

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in 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 any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

RECEIVED 2280

OMB No. 1024-0018

DEC 19 2008

NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

1. Name of Property

historic name Walking Box Ranch

other names/site number YKL Ranch, Woolf Ranch

2. Location

street & number 6333 West State Highway 164

☐ not for publication

city or town Searchlight

☒ vicinity

state Nevada

code NV

county Clark

code 003

zip code 89046

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Ronald M. Jones, NV SHPO  
Signature of certifying official/Title

7-21-08  
Date

Nevada Office of Historic Preservation  
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.)

Robin L. Burgess, Preservation Officer, Dec 9 2008  
Signature of commenting or other official

Date

Bureau of Land Management  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Barbara Byatt

Date of Action

1-30-09

Walking Box Ranch  
Name of Property

Clark County, NV  
County and 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 include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
	1	sites
4	9	structures
1	1	objects
7	13	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

None

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE: animal facility

DOMESTIC: residence

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### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

LANDSCAPE: conservation area

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Spanish Colonial Revival

Other: Railroad tie construction

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### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete; unknown

roof Ceramic tile; metal

walls Stucco

Wood: other (railroad tie)

Wood timber frames

### Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheet.



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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

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**PROPERTY FEATURES** (Keyed to site sketch map)

**Contributing Buildings**

1. Ranch House
2. Barn

**Contributing Structures**

3. Ice House
4. Water Tank
5. Corrals
  - 5A. Cattle Holding Pens
  - 5B. Sorting Alley
  - 5C. Insecticide Chute
  - 5D. Dehorning Chute
  - 5E. Branding Chute
  - 5F. Slaughter Pen
  - 5G. Scale
  - 5H. Loading Chutes (2)
  - 5I. Horse Pens
  - 5J. Barn Pens
6. Circulation Networks
  - 6A. Walking Box Ranch Road
  - 6B. Pathway System

**Contributing Objects**

7. Boundary Demarcations
  - 7A. North Boundary Fence
  - 7B. South Boundary Fence
  - 7C. Southwest Boundary Fence
  - 7D. Pipeline Range Fence
  - 7E. Southwest Range Fence
  - 7F. Northwest Range Fence
  - 7G. Internal Fence

**Non-Contributing Sites**

8. Designed Landscape to North of Ranch House
  - 8A. Allée of Transplanted Joshua Trees
  - 8B. Red Gravel Berms

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**Non-Contributing Buildings**

- 9. Bunkhouse
- 10. Temporary Caretaker's House (doublewide mobile home)

**Non-Contributing Structures**

- 11. Pump House and Water Tower
- 12. Viceroy Water Well
- 13. Weikel Water Well
- 14. Large Water Trough
- 15. Site Utilities
  - 15A. Propane Storage Tank
  - 15B. Electrical Transformer
- 16. Electrical Power Lines and Poles
- 17. Temporary Storage Trailer
- 18. Tennis Court
- 19. Circulation Networks
  - 19A. Road Bypass
  - 19B. Staging Area

**Non-Contributing Objects**

- 20. Front Gate

**Demolished Sites**

- 21. Rock Gardens

**Demolished Buildings**

- 22. Guest House
- 23. Carpenter's House
- 24. Carpenter's Shop
- 25. Original Bunk House
- 26. Blacksmith Shop

**Demolished Structures**

- 27. Water Tank
- 28. Barn Holding Pens
- 29. Dog House

**Demolished Objects**

- 30. Front Gate

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**Summary Description**

Located in Clark County in southern Nevada, approximately seven miles west of the town of Searchlight and twenty miles east of the California border, this historic ranch property is situated in a rural area in the eastern Mojave Desert. It is approximately 55 miles south of Las Vegas, situated in the Piute Valley, which runs north-south for approximately 55 miles, starting just north of the ranch and ending with the Piute Wash confluence with the Colorado River north of Needles, California. The valley varies in width from ten to twelve miles. The ranch property itself is bordered by the Highland Range on the north, the Castle Mountains on the south, and the New York Mountains on the west, all providing a scenic backdrop for the arid valley floor. The ranch is located at an elevation of approximately 3,900 feet, within a transitional zone between the creosote-bursage and blackbrush-Joshua tree vegetation communities. The surrounding landscape is comprised of Joshua trees, Mojave yucca ("Spanish daggers"), creosote and some indigenous types of cactus. The area is also home to a diverse number of species including coyotes, jackrabbits, owls, tortoises, and lizards. Cattle ranching and mining industries began in this region in the late 1800s. Turquoise was the most predominant mineral mined, but small amounts of gold, silver, lead, copper, feldspar, fluorspar, and mica were also mined.

The privately owned ranch originally included one 40-acre homestead parcel and one 120-acre parcel, as well as 300,000 to 400,000 acres of grazing leases - essentially the entire Piute Valley. The 40-acre portion of the home ranch is the subject of this nomination. The topography across the 40-acre parcel gently slopes down from the northwest to the southeast. Four major stormwater drainage paths run across the site. The property is divided into three distinct zones, with the family's residence located at the southeast corner, housing for the hired help at the northeast corner, and the cattle-ranching functions at the west side. The property consists of a ranch house, constructed in 1931-1932, a barn, and an ice house. The buildings and structures, in addition to a water tank, fences and corrals contribute to the significance of the historic district. Several of the ranch outbuildings constructed during the period of significance, including the blacksmith shop, original bunkhouse, guest house, carpenter's house, and carpenter's shop, have since been demolished. The landscape of the 40-acre parcel shows signs of significant human and agricultural use over the twentieth century. The surrounding land, now a desert tortoise preserve, historically served as cattle grazing land. The current vegetation, with a few exceptions, reflects the historic appearance of the landscape during the ranching era.

Several non-contributing buildings and structures constructed during the early 1990s, including a storage trailer and tennis court, now occupy the central ranching area. A stucco, one-story bunkhouse with a red clay tile roof has been constructed near the site of the original bunkhouse. None of these resources are considered to contribute to the significance of the district.

The configuration of the site is illustrated on the accompanying site sketch map.

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**CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

**1. Ranch House – Contributing Building, Primary Significance**  
**1931-32, constructed**  
**c. 1934, addition**  
**Architect unknown**

The ranch house was built as a residence in 1931-1932 for Hollywood actor Rex Bell and his future wife, Clara Bow. It replaced an earlier "shack" on the property, where Bow and Bell had stayed when visiting the ranch. Bell purchased the property from John Woolf, who held legal title to the property less than two years. A two-story addition and swimming pool were constructed to accommodate the needs of the growing Bell family in c.1934. After purchasing the property from Bell, Karl Weikel his family lived in the ranch house from 1951 until c. 1980. Weikel eventually sold the property in 1990 to the Viceroy Gold Corporation (henceforth referred to as 'Viceroy'). Viceroy converted the house to a corporate retreat facility. The house is currently vacant, but it is maintained by an on-site caretaker. Designed in the form and style of a hacienda ranch, this house exhibits elements of the era's popular Spanish Colonial Revival style.

The 6,300 square foot house is the centerpiece of a residential zone at the southwest corner of the ranch property. The approach to the house, both historically and currently, is from the north. In plan the house is long and narrow with a rambling compound footprint, comprised of multiple wings arranged around a one-and-a half and two-story central block. The central block has a rectangular plan, oriented along a north/south axis, with a front-facing gable wall. The principal façade faces north, and its focal point is an angled, bay window centered on the north gable wall. At the front of the structure, a one-story wing to the east of the main block houses service spaces and a three-car garage. The bedrooms are located at the rear of the structure, in the one and two-story southern wing, which was expanded to the west with the construction of the c. 1934 addition. A covered entry porch at the west side of the central block opens onto a landscaped yard to the west. A tall site wall, with a stucco finish and arched gate, was added along the south side of the west yard by Viceroy in c. 1990. A small covered porch adjacent to the garage on the north façade serves as secondary, service entrance. The central block, and north and south wings are arranged in a U-shaped configuration around the courtyard garden to the east. Covered porches at the three constructed sides of the courtyard serve as open-air circulation corridors between the various rooms of the house. To the east of the courtyard and to the south of the garage is a walled patio area with a swimming pool and open-air cabana. Although the walled patio is original to the building, the pool was added in c.1934.

The house is constructed with a concrete slab-on-grade foundation and wood-framed walls and roofs. As a result of the rambling floor plan, each of the primary façades has an asymmetrical composition. The exterior walls are sheathed with a combination of sand-finish stucco at the original walls and smooth-finish stucco at the c. 1934 addition. A series of multi-level, cross-gabled roof forms complement the building's plan. The original roofing consisted of hand-made, Mission or barrel red clay tiles; however, they were replaced in c. 1990 with factory-made, regularly laid Spanish red clay tiles with an S-curve shape. Exposed wood rafter tails support the one-foot deep eaves. The roof overhang at the gable walls is minimal, with the curved roof tiles returning to the stucco wall below.

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The west, service, and eastern courtyard porches are constructed with raised, scored and painted concrete slab floors, unadorned 5" by 5" wood posts, and exposed wood ceiling / roof framing. The sole decorative elements at the porches are the ends of the projecting roof beams, which are cut in pyramidal shapes. Windows and doors are set nearly flush in the walls, with shallow, radiused stucco returns, in lieu of wood casings. Wood doors (both single leafs and pairs) with glazed lights or wood panels and separate wood screen doors are extant at the exterior. Eight-light glazed doors are used at the western porch, and most other doors have four horizontally-divided glazed lights. Windows are a combination of wood and steel multi-light casements. Most of the original wood windows at the south elevation were replaced with metal-clad wood windows in c. 1990, presumably because the originals had been damaged by the harsh southern sun exposure. Large, sliding wood batten doors are used at the three parking bays in the garage. A battered rock chimney with decorative top, designed and built by long-time Searchlight police deputy "Big John" Silveria, is located on the west eave wall of the central block. Other exterior decorative elements include tile vents in the attic gable walls and several remaining historic light sconces with glass shades.

A two-story, 32'-0" long by 19'-0" wide addition was made to the southwest corner of the original structure in c. 1934. The addition includes a projecting, roofed balcony with a wood railing at the second floor of the north elevation. Other exterior alterations dating from the Bell period include a rectangular, one-story, hipped-roof bay window extension to the game room at the south gable wall and Bow's second floor, south-facing sun porch off the master bedroom, with a low stucco wall for privacy and wood post supports. Undated exterior alterations include a small roofed, mechanical enclosure at the east garage wall.

The interior of house is composed of nineteen rooms arranged around a one-and-a-half-story, 18'-6" wide by 46'-0" long great room in the central block, which also serves as the main entry hall. There are few interior hallways, as circulation primarily occurs through rooms or by the exterior, covered porches. Glazed doors are located on the long elevations of the great room, providing access to the western entry porch and the eastern courtyard and pool patio. The one-story, angled bay window at the north wall was used as Bell's office area, as the view from the windows allowed him to monitor the cattle-ranching activities to the north and west. The overall volume of the room is increased by the use of exposed ceiling framing, with stained wood rafters and purlins, and horizontal steel tie rods. A stone fireplace, with an exposed, full-height chimney and sunken concrete hearth, is located at the south end of the west wall.

