HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

AND

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

HISTORICAL DATA

KOHRS AND BIELENBERG HOME RANCH

GRANT-KOHR'S RANCH NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

MONTANA

by

John Albright

assisted by

Peter Snell
Paul Gordon

DENVER SERVICE CENTER
HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DENVER, COLORADO
This report is only a beginning. It serves as an introduction to the lengthy and complex history of a large Montana ranch, an institution in whose story is reflected the early settlement of the state and more than a full century of subsequent history: dynamic, prosaic, and multifaceted at one and the same time. A constant aspect of the story is the magnitude of it. The Grant-Kohrs Ranch, the "home ranch" of the immense open range cattle and mining operations of Conrad Kohrs and John Bielenberg, contains a myriad of structures and buildings and a richly furnished ranch house, each worthy of detailed consideration. The documentary collections concerning the Kohrs and Bielenberg Home Ranch are massive and detailed, revealing a range cattle operation that spanned all of Montana and parts of Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, and the Canadian province of Alberta. The raising of thoroughbred cattle is also an important part of the Kohrs and Bielenberg home ranch story. One of the partner's business ledgers for the period 1892 to 1901 listed 591 separate accounts, some for amounts over half a million dollars, yet others noting only a few hours pay for a summer ranch hand who helped in haying.

Within the necessary limits of time and funds available to meet the immediate and pressing needs of the park, and the requirement to produce material for use in interpretation, legislative compliance, planning, and exhibits, it is obvious that a lengthy and comprehensive history of the ranch could not be produced at this time. Instead, this report attempts to provide an introduction to the many activities of the ranch, focusing primarily on the broad history of the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle operation. Necessary additional research is discussed in detail in the Recommendations section at the end of this study, and many of the appendices will provide guidance to the source materials on the park.

Part of the study--virtually a project within a project--was the compilation, organization, and microfilming of the voluminous records owned by Mr. Conrad Kohrs Warren, last owner of the ranch. This work, executed by University of Montana Archivist Dale Johnson and his photographer Gerald Kling, was done under contract to the National Park Service. It is somewhat ironic to note that Mr. Johnson's excellent work, paid for by funds for this study, could not be utilized, except peripherally, in the preparation of this report. Yet the seven reels of microfilm serve to strengthen this study's reason for being: to provide data for further research and for interpretation of the park. An index of the seven rolls of film is contained as an appendix.

The study is organized in two parts: The first is a Historic Resource Study (Project 2001-1016-483, Type 32, Package 113); the second is the Historical Data section of the Historic Structure Report (Project 2001-1033-487, Type 35, Package 113). Naturally, there will be some
overlapping of information. Because the two are being produced under one cover, the bulk of the general historical data that appears will be in the Historic Research Study, with material in the Historic Structure Report confined to structural history and allied information. A map of the historical resources, an initial effort subject to change as more historical data become available, but one which can serve as an interim Historic Base Map, is included in the report and relates to both parts of the study.

The Historic Resource Study is organized chronologically. For the 1866 to 1918 period it has as its core an unpublished manuscript, "The Autobiography of Conrad Kohrs," owned by Mr. Conrad Warren. Numerous other materials, most of them either county records or manuscript material from the Kohrs Papers--also owned by Mr. Warren--or those at the Montana Historical Society, buttress the material in the Kohrs autobiography. The Historic Structure Report is organized by structure, with appropriate park-wide data preceding the building-by-building studies.

Both reports will center around the home ranch, today's national historic site. Studies of Conrad Kohrs's activities in mining and politics, and detailed studies of the range operations conducted hundreds of miles away from the home ranch, must await future examination.

Many individuals have provided time and effort to help produce this report. Con Warren, of the Warren Ranch in Deer Lodge, has been generous with his knowledge of his grandfather's ranch--a ranch he first managed and then owned--and in allowing the use of the manuscript materials that he and his wife, Nell Warren, carefully protected and organized. No doubt many individuals will, in the years to come, recognize the immense debt owed to the Warrens by all those who appreciate the creation of this historical park that commemorates the cattle industry in the American West. It is a special privilege to be among the first in the National Park Service to be able to do so in print. Con and Nell Warren carefully protected the documents and the furnishings of the old ranch, recognizing their national significance long before most others. The result of their vigilance and concern for the integrity of the collection is a historical unit of the National Park Service in which much of the furnishings, structures, lands, and historical documents remain in their original relationships to each other--a uniquely complete historical park.

