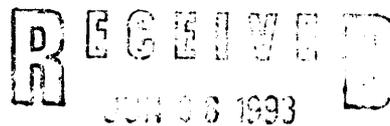


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions 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 Colter Ranch Historic District

other names/site number Cross Bar (brand) Ranch

2. Location

street & number 4th Street/School Bus Road not for publication N/A

city or town Eagar vicinity N/A

state Arizona code AZ county Apache code 01 zip code 85925

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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. Garrison AZSAPD 6/3/93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Arizona State Parks
State of 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): _____

for Signature of the Keeper entered in the National Register Date of Action

Raymond Sapsley 7/9/93

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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 10 | 2 | buildings |
| | | sites |
| 11 | 0 | structures |
| | | objects |
| 11 | 2 | 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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agricultural/Ranch

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agricultural/Ranch

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

National Folk

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Vertical Boards

Stucco

roof Corrugated Steel

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

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 Bibliographical 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture

Politics and Government

Period of Significance

1904-1932

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Fred T. Colter

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Phelps, Micajah H.

Fred T. Colter

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colter Ranch Historic District
Name of Property

Apache County, Arizona
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 73

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

| | |
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| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Zone Easting Northing

3

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|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Zone Easting Northing

2

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | 2 |
|---|---|

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 0 |
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| 3 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
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4

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| 1 | 2 |
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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 |
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

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 Robert G. Graham/Architect , Richard Lynch

organization Ryden Architects date January 1993

street & number 645 North Fourth Ave. #A telephone 602/253-5381

city or town Phoenix, state Arizona zip code 85003

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 _____

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. 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

Section Number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Colter Ranch Historic District includes 12 ranch-related buildings of various ages and styles, and one structure in a pastoral setting of irrigated fields near the town of Eagar, Arizona. The property's main components include a series of agricultural buildings lined up adjacent to the Milligan Ditch, and two modern dwellings. The agricultural buildings are of log and of wood frame construction, with unfinished wood siding and corrugated metal roofs as the predominant materials. The Little Colorado River borders one edge of the district. Irrigation ditches and barbed-wire fences are common elements. A few of the buildings have been altered, but most alterations date to the late 1930s. The modern homes are intrusive but are physically separated from the historic buildings. The ranch evolved from about 1884 through the 1940s; the two modern homes were added after 1970. Several of the buildings date to the period of residency of Fred T. Colter. With the exception of the modern homes, the site appears much as it did during 1904-1930, the time he called the ranch home.

DESCRIPTION

The lands west of Eagar which form the setting of the Colter Ranch are characterized as relatively flat grassland, punctuated by hills and distant mountains. The site lies within Round Valley, an area which includes the towns of Springerville and Eagar as well as considerable amounts of arable grazing land. The part of Round Valley in which the district lies is named the Amity Valley, after the early Mormon ward which developed here in the late 1800s. Today much of the Amity Valley remains farmland, although low-density subdivisions have sprouted up in recent years. The Little Colorado River runs through the valley, bringing irrigation water to an area which would otherwise be too dry to farm.

The district is generally bounded by the Little Colorado River on the north, School Bus Road on the west, 4th Street on the south, and the section line between Sections 7 and 8 (T 8 N, R 29 E) on the east. Other farm and ranch lands border the 73-acre site on the west, south, and east. North of the Little Colorado River, a volcanic ridge 40 feet in height rises to a plateau overlooking the district.

The Milligan Ditch, with headgates on the Little Colorado River some 1/2 mile east of the site, roughly bisects the district running west-to-east. The unlined ditch is about 8 feet in width and continues east to irrigate additional farmland outside the district.

The working agricultural buildings are grouped toward the west end of the property, and except for the large barn, granary, and "little barn", are lined up along the south bank of the ditch. In order from west to east, appear: a small wooden shed; a stuccoed log bunkhouse; a log "cabin;" a wooden shed; a

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Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

Section Number 7 Page 2

corrugated metal shed; a larger wood storage building, once a commissary; and last, across a narrow access road, a wooden machine shop. Crossing the ditch, the access road leads north to the barn, granary, and the work shed (also called the "little barn").

The westernmost building is a simple wooden storage shed. It is sheathed in vertical wood boards and encloses an area about 10' by 10'. The low-sloping shed roof is sheathed in corrugated metal.

The bunkhouse is one of the original buildings of the ranch, built c. 1910. At the time it was built, it was of exposed logs and was an example of the hall-and-parlor form of folk house styles. The entry faces east. Due to later additions, c. 1930, today it appears as a one-story house of irregular plan with a medium-pitched wood shingle gable roof. Windows are double-hung wood, one-over-one pattern. One early stucco-on-wood frame addition was made to the front (east) side, and a later concrete wing was added to the west; the original form is still discernable, as the additions are visually distinct from the oldest part of the building.

The log cabin, immediately east of the bunkhouse, was another of the earliest buildings on the ranch, possibly as early as 1890. It has a simple rectangular plan, about ten feet by fifteen feet. The exterior log skin is finished with flat faces and is precisely fitted at the corners. A single entry door faces away from the ditch. The roof is of medium-pitched, side-gabled form and is sheathed in wood shingles. A chimney of field stone appears on the east end, a small wood window to the west.

