

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 92000114 Date Listed: 3/10/92

Silver King Ranch  
Property Name

Lewis & Clark MT  
County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* *Autawicott Lee*  
Signature of the Keeper

*3/10/92*  
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

**Classification:** Because of the ruinous nature of the root cellar, it should be classified as a site rather than a building. The resource count is amended to read: 9 contributing buildings and 3 contributing sites.

This information was confirmed with Chere Jiusto of the Montana State historic preservation office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: **Silver King Ranch**

other name/site number:

**2. Location**

street & number:

not for publication: **n/a**  
vicinity: **X**

city/town: **Lincoln**

state: **Montana**      code: **MT**      county: **Lewis & Clark**      code: **049**      zip code: **59639**

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property: **Private**

Category of Property: **Buildings**

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>10</u>	<u>1</u> building(s)
<u>2</u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>3</u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>15</u>	<u>1</u> Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: **n/a**

4. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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.      See continuation sheet.

Maudie Steg Signature of certifying official 1-31-92 Date

MT SHPO 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 Antoinette Lee 3/10/92  
     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 Keeper      Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic: Domestic: single dwelling, multiple dwelling, secondary structure, camp  
Agriculture: animal facility, agricultural outbuilding, agricultural field  
Industry: extractive facility and processing site

Current: Domestic: single dwelling  
Vacant/Not in Use

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## 7. Description

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Architectural Classification: Other: Rustic

Materials: foundation: concrete  
walls: log, wood  
roof: shingle

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Silver King Ranch is a historic ranch site nestled in a high mountain valley, located against the western side of the Rocky Mountains. The ranch property boundaries were historically drawn along section lines to encompass the rich bottom land and open meadows between two well-watered creeks, Landers Fork Creek and its tributary, Indian Meadows Creek. The terrain is almost flat across the bottom land, rolling up to gentle ridge lines and peaks. The area is timbered with coniferous forest, with natural meadows interspersed throughout.

A complex of historic buildings was erected near the center of the ranch property, at a location overlooking a broad, open meadow to the east, with timber and Indian Meadows Creek forming a backdrop to the west. From the ranch buildings, a spectacular panorama of ridge lines rings this basin. Fifteen contributing historic buildings, sites and structures comprise this complex. The proposed historic property boundaries encompass the buildings as well as an agricultural field, two irrigation ditches, a rocker and the trailhead of a series of historic pack trails.

The historic buildings on the Silver King Ranch are a wonderful collection of masterfully crafted log buildings, representing a broad spectrum of ranch-related activities. These include for domestic use, Owen Byrnes' residence and a bunkhouse; for stockraising, a horse barn and loafing shed; and for secondary activities a series of outbuildings--a woodshed, smoke house, root cellar, ice house, and blacksmith shop (the only frame building in the complex). Just to the east, evidence of an irrigated hay meadow is still discernable. Near the house, an old mining rocker and a log tent base for a hunting camp reflect interest in mining and guiding, recurrent themes throughout the ranch's history. Byrnes' enthusiasm as an outdoorsman and a guide are further reflected by a system of pack trails which extend to the north from the historic building complex, established in the upper Lander's Fork drainage during his years at the ranch.

The log buildings date from the turn of the century and on, and illustrate several construction and notching techniques. The residence and the barn dominate the landscape, the smaller outbuildings stand to the sides and the rear, several are located along the creek bottom behind the main buildings. Very few of the buildings are firmly dated. The Owen Byrnes residence is reported to date to 1914 and a photograph of that vintage depicts the house much as it appears today, with the blacksmith shop set just to the north. The original bunkhouse is speculated to date between 1895 and 1914, with the addition made later. Other buildings are not dateable, although they appear to be contemporary to the main residence.

### Contributing Buildings

1) Owen Byrnes Residence: The main residence on the property was reportedly constructed in 1914. Measuring 61'9" long x 31'8" wide, this two story log building is constructed of peeled, square-notched logs, trimmed with cornerboards. Newer cement chinking has

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replaced the original mortar. It is square in massing with a projecting rear wing, and a steeply-pitched hipped roof capped by a small gable. The roof and dormer were apparently shingle-covered originally, the dormer is now clad with horizontal boards, the roof is now covered with rolled asphalt roofing. A central chimney rises above the roof's gable peak. Ribbed metal roofing covers the rear wing.

