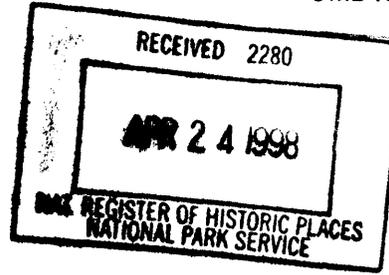


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



568

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Beckwith Ranch
other names/site number 5CR26

2. Location

street & number 64159 Highway 69 [N/A] not for publication
city or town Westcliffe [X] vicinity
state Colorado code CO county Custer code 027 zip code 81252

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

[Signature] State Historic Preservation Officer April 7, 1998
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- removed from the
National Register
- other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper 5/20/98 Date
Edson H. Beall

Beckwith Ranch
Name of Property

Custer County, Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
10	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
10	1	Total

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Agriculture/outbuildings

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete; Wood

walls Wood/weatherboard; Stucco

roof Wood/shingles

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Beckwith Ranch

Name of Property

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.)

- 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.
- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past, 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- # _____

Custer County, Colorado

County/State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1870-1907

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

Beckwith, Elton J.

Beckwith, Edwin F.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:

Beckwith Ranch
Name of Property

Custer County, Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.28

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 454240 4227040
Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carol and Steven Mehls

organization Western Historical Studies date August 23, 1997

street & number 1225 Atlantis Avenue telephone 303-666-6208

city or town Lafayette state Colorado zip code 80026-1234

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Paul R. Seegers / Friends of Beckwith Ranch, Inc.

street & number 8222 Douglas Avenue, Suite #79 / PO Box 178 telephone _____

city or town Dallas / Westcliffe state Texas / Colorado zip code 75225 / 81252

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

DESCRIPTION

The Beckwith Ranch is located in the Wet Mountain Valley, north of Westcliffe, Colorado. The property consists of the ten contributing buildings and one noncontributing structure that make up the ranch headquarters. This ranchstead includes grounds that evidence the Beckwith's efforts at landscaping. There are two large pine trees, various shade trees, and lawn grasses around the buildings. The 3.28 acre parcel of land that makes up the ranchstead is surrounded by open pastures and other agricultural lands that are not included in this nomination. The entire nominated parcel is enclosed by permanent and semi-permanent fencing.

While the Beckwith Ranch was not designed by an architect, it is clear that the Beckwiths had a plan in mind when they built the core ranch complex. This plan is apparent in the layout of the buildings and details found in each of the buildings. For example, the front doors to all the buildings face the central area of the complex, focusing on the spacious front yard and large pine trees. Additionally, remnants of the historic driveway, shade trees, grass lawns, walkways and paths are evident. The color scheme of white walls with red roofs enhances the sense of continuity within the district. Details found on the buildings also add to the sense of oneness, such as the corner boards, use of weatherboard siding, preponderance of gabled roofs, and enclosed eaves.

The resources of the district include:

Contributing buildings

- Main House (#1)
- Bunk House (#2)
- Servant's Quarters (#3)
- Carriage House (#4)
- Ice House (#5)
- Privy (#6)
- Shop (#7)
- Garage (#8)
- Cattle Barn (#9)
- Horse Barn (#10)

Noncontributing structure

pumphouse

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BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

Main House (#1)

The main house [photos #2-6], the most striking building within the complex, is a combination 1-and 2-story late Victorian eclectic style with an irregular footprint resulting from numerous additions. (See floor plan.) A porte cochère dominates the front of the house. The house's roofs reflect the additions and are a combination of intersecting gables, a hipped roof, and a bellcast hipped roof with a flat roof on the bay windows and porte cochère. The exterior is clad with clapboard siding over coated with stucco.

The irregular shaped floor plan of the main house measures approximately 97 feet x 30 feet with the porte cochère extending another 48 feet. The original core of the house dates to at least 1876 and possibly to about 1870. It is listed in the land patent for the property (see section 8). The hewn log original cabin was converted to a gabled L with enclosed stairway tower. The roofs of the main house were raised to convert it from a 1-1/2 story to 2 story building. The roof raising episode also included the addition of the bay windows and weatherboard siding. The available evidence, primarily from the homestead patent application and photographs, indicates these changes to have been completed during the early to mid-1880s. During the remainder of the decade and into the 1890s, the Beckwiths made a number of additions and modifications to the house including a kitchen wing added to the main house block to the west; the pantry/cooler/mud porch area added to the west of the kitchen wing; and the porte cochère and covered front porch were completed. A simple, concrete slab porch was added to the southwest portion of the house. All of the changes were completed by 1899, the date of construction given for the house by the Custer County Assessor. These modifications were done during the Beckwith ownership and are considered historic.

The combination roof is made of wood rafters covered with planks and wood shingles painted red. There are now flat capped brick chimneys on the roof ridges. Metal stove pipes are located at various points on the roof as well. There is a small framework made of metal bars located on one of the main gables. All eaves are enclosed with bracket decorations on the central towers.

The walls are a combination of hewn log from the original cabin and balloon framing. The weatherboard siding is coated with stucco. The stucco was added after 1954, based on a photograph published in the *Pueblo Chieftain*. While the stucco is not the original wall material and has cost the house some of its integrity, the key characteristics (such as the unique foot print, the roof shape, and the placement of doors and windows) remain. The house retains enough integrity to be considered a contributing element of the district. The windows are predominately 2-over-2 light, double hung with some 1-over-1 light, double hung. Some of the 1-over-1 light windows contain stained glass. All the windows are wooden sash. The doors are 1 light over 1 panel with milled trim and stained glass, 1 light over 4 panel, 4 panel wood and 1 light over 3 panel wood.