The staff at the park have all been most cooperative and helpful. Superintendent Richard Peterson and Administrative Officer Georgia Sumner provided a great deal of help in the many visits to the park required of the author. Park Historian Paul Gordon's research assistance, which was considerable, is recognized on the title page. It is a pleasure to thank him again for the valuable data he provided and to state that it was most rewarding to work with him and his assistants, Ranger-Historians Larry Martin and Michael Holm. At the Montana Historical Society, Harriet Meloy
and her staff, particularly Lory Morrow and Rex Myers, were both efficient and helpful in providing materials and guidance on how best to utilize them. Throughout the project, Historical Architect Peter Snell at the Denver Service Center and I have worked together and his many contributions are most appreciated. Peter's work has been of such broad scope, it is only fitting that he be recognized as an adjunct historian for the project as well as the historical architect. He contributed the bulk of the structural data on the ranch buildings and drew the interim Historical Base Maps. Linda Greene's fine editing hand strengthened the manuscript as it has many others. Her help is gratefully acknowledged. Bill Kelly provided much guidance in the search for funds to microfilm the Kohrs Papers, and Bill Siney guided the contract through the maze for such activities. The assistance of both is appreciated.

The materials at the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library proved to be as valuable as they have been on other projects involving the West, and the staff as helpful. The Milwaukee Road offices at Deer Lodge provided the 1907 map that was a key document and the earliest map showing any ranch structures. The personnel of the Powell County offices in Deer Lodge were all most kind, and the efforts of Bonnie Miller and her staff in the clerk and recorder's office particularly valuable in tracking down the numerous Kohrs and Bielenberg real estate transactions.

George A. Reinbold, of the Rocky Mountain Regional staff, prepared Map 2, and his help was greatly appreciated. Historical Architect Rodd Wheaton of the same office provided the information for Map 2, prepared Appendix 17, and provided guidance and suggestions throughout the project. His assistance proved to be of significant value, and is gratefully acknowledged.

Two friends, Mathew Kane, Jr., and Wayland Smith, Jr., both ranchers in Osage County, Oklahoma, looked over the draft manuscript and provided suggestions for improvement. Many of their comments were incorporated into the study.

While there have been an unusually high number of caveats listed above, each one carefully noting what this study is not, it is necessary to add even one more. It is that this study does not attempt to portray that particular mystique associated with the cattle business that all cattlemen have but few will acknowledge. There is no attempt to explain that drive, emotion, dedication, or whatever it is, that once kept and still keeps cattle growers devoted to a business in which the good years are rare, the bad years common, and the disastrous years not infrequent. That task is avoided in this study, and remains to challenge others.

For the benefit of those whose duties or inclinations will not permit them to read entire chapters, an introduction outlining the events to be described opens each chapter, and a summary synthesizing the material just presented closes each one.
The historian and historical architect worked together on this project from the beginning, within the limits imposed by the two professions, even conducting joint research. Because time and place came together at the Denver Service Center, this arrangement was possible. Since much of the research was done jointly, the usual repetition of information in the historical and architectural data sections has been avoided in this report. At least that was the intent.

The entire research and writing project for Grant-Kohrs Ranch was looked at as a whole, and in the division of labor much information usually found in the historical and architectural data sections was moved. As a result, the historical resource study contains more than a usual amount of ownership data on the ranch—the kind of information usually found in structure reports. It also contains a section entitled "Cultural Resources Statement," which includes some data often found in historic structure reports. Because of these deletions, the historical data section of the historic structure report is much briefer than usual. The relative paucity of material here is balanced by a larger amount of historical data in the architectural section.

As of this writing, the preceding appears to be a good solution and to make the overall document much more utilitarian to the interpreters, planners, and researchers who will be using it. Whether or not the unique arrangement will work, however, is not yet known. Like any other experiment, the results will not be final until tested. All data required in the current Activity Standards is included. But the data are not always exactly where the Standards calls for them to be. If the experiment works, then it can be tried with other projects. If it does not, then the attempt can be abandoned.

Despite the considerable assistance noted above, the principal author accepts full responsibility for any errors of fact and interpretation of fact that may appear in this narrative.
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT, PACKAGE 113, GRANT-KOHRS RANCH NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, MONTANA, FISCAL YEAR 1975

Package 103, FY 75, for GRKO, as assigned to Research Historian John Albright, Historic Preservation Team, Denver Service Center, consists of a type 32 Historic Resource Study (Project 2001-1016-483) and the Historical Data Section of a Historic Structures Report Type 35, Project 2001-1033-487) for the ranch buildings. Both will be included within one narrative.

The content of the report will meet the Activity Standards. For the Type 32 Historic Resource Study, the standards are listed on pages 2 and 3, Section IV; for the Type 35 Historical Data Section, pages 5 and 6, Section IV, as appropriate.

Because Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, projects affecting it are subject to the requirements of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation "Procedures for the Protection of the Historic and Cultural Environment" (36 CFR Part 800). Because of this requirement, the research historian will include with any recommendation in the study, data as necessary for complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, should a recommendation involve an action which would result in the necessity to comply with Section 106.

While the park management and staff will complete the nomination forms for the structures (NPS Forms 10-306, 10-301 and 10-301A) for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the National Park Service's List of Classified Structures, the research historian will provide data and assistance as available.

During the conduct of the study both park management and staff and the research historian will keep each other abreast of information involving respective areas of interest.

s/John N. Albright
Superintendent, GRKO
Date: __________________

Research Historian, DSC
Date: 5/4/76
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HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
"When I first reached Montana, the Deer Lodge Valley was one of the most beautiful stretches of bunch grass country imaginable. The grass waved like a huge field of grain."

