

William and Lucina Bowe Ranch,
One-Room Log Cabin
100 feet Southwest of House
Melrose Vicinity
Silver Bow County
Montana

HABS No. MT-104-L

HABS
MONT
47-MEL.V,
IL-

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM AND LUCINA BOWE RANCH,
ONE-ROOM LOG CABIN

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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 one-room log cabin is on the north side of the ranch, approximately 100 feet southwest of the house

Quad: Melrose

UTM: Zone: 12; Easting 368580; Northing 5053810

Date of Construction: ca. 1870s

Present Owners: Dale and Rosanna Carpenter
P.O. Box 26
Melrose, MT 59740

Present Use: Storage

Significance: The one-room log cabin contributes 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 one of the first dwellings at the Bowe Ranch and as part of the stage stop and hotel before the early 1880s. The cabin 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 cabin embodies log carpentry technologies and design concepts representative of the period in which it was built.

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Historian: Mary McCormick
Renewable Technologies, Inc.
Butte, Montana
March 1998

II. HISTORY

This cabin probably was built in the mid-to late 1870s. Presumably either it or the two-room log cabin (MT-104-M) immediately to the south was the cabin William Bowe established on his land in 1875. Both of these ~~of~~ buildings are at the approximate location of the cabin shown on the 1876 GLO map of the area, and each of them clearly dates to the period.¹ The one- and two-room cabins and the log root cellar (MT-104-N) represent the core group of residential facilities that not only housed the Bowe Family but also served as part of the stage stop and hotel until about the early 1880s, when William Bowe brought in a wood-frame dwelling (MT-104-A).

III. DESCRIPTION

This building is a single-pen log cabin (17' x 20") about 20 feet south of the log bunkhouse (MT-104-H). Most of the wall logs are round except for a few hand-hewn logs on the cabin's north side. The wall logs meet in V-notched corners and are daubed on the exterior with mortar. The roof is a low front-gable structure made of log purlins and two layers of board decking covered by corrugated metal sheeting. A metal vent protrudes from the roof at the northeast corner of the cabin. The only entry is offset to the south on the front (east) wall. It presumably once held a person-sized door but has been widened to accommodate a pair of outswinging doors made of vertical boards. Centered on the north wall is a six-light by six-light, wood-sash sliding window. There are no windows on the west and south walls.

The cabin is currently used for storage. Its interior remains unfinished, although a concrete slab has been laid on the 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; General Land Office (GLO), Plat of "T9S R9W," surveyed Sept. 29-Oct.3 1876, on file Montana State Office, Bureau of Land Management, Billings.