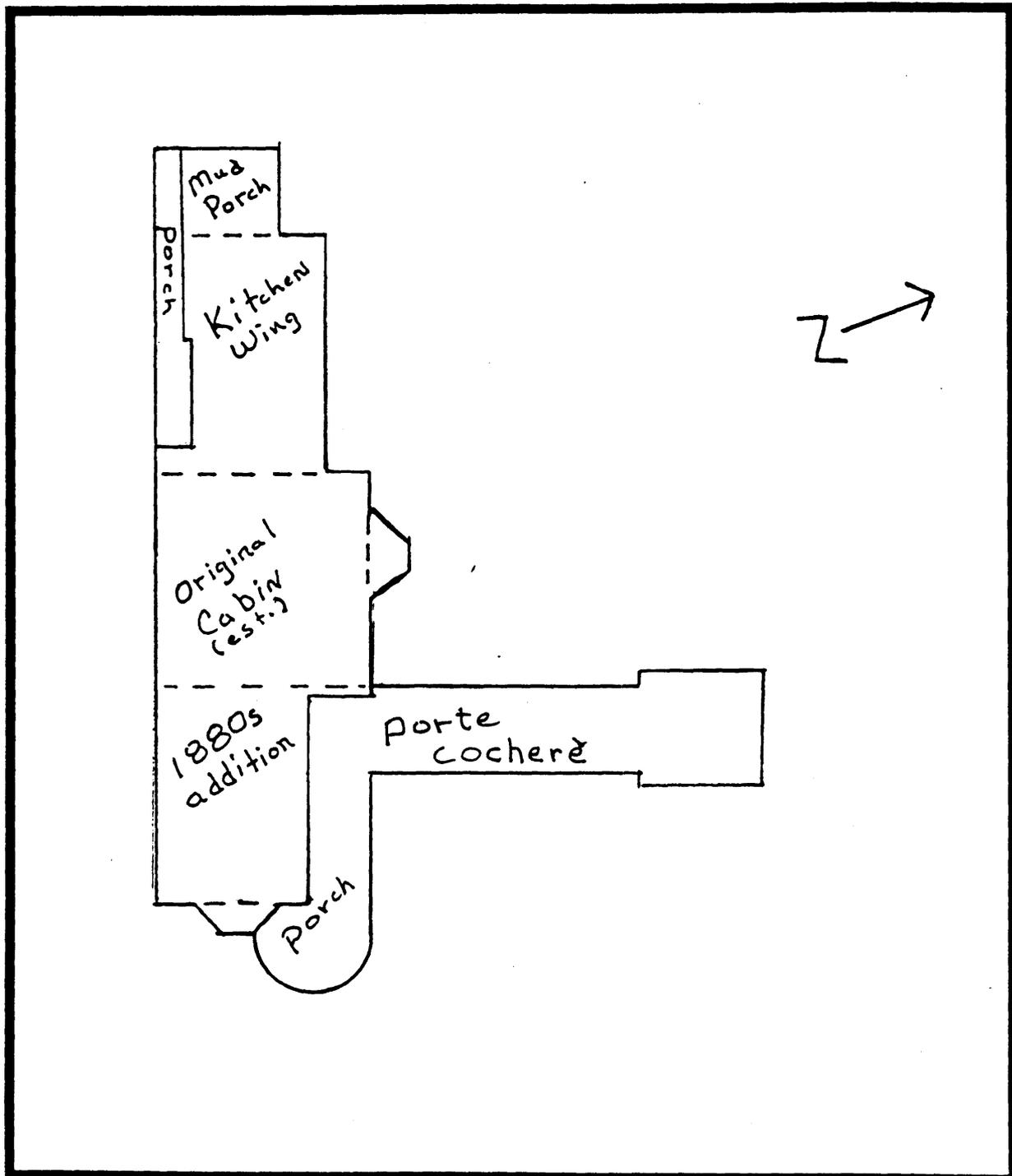
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National Register of Historic Places
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BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

MAIN HOUSE (Building 1)
FLOOR PLAN SKETCH
Approximate Scale 1" = 20'



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BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

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The present foundation is made of poured concrete that is a combination of perimeter and pad/slab types. Around parts of the house there is a concrete apron attached to the foundation that appears to be part of an eave drip protection system. This apron was added at an unknown date.

A porte cochère dominates the front of the house and connects to the wrap-around covered porch on the north and east elevations. A covered walk to the porte cochère is held up by two parallel rows of wood columns; the same type of columns support the flat roofed porch. The cover roof is flat with brackets and railings. Three sides have arched treatments for ingress and egress of vehicles; the fourth (toward the house) is flat. The roofs of the porte cochère, the portico and porch are covered with tin sheets. Local tradition holds that the roof area was used occasionally as a dance floor. This is plausible because there is access to the roof from doors on the second floor.

The present interior of the house is the product of extensive remodeling over the last 100 years. Very little of the historic fabric remains that can be traced to the Beckwith ownership. The current first and second floors are primarily 1970s interior treatments including shag carpet, contemporary paneling and false brick wall coverings. The dining room has historic rubbed oak paneling and evidences of the original cabin can be found under the present wall coverings in the other parts of dining area. The first floor rooms include a cooler/pantry, bathroom, kitchen, closet, dining areas, parlor, den/office/library, and living room. The second floor rooms include three bedrooms, a linen closet, two-stair landing areas, and spaces of unknown function. There is evidence that the original stairs were closed off when the present stairs were installed.

