

PH0693588

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DEC 12 1978

DATE ENTERED

JAN 29 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC P RANCH

AND/OR COMMON P RANCH

LOCATION MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE -- SW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Sec. 6, T32S,  
R32 1/2 E N 1/2 of NW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec 6, T32S, R32 1/2 E

STREET & NUMBER S of Burns

CITY, TOWN BURNS

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSMAN AL ULLMAN 02

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

OREGON

41

HARNEY

025

CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY                                     | OWNERSHIP                                              | STATUS                                              | PRESENT USE                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)         | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE                       | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED                 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE           | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH                          | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS           | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE      | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT              | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
|                                              | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED              | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION                   |
|                                              |                                                        | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                         | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Wildlife Refuge  |

AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

STREET & NUMBER LLOYD 500 BUILDING, SUITE 1692, 500 N.E. MULTNOMAH ST.

CITY, TOWN PORTLAND

VICINITY OF

STATE OREGON 232  
97720

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. HARNEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

STREET & NUMBER 450 NORTH BUENA VISTA

CITY, TOWN BURNS

STATE OREGON 97720

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE N/A

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION                                |                                       | CHECK ONE                                     | CHECK ONE                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT       | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS        | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR            | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED    |                                               |                                                           |

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Landmarks of historical significance at the P Ranch include the long barn, beef wheel, and several century-old willow and stockade fences. As the only remaining original structures of the huge headquarters ranch which once included at least 21 buildings, these surviving features are representative of Peter French's innovative construction techniques.

Built in the early 1880's, the 150' long by 50' wide barn is made of materials native to the Harney Basin. The pine shingled roof is supported by two rows of juniper trunks (56 total) which border the 12' wide center aisle. Most of the massive, hand hewn sills were replaced by CCC men in 1939, but a few remain in place. The mangers and feed racks, on either side of the aisle which was generally stacked to the 30' roof with native hay, are constructed of hewn aspen and ponderosa pine lumber. French hauled the lumber for the walls about 100 miles by freight team. Double doors at either end of the barn were enlarged in 1939 to accommodate heavy equipment storage for the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Originally built as a secondary horse barn for the P Ranch, today the impressive building houses a few horses and an occasional steer. The much-photographed barn attracts thousands of visitors, especially during the summer months. It is in need of stabilization and restoration and especially requires a new roof.

Also dating from the late 1880's, the square pine board beef wheel, one of the few remaining in the country, is mounted on two heavy juniper posts. For decades at the P Ranch it stood at one end of a large feed lot and was used to hoist a slaughtered beef off the ground to cool, safe from dogs and coyotes. Beeves were slaughtered once or twice weekly to feed the 100 or more P Ranch hands and buckaroos.

Willow corrals, made by piling willow shoots between upright poles, grew stronger as they aged since new willows were continually added to reinforce the fence. Stockade fences were erected by setting juniper slabs into shallow trenches and binding crosspieces to them with strips of rawhide. These structures, besides being strong enough to hold wild horses being broke or cattle being branded, served as effective windbreaks. Several sections of both types of fencing still remain today, although they are in a somewhat deteriorated condition.

Interpretive site plan completed.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD                                        | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |                                                 |                                                 |                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC          | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                    | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE  | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION   | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY               | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1977 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|                                               |                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |                                                 |                                              |

SPECIFIC DATES June, 1872 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Renowned as the headquarters of the Peter French cattle empire, the P Ranch was first established in 1872, when French arrived in the Harney Basin. During the next 25 years he rapidly expanded his holdings and cattle operation until he controlled nearly 200,000 acres, ran 45,000 head of cattle and had built a dozen subsidiary ranches. P Ranch, named after the P iron acquired along with the squatter's rights of a man named Porter, was the home ranch for this huge, well-managed spread.

After Peter French was murdered by a rival neighboring rancher in 1897, his holdings were sold to Henry Corbett of Portland and managed by the well-known eastern Oregon rancher, Bill Hanley. Later the firm was bought out by stockholder Louis Swift, of the Chicago packing company, and the French lands were managed by J. Craven and later Joe Fine. Many of the older local residents vividly recall buckarooing on the big ranch. In 1935, 65,000 acres in the Blitzen Valley, including the main P Ranch, were sold to the Federal Government to become part of a national wildlife refuge. Civilian Conservation Corps construction projects during the late 1930's resulted in the razing of most of the original ranch buildings and structures but the architectural integrity of the long barn has been maintained. In 1948 French's famous residence--the White House--burned entirely. The ranch has been occupied by refuge personnel as a refuge maintenance substation since the time of government purchase.