On the east elevation, an open shed porch supported on log posts spans the first story. Two doors enter from this side, and are set to either end of the wall. Between them, a pair of windows, double-hung, 1-over-1 is set just off center. Above this a shed-roofed balcony originally projected, this was later enclosed as a small sitting room.

On the west elevation, a single story gabled wing projects. On the west end, there is a single window, double-hung, 2-over-2. A recessed porch runs along the south side; a side entrance is located here. To the south, a low shed roof extends from the gable to cover a patio area. On the north, the windows include two small, paired 1-over-1 sash units and a long opening with more horizontal 1-over-1 hung windows.

On the north and south elevations, double-hung 2-over-2 windows are hung singly and paired. Above this, second story bedrooms are lit by 2-by-2 casement windows which appear to be original, installed by turning the standard hung units on their sides.

2) Horse Barn: This two story barn is constructed of square notched logs and measures 31' long x 26'6" wide. Most of the chinking has fallen out. It is a gambrel roofed building; the original wooden shingling has been replaced with ribbed metal roofing. The main barn doors are centrally placed on the south gambrel end and open out, dutch-door fashion. Above them, a single square opening is boarded over. Framed within the gambrel, a horizontal doorway with a ledged and braced awning door accesses the hay mow. The barn opens into a small series of corrals. The corrals include a square main corral, and a loading chute, and have been reconstructed in recent years, following the original configurations.

On the interior, the barn is sectioned into stalls on the ground floor. A wooden ladder built into the southeast corner accesses the large, open hay loft above.

3) Loafing Shed: The loafing shed is a long, horizontal building consisting of an enclosed room on the north quarter, and a covered shed which opens to the east into the corrals across the remaining portion of the building. Measuring 54' long and 15' wide, it is constructed with square-notched logs. Trimmed with cornerboards, the roof is supported by six purlins and a ridgepole. The original roofing is in poor condition, but enough remains to see that it consisted of horizontal boards laid over vertical boards.

4) Bunkhouse: The bunkhouse evidences a different log construction technique, employing saddle-notched logs on the original, northern portion. The logs are chinked with split log billets; on the interior billets and hand hewing form a flat wall surface. Window and door openings are framed with milled lumber. Fenestration includes a double-hung, 2-over-2 window on the north end, and a horizontal window opening on the east (no units remain in this opening).

A kitchen addition was made to this building, probably during the 1920s. It is framed with wood, and the log purlin and gable roof system was extended to cover this added mass. The exterior is sheathed with unpeeled, split timbers. The windows here include 2-by-2 sliding casement units, and on the south end, a double-hung, 6-over-6 window. The addition consists of one large room. The walls are finished with boards.

5) Root Cellar: The root cellar is built into the sloping ground behind the bunkhouse. Overgrown, collapsed and difficult to define, the walls were constructed of rubblestone,

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and the roof is covered with earth. An opening in the floor of the bunkhouse accessed this cellar.

6) Blacksmith Shop: The blacksmith shop is a square massed building with a steep gable roof. Built of frame construction with pole rafters, it is sheathed on the exterior with vertical board siding. A panelled wooden door framed with milled lumber, is set off center on the west elevation. On the east elevation, a standard-sized window opening has been boarded in. A single, horizontal window opening is placed on the south.

On the interior, planking covers the walls and the floor; there is no foundation. Brands burned into the walls link the building to early stockraising at the ranch. A massive workbench extends along the south side, and is covered with an array of ranching, harvesting, woodworking and metal working tools. A stove hole remains in the roof.

7) Wood Shed: The wood shed is a small, square massed cabin with a low-pitched gable roof. The roof, which is covered with non-original corrugated metal, is supported by six purlins and a ridgepole which project out across the front. Constructed with logs joined in a modified square notch, the original chinking has fallen out. Due to shrinkage, the present owner filled the spaces between the logs with lengths of small-diameter, unpeeled poles. The doorway is centered in the east wall, it houses a braced plank door. A single window in the shed is presently boarded over.

8) Ice House: This is a small log building with a gable roof that is located on the edge of Indian Meadows Creek. Logs are joined with half notch and a half notch variation. A central plank door is located in the east wall.