Bunk House (#2)

The bunk house [photo 7] is a one story building with a rectangular footprint, measuring 20 feet x 32 feet. Construction was completed in 1899. The building has a modified side gabled roof clad with wood shingles that are painted red. The eaves are enclosed. The roof extends out along the front to cover a full length veranda style porch. The porch roof is supported by four wood posts with decorative engaged posts on the front wall of the building. The wood plank flooring of the porch is supported by a concrete pad. The frame structure is on a concrete foundation. The building is covered with clapboard siding with corner boards. A brick chimney with tapered metal cap sits on the ridge at the east end of the roof. The interior contains three rooms. There are two front doors, a glazed and paneled wood and a four-panel wood door facing north toward the interior of the complex. The back, south-facing door is a four-panel wood door. The windows are 4-over-4 light, double hung, wooden sash. The interior is in fair condition and little of its historic fabric remains.

Servant's Quarters (#3)

The Servant's Quarters [photo 8] is a one-story building with a nearly square footprint, measuring 12 feet x 15 feet. This building dates to the 1890s. The building has a modified side gable roof, like the bunkhouse. The roof is covered with wood shingles painted red. There is a brick chimney with a metal

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BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

cap protruding from the ridge line. The wood frame walls are sheathed with clapboard siding and have corner boards. The building has a 4-panel wood door and 4-over-4 double hung wooden sash windows. The foundation is of poured concrete. The veranda style porch is on the north side. At one time the porch roof, an extension of the main roof, had three simple, square wood columns. Engaged columns remain attached to the front wall of the building. The interior has been nearly gutted, resulting in a loss of historic fabric.

Carriage House (#4)

The Carriage House [photo 8] is a one-story building with a rectangular footprint, measuring 20 feet x 12 feet. It is similar to the servant's quarters in many ways and appears to have been built at approximately the same time, during the late 1890s. The building has a modified side gable roof covered with wood shingles painted red. The eaves are enclosed. The walls are balloon frame. Clapboard siding with corner boards covers the outside. There is a 4-panel wood door and 4-over-4 double hung wooden sash windows. The foundation is poured concrete. The veranda style porch has square wood brackets holding up the porch roof which is an extension of the main roof. The house has a vertical plank hinged double doors on the west face. The carriage house appears to be a functional conversion, probably of servant's quarters. The interior is in poor condition and retains almost none of its historic fabric.

Ice House (#5)

The ice house [photo 9] is a small, square (8 feet x 8 feet), one story building. Its date of construction is unknown, but it appears to be part of the major construction episode of the 1890s. The front gabled roof has red painted wood shingles. The eaves are enclosed. The frame structure is sheathed with clapboard siding and vertical corner boards. There is one wooden window on the northeast side that is covered. The building sits on a poured concrete foundation. The single door is 4 panel wood. The interior is one open space.

Privy (#6)

The privy [no separate photo, but can be seen in photos 1 and 2] is a rectangular, one-story building measuring 5 feet x 8 feet. It has a side gable roof covered with red painted wood shingles and enclosed eaves. Its date of construction is unknown, but it appears to be part of the major construction episode of the 1890s. The balloon frame structure has a finished interior. It is a two-seater. The exterior is covered with clapboard siding with corner boards. The foundation is sill timbers on grade. The door is 4-panel wood.

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BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

Shop (#7)

The rectangular (12 feet x 20 feet) shop [photo 10] is a 1-1/2 story building with a front gabled roof covered with wood shingles painted red. It was built during the late 1890s. The eaves are enclosed. The frame building is covered with shiplap siding and corner boards. The foundation is poured concrete. The two wood windows are 2-light fixed and are on the front facade. There is one large, vertical plank door on the southeast corner of the front facade, facing east toward the center of the complex. The interior is unfinished.

Garage (#8)

The garage [photo 11] is a one-story, nearly square building, measuring 15 feet x 15 feet 6 inches. It has a front gabled roof covered by red painted wood shingles and enclosed eaves. There is a flat capped brick chimney straddling the ridge. The balloon frame structure has an unfinished interior. The walls are sheathed with shiplap siding and have corner boards. The foundation is timbers on grade. There is one door opening on the south side and a pair of hinged vertical plank doors on the east side. There is one covered window (wooden). The building appears to have served as a carriage house or similar function prior to its use as a garage, thus it has generally functioned for vehicle storage throughout its life. It dates to the 1890s.

Cattle Barn (#9)

This 2-1/2 story rectangular barn [photo 12] dates to the 1890s. It measures 28 feet x 50 feet and is comprised of a steeply pitched gable roof with shed roof extensions on each side. The roofs are covered with wood shingles painted red. Straddling the ridge line of the gabled roof is a wooden cupola with louvered sides. Its bell cast, pyramidal roof is covered with red wood shingles and topped with a horse weather vane. The walls are wood framed and covered with clapboard siding and cornerboards. The doors are vertical plank with hinges and are hung individually and in pairs, including the loft doors. The foundation is of stone and sill timbers. There are two-light fixed wooden windows. The interiors are unfinished but divided into areas for animal shelter (stalls) and work areas. There is a hay loft.

Horse Barn (#10)

This is a 1-1/2 story rectangular (22 feet x 36 feet) barn [photo 12] with a moderately pitched gable roof and shed roof extensions on each side. It is very similar to the cattle barn (#9), only smaller. This barn appears to date to the 1890s. The roofs are all covered with wood shingles painted red. Straddling the ridge line of the gabled roof is a wooden cupola with louvered sides. Its bell cast, pyramidal roof is covered with red wood shingles and topped with a horse weather vane. The walls are wood framed and covered with clapboard siding and corner boards. The doors of vertical plank with hinges are hung individually and in pairs, including the loft doors. The foundation is of stone and

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BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

sill timbers. There is a six-over-six light, double hung, wooden sash window. The interiors are unfinished but divided into areas for animal shelter (stalls) and work areas. There is a hay loft.