The P Ranch is a symbolic remnant of the era of rapid acquisition and control of public lands in the west by powerful cattle barons. Pete French, celebrated in book and story as one of the most colorful of them all, was a progressive ranch manager and a vigorous builder who combined the Texas tradition of running large herds of half-wild cattle on the open range with the English methods of stockfarming. He carefully controlled the breeds and strains of his stock, harvested the abundant native hay for winter feed, and irrigated thousands of acres of meadowland. Local citizens still find his methods and merits a subject of hot debate.

Although one other subbranch and a unique round horse barn, owned by the Oregon Historical Society, are intact today, the P Ranch headquarters structures should be preserved as representatives of his vast cattle operation. A restorative and interpretive site plan for the ranch has been prepared by refuge personnel.

Wood, Elizabeth L., 1951; Pete French, Cattle King; Binford and Mort, Portland, Oregon: pp. Throughout. Steens Mountain--in Oregon's High Desert Country; 1967; The Gaxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho: pp. 143-149 and throughout. French, Giles, Cattle Country of Peter French; 1964; Binford and Mort, Portland, Oregon: pp. Throughout. Oliphant, J.O. On The Cattle Ranges of the Oregon Country; 1968; Univ. of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington: pp. 96, 189, 205.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 60.15

UTM REFERENCES

|            |      |         |                 |          |   |      |         |      |          |
|------------|------|---------|-----------------|----------|---|------|---------|------|----------|
| <b>970</b> |      |         | <b>4743-000</b> |          |   |      |         |      |          |
| A          | 111  | 3459.50 | 4743            | 5.70     | B | 111  | 3459.40 | 4742 | 9.60     |
|            | ZONE | EASTING |                 | NORTHING |   | ZONE | EASTING |      | NORTHING |
| C          | 111  | 3455.40 | 4742            | 9.70     | D | 111  | 3455.50 | 4743 | 5.00     |
|            | ZONE | EASTING |                 | NORTHING |   | ZONE | EASTING |      | NORTHING |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION 4743-000

Lot 5, N $\frac{1}{2}$  Lot 6, W 200' SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , N $\frac{1}{2}$  of the W 200' NE $\frac{1}{4}$  SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Sec. 6, T32S, R32 $\frac{1}{2}$ E, Willamette Meridian, Oregon (U.S.G.S. Quad. Frenchglen, Oregon)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE  | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| Oregon | 41   | Harney | 025  |
| STATE  | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE: Joseph P. Mazzone, Refuge Manager  
 ORGANIZATION: MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
 STREET & NUMBER: P. O. Box 113  
 CITY OR TOWN: BURNS  
 DATE: November 16, 1977  
 TELEPHONE: (503) 493-2323  
 STATE: OREGON 97720

**12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION**

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES            NO            NONE           

*(Attached)*

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE: [Signature]

TITLE: FWS Historic Preservation Officer DATE: 11/27/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION: [Signature] DATE: 1.29.79  
 ATTEST: W. Ray Luce KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 DATE: 1.29.79  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

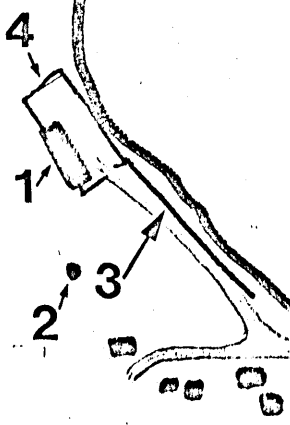
P-RANCH

La 42° 50' 5.2"  
Lo 119° 51' 6"

La 42° 50' 5.2"  
Lo 119° 50' 53"

CENTER PATROL ROAD

SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of Sec. 6  
N<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> of sec. 6  
T32S, R32<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>E



60 acres

BUTZEN RIVER

6

La 42° 49' 45.7"  
Lo 119° 51' 6"

La 42° 49' 45.7"  
Lo 119° 59' 53"

- 1- Long Barn
- 2- Beef Wheel
- 3- Stockade Fence
- 4- Willow Fence

Scale: 10" = 1 Mile

STENS MOUNTAIN ROAD

MALHEUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



SE end of Long Barn looking WNW - P Ranch  
Matheur National Wildlife Refuge

P Ranch

HARNEY County

# 1 of 6

**JAN 23 1979**





NW end of Long Barn looking ~~ESW~~ - P Ranch  
Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

P Ranch

HARNEY County

# 2 of 6

**JAN 29 1979**



East side of Long Barn looking SW - P Ranch  
Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

P Ranch

Harney County

# 3 of 6

**JAN 29 1979**



P Ranch  
HARNEY County  
Looking West  
# 4 of 6

**JAN 29 1979**



P. Ranch  
HARNEY County  
Interior Detail  
# 5 of 6

**JAN 29 1979**





P Ranch  
HARNEY County  
INTERIOR Detail  
#6076

**JAN 29 1979**