Conrad Kohrs

"We crossed the Deer Lodge River, a wide and fine stream at this point. Nooned at 11 A.M. . . . I saw several hundred cows and calves belonging to [John] Grant, the finest I have seen in America."

James Harkness

A. John Grant Introduces Cattle to the Deer Lodge Valley

Cattle came to Montana with some of the initial settlers. As early as 1833 Bob Campbell, Bill Sublette's partner, brought three cows and two bulls to a Rocky Mountain Fur Company rendezvous, their eventual destination the Yellowstone River. That same year cattle grazed at Fort Union, at the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. An 1850 inventory listed forty-two head of mixed cattle at Fort Benton on the Missouri, and in 1851 another reported twelve head at Fort Alexander on the Yellowstone. Cattle arrived in the Deer Lodge Valley almost as early. In the winter of 1849 to 1850 Captain Richard Grant and his two sons, James and John, returned to the log cabin base camp in the Beaverhead Valley, not far from the Deer Lodge Valley, from which they roamed to trade, driving a herd of cattle acquired on the Mormon Trail between Fort Bridger and Salt Lake. Granville Stuart, who both participated in and chronicled Montana's early history on a grand scale, described the Grants' trading along the Immigrant Trail.


4. Ibid., p. 12.
In 1850 Capt. Richard Grant, with his sons John and James Grant began trading along the Emigrant road in Utah for footsore and worn-out cattle and horses. This stock was usually of good quality and only needed rest and a little care to make them fine animals. The Grants spent the summers along the Emigrant road between Bridger and Salt Lake, and in the fall drove their stock into what is now Montana.  

The Grants continued trading and building their herds during the 1850s. Then in 1857 John Grant wintered in the Deer Lodge Valley, presumably taking some cattle with him. He did not stay long, leaving that spring. But in the fall of 1859 he returned to the valley and built a home at the confluence of the Little Blackfoot and Deer Lodge rivers (about twelve miles north of today's Grant-Kohrs Ranch). Grant and his family lived there alone, but maintained friendly relations with the Indians who frequented the valley. Good relations were a necessity in view of the size of Grant's growing herds roaming the richly grassed valley: "two hundred and fifty head of horses and over eight hundred head of cattle." Granville Stuart attested to the quantity and quality of Grant's animals, which he saw when he, too, entered Montana to stay. Stuart described Grant's "several hundred cattle and horses" that had "fattened on the native grasses without shelter other than that afforded by the willows, alders, and tall rye grass along the streams." Stuart, too, brought cattle into Montana in 1858, sixty head, also acquired from the wagon trains on the emigrant trail.

These cattle from the midlands of America, the best that the pioneers on their way to Oregon and California could obtain, formed the foundation of the cattle industry in Montana. There the emaciated stock, weary from the trek across the plains, revived, fleshed out in the grass-rich river valleys of southwestern Montana, and multiplied. These were English breeds, shorthorned animals descended from the cattle that came over from North Europe and England to the Atlantic seaboard colonies. Not until many years had passed and the cattle industry had become a major factor in Montana's economy and culture would the descendants of the Spanish cattle, which had multiplied to form the basis of the Texas cattle boom following the Civil War, come to Montana in any significant numbers. The Montana cattle herds began with English-American shorthorned cattle. The famous Texas Longhorns came later.


8. Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, 2:97.
Not all of the cattle moving from Missouri and the east along the trail to Oregon failed to make the trip. Many survived, and as these first Montana herds grew, other and larger herds appeared in Oregon, to the west.

Initially cattle may have entered the Oregon country in 1788, coming north to the settlements on Nootka Sound from Monterey, California. These animals were descended from the Spanish types in Mexico, and bore the name "California Longhorns." Then, in the 1790s, Captain George Vancouver shipped some California cattle to the Hawaiian Islands to victual ships calling there. They multiplied well, and by the early 19th century the islands provided cattle to Oregon. Dr. John McLoughlin, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company post of Fort Vancouver, started a herd of twenty-seven cows and steers there in 1825, later supplementing it with three Durham bulls (Durham is an English shorthorn breed synonymous with "Short Horn"). McLoughlin kept the herd under close and careful control, until by 1838 it numbered a thousand head. As the Durham strain from the three bulls he imported blended with the Spanish strain of the California cattle, Oregon, like Montana, soon had non-longhorns in its early cattle herds, although of course some longhorn qualities would continue to show.

The immigration of 1843 brought "one thousand persons, with 120 wagons, and 5,000 cattle" to the Willamette Valley from Independence, Missouri. The herds were, of course, comprised of the English-American breeds. More Durhams were brought in in 1846, and English breeds quickly dominated the Oregon cattle herds. By the 1860s Oregon was now beginning to profit by the arrival of better cattle from the east. Surpluses adequate to feed the gold seekers stampeding into Idaho, Montana, and Nevada were accumulating, thanks to the abundant bunch grass in eastern Oregon and southwestern Idaho, with fine grama and wheat plants for winter grazing.