Pumphouse

There is one noncontributing structure--a modern, poured concrete subterranean pump house with arched roof. This building is considered noncontributing because it is less than 50 years old.

During Beckwith ownership of the ranch, the built environment went through many changes. The homestead testimony, the earliest image of the property, indicates that in addition to the main log house a barn and other, unspecified outbuildings were present. These buildings were not described in detail. As the family prospered these pioneer buildings were replaced by the present buildings, as evidenced by historic photographs of the property. Custer County tax records indicate that at one time there were livestock sheds behind the present barns, garage and shop as well as to the east of the servant's quarters. These buildings are no longer extant. At one time (ca. 1900) another house sat northeast of the servant's quarters. Also, there was a gazebo located across the yard from the main house. These buildings are present in a photograph that appears to date to the early twentieth century and are of the same materials as the present buildings. The date of removal of those two buildings is unknown. Despite the building removals, the key features of the ranch remain in place.

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Continuation Sheet**

BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

Section number 8 Page 8

SIGNIFICANCE

The Beckwith Ranch is an important representative of the history of ranching in the Wet Mountain Valley and is significant under criterion A for agriculture and criterion C for architecture. The Beckwith Ranch is significant under criterion A for its association with the development of large cattle ranches in south central Colorado during the late 19th century. The ranch is eligible under criterion C for its collection of intact agricultural buildings--their number and variety reflect the technology and lifestyle of late 19th and early 20th century ranchsteads. In addition, the large elongated main house (#1) with its square towers and expansive porch extending to a porte cochère is an unusual expression for a ranch house. This dichotomy between the representative quality of the outbuildings and the unusual features of the ranch house further adds to the architectural significance of the property. The ranch is also eligible under criterion B for its association with Edwin and Elton Beckwith, prominent ranchers in the Wet Mountain Valley. Within ten years of their arrival in the area, the Beckwiths were running nearly 7,000 head of cattle, a figure which represented over 50% of all cattle in the Wet Mountain Valley. These brothers were also instrumental in establishing one of the first livestock associations, organizations created to deal with the problem of rustling.

Nearly frozen in time after the death of Elton Beckwith in 1907, the property clearly represents the built environment of a ranch headquarters built by a fortune gained during the rapid expansion period of Custer County cattle ranching. Edwin and Elton Beckwith's significance as recognized by local ranching and political leaders is best seen in the pioneering role they played in developing the industry locally, preponderance of the local cattle population owned by the Beckwiths during the 1880s and 1890s, and the continued local political support and affection felt for Elton Beckwith even though he chose only to serve one term in the State Senate. Similarly, the active career of the Beckwiths reflects the types of financial, social and eventually political power enjoyed by Colorado ranchers during the late nineteenth century.

The ranchstead retains most of its character and exterior fabric from the period when it was constructed and remains as a significant example of both the general style of the buildings and the methods and materials used in their construction. The buildings represent the types and methods of construction common to south-central Colorado during the period 1870-1907. The barns, servant's quarters, bunkhouse and other outbuildings represent designs used extensively in the area based on a reconnaissance of the Wet Mountain Valley and previous inventory work. The use of weatherboard siding and reliance on wood also are typical of the period. The main house (#1) also represents the common pattern of adding to the original house as the financial status or needs of the owner changed over time. The various buildings, such as the barns and bunkhouse, were common to nearly all ranches of the period. What sets the ranch apart from others in the region is the fact that it has experienced only minimal exterior change since the Beckwith period ended in 1907. Based on reconnaissance of Custer County, most other ranches in the area appear to have gone through many changes, especially

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Continuation Sheet**

BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

Section number 8 Page 9

additions that detract, if not overwhelm, the historic elements that remain. The Beckwith Ranch remains as a physical link to the pioneering era of ranching and cattle production in Custer County during the late nineteenth century.

Historical Background

The significance of Beckwith Ranch is tied to local events and the major trends in American and Colorado history including the gold discoveries in 1858 that led to the Gold Rush of 1859. While prospectors arrived in the Custer County area in 1863, they found only low grade gold and silver deposits and soon left the Wet Mountain Valley (Turk 1975:7). But, cattle ranching started in Colorado in the early 1860s in response to the markets offered by more successful mining camps in other parts of the state. Ranching became a growth industry for south-central Colorado in the 1870s and 1880s as mining continued to expand across the state's mountain areas. Coincidental to the emerging prosperity of Colorado's high country mining camps, Edwin and Elton Beckwith arrived in the Wet Mountain Valley and set up their ranch.

The Beckwith brothers were from Mount Desert Island, Maine, where their father operated a profitable shipbuilding and shipping company. Edwin Beckwith relocated to Colorado first, reportedly in 1869. He came west seeking the healthy air. Elton, the second of the family to move to Colorado, arrived in the early 1870s, possibly as early as 1870. Much more is known about Elton than his brother. For example, when he came to Colorado at age 23 (b. 1847) he left behind a successful Philadelphia flour and grain trading business. The two brothers formed a partnership and proceeded to build one of the largest cattle ranches in the south central region of Colorado. They based their ranch on land claimed and later patented by Edwin. Apparently, the Beckwith Ranch took some time to become prosperous enough for the brothers to consider building the impressive buildings that remain today. Edwin's 1881 Homestead Proof stated "my first house was built in 1875. I built another in 1876, it is one story. The main building is 24 x 22. Also have outbuildings and corrals. Total value of which is \$2,500." Neighbor Samuel Allen supported the homestead application, although he estimated the value of the improvements at \$3,000. Edmund L. Chafin also provided Homestead Proof and estimated the improvements at \$2,000 but included a barn in the list of improvements (U.S.D.I., General Land Office Records, various dates, E. Beckwith). These are the first descriptions of the Beckwith Ranch. The house became the core of the extant ranch house (#1). When the 32 year old Edwin Beckwith filed his homestead proof he affirmed that he was presently living in "Ula Custer Co Col." and was a native born citizen of the United States. At the time of the proof he was unmarried. He had approximately 40 acres cultivated and was raising cattle.