The next building east in the line is a one-story wooden storage shed. Of a size comparable to the log cabin, its medium-pitched gable roof faces the front (south). Roof sheathing is corrugated metal. The exterior walls are sheathed in shiplap wood siding; it was once painted, but little remains of any finish. The entry door is off center, with windows at the front and side.

Adjacent to the wooden shed is a small corrugated metal shed. This building is windowless, and has a low-pitched shed roof sloping north toward the ditch.

The commissary is the next building east from the metal shed. The commissary is larger than the storage structures mentioned above, being approximately 16 feet by 30 feet. The corrugated-metal gable roof is obscured at the south facade with a false commercial front (a "boomtown" roof type). The facade is symmetrically arranged, with a central entry door and two high, square windows above. The exterior walls are sheathed in wood board-and-batten siding. No other openings occur in the exterior walls.

Across the small access road east of the commissary is the machine shop. The shop is a still larger building, approximately 25 feet by 35 feet. Its corrugated metal gable roof faces the front, south facade. The central feature is a pair of large wooden doors. Exterior walls are unfinished wood board-and-batt

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

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siding.

At the west side of the road, north of the ditch, is the work shed, also known as the "little barn." It is small, about 12 by 18 feet, with a shed roof. Walls are unfinished board-and-batt, and the roof is sheathed in corrugated metal.

The main barn is nearby. By far the largest building on the site, it is about 35 feet wide and 60 feet long. It is two stories in height, with a medium-pitched gable roof sheathed in corrugated metal. Exterior walls are sheathed in unfinished wood board-and-batt siding. A single story, shed-roofed addition extends the length an additional 60 feet. A second addition, some 40 feet long, adds 15 feet to the east side, in lean-to fashion. Both additions are of similar materials to the main barn.

The barn is enclosed within a corral area. The corral fence is 5 feet high, and of split rail construction. Within the corral, on the west side of the barn, is a 15 foot by 15 foot granary, of the same materials as the barn, with a shed roof.

Mature trees and other vegetation are found along the ditch, and in the general area of the agricultural buildings. From the ditch, the access road runs due south to an intersection with 4th Street. A large, open work yard, used as parking for machinery and livestock trailers, is the foreground south of the main row of buildings.

Along the access road, south of the agricultural buildings, are the two modern homes. Both homes are of a simple builder's vernacular, with modern materials including plywood siding and aluminum windows.

The district has not been formally surveyed for archaeological resources. The site of the Colter Ranch House, an adobe structure, is south of the agricultural buildings on the general area of the modern homes. The presence of archaeological remains in this area is not confirmed at this time.

CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

| Map Key | Description | Const. Date |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------|
| E | Wooden Shed | c.1910 |
| F | Bunkhouse | c.1910 |
| G | Log Cabin | c.1890 |
| H | Wooden Shed(Gable Roof) | c.1940 |
| I | Corrugated Metal Shed | c.1940 |
| J | Commissary | c.1910 |

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Continuation Sheet**

Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

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| | | |
|---|-------------------------|--------|
| K | Machine Shop | c.1940 |
| L | Little Barn (Work Shed) | c.1940 |
| B | Granary | c.1940 |
| A | Barn | c.1910 |
| | Milligan Ditch | c.1880 |

NONCONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

| Map Key | Description | Const. Date |
|---------|--------------------|-------------|
| D | North Modern House | c.1980 |
| C | South Modern House | C.1980 |

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Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

Section Number 8 Page 5

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Colter Ranch Historic District is the best known extant property associated with prominent early-twentieth century Arizona rancher and politician Fred T. Colter. The district was the headquarters of his Cross Bar ranch, where Colter lived during his productive years in ranching and politics. Colter's ranch was one of the largest in northeastern Arizona before its lands were broken up in the 1930s. In politics, Colter was influential in the fields of water conservation and development, soil and forest conservation, and proper use of Arizona's natural resources. The district is significant under Criterion B for its association to Fred T. Colter. His importance relates to the contexts of Ranching in Northeastern Arizona, 1900-1930 and Arizona Water Resource Politics, 1904-1944.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Just a few miles west of the frontier community of Springerville, astride the Milligan Ditch that heads just a half mile away in the Little Colorado River, Micajah Harris Phelps claimed a 160-acre homestead in 1881 and settled in while his grown sons trailed the family cattle from the Brazos River country of Texas. These would become one of the first large herds in the valley. Phelps had heeded the call of Mormon missionaries who were seeking converts in Texas and with his younger children had journeyed to Utah to be initiated into the church. From there he headed for Arizona and the growing Mormon colonies along the upper reaches of the Little Colorado and its tributaries. Early accounts say he settled first at Woodruff but soon moved on to the Silver Creek settlements of Snowflake and Taylor to try his hand ranching there. Shortly he came to Round Valley and moved up the Little Colorado to his ultimate homestead in Section 7, Township 8 North, Range 29 East of Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona Territory. By 1882 this homestead was in the midst of the newly created Amity Ward of the Eastern Arizona Stake of Zion.