During the three decades preceding 1890, the range-cattle industry of the Northwest prospered mightily. . . . The rugged Oregon winters bred strong, rugged animals, far better suited for breeding purposes in their mountain territories, where settlement had to await the end of the Civil War, than Texas Longhorns, which were not inured to protracted cold.9

Thus, by the early 1860s the cattle herds in southwestern Montana, especially in the Deer Lodge Valley, and in Oregon, were developing rapidly,

9. Charles Wayland Towne and Edward Norris Wentworth, Cattle and Men (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955), pp. 235-37. Some of the longhorn characteristics showed in cattle that were brought into the Montana ranges in the early 1860s and known locally as "Spanish Cattle."
with predominantly English-American breeds. The herds to supply meat to the gold rushes of the early 1860s existed before the strikes opened the territory to frenetic settlement by the miners.

But the fast-growing herds could hardly have furnished a foundation for a future cattle empire had the Indians not--in the main--left the nascent industry and its bovine assets alone. This potential danger to the herds developing in southwest Montana had been eased earlier by a series of treaties with the Indians in the area negotiated by Washington Territory Governor Isaac I. Stevens in the 1850s. Stevens's treaties also allowed construction of a road from Fort Benton on the Missouri River to Fort Walla Walla in eastern Washington. This route became known as the Mullan Road, and provided an important avenue in and out of the area.10

So, a fortuitous combination of rich grass, footsore cattle along the Oregon Trail, and a diminished threat from the Indians allowed the herds to grow.

In 1860, not long after John Grant had moved to the Deer Lodge Valley his herds reached size enough to allow some to be trailed to California for sale. He became the first to export Montana cattle to a distant market.11

A year after he settled in the Deer Lodge Valley, Grant "concluded to go to the Immigrant road to induce some families to come with me and settle where I was. I took my horses but my cattle, I left, trusting to Providence. As I was leaving two strangers came up the road and one of them asked 'Do you want to hire a man, perhaps you would like to have a house made of hewed logs.' I said to the fellow, 'All right, what is your name and where did you come from?' He replied 'My name is Joe Prudhomme and we deserted Fort Benton.' It was a poor recommendation but it was honest. I liked the man's honest appearance, so I hired him and his partner at twenty-five dollars each per month and left them in charge of my cattle and to build a house."

John Grant's mission succeeded well, and he gathered together about a dozen families. They returned with him to settle at the confluence of Cottonwood Creek and the Deer Lodge River, the site of today's town of Deer Lodge. Upon his return Grant discovered he had been most astute in appraising Prudhomme's character.

Joe Prudhomme had built a good hewed log house with a good floor in it. He was not only a good carpenter but a good blacksmith and tinsmith as well. He had sold thirty head

of cattle to Capt. Mullen for twenty six hundred dollars. Joe was a very trustworthy man. I never regretted having trusted him. I was well satisfied with my house but remained in it only one year. In 1861 I gave it away and moved to Cottonwood where the other traders had settled.\textsuperscript{12}

This move took Grant to the site of the vicinity of Deer Lodge. In 1862 he decided to build a substantial home for his family "in Cottonwood afterwards called Deer Lodge. It cost me a pretty penny."\textsuperscript{13} The structure became the ranch house for his operations in the valley, and would become the property of a young Danish-born entrepreneur, Conrad Kohrs, four years later.

\textbf{B. Con Kohrs's Early Montana Years}

In the late spring of 1862, twenty-seven-year-old Conrad Kohrs arrived in the Deer Lodge Valley enroute to gold diggings farther west in Idaho. To date he had enjoyed a rather kaleidoscopic career as cabin boy, grocery clerk, river raftsman, sausage salesman, California and Fraser River gold miner, with some experience as butcher and assistant in a brother-in-law's packing plant in Davenport, Iowa.\textsuperscript{14}

By the time Kohrs entered the Deer Lodge Valley he was out of funds and almost out of provisions. Then he happened to meet Hank Crawford, and quickly accepted his offer of twenty-five dollars a month to run a butcher shop in the boom town of Bannack. With a borrowed scale, a carpenter's saw, and a Bowie knife that he ground down to cut steaks, Kohrs dropped his dreams of a prospecting career and began the work that would lead him into the cattle-raising business.\textsuperscript{15}

At Crawford's direction, he picked up three heifers at Cottonwood and headed to Bannack (south of Deer Lodge in extreme southwestern Montana) to set up shop. Almost immediately he took over the books for the shop, purchased cattle to replenish the stock, and received a raise to $100 a month from his grateful boss. Through the summer, fall, and winter Con Kohrs worked for Crawford in a rapidly growing butcher business. The hordes of miners made great demands for meat. Kohrs, searching for beef on the hoof, no doubt received an orientation in the cattle business of the region.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 2.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 3. The construction of this house is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this report.

\textsuperscript{14} Fletcher, \textit{Free Grass}, p. 20.

