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NATIONAL
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM**

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Farms and Ranches of Weld County

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Irrigated Farming in Weld County, 1870-1940

Dryland Farming in Weld County, 1870-1940

Ranching in Weld County, 1859-1940

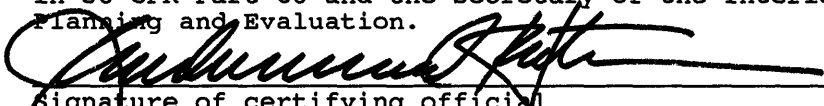
C. Geographical Data

All of the historic resources associated with this multiple resource nomination are located within the boundaries of Weld County, Colorado.

() See continuation sheet

D. Certification

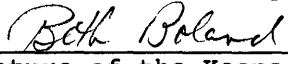
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.


Signature of certifying official

11/31/91
Date

WLP State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.


Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

3/15/91
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Weld County is the third largest county in the state of Colorado. One of the state's original seventeen counties, Weld County was named in honor of Lucius Ledyard Weld who was appointed Territorial Secretary of Colorado by Abraham Lincoln in 1861. The county is comprised of 4,022 square miles, three and a half times the size of Rhode Island. The northern edge is seventy-two miles long; the southern border measures thirty-five miles across. The present size and shape of the county reflect a reduction of almost two-thirds from its original size. Portions of Weld County were used to form all of Logan, Phillips, Morgan, and Sedgwick Counties, and parts of Washington and Yuma Counties. The county seat is Greeley, the major urban center and site of the University of Northern Colorado.¹

Weld County is located on the high plains of Colorado. The lands are primarily flat, level prairie. The altitude ranges from five

(x) See continuation sheet

¹State Board of Immigration, Yearbook of the State of Colorado, 1918 (Denver: Brock Haffner Press, 1918), pp. 189-190; and Hazel E. Johnson, "Weld County," The Historical Encyclopedia of Colorado (? : Colorado Historical Association, n.d.), p. 255.

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thousand feet in the southwest to 4,400 feet in the east. Slightly rolling hills exist around the Cache La Poudre River in the west, and the South Platte River in the center. The southern and extreme southwestern portions of the county are nearly all under irrigation. Along the various waterways are belts of Laurel sand loam soil. This type of soil is rich and retains water within an otherwise semi-arid environment. Laurel sand loam is excellent for growing onions, cabbage, and sugar beets. Farther from the waterways, the soil type changes to a more clay-like material that is suitable for beans, alfalfa, wheat, oats, corn, and potatoes. In addition, the native and introduced grasses of the plains provide good rangeland for cattle and horses.²

With its large land mass and good soil, Weld County is one of Colorado's most agriculturally productive counties. The success or failure of the local communities is closely tied to the county's agricultural fortunes. Weld County's importance as an agricultural region dates to the 1860s, when cattlemen took advantage of the open rangelands for their stock. In the 1870s, farmers successfully introduced irrigated farming into the county. Plainsmen also attempted non-irrigated farming, although it was not until dry farming techniques were developed in the early twentieth century that such farming would be widely successful.

Despite the Panic of 1893, farming and stock raising continued in Weld County, followed by a new boom in the early twentieth century. The twentieth century boom was largely the result of the rapid acceptance of sugar beets as a cash crop, as well as improved farming and ranching techniques. Also encouraging the county's agricultural growth was World War I, which created unprecedented markets for agricultural commodities. Like the rest of the nation, Weld County suffered from the agricultural downturn that occurred between World War I and World War II. However, World War II fueled new markets and, despite periodic downturns, agriculture has remained a mainstay in Weld County.

²Colorado State Planning Commission, Colorado Yearbook, 1962-1964 (Denver: State of Colorado, 1964), pp. 954-956; and Frederick L. Paxson, "The County Boundaries of Colorado," The University of Colorado Studies, vol. 3, 1906.

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Exploration and Settlement

The value of Weld County lands for farming and grazing has not always been recognized. In the 1780s and 1790s, French trappers traveled up the South Platte River into the Weld County area, but they did not settle the area. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson purchased the lands of future Weld County as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Following the acquisition, the United States government and private citizens began to explore and catalog the riches of the new land. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike began his expedition across the plains from St. Louis in 1806, searching for the headwaters of the South Platte River. Pike was captured by the Spanish but, after his release, his published account of the expedition proclaimed the lands of eastern Colorado to be desert and unsuitable for farming.³

This view was echoed by Major Stephen Long who explored the area in 1820. Long stressed the lack of available water and the inability of the land to produce crops. Fifteen years later, the explorations of Colonel Henry Dodge reinforced the conclusions of Long and Pike. Dodge's expedition reports were more romantic in terms of the terrain, but did little to encourage active settlement of the region. In 1836, Lieutenant Lancaster Lupton established a trading post north of present day Fort Lupton, located in southwestern Weld County. This fort provided an outpost in the area but little settlement occurred. In 1837, Colonel Ceran Saint Vrain established Fort Saint Vrain. Although Lupton's and Saint Vrain's efforts increased knowledge about the Weld County area, major settlement did not occur until approximately twenty-five years later.⁴

³William H. Goetzmann, Exploration and Empire; The Explorer and Scientist in the Winning of the American West (New York: Knopf, 1966), pp. 55-57; William H. Goetzmann, Army Exploration in the American West (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 36-38; and Mary L. Geffs, Under Ten Flags A History of Weld County, Colorado (Greeley: McVey Printery, 1938), pp. 13-15.

⁴Yearbook, 1918, pp. 190-191; Geffs, pp. 14-16; Goetzmann, Exploration, pp. 58-64, 107-110; Goetzmann, Army, pp. 40-50; Nell Brown Propst, Forgotten People, A History of the South Platte Trail (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 2-20; and T. L. Monson, "Early Days in

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The Colorado gold rush of 1859 spurred interest in the Rocky Mountains. The rapid influx of people spurred efforts to establish a territorial government, and the Colorado Territory was established by Congress in 1861. During the gold rush, the eastern plains of Colorado were initially viewed as just another barrier to be crossed in order for travelers to reach the bonanza fields of the mountains. However, the increased demand for produce, goods, and services encouraged settlement on the plains. Farming and trading were actively promoted, as were efforts to encourage immigration to Colorado Territory. William Byers, editor of the Rocky Mountain News, was a major booster of the region and did much to encourage farmers and ranchers to immigrate to Colorado.

These booster movements were aided by federal legislation which made land available at low prices. The 1842 Preemption Act allowed for the purchase of 160 acres of land at \$1.25 per acre. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided title to 160 acres after payment of patent fees and a five-year residency. In addition, the huge tracts of unfenced public land on the high plains were utilized by ranchers and farmers as grazing lands. Still, despite the vast quantities of land available, settlers faced several problems. The Civil War of 1861-65 slowed settlement to the West. In turn, the limited number of settlers created numerous risks associated with isolation. The continued threat of Indian attack was a problem for pioneers throughout Weld County and Colorado, although this threat was reduced significantly by the end of the decade.⁵

A major factor encouraging settlement in Weld County was the early arrival of the railroads. Talk of railroads to and through Colorado

Ft. Lupton," The Trail 6 (February 1914): 6.

⁵James F. Willard, "The Gold Rush," A Colorado Reader, ed. by Carl Ubbelohde, (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 83-85; James H. Pierce, "The First Prospecting in Colorado," The Trail 7 (October 1914):5-9; Robert G. Athearn, The Coloradans, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), pp. 7-20; Lyle W. Dorsett, The Queen City, A History of Denver (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 2-10; and Roy Robbins, Our Landed Heritage (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), pp. 211-235.

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began almost as soon as the gold rush. Passage of the Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 and 1864 encouraged Coloradans into believing that they would soon have rail connections to the East and West Coasts. But, as the plans of the Union Pacific were finalized, Colorado residents discovered that the line would go through Cheyenne, Wyoming, bypassing all but the extreme northeastern corner of Colorado. Local boosters quickly replied with their own scheme to build a railroad from Denver to Cheyenne. This line, the Denver Pacific, crossed Weld County north to south. The project took form during the late 1860s and by June, 1870, the first locomotives reached Denver. From that one line, small branch lines developed as the local population grew.

Little over a decade after the first locomotives passed through Weld County, a new round of rail building began that extended service to more of Weld County. The Burlington and Missouri River Railway--a subsidiary of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy--identified Denver as a potentially rich market and began to extend their line west from McCook, Nebraska. The Burlington's construction crews reached Denver during the early 1880s. Presence of that competition spurred the Union Pacific, by then the owner of the Denver Pacific, to build a line from LaSalle, just south of Greeley, up the South Platte Valley to the transcontinental main line at Julesburg. These new routes, combined with the old Denver Pacific north-south line, acted to tie Weld County together as a geographical, political, and economic unit. In addition, the railroads' emigration and land departments actively promoted settlement, encouraging thousands of farmers to relocate to the area.⁶

Irrigated Farming in Weld County, 1870-1940

One manner of attracting farmers willing to face the rigors of pioneer life was the colony movement. Colonies were an attempt to challenge the typical American pattern of individualism by having an

⁶Thomas J. Noel, "All Hail the Denver Pacific: Denver's First Railroad," The Colorado Magazine 50 (Spring 1973): 91-116; Robert G. Athearn, Union Pacific County (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971), pp. 133-34, 224; and Richard C. Overton, Burlington Route: A History of the Burlington Lines (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 163-173.

