William and Lucina Bowe Ranch, House
County Road 44
0.1 Mile Northeast of Big Hole River Bridge
Melrose Vicinity
Silver Bow County
Montana

HABS No. MT-104-A

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47-MEL.V
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Rocky Mountain System Support Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM AND LUCINA BOWE RANCH,
HOUSE

HABS No. MT-104-A

I. INTRODUCTION

Location:	The William and Lucina Bowe Ranch is on the east side of the lower Big Hole River Valley in southwest Montana. It lies in Silver Bow County about 0.1 mile south of the community of Melrose and 35 miles north of Dillon. County Road 40 passes through the property and crosses the river approximately 0.1 mile to the southwest. The house is at the far northeast corner of the ranch, approximately 0.1 mile northeast of the bridge over the Big Hole River.
Quad:	Melrose
UTM:	Zone: 12; Easting 368630; Northing 5053830
Date of Construction:	ca. 1880s
Present Owners:	Dale and Rosanna Carpenter P.O. Box 26 Melrose, MT 59740
Present Use:	Occupied Dwelling
Significance:	The house contributes to the significance of the William and Lucina Bowe Ranch. It is an important reflection of the site's role in the social and agricultural development of the lower Big Hole Valley, having served as both the Bowe family's home and part of their hotel business. The house also has a direct association with William and Lucina Bowe, individuals significant in local history for their part in the early settlement of the lower Big Hole Valley and the founding and development of the town of Melrose. And finally, the house stands as an example of vernacular residential architecture from the turn-of-the-century.
Historian:	Mary McCormick Renewable Technologies, Inc. Butte, Montana March 1998

II. HISTORY

The house presumably is the dwelling that William Bowe purchased and moved the site "in pieces" in about the early 1880s. It served both as a home for the Bowe family and their hotel for the next 15 to 20 years.[1] During that time, the building received one or more additions. Although unverified, it appears to have been further remodeled in the1900s, including the application of neo classical decorative elements to the exterior. Today, the house essentially retains its turn-of-the-century appearance, although it has sustained some modifications in recent years.

III. DESCRIPTION

The house stands at the far northeast end of the site, facing east toward the Highland Mountain. Rows of mature cottonwood trees line the front and north sides of the house. An historic picket fence encloses a yard on the south side of the house. The area immediately west of the side yard is used as a parking driveway. Lands north of the house serve as livestock pasture.

The house is a 1½-story, wood-frame dwelling with a gable-roofed unit at the front (east) and hipped-roofed unit at the rear (west). There is a gabled-roofed wall dormer on the north side of the roof, and another on the south; both dormers are early additions. The house rests on a concrete block foundation, but remains of a former foundation of poured concrete is evident toward the front of the building. A full-width porch fronts the house and wraps around the south side, and a small porch is attached at the rear. The exterior walls are veneered by steel siding with 8" exposure; the siding presumably was applied in the 1960s or early 1970s. At that time, the trim sets were also removed from most of the window openings. One-over-one, double-hung windows predominate. Fenestration patterns vary between each elevation of the house, and in general, are asymmetrical.

The combination gable-hip roof is covered by asphalt shingles. Its eaves have wide, enclosed overhangs with tongue-and-groove paneled soffits underscored by modillions. The gable roofs at the two dormers share a common roof ridge and their eaves display the same finishing treatment as the main roof. Both dormers retain original wood-shingle wall siding. The north dormer holds a pair of one-over-one, double-hung windows, but the south dormer has been modified with a six-by-six, sliding window. A corbelled brick chimney projects above the hipped roof at the rear of the house, and another brick chimney rises from the roof ridge at the dormers. A single-light fixed window pierces the front gable end.

The wrap-around front porch has a low-pitched hip roof and rests on a concrete foundation. The porch roof is supported by round wood columns on built-up, wood square piers with recessed panels. Similar to the rest of the house, it has wide eaves with paneled soffits underscored by modillions. Between the column piers there is a closed railing covered by steel siding. Wood-framed screen windows infill the openings between the columns. The porch's front entry is offset to the north. It holds a wood-framed screen door and is accessed by a crude set of wood steps that presumably replaced an earlier staircase. A second entry has been added at the southwest end of the porch. It is slightly canted and opens onto a long, concrete ramp, built by Tom Connors–the previous owner–to accommodate his handicapped daughter.[2] The interior of the porch has 3" board flooring and a beaded-board ceiling.

The front wall of the house (inside the porch) has a doorway to the north and a cottage window to the south. The doorway holds a full-light door framed by side lights and a transom. The cottage window features leaded glass at the upper light and is flanked on either side by narrow one-over-one, double-hung windows.

A bay window projects from the south side of the house. It has three slightly-canted walls, each holding a one-over-one, double-hung window. The bay's eastern-most wall has been cut short by modifications to the southwest end of wrap-around porch.

A shed-roofed porch is attached at the south end of the rear wall. Walls of the porch are partially enclosed by steel-siding, but the doorway remains open. It is reached by a concrete stoop with curved stairs. The rear entry for the house has a modern, hollow-core door. A modern picture window is north of the door.

