

McKenzie Property (Richey Property)

HABS No. ID-116

North bank of Sailor Gulch, 750 feet northwest

of the intersection of USFS Roads #651 and #349

Placerville Vicinity

Boise County

Idaho

HABS  
ID  
8-PLAVI.V  
2-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

**Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107**

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

McKENZIE PROPERTY (Richey Property)

HABS No. ID-116

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ID  
8-PLAVILY  
2-

Location: North bank of Sailor Gulch  
750 feet northwest of the intersection of USFS Roads #651 and #349, Placerville Vicinity,  
Boise County, Idaho

USGS Placerville Quadrangle (7.5'), Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
11.584730.4866155

Significance: The McKenzie property is significant under Criteria A because it is associated with mining as a broad theme that is important to the local, regional and state-wide history and settlement of Idaho. The structures are also significant under Criteria C as an example of Depression-era vernacular architecture of the local area that is rapidly being lost from the cultural landscape. Nearby buildings in Placerville were nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as the Placerville Historic District based on their architecture. It is unknown why this house was not addressed in the 1982 NRHP survey. In 1995, the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (ISHPO) Architectural Historian evaluated the structures as eligible to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Description: The property lies near the toe of a ridge northeast of Placerville. It is west of the main drainage of Woof Creek and is on the north side of a secondary drainage of Sailor Gulch. Both drainages were placer mined in the past and Woof Creek was later dredged for gold. The 1.5 acre estate is fenced with wooden posts and barbed wire and contains a small house, garage, small barn or shed, a root cellar, two low retaining walls of local stone, an access road and a covered well. All the structures have a similar look and appear to have been built by the same hand over a short period of time.

The overall character is, "vernacular architecture". Vernacular is described here as, "traditional, conservative, functional, plain, simplistic, regular, economical, utilitarian, built by an individual who lacked specific training". It is also described as, "folk architecture" because it is not made from drawings but from, "collective memories" of what structures should look like. The small scale and placement on the edge of the Ponderosa forest within the surrounding landscape is an example of how construction was adapted to the land and not the land being greatly modified to make room for the buildings. The integrity of the natural location, economic design, simple, unpretentious setting, available, workable, inexpensive materials, handy-man workmanship, a "home-made" feeling and mining theme association all combine to reinforce the, "vernacular" characteristics of the site.

The house measures 22'2" by 21'8".

The materials include local rock and concrete block foundation, brick chimney, dimensional lumber, corrugated metal roofing, rolled asphalt roofing and glass windows.

The structural system for the house is modified wood balloon frames on 48" centers with vertical board and batten cladding.

The house floor plan is small and simple. It is almost square and is divided into four rooms identified as an entry/porch area, kitchen, living room and bedroom. The design is a one story side gable with a lean-to attached on the north side.

Architectural details are severely limited on the interior and exterior, but a few exist. The house has a small porch attached with a wooden floor, two doors with screen doors, seven windows and a wooden walkway. The house is painted green with reddish stain on the window trim and a reddish rolled asphalt roof. Interior details include an interior cinder block chimney, painted walls and ceilings, wallpaper and linoleum. The doors have five horizontal panels and are painted. The living room has floral wallpaper and linoleum that looks like a gray carpet over a hardwood floor. The door, window and mopboard trim are painted light pink. The ceiling is covered with rectangular off-white tiles. The bedroom has red and white checkered linoleum over a hardwood floor, with gray trim paint and a ceiling of cardboard painted white. The kitchen has a geometric patterned wallpaper and linoleum that looks like carpet. Upper and lower kitchen cabinets are painted yellow, as are the door, door trim, window trim, north wall and ceiling. The sink has a drain but no running water. The entry/porch area is screened on the north and east sides. It has rough sawn planks to cover the walls and exposed 2" x 6" rafters. A red and white checkered linoleum covers a hardwood floor. It has a small shelf and a box for firewood.

The structures were reported late in this investigation to have moved here from a location on Grimes Creek summit about seven miles northwest of Placerville. The house had electricity provided by the public utilities but service has been cut. The original building at Grimes Summit did not have the lean-to noted in the photographs.

The garage is one single open space with items being stored in the open roof rafters. It has a simple, pragmatic character. It measures 10'8" by 18'0". The style is vernacular. The structural system is log sills with 4" x 4" posts and log posts holding up a 2" x 6" top plate that supports 2" x 6" rafters with rafter ties. Horizontal 1" x 12" planks sheath the long sides. The gable ends are board and batten. The floor plan is a single open space with an opening to the southeast. The roof is corrugated metal over wood planks. Architectural details are lacking, except it has a false front and a dirt floor.

The root cellar is partially buried into the hillside and has a simple and pragmatic character. It measures 9'4" by 9'4". It is made from wooden planks, corrugated metal and logs. The style is vernacular. The structural system is board and batten over a balloon frame with log purlins for a top plate and 2" x 6" rafters. It was roofed with planks and corrugated metal. The floor plan incorporates a covered porch area and a storage space. Architectural details include a wooden chimney vent, shelves, and 18" thick walls insulated with sawdust.

