Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead (Crowder Ranch)
Pinon Canyon
20 miles east of U. S. Highway 350
Model vicinity
Las Animas County
Colorado

HABS No. CO-89

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPY OF MEASURED DRAWING

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287
For more information about other structures at the Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, see:

- HABS No. CO-89-A: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Marguerite Arnet Residence
- HABS No. CO-89-B: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Adobe Barn
- HABS No. CO-89-C: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Stone Outbuilding
- HABS No. CO-89-D: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Dugout Cellar
- HABS No. CO-89-E: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Hen House
- HABS No. CO-89-F: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Residence
- HABS No. CO-89-G: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Generator House
- HABS No. CO-89-H: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Garage
- HABS No. CO-89-I: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Bunkhouse
- HABS No. CO-89-J: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Stone Shed
- HABS No. CO-89-K: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Frame Shed
- HABS No. CO-89-L: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Frame Garage
- HABS No. CO-89-M: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Shed
- HABS No. CO-89-N: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Bunkhouse
- HABS No. CO-89-O: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Stone Garage
- HABS No. CO-89-P: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Generator House
- HABS No. CO-89-Q: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Bunkhouse
- HABS No. CO-89-R: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Residence
- HABS No. CO-89-T: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Dugout Cellar
- HABS No. CO-89-U: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Shed
- HABS No. CO-89-V: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Shed
- HABS No. CO-89-W: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Shed
- HABS No. CO-89-X: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Outhouse
- HABS No. CO-89-Y: Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead, Outhouse

Location: Between Taylor and Van Bremer Arroyos, one mile west of the Purgatoire River 20 miles east of U. S. Highway 350, vicinity of the village of Model, Las Animas County, Colorado, Marguerite Arnet's claim included the SW 1/4 section of the SE 1/4 of Section 34; Lot 1 in the SE 1/4 section of the NE 1/4 of Section 3; and the SW 1/4 section of the NW 1/4 of Section 2 (170 acres total); all in Township 31 South, Range 58 West. Bessie Arnet's original claim included the S 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of Section 34 and Lots 2 and 3 of the SE 1/4 section of the NE 1/4, the NE 1/4 section of the SW 1/4, and the NW 1/4 section of the SE 1/4 (302 acres total), all in Section 3, Township 31 South, Range 58 West. The ranch is located within the United States Army's Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, and with the Pinon Canyon HABS district (HABS No. CO-96).

UTM References: 13, 598170, 4137750
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13, 598620, 4137750  
13, 598170, 4137350  
13, 598660, 4137360

Present Owner: United States Army  
Present Use: Abandoned  
Significance: The Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead represents the expansion of a homestead from three buildings, established by an immigrant family from Eppingen, Germany, to a large scale ranch operation incorporating numerous residences and outbuildings. The homestead is a sprawling complex that utilizes every known vernacular material and building technique in the Pinon Canyon area. Stone masonry, jacal, and adobe are represented at the homestead, along with the modern materials of milled lumber and cement block. Local building traditions, derived from Anglo architecture, include the segmentally-arched roofs over the Marguerite Arnet Homestead and the bunkhouse, and the dugout cellars; Hispanic techniques were utilized in the jacal and adobe walls of the Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead.

Part I. Historical Information  
A. Physical History  
1. Dates of Erection:

The Marguerite Arnet house, adjacent dugout cellar, and nearby "hen house" were built by her sons Adam and John before 1909.¹ In 1916, Adam Arnet constructed a two-room jacal residence (the Adam and Bessie Arnet Residence) and an adobe barn.² A four-room adobe addition was added to the jacal residence ca. 1918. The remaining residences, sheds,


² National Archives, Washington, D.C. Homestead application Patent No. 820201, Serial No. 024412 filed by Bessie Arnet, formerly Cassidy, of Thatcher, Colorado, in 1916 and patented on August 19, 1921 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office. In Bessie Arnet’s testimony, she states the total value of the improvements to her claim, including the "dwelling house hackell [jacal] with shingle roof, barn adobe [with] shingle roof, corral about 400 foot square, a well ..., a wind Mill [sic], [and] material on the ground for more buildings in course [sic] of construction" was about $3300.
garages, and bunkhouses were built or moved to the ranch as it expanded over the next five decades. After the 1934 sale of the section of the ranch known as "Big Canyon," a residence was constructed for the purchasers on their new property.