The interior of the house retains much of its historic design attributes and fabric, although it displays some modern features. The first floor has a parlor, living room, and two bedrooms toward the front, and a kitchen, bathroom and laundry room at the rear (figure 1). The four front rooms feature paneled-wood doors, cap trim sets at the door and wood window openings, and molded baseboards. Classical-style colonnades frame the passageways between the front entry and the parlor, and the parlor and the living room. A built-in china cabinet is set in the wall between the living room and kitchen; it features leaded-glass doors. Fixtures in both the kitchen and bathroom are replacements. Many of the walls in the first floor rooms have been covered by wall paper in recent years, and the floors throughout have been either carpeted or covered by linoleum.

Access between the first and second floors is provided by enclosed staircase toward the rear of the house (see figure 1). The second floor of the house contains two bedrooms, one on either side of a central hallway. Each bedroom is beneath a dormer.

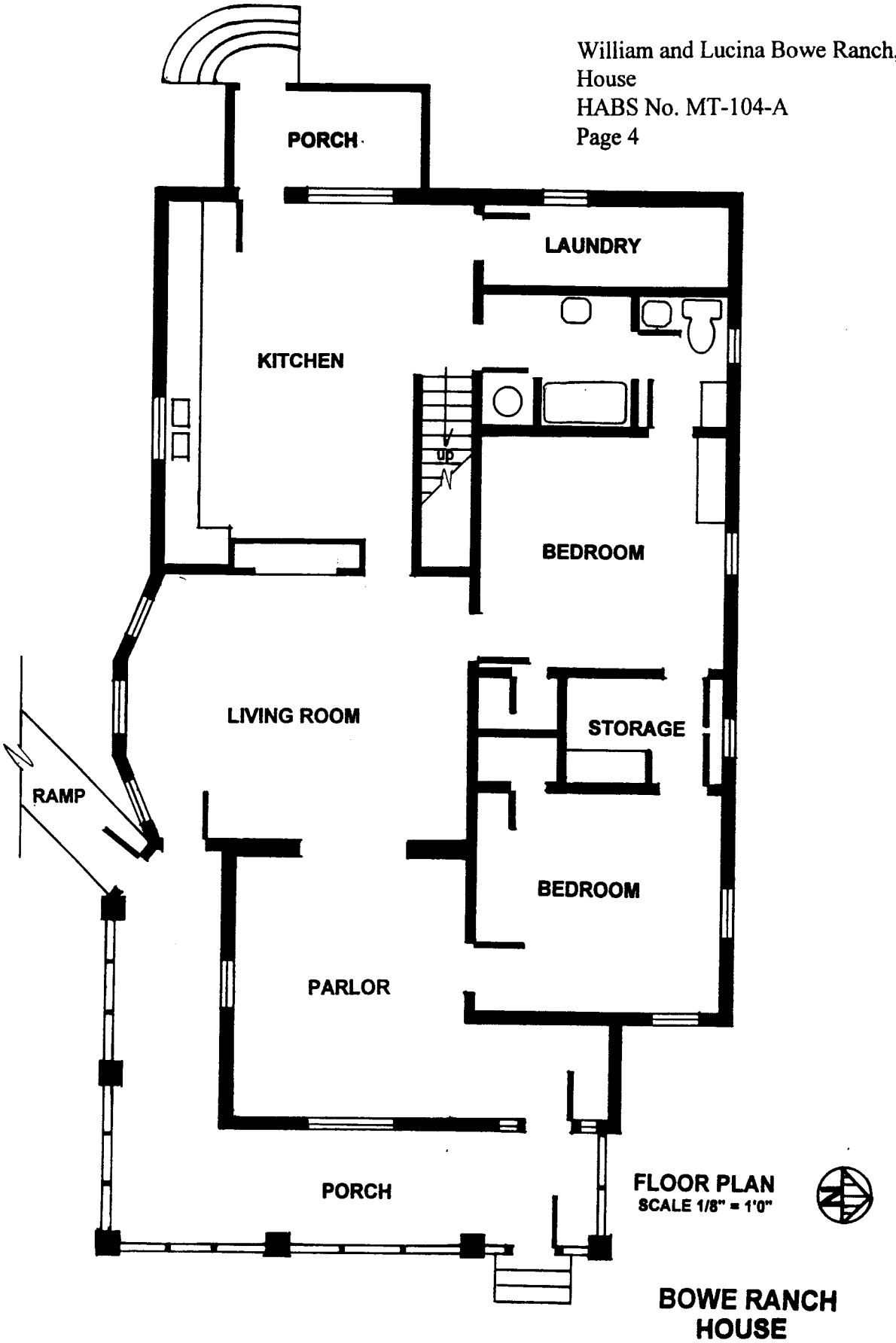

Figure 1. Plan of First Floor.

IV. ENDNOTES

1. Joaquin Miller, "William Bowe," in *An Illustrated History of the State of Montana* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1894), 643-644; Dale and Rosanna Carpenter, interviews with Mary McCormick, June 1997.

2. Jon Axline, "William Bowe Ranch," *Montana Cultural Resource Inventory Form*, April 1996.