The barn or shed has a simple, pragmatic character. It is 18'10" by 10'. It is made from wooden planks and pine poles. The style is vernacular. The structural system is made from peeled pine logs for the sills, studs, top plates, rafters and braces. Wooden planks formed the walls (no battens), floor and room or stall dividers. The floor plan incorporates two doors that lead to animal stalls and a two-holed privy. Details include a small shelf inside and a covered 6'7" by 5'2" woodshed on the north end.

The covered well has a simple roof made of rafters and asphalt shingles. The roof sits on six peeled log poles. A 3' by 3' wooden box with a hinged lid encloses a galvanized metal culvert that is sunk into the ground. The overall dimensions are about 5'6" by 3'0". A pulley hangs from the roof.

Historical Context: The house was originally built near Grimes Pass by Kenneth McKenzie in 1935 according to his brother Bruce McKenzie. Ken cut timbers and mined at the, "Golden Age" mining camp. The house was rebuilt near Placerville by Kenneth McKenzie in 1936-37. It provided shelter for Ken and his wife, Dorothy, while he worked in the Mayflower Quartz Mine about four miles west of Placerville. But the house has stood here for about sixty years and seems to fit here as the landscape cradles it. McKenzie was the owner, architect, builder, engineer and contractor to create the true sense of, "vernacular" structures.

Historically, miners have been a special breed of men that have stood apart, been independent and lived close to nature. They were dreamers and optimists that had a, "Can do!, fix it up, make it work, do it yourself!" attitude. And so this small estate reflects that same feeling and is documented here.

Ken built on the land and assumed he had squatters' rights. The house was later sold to a family named Ranft, who then sold it to the Richeys.

The history of the house is an example of the classic, "boom bust" cycle that is based on the availability and price of locatable minerals. Placerville was founded because of the minerals located there. The technology cycled from prospectors, to claim workers, to mining companies that employed loggers, sawyers, miners, surveyors, ditch diggers and finally to dredge operators that exploited the creek bottoms. There are still some claim workers and at least one man, "mines" the tourists as they rent pans and soil to prospect for an afternoon. The transportation system was created to serve the miner as it evolved from an Indian trail to a packers trail, to a freight wagon route, toll road for wagons and stage coaches that serviced the miners. But the roads are presently stuck in the dirt and gravel stages of evolution. The settlement and architecture has also evolved from tents to log cabins, but few survived the 1874 and 1899 fires. The community evolved from a men only mining camp to a functioning community. Some of the present homes are vacation homes or homes retired people live in.

The Placerville townsite was selected shortly after gold was discovered there in 1862. Placerville was the original gateway to the Boise Basin, its population exploded from 0 in 1862 to 3,254 in 1863 Placerville was incorporated July 14, 1887.

G. Guy and Nina E. Richey purchased the property in June 1952. In 1962, it was discovered that much of the townsite was built on public land and could be filed on for mining rights. The mayor requested a townsite patent from the Bureau of Land Management and it was granted in 1963. But the Richey property had not been included in the town patent. Richey applied for a patent and was finally granted a lease in 1968 under the Small Tract Act, without an option to purchase the land. The house was later used as a summer or vacation property and had been kept in good repair. The Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 continued the lease. Nina died in 1990 and her daughter, Margaret Schaufellberger relinquished the

lease that same year to the BLM and it has been a vacant building since. No significant events or people have been connected to the structures. In 1990, the Idaho SHPO suggested that the house was significant and required documentation before demolition.

Sources:

This report failed to discover any architectural drawings, historic photographs or citations in published or unpublished sources.

Interviews with informants provided primary information and confirmed other gathered data. Bruce McKenzie is the brother to Kenneth and was interviewed by Shaw in April 1996 at Placerville. He mentioned that the property lacks a clear right-of-way passage and will be pleased to see the structure demolished because he owns adjacent property.

Information was obtained from BLM site reports (Intermountain Antiquities Computer System 10BO711), National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the adjacent Placerville Townsite Historic District, BLM Occupancy Lease Case # I-2394, Idaho SHPO correspondence to the BLM, BLM Mineral Survey 1293, and Power line Right-of-Way (#45392) I-2394.

Contextual information came from Merle W. Wells' book, GOLD CAMPS AND SILVER CITIES published in 1983 by the Idaho Department of Lands, Bureau of Mines and Geology and Arthur A. Hart's book, BASIN OF GOLD - Life in the Boise Basin, 1862-1890 published in 1989 by the Idaho City Historical Foundation.

Project Information:

This small estate and its structures are being documented as mitigation for the demolition of the structures under the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Boise District, with recommendation from the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (ISHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) Pacific Great Basin System Support Office undertook this project to provide written and photographic documentation of this property that was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed by the BLM and ISHPO and it was accepted by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) in May 1996.