One reason that they may have put off substantial improvements to the ranch headquarters may be that they appear to have devoted much of their available capital to solidifying their land position. Even before Edwin obtained the patent to the lands of the present historic district, they began to acquire other parcels. Elton Beckwith purchased 160 acres at "the rate of one dollar and 25 cents per acre" in 1873, under the 1843 Preemption Act. He swore that he was not the owner of "three hundred and twenty

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

BECKWITH RANCH
CUSTER COUNTY, CO

acres of any land in any State or Territory of the United States, nor had I settled upon and improved said land to sell the same on speculation." At the same time Edwin Beckwith and William Phelps swore to Elton's residence on the land since 1870 and that he "built on said land a stable and . . . said land is chiefly valuable for grazing and not for agricultural purposes." Eventually, the Beckwith Ranch covered more than 3,000 acres in the Wet Mountain Valley (U.S.D.I., General Land Office Records, various dates, E. Beckwith).

Beckwith leadership in the Custer County, cattle ranching industry began during the 1860's and continued until 1907. Edwin Beckwith came to Colorado at least as early as 1869. He may have been here prior to that date but the records are unclear. During the winter of 1868-1869 Edwin, along with other Colorado ranching pioneers, became intrigued by the possibilities of importing Texas cattle. Possibly Edwin had spoken with individuals such as Charles Goodnight, or he may have read big glowing reports from pioneer ranchers on the plains. Whatever the source of his idea, Edwin, along with Charles Goodnight, Ira Mulock and the Eddy Brothers, decided to import approximately 3,000 head of cattle to Colorado in 1869. The livestock was purchased from ranchers and farmers in Texas and driven north to Colorado, probably along the Goodnight-Loving Trail. Some sources indicate that Elton Beckwith also was involved in this cattle purchase. However, if Elton was involved it apparently was from a distance, possibly from his Philadelphia offices. No doubt the success of this pioneering cattle drive to south-central Colorado encouraged Elton to move west the next year. Thus, the Beckwith contribution to local cattle ranching began during the earliest years of Wet Mountain Valley settlement.

Throughout the 1870's and 1880s the brothers continued to be leaders in the local ranching industry. During these years they began acquiring lands near Westcliffe and also used in grazing areas closer to the Arkansas River. These far-flung interests lead them to be very cognizant of cattle market conditions and, particularly, problems associated with stock theft and rustling. As a result of these concerns the Beckwiths became early members, probably among the founding members, of livestock associations. By 1883 the rustling problem had become so severe in south-central and southern Colorado that numerous ranchers, including the Beckwiths, organized the United Rocky Mountain Cattlemen's Association. This group included ranchers from Park, Sagauche, Fremont (including modern Custer County), Chaffee, Gunnison and Delta Counties. One of the things that sets this association apart from others in Colorado at the time is the substantial reward they offered for evidence leading to the conviction out cattle thief. The group offered \$15,000. The Beckwiths and the group, eventually hired a former Pinkerton detective to help arrest cattle rustlers. For many years the United Rocky Mountain Cattlemen's Association remained an active force in the protection of local herds. It was later succeeded by other associations. Throughout the remainder of their lives, the Beckwiths remained active in these associations. During the same years the Beckwith Ranch increased in size and wealth as described elsewhere. As is readily apparent, the Beckwiths, even in the earliest pioneer periods of local ranching, enjoyed a leadership position in the local industry (Campbell 1972: 46-7, 195-200; Goff and McCaffree 1967:207-210; O'Rourke 1979: 83-5).

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Soon after their arrival, the brothers purchased between 2,000 and 2,500 cattle from Texas. The herd summered in the Wet Mountain Valley on the ranch and wintered east of the mountains, on public land in the hills south of the Arkansas River. The Beckwith brand was a lazy T on the left hip with a bar on the jaw. Within ten years the Beckwiths had nearly 7,000 head of cattle and were running about 200 horses. Their 7,000 head represented over fifty percent of all cattle in the Wet Mountain Valley. Beckwith horses were well known racing animals and were credited with a national reputation.

The decades of the 1870s and 1880s were ones of rapid expansion for the local ranching industry and throughout this period it appears that the Beckwiths maintained the largest herds and land holdings in the Valley. Another testimony to their recognized leadership of the local cattle industry comes from roundup practices. During the valley-wide roundups, any calves that did not "mother up," were assumed to belong to the Beckwiths and were so branded. Later, possibly as a reaction to the generally disastrous winters of the late 1880s and changing market needs, the Beckwiths began the production of feeder cattle, born and raised for a year or two on their ranch and then sold to eastern farmers for fattening. Among the last recorded livestock transactions of the Elton Beckwith was the shipment of 10 carloads of feeder cattle.

The Beckwiths were not the only settlers to find the Wet Mountain Valley attractive during the 1870s. In 1870 almost four hundred German immigrants led by General Carl Wulsten came to the Wet Mountain Valley. The group hoped to establish a communal living arrangement on 40,000 acres, to farm and make cheese. However, they soon discovered that ranching could be more profitable and some of the Germans began to run herds of beef cattle, such as the Knuth family (Turk 1975:6; Murray 1978:47-48). Other ranchers also settled in the area, such as the Koch family, who took up lands north of the Beckwiths.