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entire group settle an area in a cooperative manner. Four major colony efforts were made in Weld County. In 1870, the Union Colony was established at Greeley. In 1871, the St. Louis-Western Colony was established at Evans, and the Southwestern Colony was created at Green City. Platteville was founded as a colony in the same year.

Of these four colony efforts, the Union Colony at Greeley was the most famous and successful. In 1869, Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, and Nathan C. Meeker organized Union Colony to be an alcohol-free, agrarian utopia. Each member of the colony purchased shares and entered into a series of cooperative agreements. The first Union colonists arrived by train in the spring of 1870 and began to take up lands located near the South Platte and Cache La Poudre Rivers. The workers quickly began plowing fields and building shelter. They also began building an irrigation system that had been designed by Nathan Meeker and General Robert A. Cameron. The system, which diverted water from the Cache La Poudre, was the first major irrigation undertaking in Weld County. Within a year, 60,000 acres of land were under irrigation. The Union Colony irrigation system was the mainstay for area farmers until the 1890s. This system, combined with individual deep wells, was successful in providing the basic water needs for the inhabitants of this section of Weld County.⁷

Also noteworthy is a fifth colony, Dearfield, which was established in Weld County between Greeley and Fort Morgan in 1910-1911. The Dearfield Colony had been founded by O.T. Jackson, a Black man who had been inspired by Booker T. Washington's Up From Slavery. During its first six years, approximately sixty Black families moved into Dearfield and attempted to establish their own farming community on the high plains of eastern Colorado. However, many of Dearfield's farmers were inexperienced, and the colony lacked adequate financial backing. Following a series of crop failures, most of Dearfield's colonists

⁷James F. Willard, "Union Colony's First Year," A Colorado Reader; Athearn, Coloradans, pp. 105-108; and Geffs, pp. 27-60.

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eventually moved away.⁸

During the 1870s and 1880s, many individual farmers followed the example of the colonizers and moved into Weld County. During this time, the use of irrigation spread rapidly. While irrigation was a solution to the problem of aridity, at least for some portions of the county, other problems plagued plainsmen in the 1870s. Grasshoppers were a continuing trauma. Mrs. Etta Ketley recalled the grasshoppers who came in 1872-73. She stated, "they ate everything green. We had planted some strawberries in the garden and put tin cans over them to shield them from the hot sun. The hoppers dug under these tins and ate the plants."⁹

Water rights became increasingly important as more settlers came to Colorado and sought water for mining, farming, ranching, and domestic use. The years 1873 and 1874 were exceptionally dry, adding to the growing confusion over water rights and usage. During those years, a dispute arose between the Union Colony and the Agricultural Colony at Fort Collins. Both enterprises were utilizing water from the Cache La Poudre River. As the water supply dwindled, the Union Colony--which was downstream of the Agricultural Colony--was without a reliable water supply. The matter quickly escalated with threats being made by both sides. Eventually a peaceable solution was reached but the need for a systematic legal approach to water rights was clear.

The issue of water rights was raised at the Colorado Constitutional Convention of 1876. After much debate and discussion, a new system of water rights emerged. The policy of prior appropriation or "first in time, first in right" was adopted for the State of Colorado. This did not resolve all water-related issues, but did go a long way toward providing general guidelines. Furthermore, Colorado's system of water rights became the policy adopted by many arid western

⁸Carl Ubbelohde, Maxine Benson, Duane Smith, A Colorado History (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1972), p. 239.

⁹Mrs. Etta L. Ketley, C.W.A., vol. 343.

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states in dealing with water issues.¹⁰

The Panic of 1873 resulted in a depression in agricultural markets but, within three years, settlers were once again moving into Weld County. In 1877, Greeley was established as the county seat, and the town grew accordingly. This urban growth was spurred by a continued demand for agricultural products during the 1880s. By 1890, the population of Weld County was 11,736. The Colorado Board of Trade estimated that the value of irrigated lands was \$28 million.

Interest in irrigation continued. The Cache La Poudre Reservoir Company came into existence in 1892 to provide water to farm lands then under Greeley Ditch #2, one of the original Union Colony ditches. Other irrigation efforts developed, utilizing dozens of small reservoirs located throughout the county. These included Milton Reservoir, Prospect Reservoir, and Union Reservoir. In addition to diversion, plainsmen used underground water. Deep wells were dug, and pumps used to raise the water to ground level. One of the first wells with a steam pump was owned by Andrew Wilson on Lone Tree Creek, east of Eaton. His well and pump became operational in 1888. Irrigation and well systems became particularly important in 1890 when a drought cycle began. Compounding the problem was the Silver Panic of 1893, which resulted in bank failures and severe economic dislocation throughout the nation. Bankers, attempting solvency, called in loans. Many farmers and ranchers lost their land. Still, despite the setbacks, Weld County continued to grow. The 1900 census recorded the population at 16,808.¹¹

¹⁰Robert A. Dunbar, "The Origins of the Colorado System of Water Right Control," The Colorado Magazine v. 27 (October 1944): 241-262; Robert A. Dunbar, "Water Conflicts and Controls in Colorado," Agricultural History, v. 22 (July 1948): 180-86; Geffs, pp. 138-144; and no author, Facts About Farm Lands of the Homeseekers Land and Water Company in the Greeley District, Colorado (Denver: Colonial Securities and Trust Co., n/d/1910), entire pamphlet.

¹¹Dorsett, pp. 50-65; Propst, pp. 150-55; Anna Homm Interview, C.W.A., vol. 350; Manuscript Census of the United States, State of Colorado, Weld County, 1900, microfilm at Denver Branch National Archives; and 1918 Yearbook, p. 190.

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The combination of drought and economic downturn at the end of the nineteenth century ended the first boom period of agricultural expansion in Weld County. Still, the previous thirty years had brought a large, stable population to the area, and thousands of acres of land were placed in production. The 1900s would soon usher in the next agricultural boom, much of it based on sugar beets. The sugar beet boom brought into production thousands of acres of irrigated land in Weld County.

The introduction of sugar beet cultivation and processing was one of the most significant agricultural events in Weld County history. Sugar beets had gained popularity in central Europe during the Napoleonic Wars as a source of domestic sugar. The crop slowly spread to the United States and, by the Civil War, beet sugar was viewed as an alternative to cane sugar. On November 3, 1866, the Rocky Mountain News ran an editorial exhorting farmers to embrace sugar beets as a viable cash crop and investment opportunity.

In the ten years after the Civil War, experimentation with sugar beets continued in Colorado, where the crop grew well on irrigated lands. As early as 1871, a committee including editor William Byers unsuccessfully attempted to raise money to purchase sugar beet processing equipment for Colorado. In 1872, the territorial legislature introduced a bill designed to pay a bounty of \$10,000 to the first corporation or individual that would build a refinery for sugar beet processing in Colorado. However, this measure failed to pass because of a lack of money to pay the bounty. Also in 1872, the Colorado Beet Sugar Manufacturing Company was formed. Although this company was not successful, their publications and promotional efforts encouraged many Weld County farmers to plant sugar beets. The State Agricultural College at Fort Collins (now Colorado State University) also experimented with the crop and helped publicize its suitability for the irrigated plains. Still, despite successful sugar beet cultivation, the lack of processing plants and markets hindered its growth as a cash crop.

Eventually, however, the success of Colorado farmers in growing sugar beets encouraged financiers to build factories. Colorado's first sugar plant, financed by Charles Boettcher and John Champion, opened in

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Grand Junction in 1899. Two years later, Boettcher and Campion financed a beet sugar plant in Loveland. Local farmers throughout northeastern Colorado responded, and the Loveland factory soon had more beets than could be processed. In Weld County, sugar factories were eventually built at Windsor, Fort Lupton, Eaton, and Greeley. Beet refining facilities and "beet mania" did much to spur the economic growth in Weld County during the early years of the twentieth century. The industry rapidly spread and Great Western Sugar Company was formed in 1905 by Boettcher and Arthur Havemeyer. The sugar boom continued into the 1910s with only one major shortcoming--labor.