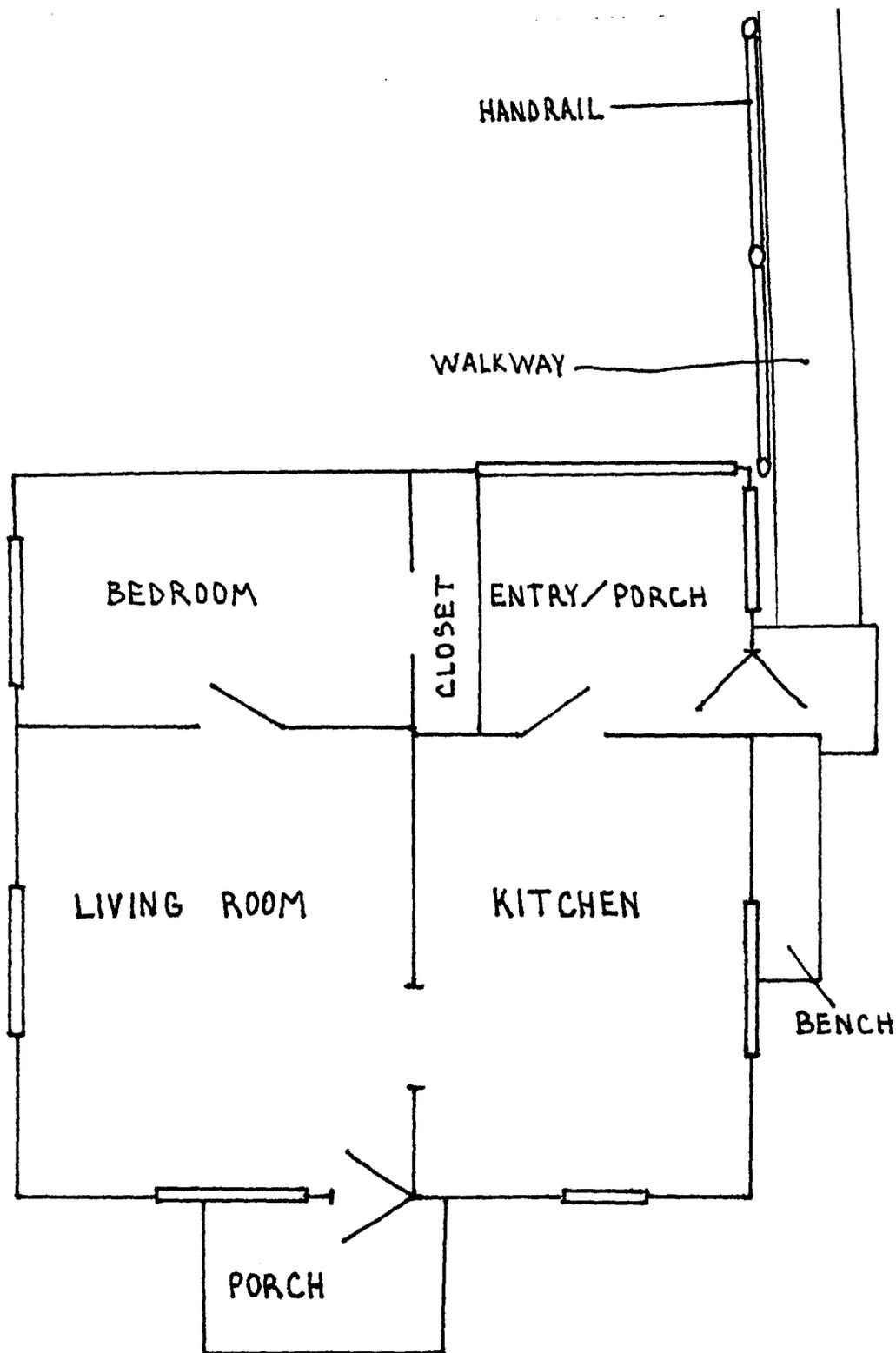
Demolition of the structures was recommended for this property to return the public lands to their original condition before they were trespassed on and these structures illegally built. Furthermore, these structures may attract vagrants that can lead to safety and health liabilities that the BLM can not afford to sustain such as accidents, vermin bites and structure and or forest fires that could raze the BLM and U.S. Forest Service timber that surrounds the town of Placerville. Restoration of these structures would have been a continual drain on shrinking BLM budgets, and because of its remote location would have provided very little actual value for the BLM or the public.

This has been a long, involved project that took several years to resolve. The following personnel worked on this project:

Margaret Wyatt - BLM Boise District Archaeologist  
Lois Palmgren - BLM Archaeological Technician  
Effie Schultsmeier - BLM Realty Specialist  
Del Bale - BLM Realty Specialist  
John Fend - BLM Cascade Resource Area Manager  
Richard Slack - Boise State University Intern for the BLM  
Thomas Green - Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer  
Robert Yohe III - Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer  
Carrie Scupholm - ISHPO Architectural Historian  
John Baker - Contract Photographer

This HABS report was investigated, compiled and written by Dean Shaw, BLM Archaeological Technician.

This final report is dated August 1996.



McKenzie Property (Richey Property) Sketch Site Plan

