted after death and is on exhibit in the Stuart, Nebraska museum. The Thompsons organized a girls' riding school and special scholarships were provided for the underprivileged. In 1938, the Thompsons' organized the "White Horse Troupe" which toured America and performed at Shrine circuses, carnivals, and rodeos for 25 years. In 1946, over 10,000 spectators viewed the troupe at the ranch in one day. Two Warner Brothers short films about the Ranch and the breed were made in 1946 and 1951.

In 1963, Mr. Thompson died. His widow moved to Oregon, taking the American Albino registry with her. The animals were dispersed but Mrs. Thompson retained ownership of the ranch. In 1985, the official breeding records were returned to Naper. Some 4,000 horses have been registered to date, and there is now an international American Albino association.

The "American White" horse color breed, as it is called today, has been made famous as the Lone Ranger's horse (the White Horse Ranch provided ten of them) and as the Mustang emblem used by Ford Motor Company. Today the White Horse Ranch is still owned by Ruth Thompson. The buildings, vacant since Cal Thompson's death, are now being restored by interested local citizens, including several women who participated in the ranch's riding school and horse troupe. The White Horse Ranch legacy also continues in the form of the Texas White Horse Troupe of registered American Albino horses which travel and perform nationally.

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American Albino Association, Inc. The American White Horses: A Description Pamphlet. Crabtree, Oregon; no date (circa 1980).

American Albino Association, Inc. To Ride a White Horse. Crabtree, Oregon; no date (circa 1967).

International American Albino Association, Inc. American Albino Yearbook Directory. Naper, Nebraska; 1986.

International American Albino Association, Inc. Fifty Years at the White Horse Ranch: The Past, The Present, The Future. Naper, Nebraska; 1986.

Nebraska State Historical Buildings Survey (NEHBS). "Reconnaissance Survey Final Report, Boyd County." Lincoln, NE: State Historical Society, 1988.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Final Report of Boyd County. Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey. Lincoln, Nebraska; 1988.

Nebraska Press Association, Who's Who in Nebraska. Lincoln, Nebraska; 1940.

Thompson, Cal and Ruth (American Albino Association, Inc.). Ranch in White. Naper, Nebraska; no date (circa 1945, second edition circa 1986).

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A.	Latitude	42°	52' 38"	Longitude	99°	3' 34"
B.	Latitude	42°	52' 38"	Longitude	99°	3' 16"
C.	Latitude	42°	52' 26"	Longitude	99°	3' 16"
D.	Latitude	42°	52' 26"	Longitude	99°	3' 34"