Over the next few years the Mormon colonists of the Amity Ward experienced the highs and lows of settling a new frontier. The large influx of Mormons into Arizona Territory had created a backlash of discrimination and animosity by those who feared the Mormon religion's polygamous tenets as well as the political power of a Mormon voting block, and who envied successful cooperative economic efforts. Mormon leaders were brought to trial in state courts on charges of polygamy, and many polygamists from the Little Colorado country fled south to Mexico to escape prosecution. The Amity A.C.M.I (Arizona Co-operative Mercantile Institution) (Arizona Co-operative Mercantile Institution) soon failed, and with the community depleted of many of its menfolk anti-Mormon activists jumped their claims and dared anyone to move them off. The Phelps family weathered this storm without moving an inch, because they did not

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Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

Section Number 8 Page 6

have to flee, and Micajah could handle any problem that came his way. His one teenage and three grown sons helped him defend the family home, watch the all-important herd, and keep the peace, while his eight daughters kept the family clothed, fed, and working together. In the midst of these lawless trials many members of the Amity and Omer wards gave up their farms, on the counsel of church authorities in Salt Lake City, to settle in a new Union Ward that became the community of Eagar. M. H. Phelps stayed and received the patent to his homestead. He, like some of his fellow colonists, survived the persecution and lived out the remaining few years of his life as a successful cattleman in his adopted home. It seems quite likely, but not documented, that one of the buildings in the proposed historic district, the tongue and groove log cabin, dates from his settlement period.

When Micajah Phelps passed away in the summer of 1892, a great void appeared in cattle country. As eldest son, W. H. "Bill" Phelps assumed his father's mantle and began by managing the liquidation of his father's estate. His father's dying without leaving a will caused some problems, but Bill handled them by selling the family homestead to himself and two sisters, Sarah Dugan (Duge) and Elizabeth (Lizzie) in equal thirds to raise cash to pay off their father's creditors. It appears that Duge and Lizzie ran cattle on their own behalf, as they bought their father's 350 head. As a single woman, Duge had probably lived with her father on the home place, because she purchased the household goods and all the farm equipment.

Over the years, using the Little Colorado headquarters as his base of operations, Bill Phelps acquired more land nearby for farming and grazing and purchased some 320 acres on Coyote Creek northeast of Springerville for water and feed for his expanding herd. When he died in 1903 at the age of 51, he was running more than one thousand head in Apache County. In addition he still owned the family ranch along the Brazos River in Hill County, Texas, and a 566-acre ranch in Chavez County, New Mexico, near Roswell, where he also owned four town lots.

Duge Phelps inherited all of her brother's property in Apache County and therefore owned two-thirds of the original homestead. Her sister Lizzie inherited the New Mexico property which had a much higher appraisal, and she therefore owed Duge money to even the values of the property distribution. It is surmised that in partial payment of the notes due, Lizzie deeded her one-third of the original homestead to Duge, who, at the age of 40, then owned it all.

Fred T. Colter had been the straw boss of Bill Phelps's Apache County operation for many years, and one can easily assume that he had known Duge for a long time. It has been said that she was a woman of considerable talent and accomplishment and had been her own boss for some time. She was quite a liberated woman for the age, and it is interesting to note that in the Noviel Decree of 1918 adjudicating the appropriation of the Little Colorado River, she held the first right to the flow of the river to irrigate one hundred acres. She was the executor of her brother's estate, and shortly after completing that task, she married twenty-five-year old Fred T. Colter on November 11, 1904.

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Continuation Sheet**

**Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona**

Section Number 8 Page 7

Following the conventions of the time, the old Phelps homestead soon became the Colter Ranch, and Fred T. used this opportunity to build a remarkable empire in a short number of years.

The Bill Phelps home place now became the headquarters ranch for Fred T. Colter's massive ranching and farming operation. Where Bill Phelps had intensively farmed about one hundred acres on the home place using the oldest recorded water right to the Little Colorado River, Fred T. enlarged the farming operation to several thousand acres, including the purchase of fifteen hundred acres adjacent to his headquarters and two thousand acres on the nearby mesa (today's Airport Mesa) just north of the river.

To irrigate these newly cleared and reclaimed acres, Fred T. located and built four reservoirs high in the White Mountains on the Little Colorado and its branches: Colter Reservoir, Mexican Hay Lake, Pool Corral, and Hog Wallow. Combined, they were capable of impounding more than 3,538 acre-feet of water.

Being able to use the historic Milligan ditch to irrigate the acreage adjacent to his headquarters, he now built a several-miles-long, rock-lined canal that rode the mesa ridge above the Little Colorado to irrigate the two thousand acres of the first alfalfa grown in Apache County. Up to that time farmers and ranchers had grown oats for livestock feed, but Colter experimented with alfalfa and found that he could get two cuttings each summer in the high country's short growing season. He also built a large earthen tank at the far end of the irrigated mesa to capture the irrigation waste water for his quickly growing livestock operations.