In early spring Kohrs's boss, Crawford, faced a local outlaw named Henry Plummer, but failed to kill him as intended. Fearing Plummer's revenge, Crawford cleared out the cash box and fled. Con Kohrs found himself in business "on my own hook," as he recalled it years later. With no operating funds available, Con

resorted to trading. From Dempsey and Bentley I bought on credit eight yoke of work cattle that had come across the plains from Minnesota. These I took to Deer Lodge and traded to Lewis De Mar and Leon Cannell for fat steers, giving @ two head of cattle for one fat steer.16

The business prospered enough that Con Kohrs picked up partners to operate the shops he opened in the various gold camps in western Montana. In Bannack "Kohrs and Myers" sold meat from at least February to June of 1863.17 By early 1864 Con had formed a partnership with Ben Peel.18 All the while, Kohrs was building herds on credit, and paying the creditors off as butcher shop proceeds came in. The process experienced some reverses, such as the loss to Indians of a herd Con Kohrs had purchased on credit.19 While Kohrs's technique was classic, it still required little business courage and a fine touch for knowing just what debts to pay off and how much money to apply to increasing his growing herds. As he put it in describing one deal, "As usual, I carried quite a sum of money, a part to be applied on my indebtedness and the remainder on another purchase. . . ."20

By the summer of 1864, "Con and Peel," the name by which his partnership with Ben Peel was known, owned about 400 head of cattle and some work-horses. They grazed in the Deer Lodge Valley, on a ranch at Race Track, about eight miles south of today's Deer Lodge. (Possibly this ranch was one purchased not much later by Kohrs.) In August Con and Peel augmented their holdings with some "Utah Steers" and then some sheep.21 Con Kohrs's wealth in cattle and his understanding of the cattle trade kept growing during these first two years of his life in Montana. Significantly, he built his herds and businesses while others prospected for gold. He saw that the money to be made was in the constant demand of the miners for

16. Ibid., p. 41.

17. Receipts, 26 Feb. 1863 and 26 June 1853, Conrad Warren Papers, on microfilm at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.


19. Ibid., p. 42.

20. Ibid., p. 54.

21. Ibid., p. 65.
beef, and not in the speculative 'diggings' that could, with apparently equal chance, enrich or impoverish a miner overnight. Not that he had dismissed his earlier desires to mine--his later ventures into mining on a major scale testified to a continued love of mining. But Con Kohrs sensed where the money could be made at the moment, and carefully, industriously, and faithfully stayed with the butcher business and concentrated on building herds to supply it. 22 These animals became the basis of his future cattle business.

During Kohrs's busy gold rush career, his half brothers--John, Charles, and Nick Bielenberg--journeyed to Montana. Kohrs had his brothers running some of the butcher shops. John supervised the shop at Last Chance Gulch (today's Helena), and Nick ran the Blackfoot City shop. Charles, known as Charley, managed the Silver Bow shop first and then moved to Deer Lodge to manage the shop there. 23 Kohrs would remain close to them for the rest of his life in Montana and enter partnerships in mining, sheep, and cattle deals with them from time to time. Yet only John Bielenberg became a full-time Kohrs partner in the cattle business and mining activities and lived with Kohrs and his family. The John Bielenberg-Conrad Kohrs association would encompass the great Kohrs cattle holdings and mining interests, and would last until both men died. It began in 1864, during the gold rush operations of the butcher shops at the mining camps.


Conrad Kohrs's lifelong interest in mining was partially summarized in a 1940 article:

In 1866 Mr. Kohrs, with . . . [at least five other investors and] . . . John Bielenberg, organized the Rock Creek Ditch and Mining Company for the purpose of digging the Rock Creek Ditch so that there might be sufficient water available for the [placer] mines. By 1871 they had expended $168,000 on the ditch and collected from the miners for its use about $144,000 in the years 1870-71. Later Mr. Kohrs purchased the interest of all his partners but Mr. Bielenberg, and also became interested in Pioneer Gulch where he carried on mining operations from 1873 to 1919, working over a dozen claims. But perhaps his most lucrative mining venture was at Cable, where he is said to have made about $100,000, a fortune that enabled him to expand greatly his stock raising activities.

J. J. McDonald, "Conrad Kohrs, Montana Pioneer," Americana Illustrated 34, no. 3 (July 1940):482-93.

23. Interview, Conrad Kohrs Warren with John Albright, 14 May 1975, at Deer Lodge, Montana, p. 2. A copy of his interview is on file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.
Also in 1864 Kohrs met Tom Hooban, "a herder," who helped restore a thoroughly chilled Conrad Kohrs to health after Kohrs fell into the Big Hole River while moving some cattle towards Deer Lodge in the winter of 1864-65. The relationship between Hooban and Kohrs quickly matured into one stronger than that usually found between cattle owner and cowboy. Hooban soon became a most trusted cattle handler, a man who took big herds long distances and sold them without supervision.

By 1865 the various cattle herds in Montana had become a real factor in the infant territory's life. A law regulating marks and brands became effective in January 1865, and Con Kohrs began branding then. His first brand was a "CP" for Con and Peel.