9) Smoke House: The smoke house is a small log building with a gable roof located on the western edge of Indian Meadows Creek. The building, now somewhat collapsed, is constructed of round-notched, axe-cut logs. A gable roof is supported on four purlins and a ridgepole; these project across the front to cover an open porch deck. The interior consists of a single room, having a small, square log crib in the southwest corner, a wooden bench along the north wall. No door remains in the doorway, which opens to the east. The opening is framed with poles. There is no foundation, the earth beneath forms the floor.

10) Hunting Camp: This building consists of a square log base, presumably for erection of a canvas wall tent. It is built to a height of three unpeeled logs; these are square notched, and chinked with lengths of pole. A doorway opens in the east wall. There is no flooring or foundation; on the interior, a wooden platform for a heating stove remains. Round nails are in evidence.

**Contributing Sites and Structures**

11, 12 and 13) Field & Irrigation Ditches: The field directly east of the historic ranch buildings is a large, natural meadow which lies stretching between the two tributaries edging the ranch. Edged by low ridgelines and stands of native Douglas fir and other conifers, the field shows evidence of early cultivation. Timothy grasses have naturalized in the meadow, and two ditches running from the nearby ridge to the west into the middle of the meadow testify to early irrigation systems.

14) Rocker: A small rocker remains in Indian Meadow Creek some 50 meters west of the Owen Byrnes residence. This wooden structure is built of milled lumber and poles. Although the vintage is unknown, it was likely used through the early or mid 1900s, for small scale prospecting along the creekbed.

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15) Pack Trail: A pack trail leading into the back country of the upper Lander's Fork drainage branches off the ranch's dirt roadway. A simple dirt trail into the forest, the blazing of this and other nearby trails is locally attributed to Owen Byrnes, although some may very well date to the period when this drainage was an extensively used travel corridor by Native American tribes in this region.

**Non-Contributing Structures**

The Davenport cabin, a modern cabin built in 1963, is set on the edge of the meadow some 100 yards to the south. It does not contribute to the significance of the Silver King ranch, although it is compatible with the historic log buildings on the property in construction, design and scale. Near the Davenport cabin, two others dating to the 1940s are located on private property just south of the present ranch boundaries.

Elsewhere on the ranch, two old adits remain in the back country. One is located above Silver King Lake, the other is on the ridge west of the Indian Meadows Creek. No information regarding the provenance of these mines has been located, they may be linked to Byrnes, or even predate his career in the area.

The mines and the dam site were considered for inclusion in this nomination, however, due to a lack of integrity at the dam, and lack of documentation associating the mines with Owen Byrnes or the Silver King Ranch, they were not determined to contribute to the significance of this property. Hence the historic property boundaries were not drawn to encompass these resources.

**Integrity**

The Silver King Ranch, in these pristine alpine surroundings has very much retained integrity of setting and feeling in this high mountain country. The rural landscape, including the agricultural field, irrigation ditches and trails leading into semiforested rangelands, which characterized the ranch in Owen Byrnes' day remains virtually unchanged by the passage of ensuing decades. The historic buildings themselves reflect an excellent retention of integrity, and have been carefully preserved so that today, with the exception of several new roofs, minor alteration of the dormer on the Owen Byrnes house and general disrepair of some of the smaller outbuildings, the original fabrics remain and the buildings accurately represent their historic appearance and design.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: <b>A, C</b>	Areas of Significance:	<b>Architecture Exploration/Settlement Agriculture</b>
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): <b>B</b>	Period(s) of Significance: <b>ca. 1900 - 1941</b>	
Significant Person(s): <b>n/a</b>	Significant Dates: <b>ca. 1900, 1914</b>	
Cultural Affiliation: <b>n/a</b>	Architect/Builder: <b>unknown</b>	

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

The Silver King Ranch is a large, early 20th century ranch property which is noteworthy for both its locally-significant history and its rustic log architecture, representative of long-established vernacular building traditions in Montana. For associations with the ranching and mining settlement of the Lincoln district, and for exemplifying log architecture of distinctive quality and technique, it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A & C.

Criteria Consideration B applies to this property, the blacksmith building which stood just north of the Owen Byrnes residence was moved prior to 1963. It does, however, remain within the historic building compound, typifying a very common practice in Montana, of moving small secondary buildings around on agricultural compounds as the need arose, and continuing to use them.