Sugar beet cultivation was labor intensive, requiring hard work in the hand thinning and cultivation of the plants. In Colorado, where most farmers owned and worked their own land, it was difficult to find enough workers for beet cultivation. As a result, the Great Western Sugar Company actively recruited laborers from throughout the United States and Europe. German Russians responded to these recruitment efforts and many came to Colorado. The German Russians were a successful labor source, and a high percentage of them saved their money and eventually purchased their own farms. Many Japanese Americans, often wishing to escape discrimination on the Pacific Coast, also relocated to Colorado to work in the sugar fields. Like the German Russians, many Japanese Americans saved their earnings and purchased land, again leaving farmers without a labor supply. Another group of laborers, Mexicans, were more transient. Many Mexican field workers did not move their families with them to Colorado, and usually returned to Mexico during the off season winter months. As such, they made the ideal labor pool. But the Mexicans, while critical to the beet industry, suffered from overt and covert discrimination in Colorado, which did little to aid their acculturation.¹²

¹²William J. May, "The Great Western Sugarlands: History of the Great Western Sugar Company," University of Colorado, Ph.D. dissertation, 1982, entire volume; no author, "The Growth of the Sugar Beet Industry in Colorado, The Trail 7 (December 1914): 11-16; Kenneth W. Rock, "Colorado's Germans from Russia," in Germans from Russia in Colorado, ed. by Sidney Heitman, (Ft. Collins: Western Social Sciences Association, 1978); Georgina A. Cook, "Fact and Fiction: German Russian Sugar Beet Farmers in Colorado," in Heitman, pp. 106-117; Geffs, pp.

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Dryland Farming in Weld County, 1870-1940

Weld County's agricultural boom of the 1870s was centered around irrigated farming. However, as the irrigated lands were taken up, some settlers also attempted farming on the thousands of acres of semi-arid land located away from the irrigation systems. At first, these dryland farmers were somewhat successful in growing the same crops as their neighbors on the irrigated land. The untilled grassland probably had enough moisture and fertility to convince the farmers that they could succeed without irrigation. They soon learned, however, that these good conditions would not last. Following the crop failures, many of these dryland pioneers either left or turned to livestock raising.¹³

In the early part of the twentieth century, a new influx of Weld County farmers sought to tame the semi-arid, non-irrigated lands. These twentieth century boomers--honeycokers or sod busters, whatever label is applied--based their hopes on newly developed techniques in dryland farming. In the aftermath of the nineteenth century failures, a number of agronomists had addressed the problem of farming the arid high plains. Much of the leadership in this effort came from Professor Hardy W. Campbell of the University of Nebraska in Lincoln.

Campbell's theories held that cyclic field use and fallow periods, as well as deep tilling, could increase the water-retaining ability of the soils given a year or two between crop plantings. During the fallow years, adequate moisture would accumulate for successful crop planting. The new dryland farming techniques also called for crops to be spaced widely apart. Weeds were carefully eradicated so that they would not draw from the precious water supply. In addition to Campbell, other individuals and institutions, including the State Agricultural College

136-137, 245-247; and Alvin T. Steinel, History of Agriculture in Colorado (Denver: State Board of Agriculture, 1926), pp. 281-310.

¹³D. Brooks Green, "Irrigation Potential and Agricultural Settlement in Submarginal Land: An Example from Weld County, Colo.," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, summer 1980, p. 40.

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(now Colorado State University), experimented with new drought resistant crops. Such scientific work was well publicized, making bushels of information available to farmers and would-be farmers.¹⁴

Railroad promoters, such as James J. Hill, also encouraged settlers to take up dryland farming on the plains. Newspaper editors and local boosters also promoted dryland farming as a means to economic improvement. In addition, the federal government continued to offer settlers land at low prices. In response to all of these factors, dryland farmers flooded onto the plains throughout the early years of the twentieth century. As one pioneer plainsman saw it, the earlier agricultural boom had, despite its setbacks, "...opened the eyes of hundreds and thousands of Eastern and Middle States farmers to the possibilities of the West. It showed what might be done if agriculture could conquer the lands that had been included in the semi-arid region."¹⁵

Between 1905 and 1910, dryland farming became well-established on the plains, and the new techniques of dryland farming were generally successful. The dangers of the fallow period--when the land lay open to dust blowing and the dangerous loss of topsoil--were not yet evident. Indeed, the impact of the early twentieth century agricultural boom can be seen in the population figures of Weld County. In 1900 the county's population was 16,808, up approximately 5,000 from 1890. By 1910 the number of people in Weld County had more than doubled to 39,177.¹⁶

The new agricultural boom had other consequences, however, as dryland farming hastened the end of the open range. The railroads had already divided up the cattlemen's open range lands. Now, cattlemen

¹⁴Steinel, pp. 283-310; Donald E. Green, Land of Underground Rain (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973); and John T. Schlebecker, Cattle Raising on the Plains, 1900-1961 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 21-22.

¹⁵Schlebecker, pp. 22-23.

¹⁶Manuscript Census of the United States, State of Colorado, Weld County, 1910, microfilm at Denver Branch, National Archives.

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also had to contend with the influx of dryland farmers who were moving onto their former grazing lands. Still, the conflict between the cattleman and the farmer was paradoxical. Although the dryland farmers plowed under the native grasses that were so important to the cattlemen, the farmers soon found that their most profitable crops were sorghum and alfalfa, both of which were fed to cattle. As such, dryland farming became an extension of the livestock industry, which was undergoing great changes during this period.¹⁷

World War I aided the early twentieth century dryland boom, as the wartime needs encouraged an increased crop output. Existing farms could not meet the demands, and new immigrants came into the region to take advantage of land opportunities. Marginal lands were placed into production in order to take advantage of high crop prices. By 1918, the population of Weld County had grown to 50,000. In that same year, it was estimated by the Colorado Board of Trade that 284,687 acres were irrigated, 745,550 acres were without irrigation, 810,906 acres were utilized for grazing, and 13,419 acres were in natural hay. The value of irrigated land was estimated at \$75-250 per acre; non-irrigated land was worth \$15-60 per acre.¹⁸

The agricultural boom of the early twentieth century coincided with other innovations which lessened the isolation of Weld County residents. Greeley, with the State Normal School (now the University of Northern Colorado) and various commercial enterprises, had long been a bustling county seat. Smaller towns such as Fort Lupton also served as local trade centers. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, a number of other small towns and communities came into existence. The birth of many of these towns--such as Briggsdale, Fosston, and Buckingham--coincided with the arrival of the railroads, which were branching out across the county.¹⁹

¹⁷Schlebecker, p. 23

¹⁸Yearbook, 1918, pp. 190-193.

¹⁹Green, p. 60.

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One new innovation that both aided and eventually detracted from the commercial viability of small towns was the automobile. From 1900 to 1910, Weld County and the rest of Colorado reacted to the Good Roads Movement. Begun by bicyclists to pressure state legislatures for better and improved roads, the Good Roads Movement soon picked up the support of automobile users. In Weld County, residents lobbied the Colorado General Assembly and the county government for improved roads. In 1916, the federal government authorized construction of a coast to coast highway and work began three years later. This road, U.S. 40, crossed the eastern plains and passed through Denver. Within a few years, other highways would cross Weld County. The automobile made it possible to travel longer distances in less time to purchase goods, have fun, or work. These changes all began in the years before 1920 and evolved fully in the years after World War II.²⁰

Ranching in Weld County, 1859-1940

Farming on the high plains depended on irrigation and/or the development of dry farming techniques. Early settlers on the eastern plains of Colorado soon discovered, however, that one form of agriculture did not immediately call for man-made intervention. Just as the buffalo before them, cattle could live off the native grasses of the great plains. Cattle raising in Weld County began soon after the gold rush of 1859.

Spanish herdsmen introduced cattle to the western plains. In 1598, Juan de Onate trailed a small herd of cattle into north central New Mexico. While most of the cattle were lost during the Pueblo revolt of 1680, cattle were reintroduced into the region when it was reconquered by Diego de Vargas in 1694. Spanish and Mexican rancheros established several herds in the Southwest, where the natural conditions produced a hardy breed of cattle that could live off the land. As early as the 1830s, Texas cowboys began driving herds of these rangy Longhorns to market. In 1846, Edward Piper drove one thousand head of cattle into

²⁰Dorsett, pp. 126-130; Athearn, Coloradans, pp. 259-65; and Propst, pp. 190-195.

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Ohio. The first drive from Texas to Chicago was in 1856.²¹

Although Anglo immigrants brought cattle into the Bent's Old Fort area in southeastern Colorado as early as the 1830s, it wasn't until the gold rush of 1859 that Colorado's cattle industry began to develop. Early settlers soon learned that their cattle could live off the native Buffalo and Grama grasses of Colorado's high plains without being fed hay and grain. In 1858, Colonel John D. Henderson let his oxen roam free to forage on the high plains northeast of Denver. The following spring, Henderson found his cattle along Bijou Creek, healthy and well-fed. A.J. Williams and C.H. Blake made a similar discovery. After arriving in Auraria in 1858, Williams and Blake could not obtain adequate hay or grain for their work cattle. Williams drove the herd out to the area around Fort Lupton in Weld County, leaving them to either live on the natural vegetation or die of starvation. When he returned in the spring, Williams found that the cattle were as fat and sleek "as if fed upon grain." "Thus was the first discovery made of the fattening properties of the dried grass of Colorado," reported the Rocky Mountain News on 18 January 1860. Although many of Colorado's earliest cattle ranches were established primarily for the care of work cattle, Denver newspapers were, by the summer of 1859, also advertising the availability of fresh beef.²²

After the Civil War, cattle raising in Colorado developed into a large-scale industry. As the railroads stretched across the country's midsection, Texas drovers began driving herds of cattle northward. At "cow towns" such as Abilene, Kansas, the cattlemen met up with the trains that could bring their herds to the burgeoning cities in the East and Far West. In 1866, two Texas cattlemen, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving, began driving two thousand head of mixed cattle from Texas to Colorado, following a trail which later became known as the

²¹Maurice Frink, W. Turrentine Jackson, and Agnes Wright Spring, When Grass Was King (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1956), p. 34; and Walter Prescott Webb, The Great Plains (Boston: Ginn, 1931; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1981), pp. 211 and 224.