At the south wall of the great room, a cased opening provides direct access to a one-story game room with a log-faced bar and an open staircase to the second floor. This room has been altered since its original construction by the addition of a rectangular bay window along the south wall. A small basement is located beneath the game room. The remainder of the southern wing contains bedrooms, bathrooms, and closets. Two guest bedrooms, with an adjoining bathroom, are located off the south porch at the eastern courtyard. The master bedroom was originally located on the second floor, above the game room. A new, larger master bedroom was provided at the second floor of the c. 1934 addition, and the original bedroom space was reconfigured to provide his-and-her bathrooms, dressing areas, and walk-in closets. A large bedroom was constructed at the first floor of the addition for Bell's two young sons. The original wood casework remains at the west

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wall of the boys' bedroom. According to the Bell children, the casework was decorated with nursery rhyme imagery, but it has since been overpainted.<sup>1</sup>

The northern service wing includes a kitchen, service hall, mechanical room, maid's room, laundry room, and garage. The kitchen retains its original paneled wood cabinetry. When the building was remodeled as a corporate retreat in c. 1990, the three-car garage was subdivided to provide two additional guest rooms, each with a private bathroom. These rooms were constructed within the shell of the original garage, leaving the exterior unaltered, with the exception of new, single-leaf doors providing access to the rooms from the pool patio area.

The interior finishes include quarry tile flooring at the ground level, wood strip flooring at the second level, and plaster walls and ceilings (with the exception of the exposed framing in the great room). The quarry tile was installed as part of the c. 1990 remodeling campaign, replacing the original linoleum flooring on the ground floor. The original glazed ceramic tile floors and wainscoting remain in the bathrooms. Three-panel, stile-and-rail wood doors remain throughout the interior, many of them retaining their original hardware. As at the exterior, the windows and doors are set flush in the wall plane, without wood casing trim. Original light fixtures remain in the great room and bar, including ceiling pendants with perforated metal shades and wall scones with glass shades. The historic Red Comet "Automatic" fire suppression system red glass heads are extant, but no longer functional.

The walled pool patio area includes a 16' by 32' pool and an 8' by 10'-6" open-air cabana with stucco-clad walls and a hipped, clay tile roof. The pool and surrounding deck were originally surfaced with concrete. In c. 1990, quarry tile was installed at the pool deck; a quarry and glazed ceramic tile edge was added to the pool; and a new walled barbeque area was constructed to the southwest of the cabana.

The ranch house remains in good condition, retaining its original location, setting, design configuration and features, workmanship, and materials. Several materials and finishes were replaced in c. 1990, including the roof and interior floor finishes. The interior configuration of the garage was also modified in c. 1990, but the overall form and exterior appearance of the garage remain intact. Despite these minor alterations, the building retains the majority of its historic design features and materials. Thus, the ranch house retains a sufficient amount of integrity to convey its original look and feel, as well as its historic significance.

**2. Barn – Contributing Building, Primary Significance**  
**Unknown construction date**

The barn is a vernacular building, characterized by the use of a variety of salvaged and assembled materials. A combination of railroad ties and wood posts is used for the wall framing, and the roof trusses are built-up from smaller salvaged wood framing members. The exact date of construction is unknown. It may have been built pre-1927 as part of a line camp for the Rock Springs Land & Cattle Company; but it is more likely that the barn was built in the late 1920s by John Woolf or in the early 1930s by Rex Bell. This would correspond to the period when railroad tie construction was most

<sup>1</sup> Rex Anthony Bell, personal interview conducted by Dewey Livingston and Katie Wollan, June 27, 2006.



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prevalent in Nevada (1930s and 1940s). The building was continuously used as a hay barn until the property was sold to Viceroy in 1990. Since that time the barn has been used for general equipment storage.

The barn is located at the north end of the property, to the northeast of the cattle corrals. The building is roughly square in plan, measuring 45 feet by 43 feet, with a gable roof oriented along an east/west axis. A series of interior columns create a three-bay massing, which is expressed at the exterior gable walls. The central bay was designed to permit large ranch vehicles to drive through the building, with large openings at the east and west walls and a raised ceiling. The barn has a dirt floor, with concrete slabs used only at the two small tack rooms in the southwest corner of the main structure. The north, east, and west walls of the north bay are constructed with staggered, 7 1/4" by 7 1/2" wood railroad ties in eight-foot lengths. The bottom tie rests directly on grade, without a foundation. The ties are held together with nails and interlocking corners. The remaining walls and the gables are framed with wood posts resting on concrete footings. The exterior wood-framed walls and roof of the building are sheathed with corrugated metal panels, attached to horizontal wood girts or purlins, spanning between framing members. The corrugated metal sheathing on both the walls and ceiling is painted red; however, historic photographs show that the roof panels were unpainted as late as 1987. The south end of the east façade was originally open to the adjacent holding pen, with a long feed trough for horses separating the interior from the exterior. The wall was later infilled with exposed horizontal wood board sheathing. At the interior of the barn, both the wall and roof framing is exposed. The roof trusses are built-up out of 1x6 and 2x6 wood members. The bottom chord of the truss sits directly on top of the wall framing, and the top chord of the truss extends beyond the wall plane to form the eave overhangs. The bottom chord of the truss is discontinuous across the central bay, allowing for a greater ceiling height under the gable peak.

A shed roof extension on the north façade covers both an open porch and an enclosed, sheet-metal-clad storage bay. According to Bell's son Rex Anthony, the north porch was used for milking dairy cows. At the south façade, another shed-roofed shelter, in a state of partial collapse, provides shade for a wooden feed trough located along the building wall. An infilled window opening above the trough would have allowed it to be serviced from the barn interior. Railroad tie posts support the roof extensions at both façades.

The large vehicle bay opening remains at the east elevation. Viceroy added a pair of oversized, wood-framed, corrugated-metal-clad swinging doors at the east façade and infilled the western opening with wood framing and corrugated sheet metal cladding. Other doors in the barn include a sliding door and a swinging wood batten door with diagonal sheathing, both with glazed transoms above, at the tack rooms on south façade. A new header has been added to support the sliding door, suggesting that it is not original to the building and was perhaps salvaged from the demolished blacksmith shop. Viceroy added a new door opening with a *faux* Dutch door to the north façade in the 1990s. A wood batten, true Dutch door provides access to the north storage bay from the porch. Other Viceroy additions to the barn include the installation of painted, flat wood trim at the door casings and base of the gable walls.

The barn interior consists of one large, three-bay room; two small enclosed tack rooms in the southwest corner of the main barn; and a separate storage bay at the north façade. The barn does not currently have a hayloft, and it is unclear if one ever existed. According to Karl Weikel's son Carl, hay was stacked from "the floor to the roof." The interior faces of the tack room partition walls are clad with unpainted horizontal and vertical salvaged wood board siding. The western-most



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room was used for the storage cottonseed cake for cattle and milk cows and grain for horses.<sup>2</sup> In the southern room, storage cabinets, equipment tack pegs, and saddle racks are extant. The barn was not electrified until after the period of significance. Lighting consists of contemporary, linear fluorescent pendants and security lamps.

The barn is in poor to fair condition. The framing elements are warped and deteriorated due to insufficient structural connections, termite infestation, and sun and water damage. As is to be expected of a working ranch building, the barn has been subject to haphazard repairs (using any materials available on the remote site) and multiple alterations to accommodate new ranching practices. Despite the deterioration and alterations, the barn retains a fair degree of integrity in terms of its location, setting, general configuration, design features, and materials.

**3. Ice House – Contributing Structure, Secondary Significance**

**c. 1930s, constructed**

**c. 1990, relocated**

The ice house has been relocated at least once in its history. Interviews with both the Bell and Weikel children indicate that the ice house was originally constructed during the Bell period and was located in the now-demolished 'shop string,' next to the carpenter's shop. Historic photos suggest that the ice house was constructed some time after the carpenter's house and shop. Viceroy relocated the ice house to its present location, approximately 20 feet to the north of the barn. The ice house appears to have been used primarily for the storage of meat and other food stuffs, with ice being manufactured in a separate facility. The Weikels later used the building for grain storage, as the solid construction deterred rodents.

The ice house is a one-story, rectangular structure, 9'-2" wide by 14'-4" long, with a gable roof oriented along the north/south axis. The wood-framed floor rests directly on grade, without a supporting foundation. The walls and ceiling are constructed with insulated, wood-framed walls and roof. The exterior walls and roof are clad with corrugated sheet metal panels, painted red. The roof eaves have a thin profile, formed only by unsupported, cantilevered metal panels. Single leaf, five-panel insulated wood doors with large, surface-mounted hinges are located at both the north and south gable walls. The interior consists of a single room, with unpainted tongue-and-groove wood floors and stained tongue-and-groove wood wall and ceiling paneling. Stained wood rails, used for hanging beef, remain at all four walls. Sloping shelves, presumably used for the storage of ice, are located along the east and west walls and are hung from the ceiling with metal rods. The compressor and distribution piping from the ammonia refrigeration system are extant.

The building remains in fair condition. Although the building has been relocated, it remains within the original home ranch compound and is relevant to the agricultural setting. As the building retains its original configuration, materials, and design features, along with its ranch setting, it is able to convey its historic use and significance.

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<sup>2</sup> Bell, personal interview.

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**4. Water Tank – Contributing Structure, Primary Significance**  
**Unknown construction date**

The water tank is located immediately adjacent to the northwest corner of the corrals, near the slaughter area. The exact date of construction is unknown, but it appears in aerial photographs taken in 1942. It was likely constructed in conjunction with the barns and corrals by Woolf in the late 1920s or by Bell in the early 1930s. The 40,000-gallon tank is currently used to store water for fire suppression. The tank, 20 feet in diameter and approximately 18 feet high, is constructed of riveted, radiused steel wall panels and sits on a railroad tie and wood plank base. A ladder, mounted to the side of the tank, provides access to the open top. The tank was originally unfinished, but it is currently painted white. The tank remains in fair condition, retaining sufficient integrity to convey its historic use and significance.

**5. Corrals – Contributing Structure, Primary Significance**  
**Unknown construction date**

The corrals at Walking Box Ranch are located at the west side of the property, to the southwest of the barn and to the west of the ranch house. The corrals were likely built in conjunction with the barn, either in the late 1920s by Woolf or in the 1930s by Bell. Weikel made several modifications and repairs in the corrals during his period of ownership (1951 to 1990). A fence running in a roughly north-northwestern direction separates the cattle-working area from the residential area to west. The triangular-shaped piece of land between the eastern edge of the corrals and the separation fence was used as a buffer zone between the two uses. The corrals themselves were used to sort cattle for shipment and to isolate cattle for treatments such as vaccination, branding, and castration or for slaughter.

The corrals are oriented along a north-northeastern axis and include multiple holding pens and working chutes. Cattle were first driven into a large holding pen at the southern end of the corrals where they could rest before moving through to the various chutes and smaller pens. The large holding pen has a rectangular plan, approximately 80 feet wide in the east/west direction and 440 feet long. An opening at the northeast corner of the corral leads to the L-shaped sorting alley (a later addition), where cattle were directed to the working chutes beyond. A loading chute is located immediately off the southern leg of the sorting alley. Two crowding areas, leading to curving squeeze chutes, are located at the west side of the sorting alley's eastern leg. The northern squeeze chute, which appears to be original, leads to the slaughter area, located just south of the water tank. The west end of the northern chute branches off into two arms, one for branding (north) and the other for dehorning (south). Weikel may have added the branding arm of the chute. The dehorning equipment and related steel restrainer are extant. The southern squeeze chute, used for treating cattle with insecticides, was added by Weikel's ranch foreman. Three smaller holding pens are located in the area bounded by the large holding pen, sorting alley, and squeeze chutes. The north end of the sorting alley terminates in a large crowding pen, which funneled cattle to another loading chute. This chute includes a concrete platform cattle scale (extant during the Bell period but modernized during the Weikel period) and terminates in a raised wood dock platform for loading cattle onto trucks. Cattle trucks parked in the open yard to the north.

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Three additional corrals (two horse pens and a cattle pen) are located to the east of the northern loading chute; and two small corrals remain just south of the barn. The wooden shade structure in the eastern horse pen has collapsed and been replaced with a temporary fabric shading device. Originally there were corrals to the east (a cow pen) and north (a pen for sick calves) of the barn; however, Viceroy demolished both of these structures in the early 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest available documentation of the corral system is an aerial photograph of the site taken in 1942. The photo shows a corral configuration that is very similar to the present layout, with the exception of the central area between the large southern holding pen and northern squeeze chute. This area originally included an irregularly-shaped pen that sorted cattle into a circular pen. The footprint of the northern squeeze chute is visible in the 1942 aerial photograph. This sorting system was replaced with the current L-shaped alley at the end of the Bell period or early in the Weikel period.