### Area History

The Silver King Ranch is located along an upper tributary of the Blackfoot River--Indian Creek--so named for its position along a portion of a well-used Indian trail. The trail joins with the Blackfoot River, and was traced by Lewis and Clark expedition in 1906 over Lewis & Clark Pass, on their return trip to the east. Tribes generally located west of the mountains, including the Nez Perce, had described this route to the expedition, indicating that this route was followed when crossing over the Continental Divide to hunt buffalo. Indeed, their name for the Blackfoot River was Cokahlarishkit, River of the Road to the Buffalo. Sites in the area, including tipi rings and portions of the trail which remain, evidence that early use.

The first white person recorded in the area was Captain Lander who travelled through the area as a surveyor for the Isaac I. Stevens party. Lander's Fork, one of the creeks in this drainage, still bears his name. In years to follow, the area was explored by miners who left prospecting scars throughout these mountains.

From 1865 when gold was struck in nearby Lincoln Gulch, and into the 20th century, mining has been a major, though intermittent industry in the Blackfoot mining district. Mining in the Blackfoot has continued to be an important aspect of the local economy to the present day.

The area was also used early on by open range cattlemen who ran cattle across this unfenced rangeland until the late 1880s. Among prominent pioneering families in the Lincoln valley were the Holters, who ran cattle in the east end of the Blackfoot Valley, and the Horskys, who ran cattle along the Lander's Fork. One of the early cattlemen of the area, a Mr. Koch, recalled cutting wild hay on the meadow in front of the Byrnes house in 1888 or 1889, when it was still open government land, prior to the founding of any ranch or residences there.

### Silver King Ranch History

Owen Byrnes created the Silver King Ranch by combining homestead claims and railroad grant lands which he purchased from the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. It is reported that by 1895, a family named Craig was settled on the 160 acres in the northwest quarter of section 12. This tract encompasses the property which later became the heart of the ranch, and location of the historic buildings and fields which define the historic property under



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consideration. After 1895, George Johnson built a house on this site and apparently lived there through 1910, when he asserted his right to the property in a legal public notice. He subsequently sold interests in that property to Owen Byrnes and the Landers Ranch Company in 1913 and 1916. The house remained on the ranch site until it was destroyed by fire. During that time, it is probable that the original portion of the existing bunkhouse was erected.

Owen Byrnes, a native of Vermont, came to the mining camp of Butte as a young man following news of gold strikes. Subsequently, Byrnes returned to the East to study mining engineering. He travelled again to Montana, and specialized in gold mining. Over the years, he gained experience in all aspects of the mining industry. During this era, Byrnes filed a homestead claim in the Lincoln district. Byrnes became interested in the mines of the Lincoln district through his employment at the Hubbard mine where he served as manager and engineer. He eventually negotiated a purchase of this mine, and followed it up with the purchase of one of the area's largest mines--the Jay Gould mine--in 1922.

Byrnes filed his original homestead claim in 1908 on a 160-acre tract above the Silver King Lake. In 1914, a year after purchasing George Johnson's homestead, Byrnes erected the large log residence which stands yet today. A 1914 photograph reveals the completed residence, along with the blacksmith shop in the background, which apparently was later moved to its present location.

In 1916, Owen Byrnes, T.O. Hammond and C.A. Spaulding formed the Lander Valley Ranch Company. As company president, Owen Byrnes raised Belgian draft horses on the Silver King Ranch with the assistance of a ranch hand named Jennings. The buildings and structures remaining on the ranch reflect that industry. Irrigation ditches into the field out front, and timothy grasses which now grow wild in the meadow indicate that the field was cultivated and watered to provide feed for the stock.

Byrnes was an avid hunter as well, and guided many hunting parties up into the mountains north of his ranch. He blazed a number of pack trails into the upper Indian Meadows/Landers Fork drainage. The hunting camp on the ranch may well be associated with these activities, although there is no documentation of that use.

As one of the foremost miners in the area, Owen Byrnes became well known, and was an important local figure. He was elected to four terms of the Montana State legislature, two in the Senate, two in the House of Representatives. Drawing upon his experiences in some of the area's most active mines, Byrnes served on the mining committee during his tenure.

The undeveloped areas of the ranch reflect Byrnes' mining-related interests and efforts. Two old adits remain in the back country of the ranch. One is located above Silver King Lake, the other is on the ridge west of the Indian Meadows Creek. No information regarding the provenance of these mines has been located; they may be linked to Byrnes, or even predate his career in the area.