²²Frink, et al, pp. 33, and 345-347.

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Goodnight-Loving Trail. The Goodnight-Loving Trail eventually became the major cattle trail in the state. Another important trail that entered Colorado was the Dawson Trail. The trail was named after John C. Dawson who, in 1859, drove the first herd of Texas cattle into Colorado.²³

Although the major purpose of the Texans in making these early drives north was to find a market for their cattle, the drives also helped spread the cattle industry throughout the Great Plains. Before being shipped out, surplus cattle were often fattened on the free grass of the plains, including the range lands of Colorado. At the same time, new cattle ranching operations were being established throughout the plains, as the profitability of raising cattle became proven. In 1868, the cattle markets at Abilene were crowded with buyers, many of whom were Colorado ranchers wanting to stock up their pastures.²⁴

One of Colorado's earliest cattle ranchers was John Wesley Iliff, known as the "great cattle king of the Western Plains." Iliff came to Colorado in 1859, and opened a mercantile business in Denver. Almost immediately, Iliff and his partner, H. Fenton, also began buying cattle and fattening them up on the plains near Fort Lupton, in the same area where Williams and Blake had grazed their cattle in the winter of 1858-1859. Iliff's beef was sold to mining camps in the mountains, as well as Denver-area butcher shops. In 1867, Iliff also contracted with the Union Pacific Railroad to supply beef to the construction crews which were then inching their way across the western plains. Iliff eventually turned to full-time cattle raising, and relocated to the South Platte River Valley near Iliff, Colorado. By 1878, Iliff owned almost 15,000 acres of land, and his range extended north to the Wyoming-Colorado border, and from the eastern edge of Colorado to Greeley. Iliff was remembered by William Delbridge of Weld County as "the largest cattleman in northern Colorado. He owned every desirable pasture between Greeley and Sterling, and counted his cattle by the tens of thousands." At the time of his death in 1878, Iliff was reported to be the biggest taxpayer

²³Ibid., pp. 35-36.

²⁴Webb, pp. 224-225; and Frink, et al, pp. 39, and 119.

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in Weld County, and was memorialized as the "most extensive cattle breeder and cattle raiser of the far West."²⁵

In addition to Iliff, several other cattlemen ran herds in northeastern Colorado. Among the more successful were J.J. Hittson, Finis P. Ernest, W.H.H. Crammer, Dennis Sheedy, Bruce F. Johnson, and Jared L. Brush. Brush, who lived in Weld County, began ranching in 1862 and, like Iliff, soon became one of the state's "cattle barons." He later served as Colorado's lieutenant governor.

As the cattle industry grew during the post-Civil War period, ranchers formed associations to regulate and promote cattle raising. The Colorado Stock Grower's Association was founded in 1867. In 1872, the territorial legislature passed a "brand law" that required cattle to be marked not only with their owner's brand but also the county's brand. After 1885, all cattle brands were registered with Colorado's secretary of state. The extent of cattle raising in Weld County is reflected by the fact that it had its own cattlemen's association. Both John Iliff and Jared Brush were members of the Weld County Cattlemen's Association, which was headquartered in Greeley. In 1878, Brush served as the association's president.²⁶

Open range cattle raising--as practiced by cattle barons like John Iliff and characterized by the great round-ups and cattle drives--existed for only a relatively short time in Colorado. The same railroads that carried the cattlemen's beef to market also brought in an influx of farmers who were eager to take advantage of cheap land and ready markets. The introduction of barbed wire fencing, which offered

²⁵Richard Goff and Robert H. McCaffree, Century in the Saddle, (Denver: Colorado Cattlemen's Centennial Commission, 1967), pp. 9-37, and 69-120; Ora B. Peake, The Colorado Range Cattle Industry, (Glendale, CA: The Arthur N. Clark Co., 1937), see entire volume; W. H. Delbert, Civil Works Administration Interviews, Colorado Historical Society, vol. 343; Frink, et al, pp. 336, 345-347, and 431; and Athearn, Coloradans, p. 148.

²⁶Frink, et al, pp. 394, and 425; Athearn, Coloradans, pp. 143-144; and Ubbelohde, et al, p. 176.

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farmers an inexpensive way to enclose their property, had a dramatic impact on the cattle industry. The year 1874 marked the beginning of the large-scale manufacture of barbed wire fencing in the United States, and the beginning of the end of the open range. In the early days of cattle raising, it was not necessary for cattlemen to own their land--the cattle grazed on public land. However, with the influx of farmers and barbed wire, cattlemen were forced to buy what they had previously used for free.

The cattle industry continued to grow in Colorado throughout the 1870s and early 1880s. In 1870, Colorado had 70,736 head of cattle. By 1880, the number of cattle had increased tenfold to 791,492. The mild winter of 1881-1882 produced exceptionally fine herds of cattle, which sold for as much as \$30 to \$35 per head. As a result, cattlemen realized profits as high as three hundred percent on stock they had purchased three years earlier. The high cattle prices--as well as the fear that all of the land was being bought up--encouraged widespread speculation. Eastern and foreign investors, including several English and Scottish syndicates, purchased several cattle ranches in Colorado during this period. One of the largest companies was the Prairie Cattle Company, a Scotch syndicate that operated in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. In 1885, the Prairie Cattle Company was estimated to have owned nearly 150,000 head of cattle, and was paying heavy dividends to stockholders.²⁷

Helping create the cattle boom were local boosters. One of the best known was Walter Baron von Richthofen of Denver, whose popular 1885 book, Cattle-Raising on the Plains of North America, provided an extremely optimistic view of the local cattle industry. Richthofen, a Denver-area developer, apparently never owned a ranch but assured his readers that "there is not the slightest element of uncertainty in

²⁷Dale, Edward Everett, The Range Cattle Industry, Ranching on the Great Plains from 1865 to 1925 (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1930, new edition 1960), pp. 76 and 82; and Webb, p. 235.

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cattle-raising."²⁸

Richthofen would soon be proved wrong. In 1885, the boom began to bust. The widespread speculation and overexpansion, combined with several severe winters and drought conditions, spelled the beginning of hard times for Colorado cattlemen. The winter of 1886-1887 was particularly terrible; so many cattle were lost that it was referred to as the "big die-up." Adding to the cattlemen's problems were dropping cattle prices, overcrowded and overgrazed ranges, and quarantines. In 1885, the federal government also enacted a law that forbade the construction or maintenance of fences enclosing public land. It was estimated that approximately 75 percent of Weld County's land fell into that category. Cattlemen, who had attempted to fence the open range, saw their fences torn down. By 1888, cattle were looked upon as "poor property" in Colorado.²⁹

The depressed cattle industry and the reduction in cattle herds provided an opportunity for the widespread expansion of sheep raising. Like cattle, sheep had been introduced into Colorado by Mexican herdsmen. Following the gold rush, the sheep industry had also flourished. During the decade of the 1870s, it was estimated that the number of sheep in Colorado had increased from approximately twenty thousand to over two million.³⁰

Sheep were historically the enemy of cattlemen because of the belief that the animals chewed the pasture down below the root level, making it unable to regrow. In addition, some ranchers believed that cattle would not graze on lands occupied by sheep. The introduction of sheep was not without acrimonious exchange but, by 1898, over 90,000 sheep were being fed in Weld County. By 1905, the number had almost doubled to 150,000. This rapid increase is explained because, while

²⁸Walter Baron von Richthofen, Cattle-Raising on the Plains of North America (D. Appleton and Company, 1885; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964).

²⁹Frink, et al, pp. 93-96, 101, and 105.

³⁰Athearn, Coloradans, p. 143.

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cattle prices dropped, sheep prices rose or remained steady. The sheep market did not undergo the fluctuations of cattle market. In addition, sheep provided more than one marketable crop; they produced wool as well as meat.³¹

Horses were also successfully raised in Weld County. In addition to being sold to city dwellers, many of the horses were raised for use by local farmers and ranchers. The open range cattle industry also necessitated a large number of horses, and cowboys generally believed that horses raised on the plains were better suited for the rigors of cattle herding and round-ups. The headquarters of the Percheron-Norman Horse Company was established in Weld County in the 1880s. The Percheron-Norman Horse Company bred high-class draft and carriage horses for factories, mills, quarries, lumbering, and farm work. The company maintained six Percheron-Norman horse ranches in the region. Like cattle and sheep, the horses grazed on the open range.