On the headquarters ranch he built a huge barn to store between forty and forty-five tons of alfalfa for the winter feeding of his teams, riding stock, and registered cattle kept in the barnyard. He built a bunkhouse to house the growing number of cowboys needed to handle the cattle operation and a commissary building to provide "the necessaries" for his men and incidentally for the nearby residents of Amity. Since the probate records of Micajah Phelps and Bill Phelps do not list these buildings, it is believed Fred T. had them constructed at this time to keep pace with his growing domain.

In May 1913, Colter applied for a post office to be located on his headquarters ranch which would serve the ranch and also the nearby neighbors in the Amity School District. He received the commission in September and installed the post office in the ranch commissary, with his wife Duge appointed as postmistress. The post office was named Colter and gave the local area another official identity, utilized most significantly in the county and state press. His neighbors, the Marbles, Nortons, Hoffmans, Finches, Bigelows, Everetts, Gibbons, and Howells, utilized this post office and general store which saved them anywhere from a three- to ten-mile walk, wagon, or horseback ride into Eagar to pick up their mail and take care of everyday needs.

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Continuation Sheet**

Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

Section Number 8 Page 8

The Colter post office remained in operation until September 1922, when it fell victim to the agricultural depression that followed the rapid deflation of prices after the First World War. A lack of commerce meant a lack of postal business. By that time Fred Colter's attention had been directed to his battle to keep Arizona from signing the Santa Fe Compact on the Colorado River, but it is doubtful if he could have kept the post office from being discontinued.

Several years earlier, Colter had been felled by the Spanish influenza during his campaign for governor in 1918 and retired to his home in Colter for the summer. There he spent long days in his rambling adobe home regaining his strength, assessing his future, and preparing to issue \$250,000 in first mortgage bonds to pay off his campaign debts and generate working capital. The adobe ranch house no longer exists on the Colter Ranch, but it once sat in the grassy farmyard where Mrs. Peggy Hall's house trailer now resides, surrounded by fruit trees and served by a well, about one hundred yards south of the bunkhouse and log cabin.

In September 1919, Carsten & Earles, brokers in San Francisco, Seattle and Spokane, underwrote the \$250,000 first mortgage bond issue, which was backed by 16,135 acres of the Cross Bar Ranch including 7,500 acres of agricultural lands both under irrigation and ready for irrigation. The mortgaged land had an appraised value of \$640,000, indicating that the bonds were well secured, but there were ominous signs on the economic horizon.

The following year commodity prices plummeted from their war-inflated levels, and hard times came to rural America. Rural real estate values took a tumble as well, and Fred T. found himself with his back against the wall, as bankers and brokers asked for interest payments, the pledging of more collateral to back his bonds, and the calling of other loans. Colter worked frantically and non-stop for a year to arrange refinancing to meet his obligations. Finally in September 1921, he formed his ranch, agricultural lands, and all real estate holdings into the Northern Arizona Land Company and issued \$450,000 in first mortgage bonds to satisfy his creditors. Brother Bert, who had been managing his cattle operations, then became general manager of the land company as well.

Each time Fred Colter needed a brief rest from the water wars he came back to the home place beside the Little Colorado. As early as 1924, bond houses began to win judgements against the Northern Arizona Land Company, forcing the sale of thousands of acres to satisfy these judgements. Shortly Bert Colter closed the St. Johns office of the land company and moved its operations to Colter to cut expenses, but it was only a matter of time before all was lost. By the early 1930s Hunter, Dulin of Los Angeles and Dillon, Read of New York foreclosed on all the remaining property, including the home place, and took over active management of the ranch. Fred T. came back as often as he could to gain some solace from the country and the home he loved, but after the bond houses took complete control, he changed his residence to Phoenix.

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Continuation Sheet**

Colter Ranch Historic District
Apache County, Arizona

Section Number 8 Page 9

With the foreclosure by the bond houses no further sales of Cross Bar land were made for some time. The Great Depression tightened its grip on the country, and cattlemen with money to spend on rangeland could not be found. Bert Colter stayed on as general manager until 1933 when he resigned to spend more time taking care of his own ranch. Pratt Udall, who had married Fred Colter's sister, Maude, and who had been postmaster of the Colter post office, stayed on to show the whole spread to the few prospective buyers.

In 1935 William A. Spence had a herd of fifteen hundred cows at Deming, New Mexico, on the way to a new range near Kingman, Arizona. For reasons that no one now remembers, he decided to buy the Cross Bar as a temporary range for his herd. Making some improvements to the headquarters ranch, he had local contractor Bryant Whiting move the ranch commissary from its position near today's intersection of Fourth Street and School Bus Road across the farmyard to its current position beside the Milligan Ditch and in a line with the bunkhouse and log cabin. Although Spence ran it as a commissary for his men, it was not the same store it once was. Spence's cowboys bought many of their necessities at Becker's Mercantile in Springerville and charged them to the Cross Bar store, where the boss then deducted the charges from their pay. The store's cupboards, shelves, and counters were removed when it was relocated by Whiting, and its false front is the only indication the building was once a store on the last frontier in the twentieth century American West. As an indication that ranch life was beginning to become mechanized, Spence had a large frame machine shop built across the lane from the store. Teams were beginning to be replaced with trucks and tractors in northern Arizona.

