

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

HABS No. MT-104-M

HABS
MONT
47-MEL.V
IM-

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,
TWO-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 two-room log cabin is on the north side of the ranch, approximately 90 feet southwest of the house.

Quad: Melrose

UTM: Zone: 12; Easting 368585; Northing 5053805

Date of Construction: ca. 1870s

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

Present Use: Storage

Significance: The two-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 station 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 one-room log cabin (MT-104-L) immediately to the north was the cabin William Bowe established on his land in 1875. Both of these 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 station and hotel until about the early 1880s, when William Bowe brought in a wood-frame dwelling (MT-104-A).

III. DESCRIPTION

This two-room log cabin (13'6" x 24'6") is a few feet southeast of the one-room log cabin (MT-104-L). Its round wall logs are square-notched at the corners and daubed on the exterior with mortar. The roof is a low side-gable structure made of log purlins and board decking covered by asphalt shingles. Fascia board trim has recently been added at the gable ends. The front (east) wall has two entries, one at the north end of the wall and the other at the south. Each entry holds a vertical board door. A small window opening pierces the north wall, but it has been covered by boards. A narrow, enclosed walkway extends from the northwest corner of the cabin to the log root cellar (MT-104-N)

The interior of the cabin is divided into two rooms by a partition wall made of vertical boards. The wall is without a door. Floors throughout the cabin are dirt. A doorway is on the rear (west) wall of the northern-most room. It opens into the walkway that leads to the log root cellar (MT-104-N).

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.