By the close of the nineteenth century, cattle raising had shifted from a range to ranch basis, as cattlemen became more diversified. Little was left of the open range, and cattlemen had to increasingly buy or lease fenced pastures for cattle. Cattlemen also increased the feeding of hay and grain, much of which they grew. Feeding as opposed to grazing was also advanced by the improvement of cattle breeds. Barbed wire fencing, which had advanced the settlement of the farmers, had also facilitated the raising of better breeds of cattle, as blooded stock could be easily separated from the common herd. In 1874, the same year that the first piece of barbed wire was sold in the United States, the Denver Blood Stock Association held its first fair. Among the breeds shown were pedigreed Shorthorns, Herefords, Ayrshires, Jerseys, Alderneys, Devons, and Galloways.³²

All of these changes created a form of diversified ranching often

³¹Frink, et al, p. 105; and The Greeley Tribune, 10 March 1888 and 12 October 1905.

³²Frink, et al, pp. 57 and 109.

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called a "stock farm" or a "ranch farm." Many of the historic ranching operations in Weld County can be described as ranch farms, and included both farming and ranching operations. These ranches frequently had land under irrigation, although it was often no more than a garden. Dryland farming was also undertaken and ranchers grew drought-resistant crops, much of which they fed to their livestock. Cattle, however, were still the primary focus. The herds were often not very large--compared to the great cattle holdings of barons like Iliff--but were good blooded stock, such as registered Herefords.³³

Just as it had for the farmers, World War I benefitted the Weld County cattlemen, as the demand for beef increased. At the same time, consumer demand encouraged the continual development of better breeds. The nation's taste for beef reached an unprecedented high during the war years, surpassing what the cattleman could supply. As a result, cattlemen sold all the cattle they raised, and beef commanded the highest prices in history.³⁴

Weld County Agriculture After World War I

The end of World War I represented a beginning of hard times in Weld County and throughout the agricultural United States. As wartime demand diminished, so did the optimistic hopes of the region's farmers and ranchers. The Panic of 1921 hit farmers especially hard and, to compound the problem, European agriculture, disrupted by the war, recovered quickly. But many local farmers never recovered from the dropping commodity prices. In order to survive, many Weld County farmers continued to put marginal lands into production in order to increase their crop yields. Also, farmers from elsewhere migrated to the county, putting more pressure on the land base. Unfortunately these higher volumes only tended to depress prices even farther. Some switched from farming to cattle, as cattle prices remained high. Gradually, during the middle 1920s, farm prices began to stabilize and

³³Webb, pp. 396-397; and Schlebecker, pp. 9-10..

³⁴Schlebecker, p. 58.

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then rise.

Farmers also lobbied Congress for relief. Using techniques begun with the Populist movement, farmers requested a variety of aid. Most notable was the McNary-Haugen movement, which sought federal purchases of agricultural surpluses to stabilize prices at the 1910 level. In other words, a parity program for farmers. Debate over the McNary-Haugen proposals continued throughout the decade. In 1929, the Smoot-Hawley Tariff was enacted which raised the import tax on certain products to record levels. Sugar was a heavily taxed commodity and Weld County growers were pleased to receive the market protection the tariff provided. Prices rose but hopes for a new prosperity were dashed in October, 1929, when the New York Stock Market crashed and the Great Depression began. Despite these years of adverse conditions, the population in Weld County continued to grow, albeit at a much slower rate. The population increased by 10,000 people during the decade.

The problems of the stock market crash, combined with weak agricultural markets, were further affected by adverse weather conditions. After several wet years, the early 1930s saw below average rainfall. The natural aridity of the region combined with increased tillage of marginal lands resulted in once rich fields blowing away in wind storms. During the 1930s, winds caused the so called dust blizzards or "dusters." These storms were regular and were reported on daily radio and newspapers with the regular weather. The federal government geographically defined the "Dust Bowl." While southern Colorado was included in this designation, northeastern Colorado, including Weld County, was not. But Weld County farmers and ranchers suffered like their counterparts in the southern portion of the state. Many who could afford to left Weld County and the state, looking for better opportunities elsewhere, frequently in California.

As farm markets declined, the debt structure for individuals was frequently too heavy. Many farms and ranches were foreclosed or auctioned for taxes. Protests by farmers proved ineffective in the face of the sheriff's gavel at sale time. Federal legislation, beginning with the election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, did much to aid farmers and ranchers in Weld County and throughout the West. The 1934 Taylor Grazing Act established grazing allotments and a fee system

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for usage of public lands. This act had minimal impact in Weld County because of the small number of federally owned acres. In 1937, over 85 percent of the land in Weld County was patented. However, the Taylor Grazing Act represented one of the first of many legislative initiatives designed to reach a permanent solution for farm and ranch problems.

Roosevelt's policies focused on relief, recovery, and reform. Agriculture received great aid from the two Agricultural Adjustment Acts which offered relief payments, production controls and ultimately increased commodity prices. Sugar beets, wheat, corn, and other grains had controlled production and prices. In 1937, the Bankhead-Jones Land Utilization Act provided for farmers to sell their lands back to the federal government in order to remove marginal lands from production.

Two large parcels of repurchased lands became Pawnee National Grasslands in Weld County. Working with the Soil Conservation Service and the Resettlement Administration, programs were undertaken on these lands to restore the native plant communities or to plant new grasses and other forage. The goal was to eliminate erosional activity and improve the quality and character of the land. The Civilian Conservation Corps also engaged in a variety of programs to help restore the grasslands including planting, road development and creation of wind breaks. Today Pawnee National Grasslands is a major natural habitat for native plants and animals.³⁵

The largest and technically most demanding project funded by the Roosevelt Administration to benefit Weld County was the Colorado-Big Thompson water project. The Bureau of Reclamation headed the effort to move water from the Colorado River, under the Continental Divide and

³⁵James E. Wickens, "Colorado in the Great Depression: A Study of New Deal Policies at the State Level," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Denver, 1964), pp. 1-30; 35-100; Paul Bonnifeld, The Dust Bowl, Men, Dirt, Depression, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), pp. 50-65; Propst, pp. 200-205; Athearn, Coloradans, pp. 250-255; John Hearal, C.W.A. interview, volume 352; and Glen Bolander, C.W.A. interview, vol. 352; and Nore V. Winter et al, "Level I Historic Cultural Resource Study of Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest and Pawnee National Grasslands," (Lakewood: United States Forest Service, n.d.), n.p.

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into the fields of northeastern Colorado. Feasibility studies and blueprints were drawn from 1934-38. In June of 1938, residents voted in favor of the proposal and construction began later that year. In 1942, shortages of concrete and steel as the result of World War II led to a general work stoppage on the project. Construction began again after the war and was finally completed in 1954. By the middle 1960s, the irrigation canals spread the water from the Colorado-Big Thompson to 720,000 acres. Also a part of this project was the development of hydroelectric plants. All of these innovations helped provide the resources necessary for the needs of World War II and post World War II agriculture.³⁶

Other New Deal agencies and programs helped the residents of Weld County survive the conditions of the Great Depression. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) provided grants as local relief efforts ran out of money. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation provided money for businesses to use for new projects or to upgrade their physical plants. Other agencies were involved in a multitude of projects, all designed to provide some relief.

During the depression, cattlemen continued to move towards diversification, and many of them turned to dude ranching. As a way to supplement their income, ranchers would take in "dudes"-- visitors who wanted to experience ranch life. Although dude-ranching was most popular during the summer months, dudes were accommodated year round. The dudes lived on the ranch, and participated in daily ranching activities and recreation. Despite the initial capital outlay needed for dude-ranching, it developed as an important source of ranch income in the West.³⁷

The rise of 4-H Clubs on the western plains also had an important impact on cattle raising during the depression years. In 4-H Clubs, children practiced modern methods of livestock raising which they, in

³⁶Oliver Knight, "Correcting Nature's Error: The Colorado-Big Thompson Project," in A Colorado Reader, pp. 323-325; Wickens, pp. 254-256; and Geffs, pp. 202-214.

³⁷Schlebecker, p. 130.

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turn, taught to their friends and family. Under the impetus of 4-H Club work, the quality of a community's cattle was often substantially improved. While old-time cattlemen were sometimes hesitant to incorporate new agricultural theories into their ranching operations, they were more likely to do so after witnessing the success of their children's 4-H efforts.³⁸

Full scale economic recovery began with the advent of World War II. Wartime demand resulted in new markets for agricultural products. When the war ended in 1945 many residents feared a return to the depression. The need for a stable cash crop was of foremost importance. Sugar beets continued as an important crop but demand was threatened by corn sweeteners. As a reflection of this trend, Great Western Sugar cut back operations. Wheat, corn, potatoes, barley, dry beans and oats all became important cash crops in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

Cattle production also grew in the thirty years after World War II. Changes in cattle raising to insure fatter, highly marbled meat resulted in the increased use of feedlots and less range feeding of cattle, reflecting the ability of cattlemen to manipulate the animals to meet market demands. In more recent years, cattlemen have responded to changing consumer tastes by breeding leaner beef. As feeding became more controlled, feedlots and cattle processing industries developed in the region. Several of these operations are located in Weld County, with Monfort of Greeley being one of the largest. During the early twentieth century, another significant change in the industry was the switch from railroading to trucking as the major form of cattle transportation.³⁹

By the middle 1970s, Weld County was ranked number one in the

³⁸Ibid., p. 132.