Spence owned the Cross Bar for sixteen years, until he finally experienced such severe financial problems that he had to sell. Victor L. Udall, who was backed by Gunnar Thude of Chandler, bought 1,430 acres of the place, including the headquarters ranch in early 1951. Victor Udall died in the fall of 1951, and the land he had purchased was split, with Thude taking sixty-five percent and Udall's family thirty-five percent. Thude received the property west and south of the old Greer highway (today's School Bus Road) and the Udalls the land east and north of the highway.

The Udalls' five hundred acres contained all the headquarters buildings that existed at the time, and they still exist to this day.

Gunnar Thude's portion of the Cross Bar was eventually sold to Louis Johnson and the motion picture star John Wayne. Johnson and Wayne then purchased the old D. C. Martin homestead/Mars Candy family show ranch on the side of the mountain not far from the Cross Bar headquarters and turned the whole spread plus other additional pieces of the old Cross Bar into the 26 Bar Hereford Ranch. Retired communications executive and Arabian horse owner, Tom Chauncey, today owns the 26 Bar Hereford Ranch.

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Victor Udall's son Sam still owns the old Cross Bar headquarters and utilizes the historic buildings as part of his working cattle ranch. The Cross Bar brand does not belong to Sam, but the history of Fred T. Colter's cattle empire is part of his daily life.

RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

The Colter Ranch Historic District is eligible to the National Register under Criterion B as the best remaining property associated with Fred T. Colter. The period of significance, 1903-1932, relates to Colter's ownership of the property and coincides with the productive period of his life. The property identified within the boundaries of the district reflects this period, as the center of Colter's ranching empire at its height.

The property retains a high degree of integrity. Only a few significant alterations have been made since Colter's tenure on the site including demolition of Colter's home, relocation of the Store/Post Office, and construction of a few agricultural buildings and two modern homes. The open space and landscape of irrigation ditches and fields are intact, and are important elements of the visual context for the ranch buildings. The spatial organization of the buildings and site is cohesive. The site is distinct from its surroundings, and is well-defined on the north, west, and south by roads and the Little Colorado River. The two modern homes represent the most extreme intrusions to the visual integrity of the site. However, these structures are physically separate from the ranch buildings along the ditch and do not seriously compromise the integrity of the site.

Archaeological resources which may be present on the site include prehistoric Indian sites, the original Store/Post Office site at the southwest corner of the site, and the site of the Colter Ranch House in the vicinity of the modern houses. It is not known whether any of these are actually present, nor the scope of information they may yield if found.

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

Ranching in Northeastern Arizona, 1900-1930

Fred Colter had been on his own and the sole support of his mother, brothers, and sister since the age of twelve when his parents had separated and his mother had moved the family back to Springerville in Arizona Territory where her mother, Mrs. Eliza Rudd, still lived. Fred attended school and worked at every and any odd job available. As his brother Bert later wrote: "He seemed to be in demand by all the widows in town as their wood chopper." After he finished grade school, he went to work for local cattlemen wrangling horses, which is the typical way young boys started on the road to becoming cowboys.

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While still in his teens he worked by himself in the nearby mountains for months on end branding range cattle for Bill Phelps and driving his own chuck wagon from range to range with two of his three saddle horses.

As Fred T. became more experienced, he developed a brand of his own, the Cross Bar, and began acquiring cattle. He bought some agricultural land, and having learned the benefits of irrigated agriculture from his father who had developed the first irrigation ditches at Nutrioso in the White Mountains in the late 1870s, he constructed two reservoirs: West Side on the Little Colorado in 1896 and Lee Valley on a tributary in 1899. With this 1,000-acre-foot capacity he then began irrigated agriculture to provide winter feed for his cattle, teams, and riding stock. By 1900, at the age of 21, he had amassed 1,200 head and on account of the drouth then afflicting Arizona, trailed them to Amarillo, Texas, where he sold them. That trip across New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle confirmed his belief in the benefits of irrigated agriculture in combination with livestock production, and after his marriage to Duge Phelps he set about developing water and additional agricultural acreage for the Colter Ranch to expand his new empire.

Starting with an unknown number of cattle which he brought to the marriage plus the 1,100 head Duge officially inherited from her brother and the 840 head she ran in partnership with her sister Lizzie, Fred T. began buying cattle in earnest. To improve the herd's breeding he purchased 300 registered Hereford cows and turned them out on the range. All bull calves born to these mother cows were branded but left uncastrated. On unfenced range these new bulls would grow to service anyone's cows, but it was vastly more important to Fred T. to improve the herd than it was to worry about whose cattle gained a free benefit. In fact, much of what Fred T. did to improve the range, its watering places, and the quality of the cattle helped all the neighboring cattlemen, and that was fine by him. At the end of two years, when he convinced his brother Bert to take over the management of his cattle operation in 1906, the Colters were running 12,000 head of Cross Bar cattle.