2. Original and Subsequent Owners:
(Source: Las Animas County Land Records on file at the The Trinidad Abstract and Title Company, Trinidad, Colorado)

Date Filed: Owner:

March 29, 1915 The Arnet Family
November 1, 1956 Jack and Margaret Crowder
March 4, 1983 United States Army

Big Canyon Section of Bessie Arnet’s Claim

October 19, 1921 Bessie Arnet
March 26, 1934 Doherty Investment Company
(purchased from E.A. Duling, Sheriff)
July 3, 1942 Louise Compton
January 12, 1951 Tom Dillingham, et. al.
January 11, 1966 Big Canyon Grazing Association
1984 United States Army

B. Historical Context

Adam Arnet immigrated to this country from Eppingen, Germany in 1891. He came to Colorado, via Ionia, Michigan in 1896 and worked in Rocky Ford at the sugar processing plants. Around 1900 he settled in the Pinon Canyon area and began working as a cook for some of the larger ranches, including Brown’s Sheep Ranch (see HABS No. CO-90.) His mother, Marguerite Arnet, brother John, and sister Mary followed him to the area. Although the Marguerite Arnet homestead was settled by her, the 160 acre plot was patented under the Homestead Act by her heirs (Adam, John, and Mary) as she died before the process was complete. The section of the site that contains the Adam and Bessie Arnet house was patented by Bessie Arnet on August 19, 1921 under the Enlarged Homestead Act. The Arnets raised sheep initially, then cattle in the 1930s and 1940s. In the 1940s Adam resumed raising sheep until the early 1950s when an injury forced him to switch from the labor intensive sheep ranching to cattle ranching.

The various Arnet family members may have used their land in common, pooling resources and expanding when they could. Adam Arnet increased his holdings dramatically in the 1920s when he began buying failed dry
farm homesteads in the area. Dry-farming techniques depended on rainfall, soil moisture conservation, and the use of certain introduced drought resistant crops. While successful in some areas, dry farming techniques proved to be a disaster in southeastern Colorado as in other parts of the semi-arid West when drought struck. These homesteaders simply left or sold to people like the Arnets. By 1930, the Arnet ranch encompassed over 30,000 acres, the third largest ranch in Pinon Canyon. Prosperity almost ended for the Arnets with the Great Depression when Adam was forced to sell a section of their property known as "Big Canyon" to stay in operation. In the 1950s, Adam's daughter Margaret, along with her husband Jack Crowder, took over the ranch and it remained in their hands until the Army acquired it in 1983. The ranch had been in Arnet family hands for over 70 years, one of the longest tenured families in the Pinon Canyon area.

C. Architectural Context

The Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead is located in the southeast corner of the Pinon Canyon area, one mile from the Purgatoire River canyon (see HABS No. CO-89-1-6). Access to the site is provided by a southeast spur road which begins at the intersections of Pinon Canyon Roads Nos. 2 and 3. The site is composed of over twenty buildings, found in four areas. The buildings are situated among several rock outcroppings; most of the site is at a lower elevation than the open prairie to the north. The vernacular architecture of the Arnet ranch demonstrates the different choices available for building materials and technologies to settlers on the southeastern Colorado frontier. The early use of jacal and stone masonry gave way to labor-intensive adobe structures and finally milled lumber and cement block.

The Marguerite Arnet residence, the dugout cellar, and the hen house, of stone, are to the east of the access road. The residence has a segmentally-arched roof. This type of roof, derived from Anglo Plains architecture, was common in the Pinon Canyon area. The dugout cellar is a feature found in both vernacular Hispanic and Plains architecture.

The remainder of the buildings are to the west of the access road. The original portion of the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence is constructed of jacal, as is a bunkhouse to the north. The addition to the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence, the generator shed, and the barn are constructed of adobe. Both jacal and adobe were first utilized in the area by Hispanics who had immigrated from New Mexico. The sheds and garages to the east and west of the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence are frame, cinder block, or masonry construction. There are fences composed of various materials which divide the area around the sheds into several pens.

Approximately 400' to the north of the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence, a third group of buildings includes an adobe residence, a masonry dugout
Hispanics who had immigrated from New Mexico. The sheds and garages to the east and west of the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence are frame, cinder block, or masonry construction. There are fences composed of various materials which divide the area around the sheds into several pens.

Approximately 400’ to the north of the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence, a third group of buildings includes an adobe residence, a masonry dugout cellar and garage, and a cinder block chicken coop. The dugout cellar has a segmentally-arched roof. The fourth group, called Big Canyon Ranch and located approximately 620’ to the northwest of the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence, includes a cinder block residence and a frame shed.

Between the Marguerite Arnet residence group and the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence group is a pond with an earth embankment on the east side. On top of the hill, there is a windmill and tank. There are also two pumps which provide water for the site. The site has electric service and the three residences to the west of the access road have indoor plumbing. The site is in fair condition; only the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence, the generator shed, and the Big Canyon residence are habitable.

Part II. Sources of Information

A. Bibliography


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B. Additional Sources


Prepared by: Michelle McFadden
Al Wiatr
Historians
National Park Service
November 1989

Note: For Historical and Architectural Overviews, see also HABS No. CO-96.

Part III. Project Information

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of Senior Historian Gregory Kendrick and Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan. Documentation was completed during the summer of 1989 at the HABS field office in Pinon Canyon, Colorado, by project supervisor Alfonso Narvaez, architectural technicians John Kirkpatrick, Eric Miller, and Jim Duran, and by project historians Al Wiatr and Michelle McFadden. Photographs were taken by Arnold Thallheimer.