

PRICE RANCH
Nez Perce National Historical Park
White Bird vicinity
Idaho County
Idaho

HABS No. ID-123

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Columbia Cascades Support Office
National Park Service
909 1st Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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25- WHITEBIRD
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Location: Price Ranch is in the vicinity of Whitebird, Idaho which is 21 miles south of Grangeville. The property is within Nez Perce National Historical Park.

Present Owner: Department of Interior: National Park Service

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Abandoned ranch

Significance: The Price Property has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its association with the development of local agriculture and dairying, and Criterion C as an intact representative group of rural Idaho farm structures from the early 20th century.

Description: The Price Property consists of an eclectic assortment of older, wood-frame farm buildings in various stages of deterioration on a tract of land totaling 33.16 acres. The property is bordered by Whitebird Creek and U.S. Highway 95. The property gently slopes from the highway to the creek. The property is fenced and cross-fenced into six different pastures and fields, with primarily post and wire fencing. There is approximately 12 acres in two fields that is irrigated. The irrigation water comes from Whitebird Creek, through a ditch along the southwest side of the property. Out of the 33.16 acres, approximately 25 acres were either cleared for pasture or for hay production at one time. There are 14 rather old fruit trees on the property that still bear fruit. There are a few trees along Whitebird Creek, but the property is cleared with some brush on the north four or five acres.

The **main house** was built in 1910 and was approximately 984 square feet in size. It was a one story, L-shaped, wood-frame house with a steeply pitched hip roof covered in composition roofing. The only feature remaining of the structure is the concrete foundation (dating from 1956).

The **barn** (approximately 912 square feet) was also built in 1910 and is the largest standing structure on the complex. Part of the building, a 24' x 24' section is built of logs. There is no foundation or floor. The gambrel shaped roof is covered with metal (over wood shakes) and has vertical wood board planking as siding above the saddle-notched log siding. A shed roofed addition, 14' x 24', clad in vertical board siding, used to be a milk parlor and contains five stanchions. It has a plank floor.

A concrete block **milk house** was built in 1953. The foundation and floor are concrete and the gable roof is covered with metal. The building contains four metal stanchions, and has a 5' x 10' granary attached. A portion of the milk house (approximately 8' x 15') is sealed for grain and mixed seed storage.

A **bunkhouse**, possibly one of the original buildings, is still standing. It is a one-story, gable roofed, rectangular building with composition siding. The bunkhouse is 16' x 21', has a chimney and several door and window openings.

A **smokehouse** (8' x 8') of rough frame material has a gable roof covered in wood shingles.

Attached to the smokehouse is a concrete floored **poultry house** (8' x 12') made of rough, vertical wood boards.

A wood-frame, gable roofed **outhouse** of vertical board construction stands nearby the poultry house.

The **shop** (12' x 14') is a gable roofed building with vertical board siding. The roof has wood shingles and there is no foundation.

The **garage** (16' x 32') is probably one of the older buildings on the ranch complex. It has a wood shingled gable roof with rough, horizontal board siding on the gable ends above vertical board siding. There is no floor or foundation.

An older **poultry house** is rectangular in shape, comprised of two joining shed roof sections, one raised several feet above the other. The roofs are covered in wood shingles, and horizontal board siding is used throughout to clad the roughly built structure.

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All of the above mentioned outbuildings are in deteriorated condition.

Small-scale landscape features include flagstone and concrete walkways, a grape arbor, wooden gates near the site of the house and behind the barn, wood-frame rabbit pens, irrigation ditches, and fencing.

Historical Context: Historical information about the property is limited. The area was home to the Nez Perce Indians before it was opened up to white settlement. Beginning in the 1860's, after gold was discovered in nearby Florence, Whitebird was passed by thousands of miners who entered the area and claimed land, displacing the original inhabitants. By the time of the Nez Perce War in 1877, the area of Whitebird had a small store and a few white squatters. This was followed by a school, post office, hotel and stage station by 1891. By the 1910's, Whitebird had a population of 400 and had two stores, two hotels, two saloons, and an assortment of other shops and services available (Pioneer Days in Idaho County, 1965). The owners of the scattered ranches and farms in the Whitebird area likely made use of the various services in town as they were available. However, no significant historic events or activities can be associated with the town and surrounding ranches. The most significant event was the Whitebird Battle, the site of which is several miles away and well-documented.

From Nez Perce NHP records it appears that the property was first purchased by Bill and Harriet Hawley who bought property known as the Buffham Ranch from Herman R. Buffham in 1892. The ranch, all unsurveyed land on Whitebird Creek, contained improvements of fencing, fruit trees and bushes, a dwelling house, and outbuildings. In 1909, Harriet Hawley sold the property to Charles Dunham (34.08 acres) who lived there with his wife Lillian. They sold it in 1920 and bought it back again in 1928-33. The Hardins owned the property from 1920-1922 and S. Whitney Gorman owned the property from 1922-1927. In 1933, William and Mary Wright bought the property from Dunham. The William Wrights' and the Frank T. Taylors (Mary's parents) lived on the property and planted an orchard and garden, and had cows, pigs, and other farm animals on the ranch. In 1946, William Wright sold the property to Grover C. Newman. Grover and his wife Zola owned the property from 1946-1950. They sold to their granddaughter, Fae Davis, and her husband Darrold Price. At that time (1950), it was a small rural dairy and the owners sold milk in the small town of Whitebird. Darrold and Fae owned the property until 1969 when they sold to the National Park Service, retaining a life estate. Fae Price passed away in 1992, twenty years after her husband, and the property officially became the responsibility of the NPS.

Project Information: The Price Ranch is being documented because NPS resource management and planning documents call for the removal of structures from this area to enhance interpretation and preservation of the White Bird Battlefield site and the historic scene.