The herds kept growing, both by natural increase and purchase. Years later, Kohrs laconically recalled one major transaction:

I saw in the Spring of '65 that cattle were going to be scarce and I borrowed $12,000 of George Forbes in Virginia City and with it bought $85,000 worth of cattle, buying from different parties and paying enough down to make the trade good. In the Spring of '65 I had all the beef in the country in my hands.

Kohrs kept quite busy during 1865. He ran the busy field aspect of the cattle and butchering business, "selling and collecting through the district where we sold our cattle." He rode so much that he had to assemble a string of twelve horses to meet his needs. The business grew to such an extent that Con and Peel sold their meat shops in Summit, and Peel took charge of the Race Track Ranch, now owned by the partners. They bought seed from Johnny Grant and planted oats and barley. For the crop, put in late, Kohrs and Peel dug an irrigation ditch, the first of many, large and small, that Conrad Kohrs, usually in partnership with others, was to build in the coming years.

The next spring the partners brought in 300 to 400 head of "fine steers" from Walla Walla—purchased in February. Kohrs's description of them, "in fine condition and heavy," attests to the good qualities of the Oregon and Washington cattle even in winter. That same spring Conrad

Kohrs dissolved the profitable partnership with Ben Peel, buying out Peel's interests for $17,500 in gold brick. Ben Peel had fallen in love and pursued this interest when its object moved east.28 Bachelor Kohrs remained.

Later in August 1866 Kohrs purchased the John Grant ranch, whose owner he had known for a good while. In 1864 Kohrs had purchased a horse for $250 from Grant and had enjoyed a good business relationship with him. No doubt Conrad Kohrs saw the Grant ranch as a potential headquarters. In the spring of 1865, a year prior to the eventual purchase, John Grant recalled that

Conrad Kohrs offered me thirty thousand dollars for my place and cattle, but I refused it. But if I had known of a place where I could have moved with my family I would of sold out then for I was very anxious to take my children away from such a rough country as Montana was then.29

The death of Grant's wife Quarra, in early 1866, no doubt changed his mind, and a year after the first offer he sold the ranch to Kohrs for $19,200 with $5,000 down. The land was not surveyed, and the title described the property as "my ranch situate on Cottonwood Creek." The herd, by then reduced to about 350 head, probably through Kohrs's earlier purchases, went with the ranch, as did all the equipment, corrals, and haystacks. Grant retained his horses, taking them out of the country in September, and then, Kohrs wrote, "I took possession of my property."30

The ranch house (described in more detail in Chapter 2) was described in 1865:

The dwelling house, which is large and two storied, is by long odds the finest in Montana. It appears as if it had been lifted by the chimneys from the bank of the St. Lawrence, and dropped down in Deer Lodge Valley. It has twenty-eight windows, with green-painted shutters, and looks very pretty.31

The former Grant Ranch also had corrals, a threshing machine, and outbuildings. It was the largest ranch headquarters in the Deer Lodge

28. Ibid., p. 72.
30. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 73. The transaction is recorded in Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 1, Courthouse, Deer Lodge, Montana, p. 161. The purchase of the house included a few pieces of furniture that Grant had picked up, some of which remain today.
Valley. With its acquisition, Kohrs, already the major cattle grower in the valley, became the most prominent rancher in the settled portions of Montana. For the rest of his life he remained as one of the largest and best known stockmen in the territory and State. In August 1866 the purchase of the Grant Ranch provided Kohrs with an operating base. From the ranch house just north of Deer Lodge, in name and fact the "home ranch," he would supervise the varied and dynamic Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle operation and mining activities.

But his ranch purchases were not yet complete. In September, just a month after purchasing the Grant Ranch, he paid $1,000 for "160 acres near Dempsey Creek, west side of Deer Lodge River . . . and known as the Louis Demers Ranch, one light horse wagon and all the farming implements and other tools."

The John Grant era in the Deer Lodge Valley had ended. Con Kohrs had come to the area in 1862, broke; yet four years later he owned most of the cattle in the valley, the Race Track, and the Demers and Grant ranches. The era of Conrad Kohrs, or more accurately, Kohrs and Bielenberg, had begun.

32. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 1, pp. 120-21.
"In his lifetime Mr. Kohrs had many financial adventures. As he used to say to me: 'I guess, John Clay, I have been broke oftener than any man in the west, but I have always taken it cheerfully and gone to work again.'"

John Clay

In the twenty years between the purchase of the Grant Ranch in 1866 and the disastrous winter of 1886-87, the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle business grew with the territory of Montana. The herds increased greatly in quantity and quality. The partners introduced registered Short Horn cattle into the herds first, followed a few years later by registered Herefords. The Kohrs and Bielenberg herds, along with others, roamed the open range east of the mountains in Montana. They travelled overland to eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska for shipment to the eastern markets, primarily Chicago and Omaha. Late in 1883 Kohrs and Bielenberg purchased a major part of the DHS Ranch in the largest cattle deal, to that date, in Montana.