The corrals are typically simple in design but sturdy in construction. They are constructed of redwood railroad tie posts (often split), with either juniper spacers and page wire (a type of wire mesh), often with added strands of barbed wire; or horizontal wood slats; or horizontal strips of corrugated metal. Some of the corral fences are built entirely of closely-spaced, vertical split wood posts, with horizontal reinforcing bars. The majority of the historic corrals are built with railroad ties posts, suggesting a construction date of the late 1920s or later. Prior to that time, juniper wood posts were more common.<sup>4</sup> The oldest gates are constructed using wood posts and boards. Later repairs and additions are constructed with metal pipe. Watering troughs are located throughout the corral pens. All of the troughs have a rectangular configuration and made of galvanized metal, wood, concrete, and other salvaged materials (such as recycled steel military transport cases). A wood salt trough is located in the north end of the large holding pen.

Although the two barn holding pens have been demolished and other sections have been modified through repair and modernization (to be expected for a working cattle ranch), the historic configuration and elements most significant to the cattle-ranching process remain, including various holding pens and working chutes. The corral system remains in its original location, and retains its original setting and feeling, as well as many of the original materials. As the corrals are an important element of a cattle ranch, they are considered a contributory structure.

**6. Circulation Networks – Contributing Structure, Primary Significance**

**c. 1910, c. 1931-32, constructed**

**c. 1990, modified**

The main approach to the ranch property is from the north, along Walking Box Ranch Road. The road begins offsite to the north at Nipton Road (Highway 164), an east/west highway linking Nipton, California and Searchlight, follows a south-southwestern alignment, and continues beyond the south edge of the property to the California border. The road closely follows a c. 1910 iron water pipeline installed by the Rock Springs Land & Cattle company, and it is likely that that it was built in conjunction with the pipeline. The original road alignment was bisected by the western cattle corrals.<sup>5</sup> After Viceroy

<sup>3</sup> Bell, personal interview.

<sup>4</sup> Dewey Livingston, "National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Rock Springs Land & Cattle Company, San Bernardino County, CA," March 11, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> 18 May 1942 aerial photograph of the site, from the collection of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

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purchased the property in 1990, several modifications were made to the road to improve access to the local mines. The original one-lane dirt road was widened, a curved road bypass around the west side of the corrals was constructed, and the entire road surface was coated with lignum sulphate (a tree sap derivative) to control dust. The bypass eventually rejoins the original road alignment, just south of the property. Viceroy removed the unused portions of the historic road to the north of the corrals, but remnants of original one-lane unpaved road are still extant, just south of the corrals before the bypass rejoins the original alignment.<sup>6</sup>

In conjunction with the construction of the new ranch house in 1931-32, Bell added a vehicle driveway that provided a long axial approach to the house. The driveway branched off of Walking Box Ranch Road, approximately 1,700 feet north of the current house, passed between the blacksmith shop and bunkhouse, through the original front gate (demolished), and by the guest house, before terminating at the ranch house. Prior to 1987, Weikel added a new driveway segment connecting Walking Box Ranch Road to the original driveway, just north of the barn, which eliminated the long axial approach. Viceroy later widened this new driveway segment. The original long axial drive remains; but with disuse, it has been partially overgrown with native vegetation.

Buildings and structures were connected by a series of vernacular, unpaved paths and driveways across the site. The pathway configuration and widths have changed as buildings were constructed and demolished, but they remain unpaved.

The original circulation systems retain a fair degree of integrity. The site approach from the north remains the same. Although portions of the original Walking Box Ranch Road and driveway have been modified with bypasses, the original road alignments generally remain intact.

**7. Boundary Demarcations / Fences – Contributing Structure, Primary Significance**  
**c. 1930s**

Three sides of the property are enclosed by boundary fences, some dating to Bell era (1931-51), and others rebuilt or newly constructed during the Weikel period (1951-1990) or by Viceroy in the 1990s. The original eastern boundary fence is located outside of the current property boundaries and is not included in this nomination.

**7A. North Boundary Fence**

Although the existence of a northern boundary fence dates to the Bell era, it appears that only the eastern portion of the current fence is original to that period. This linear fence runs in an east/west direction, with a diagonal jog at the juncture between the old and new sections. This older, eastern section of the fence is constructed with split redwood railroad tie posts and 4-inch mesh wire. The western part of this fence was rebuilt c. 1992 by Viceroy as a decorative "ranch style" entry to the complex, and it includes a non-contributing entry gate (non-contributing object #20). The new portion of the fence is about 4 feet high and constructed with 6x6 wood posts and 2x6 horizontal fence boards.

<sup>6</sup> Bob Zaebst, personal interview conducted by Dewey Livingston, August 26, 2006.

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*7B. South Boundary Fence*

This older, east/west running fence may date to the Bell period. It is constructed with split redwood railroad tie posts, occasional steel posts, and 4-inch mesh wire, with whole ties and H-braces at the corners. A portion of the fence damaged by seasonal flood waters has been repaired with steel posts. On the west end is a wooden gate that serves as the restricted south entrance/exit to the property, hung between tall posts and constructed of five horizontal boards with one diagonal brace board, and a wood slider latch.

*7C. Southwest Boundary Fence*

This fence may have been constructed during or after the Bell period, and appears to have been rehabilitated more recently. The fence runs on a northeast/southwest diagonal, and it is constructed with railroad tie posts and juniper spacers, seven strands of barbed wire, with H-braces at the corners. On the west end is a short stretch constructed of horizontal boards and salvaged galvanized pipe. There is one gate on the west end of the fence, which was originally the main south gate to the water pipeline, Malpais Spring and Barnwell, but the road bypass has rendered this route obsolete. It is a wooden gate constructed of five horizontal boards with one diagonal brace board, and a wood slider latch.

*7D. Pipeline Range Fence*

This older fence may date to the Bell period. It follows the dirt pipeline road (current Walking Box Ranch Road) offsite in a south-southwesterly direction. The fence is constructed with juniper posts, widely spaced railroad tie posts and occasional steel posts, and 4 to 5 strands of barbed wire with wire spacers. Remnants of the c. 1910 iron water pipeline installed by Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company are occasionally visible between the road and fence. An old gate is located at the northern end of the fence opposite the bottom of the corral. It is a man-width wooden gate with a wood slider latch with peg handle.

*7E. Southwest Range Fence*

This older fence may date to the Bell period. At the east end, a short tangent continues the line of the west fence of the corral, and it is constructed of whole and split ties, wire mesh with twisted smooth wire at the top and an H-brace at the south corner where the fence makes a sharp turn to the northwest. The remainder of the fence is constructed with split ties (and occasional whole ties) and board spacers, and four to five strands of barbed wire. The fence is bisected by the road bypass and continues on the same tangent beyond the edge of the property. An old gate is located at the sharp turn near the east end of the fence. The gate was a bolted wood frame with 5 horizontal boards and a diagonal brace.

*7F. Northwest Range Fence*

This older fence may date to the Bell period. It is an extension of the northwest entry fence (near the water tank) and runs in a tangent in a northwesterly direction beyond the property. The fence is constructed with railroad tie posts with juniper spacers and occasional steel posts, and wire mesh. The fence is bisected by the bypass road.

*7G. Internal Fence*

This fence may date from the Bell period. It acts as a separation between the cattle-working area and the residential complex. It is constructed with alternating whole and split railroad ties, mesh wire and two strands of barbed wire at the top. There is an H-brace at approximately the halfway point of the fence. The final section at the north end, north of a



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gate, is constructed with whole ties, V-mesh wire, and one horizontal board. This last section appears to definitely date from the Bell period. An old wooden gate with an extended diagonal brace is located near the north end of the fence.

The fences remain in fair condition, with some damage caused by encroaching native vegetation, seasonal water run-off in several washes running through the property, and general lack of maintenance. The two range fences were damaged when the road bypass was cut through them. Several of the gates have fallen and are inoperable. Although the fences have been subject to various repair and replacement campaigns, they retain their original configuration and many of their original materials; and thus, they are considered contributory structures.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

**8. Designed Landscape to North of Ranch House – Non-Contributing Site**  
**c. 1990, constructed**

As part of the c. 1990 corporate retreat conversion project, Viceroy made several improvements to the landscaping between the bunkhouse and ranch house. Previously, this area had been informally landscaped with native plants and Joshua trees. Viceroy widened the existing driveway and created an allée lined with evenly-spaced, transplanted Joshua trees set in red gravel planting beds. Red gravel berms were installed around the perimeter of the bunk house and ranch house, as well as in the west yard and eastern courtyard of the ranch house. The landscaping remains in good condition.

**9. Bunkhouse – Non-Contributing Building**  
**c. 1990, constructed**  
**Architect unknown**

The bunkhouse was constructed in c. 1990 by Viceroy to replace the earlier, dilapidated bunkhouse. The bunkhouse is a one-story wood-framed house with a gable roof oriented on a north/south axis. The location and footprint, 23'-7" by 63'-7", closely approximates that of the original bunkhouse. The exterior walls are sheathed with stucco and the roof is covered with factory-made Spanish red clay tiles. A covered porch, supported with wood posts, is located along the east side of the building. The bunkhouse is currently used as temporary lodging for visitors to the site. The building is in good condition overall.

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**10. Temporary Caretaker's House - Non-Contributing Building**  
**c. 1979, erected on site**

The caretaker's house is a temporary, double-wide trailer with a gable roof oriented along a north/south axis. A carport is located along the west elevation, and a covered porch is located at the east side. A detached storage unit is located at the north side of the building. The building is in fair condition overall.

**11. Pump House and Water Tower - Non-Contributing Structure**  
**c. 1992**

The pump house and water tower were constructed by Viceroy after the new water well was drilled in 1992, replacing an earlier water storage tank on the site. The pump house is constructed with a concrete slab, wood-framed walls sheathed with painted, vertical tongue-and-groove wood paneling, and a wood-framed roof with an asphalt shingle covering. A 7,500-gallon water storage tank, projecting through the roof, is located at the north end of the building. The exterior of the metal tank is exposed and painted. The pump house and water tower remain in fair condition.

**12. Viceroy Water Well - Non-Contributing Structure**  
**1992**

After the 1964 Weikel well was abandoned, Viceroy drilled a new well near the southern end of the corrals. The well is 1,095 feet overall; and the well hole diameter is 12 inches down to 535 feet and 8 inches from 536 feet to the bottom.<sup>7</sup> Currently in use, the well provides water for the caretaker and visitors staying at the bunkhouse.

**13. Weikel Water Well - Non-Contributing Structure**  
**1964**

Drilled in the 1964, this water well is located near the site of the demolished guest house. It was abandoned in the early 1990s after a well pump was reportedly dropped into it. The top of the well is marked with a square concrete slab and is secured with a sheet metal clad lid.

**14. Large Water Trough**  
**c. 1992**

This water large trough is comprised of a circular steel basin sunk in a rough concrete base. The steel basin appears to be the salvaged top of the water storage tank that was demolished for the construction of the pump house and Viceroy well. The trough remains in fair condition.

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<sup>7</sup> State of Nevada Division of Water Resources Well Driller's Report #38903, dated July 6, 1992.



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**15. Site Utilities – Non-Contributing Structure**

**Unknown Construction Date**

A 1,000 gallon steel tank, located to the east of the ranch house, is used for the storage of liquid propane gas. The tank itself is new, but it may be a replacement for an earlier gas tank. The electrical transformer for the site is housed in a metal cabinet set on a concrete pad, located between the ranch house and bunkhouse. The transformer is a recent construction.