³⁹Dorsett, pp. 220-225; Athearn, Coloradans, pp. 296-300; Steven F. Mehls, The New Empire of the Rockies: A History of Northeast Colorado (Denver: Bureau of Land Management: 1984), pp. 173-182; Wickens, pp. 280-377; David A. Henderson, "The Beef Cattle Industry of Colorado," (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 1951), pp. 160-175; and 1962-1964 Yearbook, pp. 954-956.

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state of Colorado for total crop value. That trend had begun in the late 1950s and continued for most of the 1960s. The years after World War II have been subject to fluctuations in market demand and weather conditions but, generally, agriculture has been healthy for the past forty-five to fifty years.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type: Farms and Farming Facilities, 1870-1940

II. Description

This property type is comprised of either farm complexes (districts) or individual buildings, structures, and sites that are associated with irrigated and/or dryland farms of Weld County, Colorado. Buildings typically associated with a Weld County farm include farm houses, housing for hired hands, barns, equipment and storage sheds, poultry houses, milk houses, smoke houses, ice houses, root cellars, carriage houses, garages, and outhouses. Structures include silos, bins, grain elevators, beet dumps, wells, pumps, windmills, water tanks, corrals, and fences. On irrigated farms, structures can also include reservoirs, as well as irrigation canals, ditches, and laterals. Historic sites can include pastures and cultivated fields. Individual farms may have any combination of the aforementioned buildings, structures, and sites.

The earliest residences of Weld County were often constructed of native materials. Except along isolated waterways, few trees existed in the semi-arid landscape of the high plains. The earliest pioneers often lived in dugouts, or constructed homes of adobe, sod, or native rock. Stylistically, these buildings would be categorized as folk or vernacular in the truest sense. Outbuildings on these pioneer homesteads were few and tended to be multi-functional buildings of sod, pole, and mud. Like the residences, the outbuildings were also often of dugout construction. As late as 1990, some of the county's pioneer sod and stone houses were still in existence.

The arrival of the railroad in 1870 led to a number of changes in the built environment of Weld County. First and foremost, the railroads opened up sources of building materials, allowing local residents to use milled lumber, pre-manufactured parts, millwork, and non-native stone. As a result, dugouts and soddies soon gave way to more permanent buildings. The railroads also made possible the use of coal for fuel, and attendant changes on the interior layout and furnishings of the houses.

The architecture of the post-pioneer phase took on the look and general style of late nineteenth and early twentieth century rural America. Still, not all parts of Weld County developed at the same time. The farm lands around Greeley developed a more sophisticated look at the same time that residents in other parts of the county were just beginning the settlement process. Nonetheless, as portions of the county matured, the architecture reflected this changing status. Buildings were largely constructed of wood, with only a limited use of stone or other materials. By the end of the nineteenth century, the

(x) See continuation sheet

(x) See continuation sheet for additional property types

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development of Colorado cement supplies made concrete one of the most popular materials for foundations and basements. Most of the houses are of wood frame construction. The use of brick tended to be decorative, and was often used for special application such as chimneys or foundations. The limited use of brick probably reflects the cost of transporting items to rural Weld County.

Vernacular buildings are the most prevalent. In the irrigated areas of Weld County, two of the more popular, late nineteenth century styles appear to have been Italianate and Gothic Revival. Most of these designs were probably adapted by local builders from pattern books or the popular press. Queen Anne houses also date to this period. The most popular vernacular style was the "Gabled Ell," as defined in NRHP Bulletin 31. This building's flexibility in being easily added on to may account for its popularity. Other vernacular styles such as the double pile and shotgun house are also found.

After 1900, the architectural preferences of Weld County farmers diversified and broadened, reflecting the general prosperity in the county during the first two decades of the new century. In the irrigated sections of the county, Bungalow, Foursquare, and Prairie style architectural styles were popular. Variations on the Foursquare are primarily found in porch treatments, rear additions, window arrangements, and roof lines, rather than in the basic volume, massing, and feel of the house. Again, it appears as if pattern books and other popular media had great impacts on Weld County. On the dryland farms, many of which were established after 1905, Bungalow and Craftsman style homes were also very popular. Generally, the main farmhouse can be distinguished from the hired hands housing by its size, the difference being a matter of scale rather than materials or decorative treatments.

Weld County farms also reflect the large number of German-Russians that came into the area after 1900 as part of the sugar boom. These people brought with them a European heritage that included some distinctive building characteristics. They duplicated, as best they could, their traditional European styles in Weld County. Even so, some compromise and accommodation had to be reached because of the materials available for use. What appears to have developed is a hybrid architecture with European style and American components. The houses and barns of the German-Russian immigrants tended to display the most obvious European characteristics, especially the barns with their high stone foundations, large gabled roofs, and general squarish massing, rather than the traditional gambrelled American barns.

Another characteristic that sets the more mature farm areas apart

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from the pioneer phase are the number and diversity of outbuildings. Specialization of buildings by function became prevalent, often reflecting the type of farming taking place. However, all farms included a barn, which was often constructed before the house. Barns served three basic functions: 1) hay storage, 2) an area for intensive livestock husbandry such as milking or draft animal care, and 3) machinery storage. Barns tended to be vernacular, wooden buildings with gable or gambrel roofs. The scale greatly reflected function. Farms created during the early twentieth century sugar beet boom generally had smaller barns without large hay lofts, reflecting functions more akin to a workshop than animal care. Other barns had large hay lofts and reflected either dairy or draft animal care.

Other common outbuildings and structures include pump houses for domestic and/or agricultural water supply, animal sheds, chicken coops, and granaries. Sheds are usually wooden rectangular buildings. While some animal sheds and equipment sheds have three sides, most have four. Structures for produce storage range from small wooden or circular metal grain bins to much larger buildings. The larger buildings are generally of wood construction.

Beyond these fairly common buildings, the diversity grew. Orchardists and truck farmers frequently had produce and/or packing sheds. Dairy operators built special milking houses with attached or separate storage rooms for the milk; feed was stored in either loafing sheds or hay derricks. Wheat and grain farmers constructed large granaries or elevators. Elevators, popular on individual wheat farms before World War I, are very similar in overall shape and construction to larger "co-op" or grain dealer ones except in scale. Silos are upright cylinders of cinderblock, concrete, or ceramic tile. They generally were in close proximity to either a barn or animal shed. Beet farmers tended to have fewer specialized outbuildings, but more worker housing. The increase in the size and complexity of machinery after the turn-of-the-century led to the construction of machine sheds. The arrival of the automobile caused farmers to construct garages or convert carriage houses. Historically, the garages are separate from the house, although they are sometimes connected by a breezeway. By 1920, a typical farmstead in Weld County often resembled a small industrial plant much more than it did a subsistence farm of a few decades earlier.

During the 1920s and 1930s, one agricultural structure experienced more change than any other--the grain bin. Late nineteenth century farmers had used slat side corn cribs and small enclosed buildings for grain storage. These systems were practical for small farms and low yields. However, as farms grew larger and agronomists developed new and more productive farming techniques, these structures proved inadequate.

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In their place, farmers began using grain bins, which were small, easily constructed buildings that could be used to store any type of grain. The first grain bins appeared in the early twentieth century. By World War I, the octagonal, wood frame, wood sided bin appears to have been a fairly common site on the grain farms of Weld County.

During the Great Depression, when Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace announced his concept of the "ever normal granary," a plan to allow on-the-farm storage of grain and other commodities for times of shortfall, bin construction got a boost in the form of federal aid. Because of the need for massive numbers of storage bins nationwide, the prefabricated metal bin became very popular. These were easy to assemble on any site by a farmer with a set of wrenches and an extra helper. The utility of these bins quickly became obvious, and they soon became one of the most commonly used and popular of all farm structures. The first experiments with metal bins came during the 1920s, although wood remained the preferred building material. During the 1930s, however, improved designs and the reduced costs of metal bins made them a viable and attractive alternative for farmers.

Wells are a standard feature on the farm, often with windmill or gasoline powered pumps. Another water resource, critical to much of Weld County, is the irrigation ditch, canal, or system. When first built, especially before 1900, these ditches tended to be unlined. If they remained active, concrete lining, especially of the main canal and laterals, was frequently undertaken to minimize water loss into the ditch bottoms.

The landscaping typically associated with Weld County farms, besides plowed fields and pastures, is defined by a concentration of outbuildings around the main structures. A windbreak/shade belt surrounding the complex is quite common. A kitchen garden was frequently located near the main structure. Decorative landscaping was minimal. However, there were many instances of flower beds and shrubbery around the main residential structure.