By 1908 Fred Colter had developed four reservoirs on the Little Colorado and its branches, Colter, Mexican Hay Lake, Pool Corral, and Hog Wallow, with a combined 3,500-acre-foot storage capacity. He had purchased some fifteen hundred acres around the home place and two thousand additional acres up on the mesa where he grew alfalfa and grazed cattle. He developed the upper and lower Coyote Creek ranches that Duge had inherited, developed stock water along the creeks, and put up some necessary buildings on the home place headquarters.

In 1910 Fred T. expanded his horizons and took a contract to build the Lyman Dam and Canal near St. Johns. He became the main contractor on the entire Lyman irrigation project and the largest landholder under it, accumulating 1,760 irrigated acres. While working on the Lyman project, Fred T. acquainted himself with the new land lease laws that would go into effect with statehood, and when that day came in 1912, he began applying at the posted rate of one and one-half cents per acre. Over the next few years,

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while others delayed taking action on the supposition that the open range could not be leased, Fred recognized the new reality and acquired leases on 200,000 acres of state land in Apache County and on a large acreage in Catron County, New Mexico, as well. Some observers said his leased land now topped 500,000 acres, and he then began the long, arduous, and expensive process of fencing and cross-fencing what had once been open range.

By the mid-teens Fred T. Colter's land and cattle domain had reached its zenith. He owned more than 43,000 patented acres in Apache County, and his Cross Bar range took the form of a fat "+" with a north-south range of approximately sixty-four miles and an east-west range of about seventy-three miles. It extended on the north-south axis from the Black River country on the Apache County-Greenlee County border on the south (just northwest of Hannagan Meadow) to the Zuni Wash in Apache County on the north (about sixteen miles north of St. Johns). On the east-west axis it extended from Vernon, Arizona, on the west to Quemado, New Mexico, on the east following approximately the route of present-day U. S. Highway 60. In addition to the patented acreage and the leased state land, the Cross Bar also received allotments to run cattle in the Apache and Sitgreaves national forests and permits to graze on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. It was a remarkable empire built around a modest foundation, and the hub of the whole operation: the Cross Bar headquarters ranch beside the Milligan Ditch and close by the Little Colorado River.

The Cross Bar Ranch at its zenith was not nearly as large as the Babbitt Brothers' CO BAR, which was the Arizona nucleus for a ranching operation in three states covering 100,000 square miles. Nor were the Cross Bar's patented acres any match for its neighbor to the west, the legendary Aztec Land and Cattle Company, which at one time was second only in size to the XIT Ranch in Texas. By the turn of the century Aztec was getting out of the cattle business and selling off its one million acres of deeded land, but in 1928, it still held 341,000 acres of deeded rangeland and still manages close to a quarter million today.

Of the many neighbors on its Apache County range, the Cross Bar was by far the largest. Other outfits included the P-Lazy-S owned by Pete Slaughter, the Flying-Box owned by Charley Thomas, the Cross-L owned by Bill Lee, the C-Dart owned by the Cooley family, the 7-Bar-T owned by Dick Gibbons, the 2-H-2 owned by the Naegle family, and the Double Circle owned by an absentee corporation. There was also the Escudilla Pool, which combined the cattle holdings of the Beckers of Springerville (famous Pioneer merchants), those of Enos Pipkin, and those of Julius Reagan into a sizeable cattle operation.

There was also the 175,000-acre Long-H spread taken over by Henry Jon Platt and his three sons Harvey, Earl, and Clair in 1943, and the Spurlock Ranch, which developed after the Second World War. They would have been challengers to the Cross Bar in an earlier time, but during its hey-day in the mid- to late-teens when World War I generated some handsome cattle prices and profits, the Cross Bar Ranch was

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one of the largest cattle operations in northern Arizona, and as a combined cattle operation and irrigated farming venture it had no peer.

Fred T. Colter's vision and hard work and Bert J. Colter's unflagging support and expert management created one of the great untold cattle stories of the early twentieth century in northern Arizona. When the ranch was sold in the early 1930s, it took three days in a model-T Ford to show the property to prospective buyers.

Arizona Water Resource Politics, 1904-1944

Fred T. Colter began his political career in the fall of 1904 when he ran as a Democrat for a seat on the board of supervisors for Apache County. He and his Democratic running mate lost the election to Republicans Gonzales and Armijo, but it was only the first inning in a forty-year political season for the native from Nutrioso.

Colter ran again in 1906 with Joseph K. Udall as his running mate and this time won the seat. By virtue of his higher vote total, he was awarded the four-year term and Udall the two-year office.

The turmoil of possible statehood and a constitutional convention postponed the county elections of 1910, and Fred T. served the citizens of Apache County until February 14, 1912. The following month Governor George W. P. Hunt appointed Colter to the first State Sanitary Sheep Commission where he served for several years in a post important to the grazing interests in Apache County. He also served on the Committee on Forest Reserves and Public Grazing of the American National Live Stock Association and began to exhibit some of his deep concern for the land and water of Arizona and the West that would drive his political career in the coming years.