**16. Electrical Power Lines and Poles – Non-Contributing Structure**

**Unknown construction date**

An overhead, high-voltage electrical power line supported by wood poles runs diagonally across the site from the southeast to the northwest. The line supplies both the ranch and the mines in the mountains to the west.

**17. Temporary Storage Trailer – Non-Contributing Structure**

**c. 1990, erected on site**

The storage structure is a temporary, single-wide trailer with a gable-roof oriented along a north-south axis. The roof is covered with factory-made Spanish red clay tiles, similar to the bunkhouse. The trailer was originally brought to the site by Viceroy to serve as a classroom and training center for their mine employees. The trailer is currently used for storage. It is in fair condition overall.

**18. Tennis Court – Non-Contributing Structure**

**c. 1990**

The tennis court is a regulation-sized, paved hard court, measuring 60 feet by 120 feet overall, with aprons. Pole-mounted light fixtures illuminate the court, making night play possible. The court was installed in c.1990, as part of Viceroy's project to convert the property to a corporate retreat.

**19. Circulation Networks – Road Bypass and Staging Area – Non-Contributing Structure**

**c. 1990**

When Viceroy purchased the property in 1990, several modifications were made to the historic road to improve access to the local mines. As part of this work, a curved road bypass was constructed around the west side of the corrals, connecting with the historic road alignment to the north and south of the property. An unpaved staging area for mine trucks was created by clearing a large area of vegetation to the north of the corrals and west of the barn.

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**20. Boundary Demarcations – Front Gate – Non-Contributing Object**  
**c. 1990**

At the north boundary fence, a double gate serves as the main entry to the site. The gate is surrounded by tall posts supporting a braced horizontal beam from which hangs a welded black steel sign that reads, WALKING BOX RANCH, and a representation of the ranch brand. The gate is in good condition.

**DEMOLISHED RESOURCES**

**21. Rock Gardens – Demolished Site**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished c. 1950s**

Originally, both the west yard and eastern courtyard of the ranch house had decorative rock gardens, designed and installed by "Big John" Silveria, who also constructed the stone chimney at the house. Another rock garden, designed in the shape of a steer's head, was located at the front of the house, adjacent to the garage driveway. The rock gardens proved to be attractive habitats for rattlesnakes; and as a result, Karl Weikel removed them during the period of his ownership. Viceroy later replaced the gardens with red gravel berms and Joshua trees.

**22. Guest House – Demolished Building**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished c. 1950s**

The house was constructed in the 1930s to provide additional accommodations for guests visiting the Bells. The guest house was located in the residential area of the site, just inside the original entry gate (demolished). The guest house was a small rectangular structure with stucco walls and a corrugated sheet metal roof oriented along a north/south axis. A screened entry porch was located at the west elevation, facing the driveway. Bedrooms were located at the north and south ends of the building. Between the bedrooms was a small kitchen with a cook stove and a shared bathroom with a shower and sink. Weikel demolished the building in the 1950s. The original concrete slab remained in place for several years after that, but it is no longer extant.<sup>8</sup>

**23. Carpenter's House – Demolished Building**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished c. 1990**

The house was constructed in the 1930s for use by the ranch carpenter, Nick Nicholson. It was located in a 'string' of buildings along with the carpenter's shop and the ice house. The house was a small rectangular structure with horizontal wood siding and a gable roof oriented on an east/west axis. A porch with a shed roof was located at the entry on the west

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<sup>8</sup> Bell, personal interview.

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elevation, and a shed-roofed enclosed room was located on the east elevation. After Nicholson left the ranch, the Weikels converted it to an ammunition-loading house.<sup>9</sup> The building was demolished by Viceroy.

**24. Carpenter's Shop – Demolished Building**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished c. 1990**

The shop was constructed in the 1930s for use by the ranch carpenter, Nick Nicholson. It was a small rectangular structure with vertical board and batten siding and a gable roof oriented on an east/west axis. A string of ribbon windows wrapped around the north, east, and west elevations, and the entry door was located on the south elevation. The building was demolished by Viceroy.

**25. Original Bunkhouse – Demolished Building**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished c. 1990**

The original bunkhouse was located on the site of the current bunkhouse, and it had similar dimensions to the present construction. The original building had vertical board and batten siding and a sheet metal gable roof, with a screened porch running along the east side of the house. The wood framed floor was set several feet above grade. The interior was comprised of a kitchen and pantry at the south end, a mess hall, three private bedrooms, and a bunkroom. The screen porch provided additional sleeping accommodation for cowboys in the warmer months. The bunkhouse was surrounded by a fenced yard, separating it from the adjacent barn and blacksmith area.<sup>10</sup> Viceroy found the original bunkhouse in a dilapidated state and replaced it with the current building in c. 1990.

**26. Blacksmith Shop – Demolished Building**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; expanded c. 1960s; demolished c. 1990**

The blacksmith shop was constructed in the 1930s and was located to the east of the barn. It contained two forges for metal work repair and fabrication, including horseshoes and water pipe fittings. In the 1960s it was expanded to the south by the construction of an enclosed auto shop with a lube pit. An aerial photograph from 1987 shows the blacksmith shop with two distinctive parts: the original gable-roof building to the north, and the 1960s shed-roofed addition to the south. Viceroy demolished the building in c. 1990.

**27. Water Tank – Demolished Structure**  
**Unknown construction date; demolished c. 1992**

Originally there was a second water tank located to the east of the corrals, on the site of the current pump house. The exact date of construction is unknown, but it appears in aerial photographs taken in 1942. It was likely constructed in conjunction with the extant water tank by Woolf in the 1920s or by Bell in the early 1930s. Unlike the extant water tank,

<sup>9</sup> Carl Weikel, personal interview conducted by Dewey Livingston and Katie Wollan, June 7, 2006.

<sup>10</sup> Bell, personal interview.

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this circular metal tank had a lid. Aerial photographs show that the tank remained in place until at least 1987. It was likely demolished in the early 1990s for the construction of the new water well and pump house.

**28. Barn Holding Pens – Demolished Structure**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished c. 1990**

Originally there were corrals to the east (a cow pen) and north (a pen for sick calves) of the barn; however, Viceroy demolished both of these structures in the early 1990s.<sup>11</sup> The barn holding pens were constructed with the same materials as the extant corrals.

**29. Dog House – Demolished Structure**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished during the Weikel Period (1951-1990)**

The Bell family had at least one dog, a Great Dane, that was kept in a dog house and surrounding pens in the residential area of the site. The dog house was located to the east of the guest house and to the north of the ranch house garage. It was a small, gable-roofed structure with unpainted, vertical board and batten wood siding.

**30. Boundary Demarcations – Front Gate**  
**Constructed c. 1930s; demolished during the Weikel Period (1951-1990)**

The ceremonial front gate was located along the car driveway, at the entrance to the residential zone of the site, near the guest house. The gate consisted of two vertical wood posts, supporting a horizontal beam. A steer's skull was mounted to the center of the beam, facing north.

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<sup>11</sup> Bell, personal interview.

**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 a 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.)  
See Continuation Sheet.**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

AgricultureArchitectureSocial History**Period of Significance**1931-1958**Significant Dates**1931c. 1934**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation****Architect/Builder**Unknown**9. Major Bibliographical References**

(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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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

Name of repository:

University of Nevada, Las Vegas Special Collections Lib.

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**Summary of Significance**

Walking Box Ranch, a cattle ranch located just outside the town of Searchlight, Nevada, was carved from the massive, million-acre Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company, based across the state line in Barnwell, California. The ranch originally included a privately owned, 40-acre homestead parcel and another 120-acre parcel, as well as 300,000 to 400,000 acres of grazing leases. In 1931, Rex Bell purchased the ranch from John Woolf who obtained legal title in 1930. Bell and his wife Clara Bow, both Hollywood actors, constructed a substantial new ranch house in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in the same year and added a second story, circa 1934, as their family grew. Bell and subsequently Karl Weikel, to whom the ranch was sold in 1951, continued to operate the property as a working cattle ranch until its sale to Viceroy Gold Corporation in 1990. Viceroy used the property to access their local mine and rehabilitated the ranch headquarters to serve as an executive retreat. Since the mid-1990s, the property has changed hands several times and is now located in the midst of an expansive desert tortoise conservation area managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Walking Box Ranch is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, under Criterion A at the local level, for its association with the history of cattle ranching in Clark County and the Mojave region. It is also significant under Criterion C at the local level as an uncommon local example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style (main house); as an example of railroad tie architecture (barn), a typical method of construction in the region; and as a representative local example of a property type, the cattle ranch.

**Criterion A: Association with the History of Cattle Ranching in Clark County and the Mojave Region**

*Historic Context*

Beginning in the 1860s, mining ventures and the railroad brought large numbers of European American settlers to Nevada and other parts of the American West. This influx of newcomers stimulated the development of other enterprises, such as farming and ranching, which helped to feed the growing population. The harsh desert environment and scarcity of water in Nevada made raising agricultural crops difficult; however cattle and sheep ranching thrived in the desert, as the native sage, rye, and wild grasses provided excellent forage for the herds. Cattle were first brought to Nevada in the 1850s by Mormon families arriving from Utah, and the enterprise was expanded in the late 1850s when large numbers of California ranchers moved their herds to the unexploited and unregulated ranges of Nevada. The industry continued to expand with the aid of the railroad, which allowed ranchers to ship their products to large markets in California, including San Francisco and Sacramento. The early presence of large, outside cattle-ranching interests significantly shaped the development of the industry in the state. For most of its history, ranching in Nevada has been controlled almost entirely by several dozen families, a few large corporations, and the federal government. Many of the independent ranchers left the business during the Great Depression, and in some cases, their ranches were taken over by larger corporations.<sup>1</sup>

When ranching first began, the rangelands were generally regarded as common property. In the 1880s, ranchers began to accumulate millions of acres of land, either legitimately through land patents or illegitimately; however, they were still dependent on the common rangeland. At this same time, the environmental conservation movement in the United States was gaining ground; and several scientific reports were issued, describing the damaging effects of ranching on the

<sup>1</sup> Julie Nicoletta, Buildings of Nevada, Society of Architectural Historian's Buildings of the United States series (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) 24-27.



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landscape. As a result, in the late nineteenth century, the land became subject to tighter controls. The first federal effort to regulate grazing on federal public lands, the Taylor Grazing Act, was enacted in 1934. With the intent of stopping "injury to the public grazing lands by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration," the Act instituted a policy of restricting and controlling grazing on public land through leases.<sup>2</sup> Ranchers initially supported the Act, in part because it reinforced the cattle industry's local control over the public domain by setting up local advisory boards in each district to regulate permits and grazing within their district. In 1946, the Grazing Service, the federal administration that oversaw the districts, and the General Land Office were merged to form the Bureau of Land Management. The Taylor Grazing Act remained largely in force until 1964, and it was later replaced with the Federal Land Policy and Management Policy Act of 1976. Due to the Dust Bowl phenomenon, new concerns about the environment arose in the 1940s that would have a drastic impact on cattle ranching in the second half of the twentieth century. These concerns led to more limited access to public lands by ranchers and increased federal management of the lands; and as a result, in many cases, commercial use of the land stopped altogether.<sup>3</sup> As the urban areas of Nevada have grown at a rapid pace in recent years, large swathes of former ranch land has been bought up, subdivided, and developed as suburban tract housing.

*Cattle Ranching at Walking Box Ranch*

Cattle ranching in the eastern Mojave began in earnest following the 1883 construction of the Southern Pacific rail line between Needles, California and San Francisco. Beginning in 1886, T.L. Blackburn and Co. began obtaining water rights throughout the region and in 1894 incorporated as the Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company (RSLCC). RSLCC was headquartered in Barnwell, California with operations in a roughly fifty-mile square area of the eastern Mojave that supported approximately 10,000 head of cattle in its heyday. RSLCC began to move cattle across the Nevada border and into the Piute Valley in the first decade of the twentieth century. John Woolf served as Rock Springs' long-time ranch manager.

Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company suffered financial reverses as a result of several seasons of drought in the 1920s and decided to sell its assets, including land, livestock, grazing and water rights. As part of this disposition, the Nevada ranch lands were given to John Woolf. At least one local newspaper account indicates Woolf's association with the ranch as early as 1927; however, the deed to the property was signed over to Woolf in February 1930. The grazing rights associated with the original ranch extended north from the ranch headquarters to Railroad Pass, east to Highway 95 and the Colorado River, south to the Newberry Mountains and west across Crescent Peak and the California border. Woolf sold the ranch, including water and grazing rights, to cowboy actor Rex Bell (born George F. Beldam) in May 1931.

At roughly this same time, silent screen star Clara Bow, Rex Bell's future wife, was suffering mental and physical health problems, in part related to a legal suit and public scandal. After suffering a nervous breakdown and short recuperative stays at two Southern California sanitariums, Bow broke her contract with Paramount Studios. In her letter of resignation to Paramount, Bow indicated that she could be contacted at Woolf Ranch in Nipton, California where she intended to continue her recuperation. Once at the ranch, Bell and Bow quickly began construction of a large Spanish Colonial Revival

<sup>2</sup> Information compiled from Bureau of Land Management website, [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov).

<sup>3</sup> Paul F. Starrs, *Let the Cowboy Ride: Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) 56-60.



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style ranch house. After much public speculation, Bell and Bow were married in Las Vegas in early December 1931. The Bells raised two young sons (born in 1934 and 1938) at Walking Box Ranch. Bell also cooperated with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a New Deal work program, to construct two wells on the grazing lands associated with the ranch.

Rex Bell was not a seasoned rancher or rider. He continued to make movies in Hollywood during his time at Walking Box Ranch, and a ranch manager handled the daily ranching operations. Red Verzani and later Al Marshall were each employed as ranch manager. There were no other full-time cowboys, but they were hired as needed during the year. While not a hands-on rancher, Bell did begin a successful political career as a leader in local ranching, serving on the first advisory board for Nevada Grazing District #5, created after the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act. In the early 1940s, Bell sold the northern half of his grazing rights, north of the old Nipton Road, to his ranch manager Al Marshall. By the mid-1940s, Bell moved his family to Las Vegas and leased the remaining portion of the property to Wyatt Marshall and a business partner for a five-year period. Bell later served as Lieutenant Governor of Nevada, from 1954-1962.

Following the lease period, Rex Bell sold Walking Box Ranch to Karl Weikel, a former Navy officer, in 1951, and the property became known as the YKL Ranch. Weikel continued cattle ranching operations through the 1970s. Weikel eventually sold the ranch to Viceroy Gold Corporation in 1990. Viceroy interest in the property stemmed from their need for better access to local mines; however, the ranch itself was rehabilitated for use as an executive retreat. Alterations to the main house, demolition and relocation of outbuildings, and alterations to landscape features date from the period.

In the last fifteen years, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy have established the area around Searchlight as a desert tortoise conservation habitat, effectively ending the remains of cattle ranching in the area. The Bureau of Land Management acquired Walking Box Ranch with funding from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA), which generates revenue for special projects from the sale of public lands. The Nature Conservancy holds two separate easements on the larger 160-acre parcel, which includes the 40-acre home ranch that is the subject of this nomination.

The period of significance for Walking Box Ranch as a cattle ranch extends from 1931-1958.

**Criterion C: Example of Typical Local Vernacular Construction - Railroad Tie Architecture (Barn)**

*Historic Context and Character-Defining Features*

In early western America railroad ties were common as a building material in areas where traditional building materials were scarce. Made widely available by the rapid western expansion of rail lines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, railroad ties were often available in nearby areas at very low cost. They were viewed by industrious pioneers as a sturdy, easy-to-work-with building material that could be used to construct structures that stayed cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Railroad tie buildings are found throughout Nevada, predictably with the heaviest concentrations in towns where the railroad helped define the culture. The greatest concentration of railroad tie buildings in Nevada is found in Elko County, in

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the northeastern corner of the state along the Union Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroad lines. In northern Nevada, railroad tie construction disappears near the California border, presumably as timber became more available from the Sierra. While, as a building material, railroad ties are often associated with ranching, in Nevada they were used to build houses, schools, barns, outbuildings, stores, bars, bunkhouses, and cold storage facilities. A study of Elko County found railroad ties used in construction as early as 1890.<sup>4</sup> Railroad tie construction reached its peak during the lean times of the Great Depression and the following War years. Their use as a building material waned in the late 1940s, but they were still used on ranches for fences, corrals, and other like structures.

Early railroad ties were most frequently made of cedar or redwood, and unlike contemporary ties, were not pressure treated or coated in foul-smelling creosote, which would tend limit their use to unoccupied buildings. Most railroad tie construction is a hybrid of masonry and log cabin construction techniques, with ties laid horizontally and joints offset from the rows above. Railroad tie buildings are generally simple in plan and either square or rectangular in shape. As the typical railroad tie comes in a length of eight feet, most railroad tie buildings are dimensioned in multiples thereof. Often, railroad tie buildings were built directly on the ground with no foundations. The dry climate helped to reduce instances of insect infestation and rot. Roofs were typically gabled, with notches cut in rafters to fit onto the ties below. As railroad ties were difficult to cut at an angle, gable ends were often constructed of other materials. Doors and windows were simply cut out from the laid up ties. In residential structures, exteriors were often clad with stucco or shingles.

*Railroad Tie Architecture at Walking Box Ranch*

The Walking Box Ranch barn is characteristic of railroad tie construction in Nevada. As materials were scarce in the region, it was built using the only readily available source of lumber - ties from two abandoned rail lines in the area. The barn exhibits many of the typical features of railroad tie construction, including: horizontally-laid ties in eight foot lengths with offset joints; simple, square-shaped plan; lack of foundation; gable roof; and wood-framed gable wall construction. While the barn incorporates many of the typical features of railroad tie construction, it is in many ways a hybrid of various salvaged materials. The southern bay of the barn is framed with wood posts and clad with salvaged wood boards and corrugated metal. Despite this hybrid nature, the barn is an excellent example of railroad tie construction, illustrating how ranchers adapted to the scarcity of materials in the 1930s.

Most extant railroad tie structures in Nevada are concentrated in the north of the state, along the Union Pacific railroad line. The barn is significant as a rare remaining example of railroad tie construction in the Searchlight area and among the southern Mojave Desert ranches. Although historic photographs show several railroad tie structures in Searchlight, few, if any, currently remain. Among the Mojave ranches, railroad tie structures are also rare. The saddle shed at the Kessler Springs Ranch Headquarters, on the former lands of the Rock Springs Land and Cattle Company, is among the documented examples.

<sup>4</sup> Andrea Graham, "Railroad Tie Architecture in Elko County, Nevada," unpublished manuscript, 1987, presented at Vernacular Architecture Forum Annual Meeting, 1987 (Salt Lake City). Typescript, copy provided by author.

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**Criterion C: Uncommon Local Example of Spanish Colonial Revival Style (Ranch House)**

*Historic Context and Character-Defining Features*

The Spanish Colonial Revival style was one of a number of historically inspired styles popular in the United States in the early decades of the twentieth century. Spanish-inspired residential design first made an appearance at the turn of the century as Mission style architecture, an idiom derived from the Spanish Colonial mission buildings. The Spanish Colonial Revival style followed and combined Spanish architectural elements (including Moorish, Byzantine, or Renaissance influences) with the architecture of early California settlement and Mexican forms. Though the designs drew on non-American sources, this revival style is an American creation. The style gained a significant boost in popularity through its use as the dominant style of the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, which was designed by architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. The style became a popular residential building style in the 1920s in the Southwest, Florida, and particularly California, where it was the preferred style for Hollywood stars' residences.<sup>5</sup> The style was common in the 1920s and 1930s but lost popularity after World War II.

Typical features of Spanish Colonial Revival style residences include:

- low-pitched gabled or flat roofs
- red clay tile roofs
- asymmetrical facades
- use of balconies and balconets
- smooth-stuccoed exterior walls usually painted white
- arched openings
- colorful tile work
- exposed heavy beams
- heavy wood doors
- wrought-iron grills

*Spanish-Colonial Revival Architecture at Walking Box Ranch*

In the early 1930s, as the nation fell deeper into economic depression, Hollywood personalities began to sink their wealth into farms and ranches. According to the *Los Angeles Times* in 1931, "(r)anches are the favorite buys in the cinema colony now – cattle ranches, fruit ranches, all kinds, sizes, and shapes."<sup>6</sup> Among the actors-turned-ranchers were Gary Cooper, Will Rogers, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and Zane Grey, as well as Bell and Bow. These Hollywood stars brought their architectural tastes with them to their new ranches.

In 1931 Bell and Bow built their new ranch house in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style that had enjoyed enormous popularity in Hollywood in the previous decade. The new house stood in sharp contrast to other southern Nevada ranch houses, which had long relied on locally available building materials such as discarded railroad ties. While not a style seen

<sup>5</sup> Rachel Carly, *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture* (Ontario, Canada: Roundtable Press, 1994) 196.

<sup>6</sup> John Scott, "Colony Hies Back to Land," in *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1931, p. B11.

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in the region, it likely appealed to Bell and Bow as a style that was both familiar to them personally and seemed appropriate for their new life on a cattle ranch in the desert. The style had been inspired, in part, by the adobe "ranchos" built to accommodate the harsh rural conditions of California in the nineteenth century. Although certainly modest in comparison to Spanish Colonial Revival mansions of their Hollywood peers, the house at Walking Box Ranch retained a sense of the lavish lifestyle they left behind.

The main house design is characteristic of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style and includes typical features such as: irregular, sprawling massing; wide expanses of white, smooth stucco wall surfaces; intersecting low-pitched gabled roofs; red clay tile roofs (originally handmade barrel clay tiles and now factory-made Spanish clay tiles); minimal ornamentation; soft, rounded corners and edges; arcaded wing walls; tile vents in the attic gable; and a cantilevered balcony. The incorporation of exterior circulation spaces and a blurring of the line between indoors and outdoors are also characteristic of the style and are seen at the house in the original entrance arcade and the covered porches surrounding the courtyard, which provide circulation for the interior spaces. The traditionally crafted elements that have been associated with the style, such as wrought-iron grills, handmade quarry tiles for paving, polychrome (multi-colored) decorative tiles, and hand-carved woodwork, were curtailed at the residence.

In contrast to the typical vernacular residences in southern Clark County, the sophisticated design of the main house at Walking Box Ranch suggests the work of professional architect; however, a specific architect could not be identified. No architectural drawings have been found; however, there are several undated and unsigned architectural color renderings, which appear to predate construction.

**Criterion C: Representative Local Example of a the Cattle Ranch Property Type**

*Historic Context and Character-Defining Features*

In the 1880s, ranchers were starting to realize that the use of public lands was not guaranteed to last forever, and homesteaders became interested in obtaining title to these lands. After the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934, it became necessary for ranchers to have a home property base in order to attain grazing access to the federally regulated, public-domain rangelands. The home ranch grew out of these realizations and regulations, providing a base of operations where the family and hired hands lived, kept livestock over the winter, and branded new stock. Most ranches were remotely located; and thus, they were self-sustaining as a matter of necessity. Food was grown, stored, and prepared at the ranch; and carpenters and blacksmiths were able to fabricate and repair any necessary building and ranching materials on site. After the rampant speculation associated with beef industry in the late 1800s, the home ranch came to symbolize the ranching's attempt at stability in the early 1900s.