III. Significance

The farms and farming facilities of Weld County are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, C, and/or D. The period of significance spans the period from 1870 to 1940.

Because they reflect the broad patterns of agricultural development in Colorado and the western plains, the property types are eligible under Criterion A. Weld County's farmsteads reflect the

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establishment of permanent agricultural settlement in the region, the first economically intensive use of the land by Euro-Americans, and the longest lived economic activity in the area. The irrigation system established by the Union Colony in 1870 became the mainstay for farmers in the area, and was one of the earliest irrigation efforts in the Colorado. As irrigation efforts continued to develop, they had a significant effect on the settlement and development of northeastern Colorado. Dryland farming, which was practiced more intensively in the twentieth century, is representative of efforts on the part of agronomists and farmers to cultivate the semi-arid lands of eastern Colorado.

If associated with significant individuals, this property type is also eligible to the National Register under Criterion B. Many of the early farmers in Weld County played a significant role in the development of their local and regional community institutions. The irrigated and dryland agricultural techniques pioneered by Weld County farmers also had an important impact on the development of the region.

Because they reflect the architecture, workmanship, and technology of farming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the farms and farming facilities of Weld County are also eligible to the National Register under Criterion C. These properties reflect the development of Colorado agriculture over a period of almost eighty years, with individual elements representing different stages of that development.

Historical archaeological sites and districts associated with this property type may also be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D. These archaeological sites and districts reflect the development of agriculture in Colorado, and the broad patterns of settlement in the region.

IV. Registration Requirements

The farms and farming facilities of Weld County may be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places as either an historic district, or as individual buildings, structures, or sites. Either individually or as a district, the properties must meet two basic requirements. First, they must have been constructed within the 1870-1940 period of significance. Secondly, they must represent their original design, workmanship, materials, and location, or their location during the period of significance.

The property type must have been either part of an important

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trend, such as group settlement, or associated with a farm that made a significant contribution to local agricultural development. In addition, the farm or farming facility must convey the historic feeling of a farm during the period of significance. These associations are most often the result of original workmanship, design, and setting. Additions or modifications must not impair the quality of the historic fabric (design, materials, and workmanship) of the individual buildings within the farmstead. If the individual buildings or structures have lost any of their ability to convey either their design, materials, workmanship, or character and function within the farmstead through natural deterioration or the activities of man during or after the period of significance, then those specific resources shall be considered to be ineligible. For features such as fields or pastures, attempts to recontour, fill in, or otherwise obliterate any part of the feature shall be considered to have destroyed the original setting, thereby making it ineligible.

For districts made up of farmsteads and/or farming lands, different registration requirements apply. The first requirement is that the district be historically associated with an important social or economic trend as identified in the historic context. The second requirement is that the physical characteristics of the farm must be present. Specifically, the historic setting and feeling, as they were created during the period of significance, should still be evident. The setting should show evidence of a settlement and land use scheme, giving continuity to the district. The district must also convey the spatial association of the various farms and features within the district. Other elements that distinguish the overall design, setting, and feeling for the district are the definable lines of communication/transportation that would have cemented the district together during the period of significance. In potential historic districts served by water diversion/irrigation systems, elements of that system must remain and the system must still either carry or be able to carry water. The final elements that help define the setting and feeling are the discernable presence of fields, fencelines, and pastures that meet the requirements for those structures/sites. As a district is defined in terms of land use, it is assumed that location, workmanship, and materials were limited by the nature of the property and are not issues pertinent to the registration of farming districts. Within the districts, there must also be individually eligible farmsteads.

Historic districts must also possess some sense of cohesiveness. Also, some evidence of planning and adaptations to the local topography should be present. Topography and land availability impacted the spatial arrangement and location of individual farmsteads, but not in as clearly a discernable manner as in the group areas. The condition of

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these resources varies from active farms to badly deteriorated, abandoned, partially or totally destroyed farmsteads. Occasionally, historic farmsteads are marked only by tree lines or root cellar depressions.

Historic archaeological sites or districts must relate to the agricultural development of Weld County within the period of significance. If the site has not been totally excavated, it must possess the potential to yield important information relating to the history of agriculture in Weld County.

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I. Name of Property Type: Ranches and Ranching Facilities

II. Description

This property type is comprised of either districts or individual buildings, structures, and sites that are associated with ranches and ranching facilities of Weld County, Colorado. Buildings typically associated with a Weld County ranch include ranch houses, housing for hired hands, line camps, barns, equipment and storage sheds, blacksmith shops, carriage houses, garages, and outhouses. Structures include silos, bins, wells, pumps, windmills, water tanks, dipping vats, loafing sheds or feeders, and fences. Corrals, located near the main complex and scattered on the ranch lands, are also included. Since so many twentieth century ranchers also cultivated irrigated land, historic structures can also include irrigation canals, ditches, and laterals. Sites may include pastures and cultivated fields, as well as areas where significant historical events related to the raising of livestock took place, such as the site of cow camps, cattle round-ups, or livestock trails. Individual ranches may have any combination of the aforementioned buildings, structures, and sites.

Like the pioneer farmers of Weld County, early ranchers generally lived in vernacular buildings. One 1878 visitor to a ranch in eastern Colorado described it as being no more than a shanty dug into the side of a hill. The accompanying barn and corral were constructed of rough, unpainted lumber. As ranchers became more successful, their homes often became more sophisticated. The nineteenth and twentieth century ranch houses in Weld County are typical of many rural residences in the West. Like their farming neighbors, Weld County ranchers were influenced by pattern books and popular styles, and their homes often reflected Italianate, Gothic, and Queen Anne styling. More often, however, the ranch house was a vernacular building, usually with wood siding and a gabled roof. Twentieth century Bungalow and Craftsman style homes were also popular on Weld County ranches.⁴⁰

Nineteenth century farmers, particularly in the dryland sections of the county, often turned to cattle and sheep raising after their crops had failed. As such, there is often little distinction between the early ranches and farms in the county. On both farms and ranches, the main residence is located near a cluster of agricultural outbuildings, such as barns and sheds. As ranching became more diversified in the twentieth century--and ranchers were often

⁴⁰Athearn, The Coloradans, p. 145.

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cultivating crops in addition to raising livestock--farms and ranches became even more similar in appearance.

One of the major distinguishing characteristics of ranches in Weld County is the acreage associated with the property. Farmsteads are often located along the main roads, and are frequently close to local communities. By contrast, many of the ranches of Weld County are not even visible from the main roadways. Surrounded by hundreds--often thousands--of acres of land, many of these ranches can only be reached by private roads, which are sometimes locked. While a 160-acre homestead could be adequate for farming activities in Weld County, ranchers needed much larger expanses of land, even after the shift towards diversified ranching.

During the days of the open range, ranches were widely scattered throughout the county, as cattlemen controlled huge expanses of land. While some cattlemen lived on the plains, others did not. By 1866, John Wesley Iliff was already well established as a cattle dealer with extensive holdings in Weld County, but he and his family continued to reside in Denver. On the open range of northeastern Colorado, Iliff had established several "cow camps," including several in Weld county. The camps were the center of round-up activities and, as such, were transitory in nature. During the round-ups, wagons and horses were brought into the cow camps, and cowboys camped out in pitched tents. The open range also often included some primitive forms of shelter for cattle. These cattle shelters often consisted of a wooden frame, constructed of poles, on which hay was spread, providing some measure of protection from storms and severe winds. Small buildings that provided temporary shelter for cowboys were also constructed on the range.⁴¹

One form of shelter that existed on the plains during the days of the open range were "line cabins" or "line camps," which provided temporary shelter to cowboys. Line camps were established along the boundary lines of a range; cowboys stationed at the camps would prevent cattle from crossing over the line. At least one line camp was still in existence in Weld County in 1990. The camp was a small, one story building constructed of native stone, and had a gabled roof covered with

⁴¹Frink, et al, p. 355; Byron David Halsted, Barn Plans and Outbuildings (New York: Orange Judd, 1881; reprint, Lexington, Massachusetts: The Stephen Green Press, 1977), pp. 71-73; and Richthofen, pp. 19-20.

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sod.⁴²

The most common agricultural buildings and structures on ranches were barns, loafing sheds, animal pens, and corrals. Many of Weld County's oldest barns are of stone construction, reflecting the use of native materials. Twentieth century barns were typically large wooden buildings with a gable or gambrel roofline. Loafing sheds--three-sided structures used for sheltering and feeding animals--were either attached to the barns or stood alone.

Many of the outbuildings associated with farming were also used on cattle ranches. With the growing emphasis on feeding rather than grazing, ranchers relied more heavily on silage and, as a result, silos became a common site on livestock ranches. During the 1890s, specialized corral complexes and sheds also began to be used for sheep shearing and dipping, reflecting the growth of sheep husbandry. Dipping vats were also common structures on cattle ranches, and were utilized by stockmen as a means of controlling disease and infection in their livestock. During the twentieth century, as more and more mechanized equipment was used on the ranch, new and larger equipment sheds were often constructed.