In 1914, Byrnes became involved with the Landers Power Company. Byrnes shared an undivided half interest in the ranch with Albert Mohr, a Chicago based financier. With that backing, he developed not only his mines, but a power project on the Lander's Fork to harness hydropower for the Jay Gould mine. A dam was constructed at a waterfall south of the ranch and a powerline was strung over to Gould. The project was ill-fated, however, and the dam was never functional. Water leaked through fissures in the holding reservoir, and the first winter all the power poles snapped from the contraction-expansion of the wires. The dam was subsequently removed, and all that remains at the site are a turbine tunnel, some concrete pilings along the sides of the creek, and the collapsed and deteriorated remains of two wooden buildings.

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The mine sites and the dam areas were investigated and considered for inclusion in this nomination, however, due to a lack of integrity at the dam, and lack of documentation associating the mines with Owen Byrnes or the Silver King Ranch, they were not determined to contribute to the significance of this property.

Owen Byrnes died in 1931. After that time, his wife, Bessie, leased the ranch to several individuals including a partnership, Ingersoll and Harold Longmaid, who ran cattle in the summertime, and during the years 1931-1942, Red Woolrich. Dude ranching became an important secondary industry on many Montana ranches during the 1930s, and in 1931, Woolrich tried his hand at running dudes at the Silver King Ranch with the Lambkin family.

Carroll "Dave" and Amy H. Davenport purchased a 160 acre interest in 1948, and built a nearby cabin. In 1963, Robert and Neva Lydiard purchased the ranch. The Lydiard family have used the ranch as a summer place since then. In 1987, the Lydiards granted a conservation easement on the Silver King Ranch to the U.S.D.A. Forest Service; Mr. Lydiard retains ownership to the present.

**Architecture**

The architecture of the Silver King Ranch Buildings reflects the able craftsmanship of those who worked in the rustic log building traditions common throughout Montana. They provide an example of substantial construction, using square and saddle notching, common to many early settlements.

The architecture of the house and the barn in particular are impressive undertakings, displaying the abilities of early Montana builders to combine a high degree of architectural style with simple, direct techniques of construction which were adapted to the surrounding environment. A high degree of artistry is suggested by the quality of the log work and the level of architectural information evidenced by these buildings. The complex rooflines, the balanced symmetry of the massing and fenestration, and attention to such finishing details as window and door frames, reflect an emphasis on high architectural standards.

Today, the influence of Owen Byrnes and the legacy of the early mining and ranching community in the early Blackfoot Valley remains indelibly woven into the character and history of the Silver King Ranch. And while the well-preserved buildings themselves have much to tell us yet, about the design and construction of early 20th-century log architecture in Montana, their stately presence in the heart of this undeveloped country has been a major landmark in the outlying Lincoln community for decades.

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## 9. References

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1911 Twelfth Legislative Assembly, Rules of the House, State of Montana.  
Davenport, Dave, Oral History of the Silver King Ranch, Interview with Robert Lydiard,  
Lincoln, Montana, 1978.

X See Continuation Sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: approximately 120 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	12	381270	5214640
B	12	382000	5214600
C	12	381240	5214080
D	12	382200	5214040

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Verbal Boundary Description:

The Silver King Ranch lies in the N $\frac{1}{2}$  NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 12 and the S $\frac{1}{2}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 1, T15N, R8W. The boundaries are defined on the accompanying USGS topographic map.

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Boundary Justification:

The boundaries for the Silver King Ranch do not encompass all of the lands historically associated with the ranch during Owen Byrnes residency. They do, however, encompass the portion of the original homestead parcel which includes the significant buildings, sites and structures at the heart of the ranch, communicating the history, appearance and atmosphere of the ranch throughout the historic period.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Chere Jiusto