The home ranch was surrounded by vast amounts of land where the cattle grazed; however, much of the land was leased from the federal government or other private owners. The home ranch stands in contrast to outlying camps, often referred to as 'line camps,' which were spread out across the grazing lands and acted as satellite facilities. While the home ranch was a permanent facility and base, the line camps were often no more than a corral and cabin where ranch hands watered cattle and slept while moving herds across the lands.

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Home ranches consisted of numerous buildings including:

- main house / ranch headquarters for the owner's family
- housing for any hands working on the ranch, outside of the immediate family
- repair shop
- storage for ranch products and other miscellaneous ranch materials
- water tower or wind mill
- corrals
- fence wire and posts
- shade trees

Ranch buildings were typically constructed in a variety of materials, including logs, railroad ties, adobe and mud, or stone. In later years, pre-fabricated structures became popular, as they provided an easy alternative to construction on site in remote areas.

*Walking Box Ranch as a Cattle Ranch Property Type*

Walking Box Ranch is significant as a representative local example of the cattle ranch property type, retaining the historic buildings and structures that are critical to the functioning of a working home ranch. The main residential quarter of the site, at the southwest corner of the property, is separated from the working areas of the ranch by fences and a buffer zone of unused land. The centerpiece of the residential quarter is a large main house, built by Rex Bell in 1931, where he lived with his wife Clara Bow and their two young sons until the mid-1940s. The main house was not only a family residence, but also a business and social center for the ranch. Bell conducted business from his office in the great room, where he could monitor the barn and corrals from the large bay window. The Bells hosted numerous parties at the ranch for family, visiting Hollywood friends, the Searchlight community, and even troops from nearby Camp Ibis before they headed off to join General George S. Patton's Third Army.<sup>8</sup> Visiting family and other guests stayed in one of the many bedrooms in the house or in the detached guest house to the north. The family generally employed cooks who also lived in the main house, in a separate servants' and service wing. During the Bell period, other structures in the residential quarter included the guest house (demolished, c. 1950s) and the family dog house (also demolished). Later owners, including Karl Weikel, continued to live, work, and entertain in the main house. The area still retains its residential quality. Although the main house is currently vacant, the site caretaker resides in a temporary mobile home to the south.

The northeast corner of the property was home to the ranch manager and hired hands. Ranch manager Al Marshall and his family, as well as seasonal ranch hands, lived in the original bunkhouse. The bunkhouse was replaced c. 1990 by Viceroy Gold Corporation, but it was rebuilt in the same location with a similar footprint. A carpenter employed by the family lived a small house set in a 'string' of buildings that also included his shop and an ice house. Both of the carpenter's structures have been demolished. The ice house, used for the storage of meats, still remains, but has been relocated to a

<sup>7</sup> Starrs, 9-13.

<sup>8</sup> Rex Bell, Jr., video interview conducted by UNLV, May 2006; and Marge (Frost) Sandquist, personal interview conducted by Dennis Casebier, August 15, 1995.



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location near the barn. Other ranch storage structures, including the remains of a shed, are extant, but are located outside of the current 40-acre property.

The working areas of the site are located at the west side of the property and include a barn, water storage tank, and corral system. The barn was used for the storage of hay and other animal feed, as well as horse tack. It remains in fair condition and is currently used for storage. The remaining corral system is comprised of various holding pens, a slaughter pen, and working and loading chutes, as well as equipment such as dehorers and cattle scales. Originally, the working area also included a blacksmith shop, used for the fabrication and repair of horse shoes and other ranch equipment; however, it was demolished in 1990.

The whole property is surrounded by a system of boundary fences, which remain intact, although sections have been repaired and replaced as they have deteriorated.

Walking Box Ranch typifies the western home ranch in the Nevada desert. The ranch house remains at the center of the residential zone on the site, and the barn, ice house, water tank, corrals, and boundary fences fill out the working ranch portion of the site. Despite the demolition of some of the original components, the historic buildings and structures that are critical to the functioning of a working home ranch remain relatively unaltered, and the relationships between these components is substantially unchanged since the Bell period. Thus, the district retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic use and significance.

### Conclusion

Walking Box Ranch is significant at the local level under National Register Criterion A, as it is associated with patterns of events that have contributed to the development of southern Nevada, in this case the development of agriculture, specifically cattle ranching, in the Mojave region. The context of agriculture is defined as "the process and technology of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and plants."<sup>9</sup> As a remote ranch in a desolate location, the ranch illustrates the development of cattle ranching in the area throughout the twentieth century. The complex is illustrative of the period when cattle ranchers were obligated to set up privately owned home ranches in order to maintain access to public grazing lands under the Taylor Grazing Act. Walking Box Ranch is also associated with a more particular trend associated with ranching in the 1930s – that of the Hollywood actor-turned-rancher. Rex Bell and Clara Bow, both Hollywood personalities, built the main house and many of the outbuildings. Bell went on to be a leader in the local community and in the State of Nevada.

Walking Box Ranch is also significant under National Register Criterion C for architectural merit as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, and method of construction. The design of the main house is characteristic the Spanish Colonial Revival Style and includes many typical features. Though no architect has been identified, the main house exhibits subtle design details associated with an architect-designed building. Designed for a

<sup>9</sup> National Park Service, "National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Form" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service, 1991) 40.

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high-profile Hollywood couple in a Mediterranean style popular in California at the time, it is representative of its era. The property also exhibits a distinctive regional method of construction, railroad tie construction, in the barn and also in the corrals. Walking Box Ranch typifies the western home ranch property type in the southern Nevada desert. The complex retains seven historic buildings, structures, and objects, many of which are large components (both in terms of size and function), critical to the functioning of a working cattle ranch. Several of the outbuildings, such as the guest house and blacksmith shop have been demolished. In comparison to the remaining main house, barn, ice house, corrals, and water tank, the demolished buildings played a secondary role in the day-to-day operations of the ranch. The extant historic buildings and surrounding landscape retain a fair to high degree of individual integrity; and thus, they are able to convey their original uses, intent, and historic and architectural significance. The relationship between these various contributing resources in the district is substantially unchanged since the Bell period. Although thirteen non-contributing buildings, sites, structures, and objects occupy the site, many of them are below ground (two water wells), small in scale (a water trough), or temporary in nature (two mobile trailers). Thus, Walking Box Ranch remains as an excellent example of the home ranch in Clark County and the Mojave region.



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 5

Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Name of property

Clark County, NV  
County and State

- 
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- "Around and About in Hollywood." *Los Angeles Times*. July 9, 1936, p. A19.
- "Clara Bow Taken Ill on Her Ranch." *Los Angeles Times*. August 31, 1936, p. A18.
- "Around and About in Hollywood." *Los Angeles Times*. December 28, 1936, p. 15.
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- "Clara Bow and Rex Bell Will Run Hollywood Café." *Los Angeles Times*. August 31, 1937, p. 4.
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- "Clara Bow Sued by Cattle Dealers." *Los Angeles Times*. October 2, 1937, p. A8.
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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   9   Page   6  

Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Name of property

Clark County, NV  
County and State

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9 Page 7

Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Name of property

Clark County, NV

County and State

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Walking Box Ranch  
Name of Property

Clark County, NV  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 40 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	677600	3929015	3	11	678020	3928620
2	11	678010	3929020	4	11	677610	3928615

☐ See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

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

See Continuation Sheet.

### Boundary Justification

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

See Continuation Sheet.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Katie Wollan and Sara Lardinois, with research assistance from Dewey Livingston

organization Architectural Resources Group date June 2008

street & number Pier 9 The Embarcadero telephone 415-421-1680

city or town San Francisco state CA zip code 94111

### 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. *Included.*

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

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property. *Included.*

#### Additional items

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

### Property Owner

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

Name Bureau of Land Management

street & number 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive telephone 702-515-5139

city or town Las Vegas state NV zip code 89103

**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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Name of property

Clark County, Nevada  
County and State

---

**Verbal Boundary Description**

This property being nominated is recorded at Clark County Official Records as:  
Parcel No. 242-00-002-007; SW ¼ SW ¼ Section 22 Township 28 South, Range 62 East, MDB&M.

**Boundary Justification**

This parcel constitutes approximately 40 acres, located at the northwest quadrant of the original 160-acre home ranch that is historically associated with Walking Box Ranch and contains those extant resources directly associated with the operations of the ranch. The entire 160 acres, consisting of three separate parcels, are currently owned by the Bureau of Land Management and protected as a desert tortoise habitat by a conservation easement held by the Nature Conservancy. The northwest parcel addressed by this nomination is allowed a historic agricultural use under the terms of the conservation easement.

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 1

Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Name of property

Clark County, Nevada  
County and State

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**PHOTOGRAPHY LABELS**

AERIAL VIEW, Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
From the collection of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), photographer unknown  
May 18, 1942  
Aerial view of district  
Photograph 1

AERIAL VIEW, Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
From the collection of Dennis Casebier, photographer unknown  
c. 1987  
Aerial view of district, looking southwest  
Photograph 2

AERIAL VIEW, Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
SURVCON, INC, photographer  
2006  
Aerial view of district  
Photograph 3

RANCH HOUSE (Contributing Building #1), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Oblique view of north and west façades; view looking southeast  
Photograph 4

RANCH HOUSE (Contributing Building #1), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Oblique view of north and west façades; view looking southeast.  
Photograph 5

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 2

Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Name of property

Clark County, Nevada  
County and State

---

RANCH HOUSE (Contributing Building #1), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Oblique view of south façade; view looking northwest.  
Photograph 6

RANCH HOUSE (Contributing Building #1), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Axial view of east façade; view looking west.  
Photograph 7

RANCH HOUSE (Contributing Building #1), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Interior - Oblique view of great room; view looking northwest.  
Photograph 8

BARN (Contributing Building #2), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Oblique view of west and south façades; view looking northeast.  
Photograph 9

BARN (Contributing Building #2), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Oblique detail view of northwest corner; view looking southeast.  
Photograph 10

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 3

Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Name of property

Clark County, Nevada

County and State

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BARN (Contributing Building #2), Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Clark County, NV

Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Interior – Axial view of barn interior; view looking west.

Photograph 11

ICE HOUSE (Contributing Structure #3), Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Clark County, NV

Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior – Oblique view of south and east façades; view looking northwest.

Photograph 12

ICE HOUSE (Contributing Structure #3), Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Clark County, NV

Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Interior – Oblique view of ice house interior; view looking northwest.

Photograph 13

WATER TANK (Contributing Structure #4), Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Clark County, NV

Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior – Oblique view of water tank; view looking southwest.

Photograph 14

CORRALS (Contributing Structure #5), Walking Box Ranch Historic District

Clark County, NV

Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior – Oblique view of railroad tie and juniper spacer fence; view looking northeast.