As the range cattle herds increased, Kohrs and Bielenberg added small portions of land to the home ranch, as well as to the ranch four miles south of Deer Lodge known as the "upper ranch." Kohrs regularized the purchase from John Grant—which had not been surveyed—by homesteading the land he had bought earlier from Grant.

Conrad Kohrs's personal life changed as well. He married, moved his bride to Montana Territory, and began a family. He entered politics, first on the county and then on the State level, and helped organize and run the Montana Cattlemen's Association. As Conrad Kohrs moved through the territory arranging for mining claims and cattle sales and purchases, John Bielenberg remained at the home ranch, managing it.

The era contained a brief Indian threat when Chief Joseph led his Nez Perce band in their march toward Canada, trips to Europe for the Kohrs family, and the death of a highly trusted and respected employee. The period saw the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle become one of the major herds in Montana, and witnessed the continued financial growth of the family. It was an active and dynamic period in the history of the Kohrs and Bielenberg home ranch.

A. 1867-1870

Con had started branding his cattle in 1865, using "CP" for "Con and Peel." After he purchased the Grant herd along with the ranch, he used Johnny Grant's "G," branding on the left hip. He began using the brand that would be synonymous with Kohrs and Bielenberg, the ubiquitous "CK," in 1867. The growing Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle business remained confined to the Deer Lodge Valley, however, Kohrs recalling that "the whole country was community range and the cattle were mixed together." Much of Kohrs's energy in 1867 went toward development of the Rock Creek Ditch Company, which involved digging the water ditch from the vicinity of Rock Creek Lake west of the ranch down towards the valley floor where the water could be sold for use in placer mining.

Yet he and John Bielenberg did have the time to purchase Utah and Oregon cattle at prices that enabled them to "sell to the butchers and make a fair profit." There was time, too, that summer of 1867, for parties at the Kohrs ranch house. In his autobiography, Con Kohrs took time to describe one of them in some detail, "just to give an idea of the condition of the country . . . ." He recalled that everybody within a radius of twenty miles had been invited and the attendance was large. A couple of fiddlers provided the music, the only kind that could be procured. There was no dress parade. The majority of women wore nice clean calico dresses. Those that had babies brought them and a room with beds was provided for the children and Tom Strange was put in charge as a baby tender. Boots and shoes were scarce articles and most of the men danced in mocassins made out of deer hide by the Indians, some with fancy beads, others plain.

As we had no refreshments except tea, coffee, and sandwiches, many of the men brought their chemicals and cached them in the woodpile. David L. Irvine, who was running for the office of Clerk and Recorder, was known as a man who never had taken a drink. He was electioneering for votes and the first thing


4. See Kohrs's "Autobiography," pp. 76-80, for his discussion of the project.

5. Ibid., p. 80.
the boys took advantage of him, took him to the woodpile and induced him to drink and ere the evening was over, had him intoxicated. The Missouri ladies were strict Campbellites, had never danced and the boys had been very temperate. During the evening Jim Brown tapped me on the shoulder and said: "Con, the country is saved." "Why, how so?" I asked. He replied: "The girls have gone to dancing and the boys are drinking."6

A tradition for parties in Deer Lodge City had prevailed for at least the past two years. An 1865 gathering, possibly at the Grant home, rated a lengthy review in one of Montana's early newspapers, Virginia City's Montana Post. The correspondent noted that since there were not "more than seven dances a week in Cottonwood--I humbly beg pardon-in Deer Lodge City--the hospitable folks got one up for my special benefit."7

In December 1867 Con Kohrs left for the "states," specifically Iowa, to visit his mother, brother, and stepfather, Claus Bielenberg, in Davenport, and to spend the Christmas holidays with them.8 The trip proved to be somewhat more eventful than a mere winter holiday. He later summed up this major episode in his life rather laconically.

Embracing the opportunity I went to Davenport, married, and returned to Montana by the Missouri River that fall.9

In reality, the event was not quite so spartan. Con heard of Miss Augusta Kruse from his brother, Henry. Augusta was the daughter of Henry's nurse.10 Con remembered that he had "known her as a child, but had not met her since." He left Davenport in January travelling to Covington, Kentucky, to look for Augusta. There he discovered that she had moved to Cincinnati. He found her there, "renewed our acquaintance," courted the nineteen-year-old beauty, gained her acceptance, and took her back to Davenport, Iowa. On the twenty-third of February they were married in the family home.11 A stay of over a month in Davenport followed the quiet wedding, and then, in early April, came the beginning of the journey

6. Ibid., pp. 81-82.
7. "Letter From Blackfoot."
to Deer Lodge. The newlyweds took a river steamer out of Omaha, and inched their way up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, the head of navigation in Montana Territory. They were on the boat from April 16 to June 8. During the trip the young bride was introduced to some of the hardships of the West, Kohrs writing that "the trip was so long that provisions gave out and consequently the fare was very poor, consisting mainly of beans and bacon."\textsuperscript{12}