Organization: Montana State Historic Preservation Office

Date: November 1991

Street & Number: 225 North Roberts

Telephone: 406-444-7715

City or Town: Helena

State: Montana Zip: 59620

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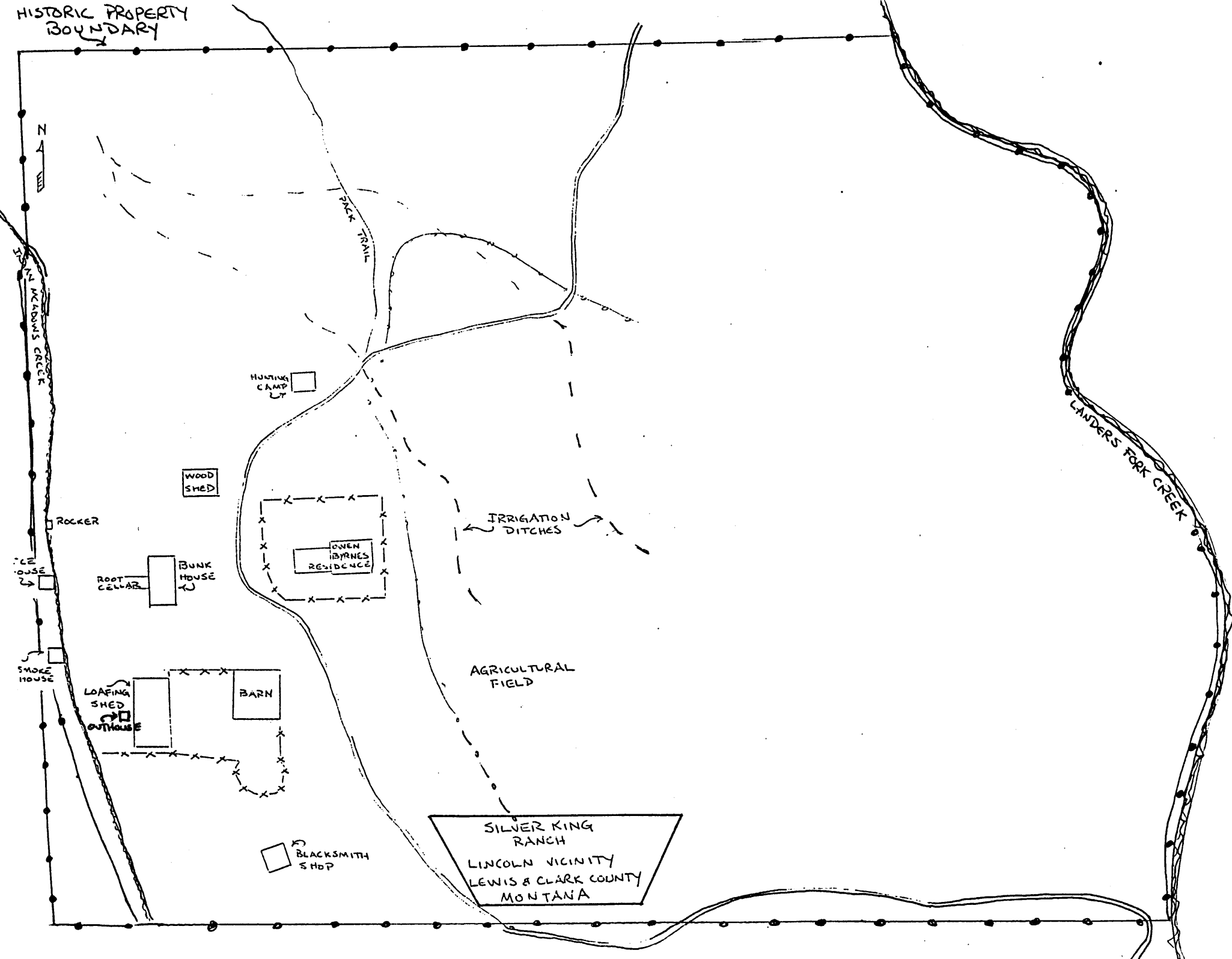
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Lydiard, Robert, personal communication with Chere Jiusto, August 26, 1991.  
Helena Abstract and Title Company, Abstract of Title to Silver King Ranch.  
Pardee, J. T. and F. C. Schrader, Metalliferous Deposits of the Greater Helena Mining  
Region, Montana, Bulletin 842, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Government  
Printing Office, Washington, 1933.  
Great Falls Tribune, June 9, 1963, pg. 7.; February 25, 1980, 4B; July 11, 1987, pg. 9A.  
Western Spurs, July 16, 1987, pg. 30.  
The Helena Independent, March 31, 1931.

HISTORIC PROPERTY  
BOUNDARY



SILVER KING  
RANCH  
LINCOLN VICINITY  
LEWIS & CLARK COUNTY  
MONTANA