Beginning with their original early 1870s land claims, the Beckwiths expanded their land and cattle holdings over a thirty year period to become large ranchers. One factor that can not be ignored in examining the early history of cattle raising in Colorado and Beckwith Ranch area is the millions of acres of federal land that in 1870 were open for use by anyone, at no charge. Ranchers quickly took advantage of the situation, often claiming the water holes and other prime parcels while letting their stock wander at will except for the seasonal round-ups. Federal land policy encouraged these types of activities, albeit unwittingly. Apparently the Beckwiths were no different. A 1954 article on the Beckwith lands in the *Pueblo Star Journal and Sunday Chieftain* reported that the Beckwiths had range camps at Indian Springs, Iron Mountain, Trenton Springs and the "old Brown place" (September 5, 1954) to use as their herds grazed the public lands.

The brothers, especially Elton, began to develop a local political following during these years. Elton was an active Republican serving many times as a Custer County delegate to the Colorado Republican convention. Eventually his political ambitions led him to stand for election as a State Senator. He served one term as State Senator (1886-88). After his short residence in Denver, Elton returned to the

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ranch, but remained active in local politics until shortly before his death. Among his political allies were individuals such as Edward Wolcott.

As the Beckwith fortunes improved the house was expanded with the addition of the kitchen wing and other features. It was during this 1880s period that the house was sided. During the late 1890s other additions were made and the 1876 cabin evolved into the present main house. This work was completed in 1899. During the 1890s the brothers began a construction program that noticeably altered their ranch headquarters, adding the bunk house, servant's quarters, carriage house and barns. These buildings were built and decorated in a manner consistent with the tastes of the period and reflected the financial successes of the Beckwiths. Unfortunately, before all the work was completed tragedy struck the partnership. Edwin Beckwith died in 1898.

Edwin lived his life as a bachelor, but his brother Elton started a family. In 1875 Elton married Mrs. Elsie A. Davis, a widow who ran the Half Circle D ranch near Ula. The couple had a daughter, Velma (a.k.a. Elsie Velma). After the turn of the century Elton decided to take a less active role in the ranching operations. His retirement was short. Beckwith died in 1907. The ranch was sold to the Baker and Biggs company of Canon City after Elton's death. The cattle were sold separately. The ranch changed hands several times during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1942 Mac Clevenger, an automobile dealer from Pueblo, purchased the ranch. Clevenger repurchased most of the original Beckwith lands over a number of years and completed many repairs to the ranch buildings and did major interior remodeling to the main house (*Pueblo Star Journal and Sunday Chieftain*, September 5, 1954). He also may have been responsible for stuccoing the exterior of the main house.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The 3.28 acre rectangular parcel of land is located within the South ½ of the Southeast 1/4 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 27, Township 21 South, Range 73 West of the Sixth Principal Meridian. The property is bounded as follows. The northwest corner commences at a point 18.5 feet S54°08'02"E from a permanent survey marker with cap set by Colorado PLS No. 19883. From this northwest corner the boundary proceeds on a line S54°08'02"E for 406.04 feet. At that point the boundary turns and follows a line S41°41'19"W for 366.46 feet. At that point the boundary turns and follows a line N53°07'39"W for 384.25 feet. At that point the boundary turns again and follows a line N38°19'08"E for 358.15 feet, and thus reaching the beginning point of the polygon. This boundary roughly follows the right of way fence for Colorado Highway 69 on the northeast side and the remainder follows a line of existing permanent and temporary fences.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

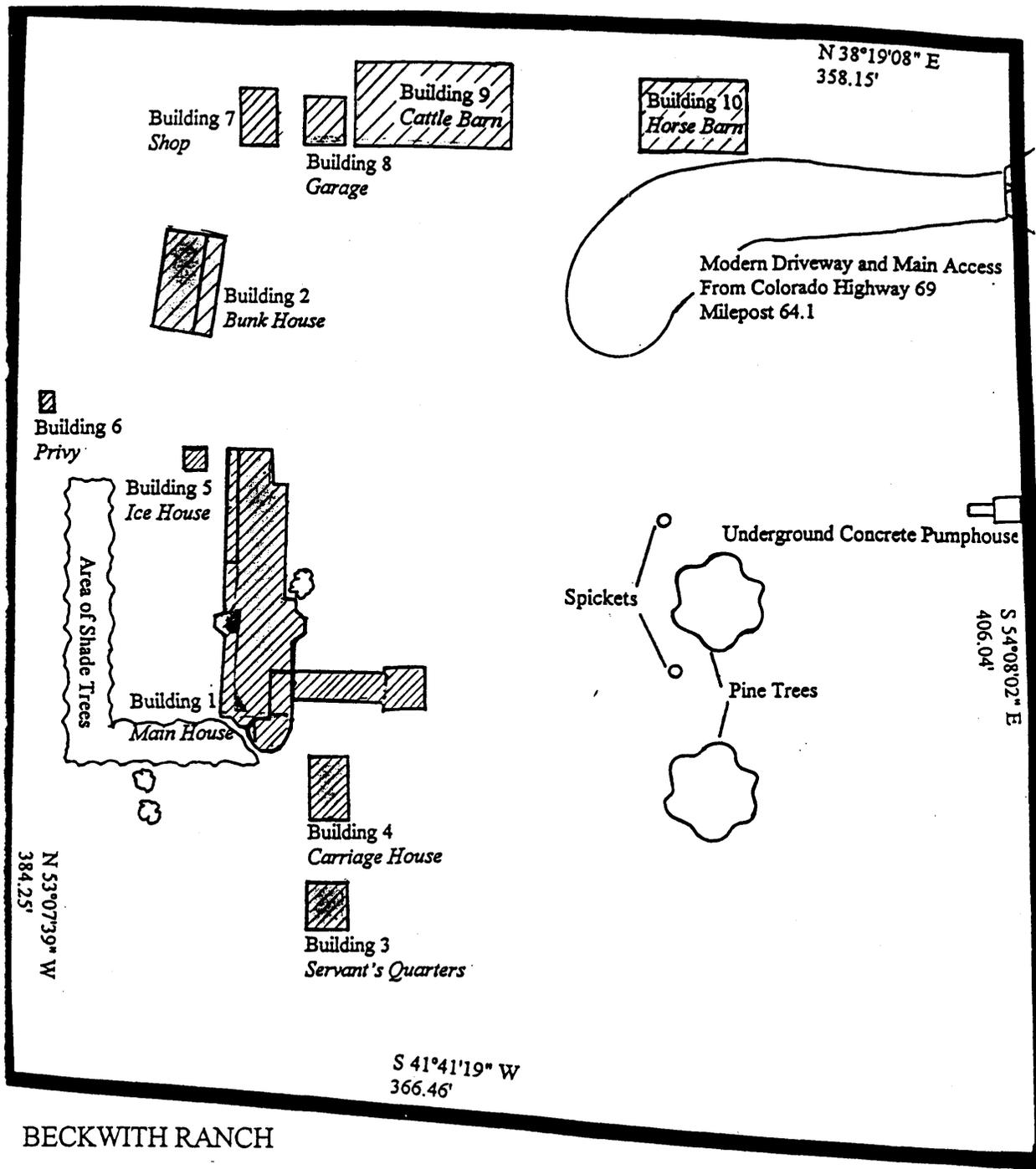
The boundary was drawn to include only the ranch headquarters complex--the limited area within the ranch occupied by the buildings, corrals, fences and gates, and landscaping that served as the center of the Beckwiths' operations.