Photograph 15



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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photographs Page 4

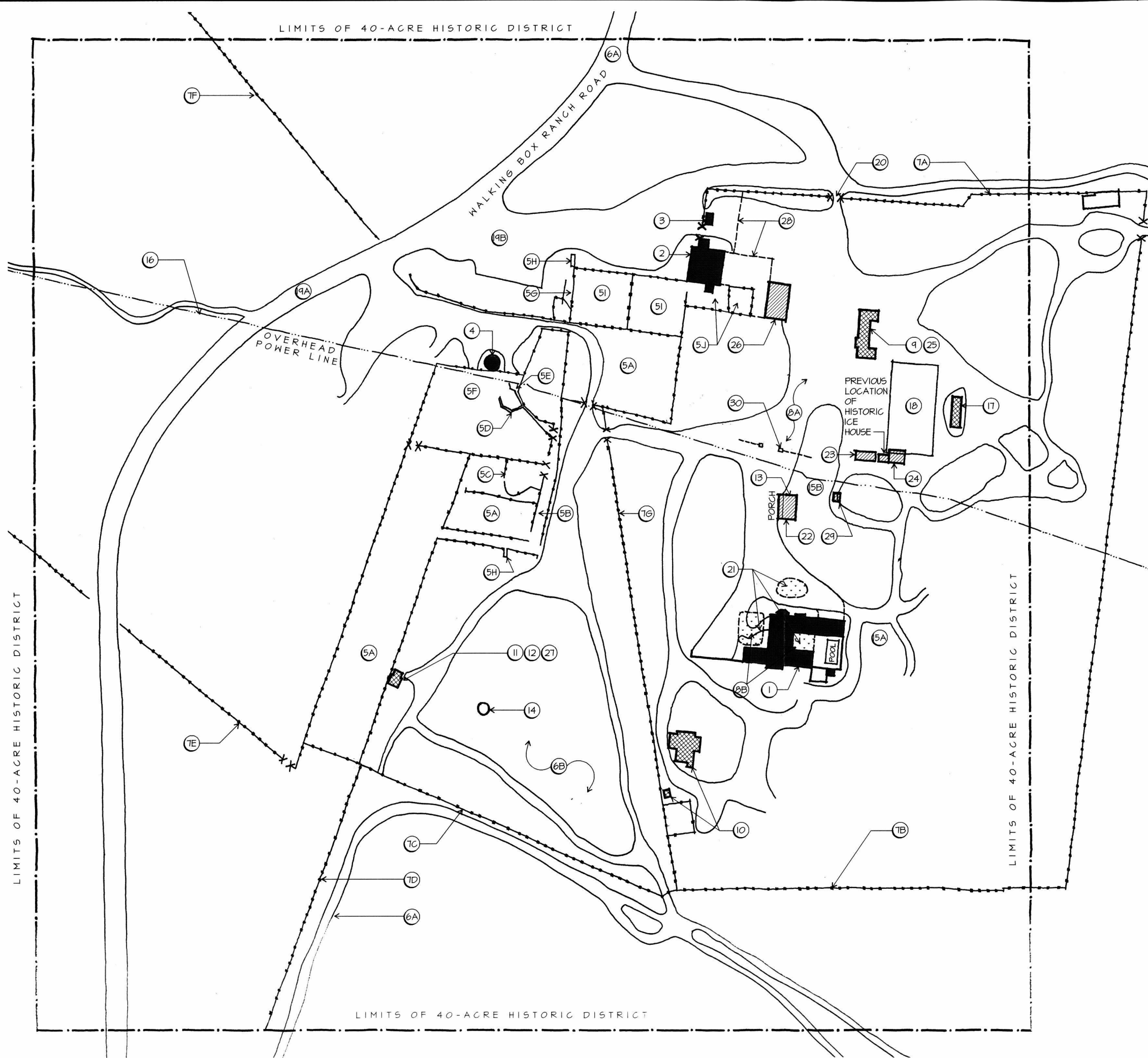
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Name of property

Clark County, Nevada  
County and State

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CORRALS (Contributing Structure #5), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior – Oblique detail view of squeeze chute; view looking southeast.  
Photograph 16

CORRALS (Contributing Structure #5), Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior – Oblique view of dehorner and slaughter pen; view looking southeast.  
Photograph 17



#### PROPERTY FEATURES KEY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ① RANCH HOUSE  | ⑨ BUNKHOUSE                                |
| ② BARN   | ⑩ TEMPORARY CARETAKER'S HOUSE              |
| ③ ICE HOUSE  | ⑪ PUMP HOUSE AND WATER TOWER               |
| ④ WATER TANK   | ⑫ VICEROY WATER WELL                       |
| ⑤A CORRALS - CATTLE HOLDING PENS                           | ⑬ WEIKEL WATER WELL                        |
| ⑤B CORRALS - SORTING ALLEY                                 | ⑭ LARGE WATER TROUGH                       |
| ⑤C CORRALS - INSECTICIDE CHUTE                             | ⑮A SITE UTILITIES - PROPANE STORAGE TANK   |
| ⑤D CORRALS - DEHORNING CHUTE                               | ⑮B SITE UTILITIES - ELECTRICAL TRANSFORMER |
| ⑤E CORRALS - BRANDING CHUTE                                | ⑯ ELECTRICAL POWER LINES AND POLES         |
| ⑤F CORRALS - SLAUGHTER PEN                                 | ⑰ TEMPORARY STORAGE TRAILER                |
| ⑤G CORRALS - SCALE   | ⑱ TENNIS COURT                             |
| ⑤H CORRALS - LOADING CHUTES                                | ⑲A CIRCULATION NETWORKS - ROAD BYPASS      |
| ⑤I CORRALS - HORSE PENS                                    | ⑲B CIRCULATION NETWORKS - STAGING AREA     |
| ⑤J CORRALS - BARN PENS                                     | ⑳ FRONT GATE                               |
| ⑥A CIRCULATION NETWORKS - WALKING BOX RANCH                | ㉑ (D) ROCK GARDENS                         |
| ⑥B CIRCULATION NETWORKS - PATHWAY SYSTEM                   | ㉒ (D) GUEST HOUSE                          |
| ⑦A BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - N. BOUNDARY FENCE               | ㉓ (D) CARPENTER'S HOUSE                    |
| ⑦B BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - S. BOUNDARY FENCE               | ㉔ (D) CARPENTER'S SHOP                     |
| ⑦C BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - S.W. BOUNDARY FENCE             | ㉕ (D) ORIGINAL BUNKHOUSE                   |
| ⑦D BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - PIPELINE RANGE FENCE            | ㉖ (D) BLACKSMITH SHOP                      |
| ⑦E BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - S.W. RANGE FENCE                | ㉗ (D) WATER TANK                           |
| ⑦F BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - N.W. RANGE FENCE                | ㉘ (D) CORRALS - BARN HOLDING PENS          |
| ⑦G BOUNDARY DEMARCATIONS - INTERNAL FENCE                  | ㉙ (D) DOG HOUSE                            |
| ⑧A DESIGNED LANDSCAPE - ALLEE OF TRANSPLANTED JOSHUA TREES | ㉚ (D) FRONT GATE                           |
| ⑧B DESIGNED LANDSCAPE - RED GRAVEL BERMS                   |  |

#### SKETCH MAP OF THE WALKING BOX RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT, CLARK COUNTY, NY

FEATURES ARE KEYED TO SECTION 7, CONTINUATION SHEETS 1 AND 2

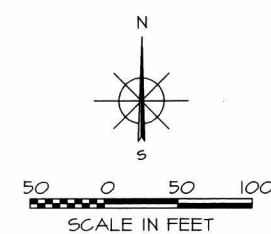
#### LEGEND

- (D) DEMOLISHED  
(E) EXISTING  
(R) RELOCATED

■ (E) HISTORIC CONSTRUCTION

▨ (E) NON-HISTORIC CONSTRUCTION

▩ (D) HISTORIC CONSTRUCTION



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Walking Box Ranch  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEVADA, Clark

DATE RECEIVED: 12/19/08 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/05/09  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/20/09 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/01/09  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 08001392

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

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

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1-30-09 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The Walking Box Ranch Historic District is a former cattle ranch located in the eastern Mojave Desert in southern Nevada. The district includes the 40-acre home ranch that was developed by actors Rex Bell and Clara Bow. The ranch was nominated under Criteria A and C at the local level for its association with cattle ranching in Clark County and the Mojave region, as an example of a Colonial Revival style ranch house, and as an example of railroad tie construction, as applied to a barn. The period of significance is 1931 to 1958.

RECOM./CRITERIA A & C  
REVIEWER Barbara Ogall DISCIPLINE Historian  
TELEPHONE 202-354-2252 DATE ~~2-1-09~~ 1-30-09

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

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



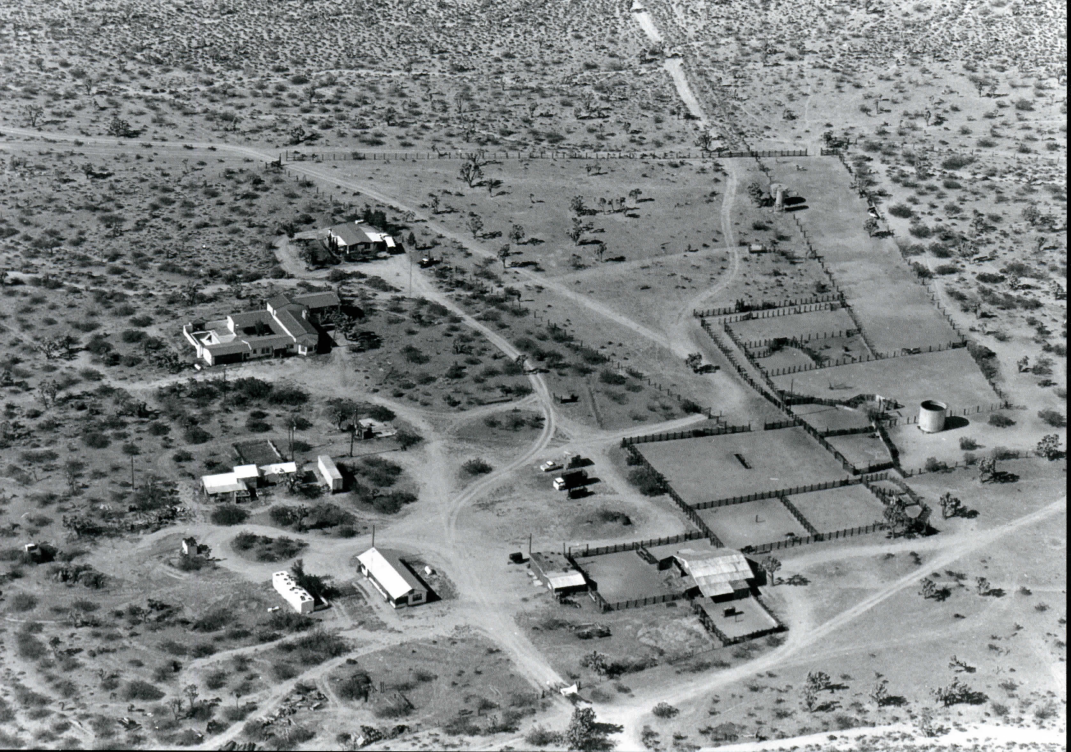
Aerial view,  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV

From the Collection of the Nat. Archives and  
Records Administration (NARA) photographer  
unknown

May 18, 1942

Aerial view of District  
Photograph 1







Aerial view, Wal King Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV

From the collection of Dennis Casebier,  
photographer unknown

C. 1987

Aerial view of District, looking southwest  
Photograph 2



Aerial view, Walking Box Ranch Hist. Dist.  
Clark County, NV  
Survcon, Inc. photographer  
2006

Aerial view of district  
Photograph 3

Epson  
Professional Paper

EPSON



Ranch House (Contributing Building #1)  
Walkly Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique view north and  
west facades, view looking  
southeast

Photograph 4







Ranch House (Contributing Building #1)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources  
Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique view of North and  
West facades; view looking southeast  
Photograph 5



Ranch House (Contributing Building #1)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources  
Group, photographer  
June 2006  
Exterior - Oblique view of south facade;  
view looking north west  
Photograph 6



Ranch House (Contributing Building #1)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Axial view of east façade;  
view looking west

Photograph 7





Ranch House (Contributing Building #1)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resource  
Group, photographer

June 2006

Interior - oblique view of great room,  
view looking northwest

Photograph 8



Barn (Contributing Building #2)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources  
Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique view of west and  
south facades; view looking  
north east

Photograph 9

Epson  
Professional Paper



Barn (Contributing Building #2)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources Group - photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique detail view of  
northwest corner, view looking  
southeast

Photograph 10





Barn (Contributing Building #2)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources  
Group, photographer