In 1910 he became the youngest delegate, along with Sidney P. Osborn of Maricopa County, to the Arizona Constitutional Convention where he waged a spirited but unsuccessful contest to have women's suffrage added to Arizona's progressive constitution.

Fred Colter stepped into the state Democratic Party limelight in 1912 when he became Democratic National Committeeman for Arizona and ran Woodrow Wilson's first campaign for the presidency. He next ran for the state senate from Apache County, and after winning the seat he began his drumbeat for water conservation and development, soil and forest conservation, and the proper utilization of Arizona's natural resources; topics he had been living with on a day-to-day basis since he was a teenager branding range calves in the mountains.

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Colter won re-election to the Arizona Senate and ran Wilson's re-election campaign in 1916. From there he launched his campaign for the governor's chair and, with the backing of long-time governor George W. P. Hunt, who was temporarily retiring, won the 1918 Democratic nomination by more than four thousand votes. Colter carried an impressive resume into the campaign. He was president of the Apache and Navajo counties cattle associations, vice-president of the Arizona State Live-Stock Association, member of the executive committee of the National Live-Stock Association, vice-president of the Stockman's State Bank in St. Johns, and state senator and Democratic National Committeeman for Arizona. In addition he was one of the largest and most respected cattlemen in the state. In an extremely close race between two native sons, the outcome of which was in doubt for several days after the election, Colter lost to Republican Thomas E. Campbell by 339 votes.

Following his grueling run for the governor's chair and his long bout with influenza, the protracted struggle to refinance his ranching operation nearly did him in, and his doctors recommended an around-the-world cruise to recover his stamina and his nerves. He had booked boat passage and was in Los Angeles ready to sail when word flashed across the wires of the signing of the Santa Fe Compact at Bishop's Lodge in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This agreement divided the waters of the Colorado River between the seven states of the upper and lower Colorado River basins, and Colter saw immediately the danger of this pact to Arizona. He canceled his cruise plans and returned to do battle to stop Arizona from ratifying this misbegotten agreement.

For the next twenty years, as a member of the Arizona Senate, a member of the Arizona House of Representatives, candidate for the Democratic nomination to become governor and to become a member of the United States House of Representatives, Fred Colter campaigned against Arizona's ratification of the Santa Fe Compact and against giving away to Mexico any water in the Colorado River. Shortly after the compact was approved at Bishop's Lodge he personally made filings on forty reclamation dam and hydro-electric power sites on the Colorado River for the people of Arizona and spent his personal fortune providing due diligence on all the sites to keep them current, active, and in force. He funded hydrologic and engineering studies to prove which sites offered the best possibilities for water storage and hydro-electric power production. His studies showed that Bridge Canyon, Marble Canyon, and Glen Canyon would provide the best damsites, but he continued to provide due diligence in meeting all the legal requirements for all forty sites. Forty years later these three Colter specified sites would be targeted by the Bureau of Reclamation for inclusion in the Central Arizona Project, and Glen Canyon Dam would be built. Colter showed that wealthy and powerful American interests were behind the water treaty with Mexico, as their lands south of the border would receive the Colorado River waters, while millions of acres in central Arizona would remain desert. By the power of his arguments, which he took to the people of Arizona, he kept the state from ratifying the Santa Fe Compact several times, and no politician dared support the agreement in public. Rich Johnson, author of *The Central Arizona Project*, called Colter Arizona's counterpart to California's William Mulholland and credited him with single-handedly stopping

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Arizona's ratification of the Colorado River compact.

His critics called him a fool and insane for trying to bring the waters of the Colorado out of the canyons and down through the Verde River system to Central Arizona. They pointed to the forced sale of his ranchlands as proof he was crazy. No man in his right mind would spend his personal fortune for the people of Arizona on such a hare-brained scheme. And yet Arizona stayed out of the compact, and the water treaty with Mexico went unsigned. Eventually the provisions of the Santa Fe Compact were implemented without Arizona's signature, and the treaty with Mexico was signed, but only after Fred Colter had been dead for two months.

The last public office he held was a seat in the Arizona House as a representative from Maricopa County in 1940-41. He ran for the Democratic nomination to the U. S. House in 1942 but was defeated. He kept fighting to the end, but all his money was gone, and he had become a pathetic figure in patched clothing and scuffed shoes. He was hit by a car on January 8, 1944, and died at the age of sixty-four.

Fred T. Colter is not well remembered in Arizona history, perhaps because he ultimately failed in his great mission in life and lost everything, or perhaps because he bucked the establishment and spoke bluntly about whose interests were being served and whose patrons were being concealed. Nevertheless, "Many authorities on the subject [Arizona's water rights] now agree that if Fred T. Colter had not personally blocked ratification of the infamous Santa Fe Compact in the Arizona Senate, Arizona would have lost all rights to the water in the Colorado and most of the water it had already appropriated from the Salt River."