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BECKWITH RANCH

SITE MAP
Westcliffe Vicinity
Custer County, Colorado
July 21, 1997



-  - Contributing Element
-  - Non-contributing Element
-  - Trees
-  - District Boundary

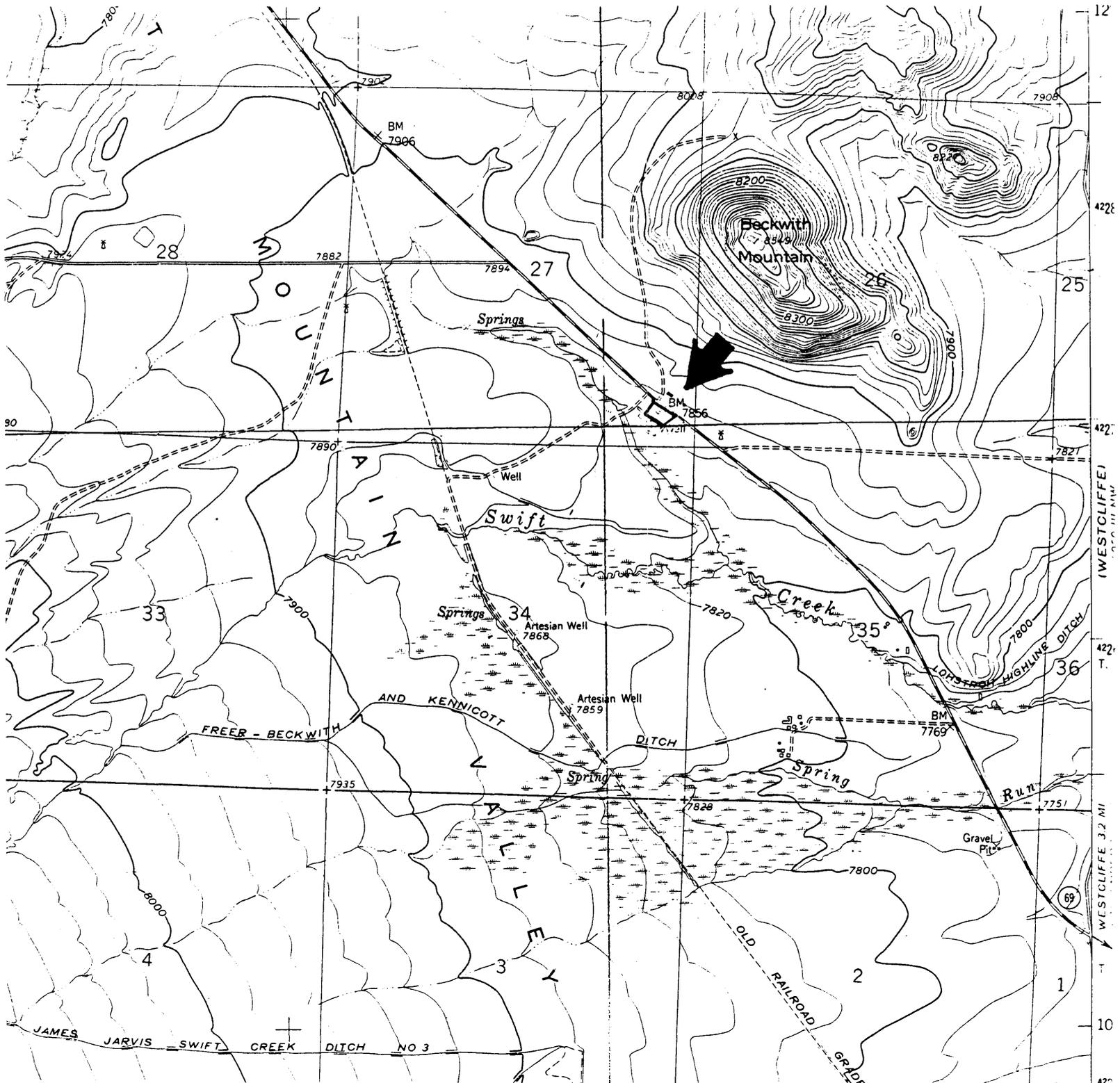
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U.S.G.S. MAP - Beckwith Mountain Quadrangle (7.5')