June 2006

Interior - Axial view of barn interior;  
view looking west  
Photograph 11



Ice House (Contributing Structure #3)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic  
District

Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior - oblique view of south  
and east façades; view  
looking northwest

Photograph 12



Ice House (Contributing Structure  
#3) Walking Box Ranch  
Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources Group, photographer  
June 2006

Interior - oblique view of ice  
house interior, view looking  
north west

Photograph 13





Water Tank (Contributing Structure  
# 4), Walking Box Ranch  
Historic District

Clark County, NV

Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources Group -  
photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique view of  
Water Tank, view looking  
South west

Photograph 14



Corrals (Contributing Structure #5)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural  
Resources Group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior Oblique view of railroad  
tie and juniper spade fence  
view looking northeast

Photograph 15



Corrals (Contributing Structure #5)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - Architectural Resources  
Group - photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique detail view of  
squeeze chute; view looking southeast  
Photograph 16





Corrals (Contributing Structure #5)  
Walking Box Ranch Historic District  
Clark County, NV  
Shayne Watson - architectural resources  
group, photographer

June 2006

Exterior - Oblique view of dehorner  
and slaughter pen; view looking  
south east  
Photograph 17



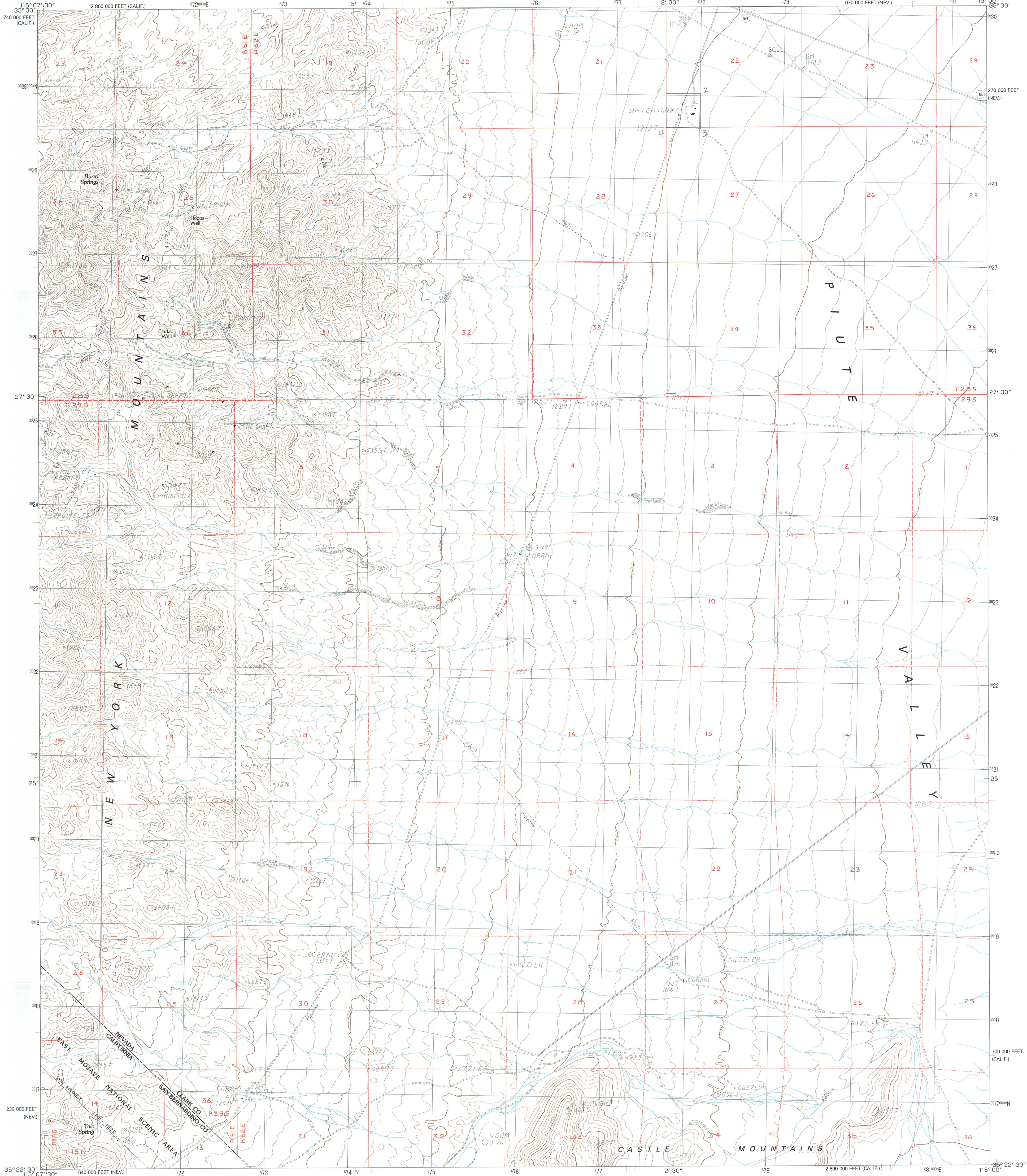
UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WALKING BOX RANCH HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CLARK COUNTY, NV

UTM REFERENCES:

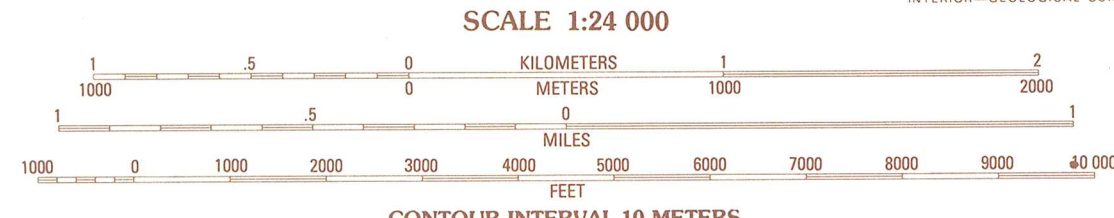
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2. 11/678010/3929020 4. 11/677610/3928615

HOPPS WELL QUADRANGLE  
NEVADA-CALIFORNIA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



PRODUCED BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
CONTROL BY: USGS, NOS/NOAA  
COMPILED FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN: 1975, 1980  
FIELD CHECKED: 1981. MAP EDITED: 1984  
PROJECTION: UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR  
GRID: 1000-METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR, ZONE 11  
10,000-FOOT STATE GRID TICKS, NEV. EAST ZONE/CALIF. ZONE 5  
UTM GRID DECLINATION: 1907 EAST  
1980 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION: 14° EAST  
VERTICAL DATUM: NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
HORIZONTAL DATUM: 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM  
To place on the predicted North American Datum of 1983,  
move the projection lines as shown by dashed corner ticks  
(3 meters north / 75 meters east)  
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of any  
Federal and State Reservations shown on this map

PROVISIONAL MAP  
Produced from original  
manuscript drawings. Infor-  
mation shown as of date of  
field check.



CONTROL ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST 0.1 METER  
OTHER ELEVATIONS SHOWN TO THE NEAREST METER  
To convert meters to feet multiply by 3.2808  
To convert feet to meters multiply by 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

1	2	3	1
4	5	6	2
7	8	9	3

McCallough Mtn.  
Highland Spring  
Nelson SW  
Crescent Peak  
Searchlight  
Castle Peak  
Hart Peak  
Tenmile Well

CONTOURS AND ELEVATIONS IN METERS  
ROAD LEGEND  
Improved Road.....  
Unimproved Road.....  
Trail.....  
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

HOPPS WELL, NEV.-CALIF.  
PROVISIONAL EDITION 1984  
35115-D1-TM-024

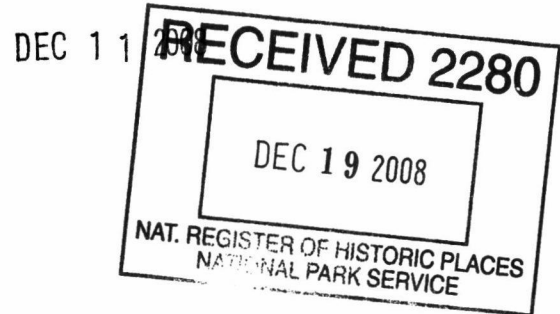




United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
<http://www.blm.gov>



In Reply Refer To:  
8100 (240)



Memorandum

To: J. Paul Loether, Chief  
National Historic Landmarks/National Register Programs  
The National Park Service

From: Dr. Robin Burgess, *Robin Burgess*  
Federal Preservation Officer  
The Bureau of Land Management

Subject: National Register Nomination for Walking Box Ranch Historic District, Nevada

The Bureau of Land Management takes great pleasure in forwarding the attached National Register nomination for the Walking Box Ranch Historic District, Nevada. This nomination was a collaborative effort among the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Southern Nevada District Office, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and members of the community. The Walking Box Ranch Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its association with the history of cattle ranching in Clark County and the Mojave region. It is also eligible for listing under Criterion C for its Spanish Colonial Revival and railroad tie architecture. I have signed the nomination and it has also been signed by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer.

We look forward to the results of your consideration. If you or your staff have any questions, please call 202-785-6581 or e-mail [Robin\\_Burgess@blm.gov](mailto:Robin_Burgess@blm.gov).

Attachment

25Nov 08. NVSO Memo w/Atch



WEST VIRGINIA  
DIVISION OF  
CULTURE & HISTORY

The Cultural Center  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E.  
Charleston, WV  
25305-0300

Phone 304.558.0220  
Fax 304.558.2779  
TDD 304.558.3562  
[www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org)

EEO/AA Employer

December 11, 2008



Dr, Janet Matthews  
Keeper, National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service 2280  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 "I" (eye) Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20005

Dear Dr. Matthews:

We are submitting for your review the following National Register registration forms:

1. Bullskin Run Historic District, Jefferson County
2. John William Deck House, Berkeley County
3. Davis-Keesecker House, Berkeley County
4. Orndoff-Cross House, Berkeley County

The enclosed nominations have been approved by the State Archives and History Commission and processed in accordance with 36 CFR Part 60. Each registration form is accompanied by an original USGS topographical map and one set of archival black and white photographs. Digital prints are accompanied by CD-R media.

Please know that while we have determined that the Bullskin Run Historic District meets the National Register Criteria, we do not believe the nomination as prepared justifies its listing. Our comments are provided with the nomination. A copy of the draft minutes from the Commission meeting is also attached.

Furthermore, while I have signed the three submitted Berkeley County nominations we believe the nominations' contexts are somewhat weak. We are working closely with this consultant to improve the quality of future nominations.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have questions. We can be reached at 304.558.0240.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Pierce  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

enclosures

# United States Department of the Interior


BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Nevada State Office  
P.O. Box 12000 (1340 Financial Blvd)  
Reno, Nevada 89520-0006  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>

In Reply Refer To:  
8121 (NV-933)

**NOV 25 2008**

## Memorandum

To: Federal Preservation Office (WO-240 LS)  
Attention: Robin Burgess

From: Michael R. Holbert   
Deputy State Director, Natural Resources, Lands and Planning

Subject: National Register of Historic Places amendment for the Walking Box Ranch Historic District (Clark County)

I am pleased to send you the attached National Register nomination form for the Walking Box Ranch Historic District. This nomination is the result of collaboration among the Southern Nevada District Office, the State Historic Preservation Office, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and local stakeholders. Nominating this property gives it the recognition it deserves.

This package includes the nomination form signed by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, a US Geological Survey map showing the area of the nomination and 17 black-and-white photographic prints of the property.

I wholeheartedly endorse this nomination and urge you to sign it and forward it to the Keeper of the National Register as soon as possible.

Please contact Tom Burke at 775/861-6415 if there are any questions.

cc: (without attachment)  
District Manager, NV-050  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
Tom Burke (NV-933)