There is one place in Arizona where his memory is preserved, where his accomplishments and good deeds are remembered. In the weathered boards and the chinked logs, in the murmur of the Milligan Ditch, and in the rustle of the cottonwood leaves, the name of Fred T. Colter is seen, spoken, and remembered. The Colter Historic District is the best physical manifestation of the life of Fred Tuttle Colter.

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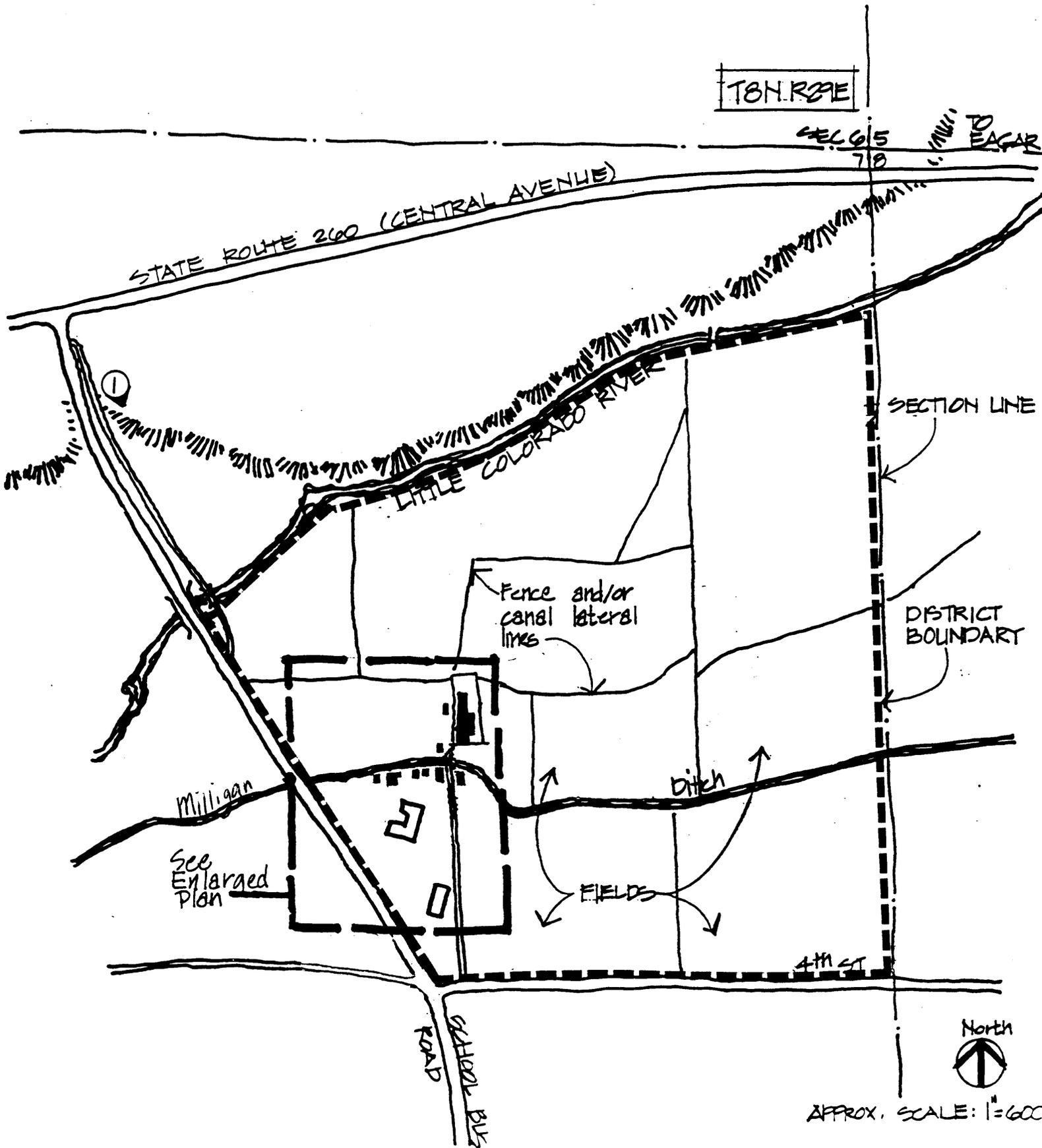
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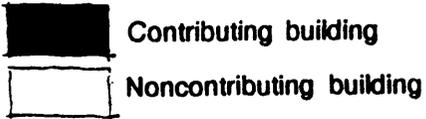
COLTER RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT
(CROSS-BAR RANCH)
Eagar, Apache County, Arizona



COLTER RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT

(CROSS-BAR RANCH)

Eagar, Apache County, Arizona



- A-Barn
- B-Granary
- C-Modern House
- D-Modern House
- E-Shed (wooden)
- F-Bunkhouse
- G-Log Cabin
- H-Shed (wooden)
- I-Corrugated Metal Shed
- J-Storage Shed (Commissary)
- K-Machine Shop
- L-Little Barn