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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information is the same for all photographs:

name of property: Beckwith Ranch

county and state: Custer County, Colorado

photographer: Robert Mehls

date of photograph: 21 July 1997

location of negatives: Friends of Beckwith Ranch, PO Box 178, Westcliffe, CO 81252

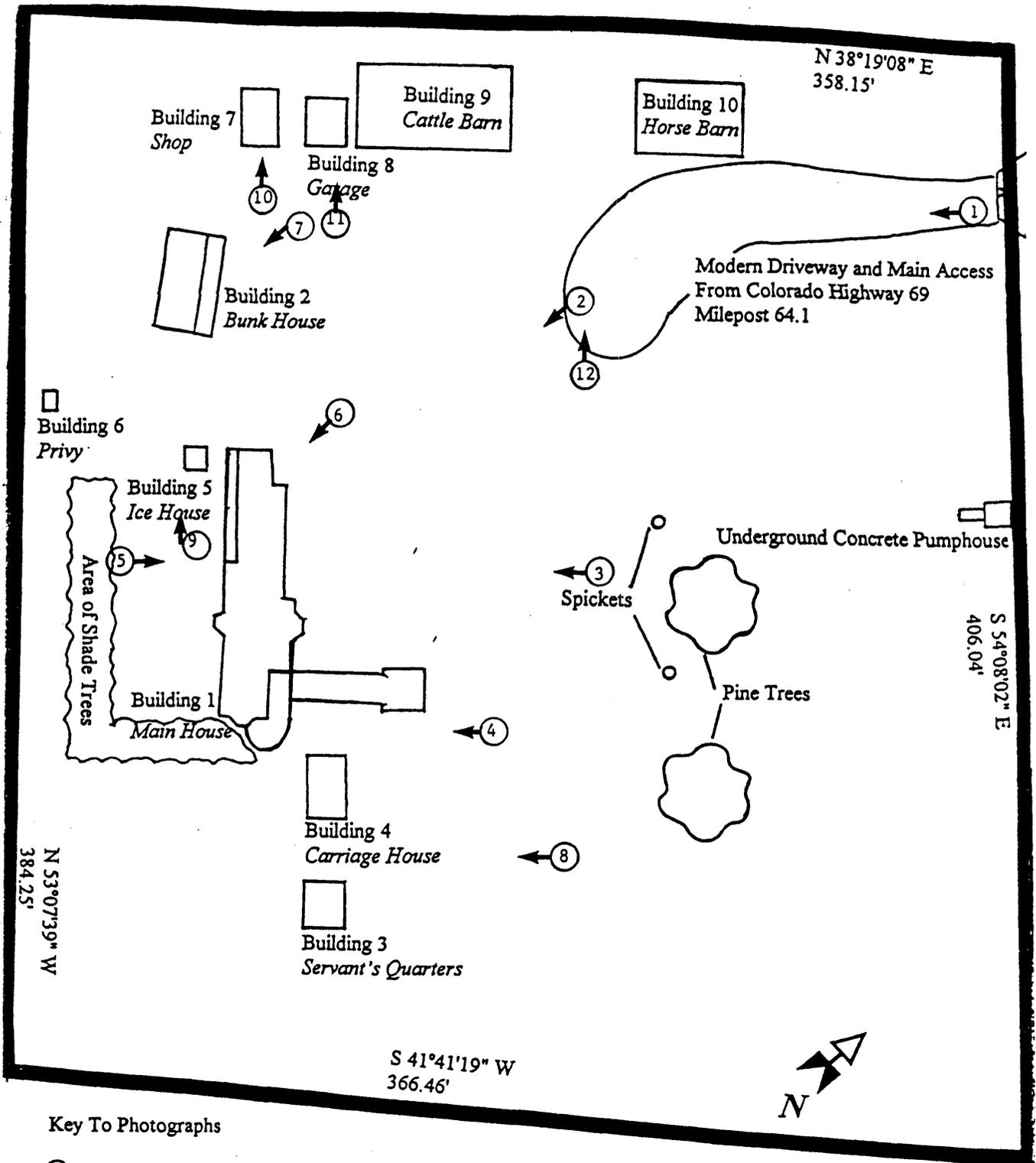
<u>photo number</u>	<u>description</u>
1	Site overview; view to SW from gate
2	Building cluster including (left to right) Servant's Quarters, Main House, rear of Ice House, Privy, Bunkhouse [building #4 obscured behind porte cochère]; view to S
3	Front of Main House and Carriage House; view to SW
4	East portion of Main House with porte cochère and stairway tower; view to SW
5	Rear of Main House, Ice House in left of photo; view to NE
6	West corner of Main House showing kitchen wing, mud porch addition; view to S
7	Front 3/4 view of Bunkhouse; view to S
8	Front view of Servant's Quarters and Carriage House; view to SW
9	Front view of Ice House; view to NW
10	Front view of Shop; view to NW
11	Front view of Garage; view to NW
12	Front view of Cattle Barn and Horse Barn with Garage to the left; view to NW

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Key To Photographs

- ⊗ - Photo Number
- ← - Direction of Camera