III. Significance

The ranches and ranching facilities of Weld County are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, C, and/or D. The period of significance extends from 1859 to 1940.

Because they represent the agricultural settlement and development of Weld County and the high plains, the ranches and ranching facilities are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. Weld County's ranches reflect the growth of the state's livestock industry, dating from the earliest open range days to the more diversified ranching activities of the twentieth century. Livestock raising began in Weld County in 1859, during Colorado's settlement period. Continually adapting to new agricultural developments, livestock raising continues to be one of the state's most important industries.

If associated with significant individuals, this property type is

⁴²Front Range Research Associates, Weld County Survey, 1990, on file at the Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

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also eligible to the National Register under Criterion B. Many of the early ranchers in Weld County, such as John Wesley Iliff and Jared Brush, played a significant role in the development of the livestock industry, as well as the development of community and agricultural institutions. As such, these individuals had a significant impact on the development of the region.

Because they reflect the architecture, workmanship, and technology of ranching in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ranches and ranching facilities of Weld County are also eligible to the National Register under Criterion C. These properties reflect the development of Colorado agriculture over a period of almost eighty years, with individual elements representing different stages of that development.

Historical archaeological sites and districts associated with this property type may also be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D. Such archaeological sites and districts reflect the development of agriculture in Colorado, and the broad patterns of settlement in the region.

IV. Registration Requirements

The ranches and ranching facilities of Weld County are eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district, or as individual buildings, structures, or sites. In order to be eligible to the National Register, the ranches and ranching facilities of Weld County must meet two basic requirements. First, they must have been constructed within the 1859-1940 period of significance. Secondly, they must represent their original design, workmanship, and materials.

Although original location is often a requirement for nomination to the National Register, it is not required for the ranch and ranching facilities of Weld County. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, agricultural buildings were frequently relocated, often for a distance of several miles. Building materials, such as wood, were difficult to obtain in treeless environment of rural Weld County. Rather than abandoning or destroying vacant buildings, ranchers often relocated and recycled them. This was a very common practice in rural Weld County, and reflects the practicality and thriftiness of early ranchers. However, although a ranching property has been moved from its original location, it must have been built and relocated during the 1859-1940 period of significance in order to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

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To be eligible to the National Register, the property type should also reflect an important historical trend, such as the development of ranching on the high plains, and/or be associated with a ranch that made a significant contribution to local agricultural development. In addition, the property type must convey the feeling of a ranch constructed and operated during the period of significance. These associations are most often the result of original workmanship, design, and setting. Additions or modifications must not have impaired the quality of the historic fabric (design, materials, and workmanship). This is also true for landscape features associated with the historic ranches of Weld County. Fields or pastures should reflect their original setting and topography.

Districts must also convey their original associations, as well as a sense of cohesiveness. Specifically, the historic setting and feeling, as they were during the period of significance, should still be evident. However, many of Weld County's historic ranches are on-going operations. As such, buildings and structures on the ranch complex have often been updated to reflect changing agricultural trends. Therefore, in order to determine their eligibility to the National Register, each individual element of an historic ranch district must be judged according to its date of construction, and the particular period of ranch history that it represents.

Historic archaeological sites or districts must relate to the agricultural development of Weld County within the period of significance. If the site has not been totally excavated, it must possess the potential to answer important questions regarding the history of agriculture in Weld County.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

Funding for this project was provided by historic preservation funds through the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The nomination evolved as part of an on-going project to survey and record historic farms and ranches in Weld County, Colorado. The survey began in 1989, when fifty irrigated farms in the extreme southwestern corner of Weld County were evaluated by Western

(x) See continuation sheet

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(x) See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office	<input type="checkbox"/> Local government
<input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency	<input type="checkbox"/> University
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Specify repository: Colorado Historical Society

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title Christine Whitacre and R. Laurie Simmons
Organization Front Range Research Associates Inc. Date October 1990
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Historical Studies, Inc. The farms were photographed and recorded on Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Cultural Resource Survey forms. As part of that project, a broad historic context for Weld County agriculture was prepared: "Weld County Colorado Historical Agricultural Context." The context concentrated specifically on the aspects of irrigated farming identified during the survey and also discussed the general development of the county, dryland farming, and ranching. The historic context for irrigated farming, portions of the context for dryland farming, and the general overview of Weld County development prepared for this nomination are based upon the 1989 agricultural context prepared by Western Historical Studies, Inc. In addition, the description of property types related to farms and portions of the bibliography are based on information from that document.

In 1990, the Colorado Historical Society contracted with Front Range Research Associates, Inc., to continue the survey of Weld County agricultural resources begun during the previous year. The 1990 survey concentrated specifically on identifying fifty cattle ranches and dryland farms throughout Weld County, excluding the area surveyed in 1989. Unlike the previous survey, the 1990 survey attempted to examine representative resources from throughout the county, an approximately four thousand square mile area. In addition, the 1990 survey sought to record the most historically significant, intact, agricultural complexes. Thus, dozens of properties were examined, but only fifty were recorded. Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Cultural Resource Inventory forms were prepared for each resource. Minimal information was provided for sites evaluated as not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Complete information was provided for eligible resources.

Three individual National Register nomination forms for agricultural complexes will be prepared as part of the 1990 project. In addition, Front Range Research Associates revised the previously prepared historic context; incorporated new information concerning dryland farming; added a context on historic cattle ranching; prepared property type specifications for ranches; composed registration requirements for both property types; and completed this nomination form utilizing these components.

Archival research in preparation of the historic contexts included the resources of the Colorado Historical Society Library and the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Library, the Denver Public Library Western History Department, the Colorado History Collection of the Greeley Public Library, and the University of Northern Colorado

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James A. Michener Library Archives. The Western Range Cattle Industry Study Collection of the Colorado Historical Society proved extremely useful in the development of the ranching context, as did the publication which resulted from that study, When Grass Was King: Contributions to the Western Range Cattle Industry Study (1956). Nineteenth century promotional literature on farming and ranching housed in the Denver Public Library was extensively searched.

An early account of the cattle industry utilized is Cattle Raising on the Plains of North America by Walter Baron von Richthofen (1885). Also utilized was Edward E. Dale's The Range Cattle Industry (1930). More recent developments in the cattle industry is covered by Cattle Raising on the Plains 1900-1961 by John T. Schlebecker (1963). Walter Prescott Webb's The Great Plains (1931) gave an overall view of agriculture and environmental conditions on the Great Plains. Alvin T. Steinel's seminal work, A History of Agriculture in Colorado (1926), was the basis of the general agricultural development of the area.

Local histories utilized included John Dugan's pictorial history, Greeley and Weld County (1986); Carol Rein Shwayder's Weld County--Old and New (1983); and Mary L. Geffs's Under Ten Flags: A History of Weld County, Colorado (1938). A series of local history studies written by Wilbur Ball provided detailed information about specific sites in the county. The History of Northeastern Weld County (1989) provided a wide-ranging view of agricultural enterprises on the eastern plains and background on the towns which developed there.

Of invaluable assistance in the preparation of this study were the local historians and residents of Weld County who submitted to interviews and offered suggestions of sources for further research and locations of historic resources. Among the many individuals who generously contributed their time and expertise toward this project were: Wilbur Ball, Carol Rein Shwayder, Dorothy Bolin, the Stow Witwer family, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Ball, Stewart Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Uhl, J.D.A. Ogilvy, Ivan Grime, Lou Ann Littlefield, Brad Kirchner, and Donna Norgren.

Historically, Weld County agriculture may be seen as an early field for competition between ranching and farming, with an evolution into diversified operations which often embody elements of both agricultural endeavors. Although the historic contexts of this document have been divided into ranching and farming for discussion purposes, many identified on-going complexes comprise a hybrid of both types of operations. The geographic area for the historic contexts was defined by the limits of the survey project--Weld County, Colorado. Because the majority of historic resources identified are on-going agricultural

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enterprises whose periods of significance encompass broad time spans, the period of time covered by the historic contexts ranges from the origins of the ranching and farming industries in Weld County to 1940.

The typology of significant property types was based most significantly on function and association. Because each historic agricultural complex typically encompasses many diverse types of buildings, structures, and sites, the broadest encompassing property type for such complexes was utilized. Under each property type, provision was also made for inclusion of related facilities which might be identified individually. For example, the property type "Farms and Farm Facilities," could include such resources as large farm complex or an individual irrigation ditch.

The requirements of integrity were based upon direct observation of fifty irrigated farms, and over fifty dryland farms and cattle ranches. At the beginning of the 1990 survey, a predictive model was created to identify and locate dryland farms and ranches in Weld County. This model was based on the collection of test data resulting from a reconnaissance survey of the northeastern portion of the county. Also utilized to determine areas of agricultural settlement were land use and topographical maps of the county. Various published documents, especially local histories of towns and areas within Weld County, were utilized to determine the nature of property types. In addition, local residents throughout Weld County were interviewed for information regarding the number and condition of property types.

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