Tom Hooban met the couple at Fort Benton. He was, by now, Kohrs's and Bielenberg's most trusted employee. John Bielenberg remained at the home ranch to run things. Tom reported with the spring wagon for passengers and an ox team and wagon for the furniture Con had purchased in St. Louis and brought with them. The overland trip of 180 miles to Deer Lodge proved to be a difficult one, with rain most of the way. Augusta particularly suffered. Her husband described her as being "unaccustomed to roughing it."\textsuperscript{13}

During the whirlwind courtship in Cincinnati, Augusta had asked Con how far he lived from the railroad. The answer had come "Oh, just a short distance." Years later Augusta would tell the family that had there been a way to get back to Cincinnati from Deer Lodge the marriage would have ended when they arrived after six days in a wagon in the rain, after seven weeks on a riverboat.\textsuperscript{14} There was no way to get back, of course. The marriage did not end and over the next fifty-two years the couple retained a strong devotion to each other. The tall rancher who took Augusta away from Cincinnati and onto the frontier shared with her a long and satisfying life.

But at the beginning of their tenure at Deer Lodge things did not come easy for Augusta Kruse Kohrs. She entered a household composed of bachelors running a ranch. Presumably the "large crew of men delivering my cattle to various parts of the country" headquartered out of the home ranch as well. The house could not have presented much of a genteel appearance to Augusta. Con himself admitted

\begin{quote}
There were no carpets. The floors were all pine and were kept spotlessly white by scrubbing. . . . We had an old homemade bed; strings of rawhide stretched across in place of springs, a straw tick for a mattress.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 84.

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{14} Gehrmann letter, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{15} Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 86.
No doubt a disarray of clothes, equipment, and miscellaneous accoutrements of Bielenberg, Hooban, Mitch Oxarart, (another highly trusted employee) and some of the other hands complemented the austere furnishings of the house. Family tradition has it that the place looked like a boar's nest, and that the mess immediately became the target of the new mistress of the manse. Kohrs admits as much in his autobiography, noting that "my wife had the German pride in taking care of her own household." He added a description of her horror at the presence of a male cook in the house and insisted that he be dismissed. She would do the work herself. With the ranch workers to feed, eight cows being milked, coffee to be roasted, soap and candles made, and "altogether too much work for one woman," the lady of the house, age nineteen, fresh from the east, and carrying the couple's first child, brought order and domesticity into the scene.

Bedbugs proved to be one of the initial problems. But applications of kerosene and boiling water sufficed to end that irritation at least.

The summer passed in a flurry of work as Mrs. Kohrs impressed her stamp on home and family. Late that summer Con and Augusta drove to Helena for the Territorial Fair. The Kohrs and Bielenberg enterprise exhibited cattle, sheep, and horses. John Bielenberg, showing a devotion to horse racing and race horses that he retained throughout his life, had a trotting horse--"Sorrel George"-at the fair as well. 

Following the fair the "old routine of hard work" was resumed. Then on the 18th of December our first baby was born. There was no woman help in the country, no nurse. Dr. Crippen and I were the nurses. The doctor knew nothing, neglected my wife and she suffered for months.

They named the child, a daughter, Anna Catherine.

For Conrad and Augusta Kruse Kohrs, and for life at the ranch, 1868 had been a significant year.

In his usual sparse prose, Conrad Kohrs noted in his autobiography that "there was little to mark the year 1869," and then proceeded to show that it was a vitally significant one for the Montana range cattle industry and Kohrs and Bielenberg.

16. Ibid., p. 85.
17. Ibid., p. 86.
18. Ibid.
Con started off the year purchasing a small ranch from Henry DeWitt for $150, specifically, the "ranch known as Alexander Pember-ton Ranch on Tin Cup Joe Creek, adjoining Frank Mason's Ranch." He needed more land, since the Deer Lodge Valley daily housed more cattle. Grass kept getting scarcer, and the Kohrs and Bielenberg herd was becoming "too large to winter in the valley without feeding."

Tom Hooban suggested moving part of the herd to the Sun River Valley, southeast of the Deer Lodge Valley and on the eastern slope of the mountains. So in the fall they sent about a thousand head of their best cattle to the grasslands south of the Sun River. The move marked a major thrust of the cattle business into the central and eastern plains of the State, and into Indian country; it was the initial entry of the first of the hundreds of thousands of cattle that would eventually cover the Montana plains--the last free-grass area in the Nation.

The stock that furnished beef to the mining camps remained in the Deer Lodge Valley. Mitch Oxarart supervised the delivery of animals to the various mining camps. Kohrs and Bielenberg continued "furnishing Blackfoot, Bear Gulch, Washington Gulch, Deer Lodge, Helena, and some at Virginia City and German Gulch and were doing well."21

Augusta, caring for Anna, kept busy ministering to child and household. Yet that fall she managed to win a "1st Premium" at the Territorial Fair for a sofa cushion. The ranch sold three steers at the fair, ranging from two to four years old and grossing 5,480 pounds. The size of the animals from the Deer Lodge Valley attested to the quality of the Kohrs and Bielenberg herd, attributable to the rich grasses along the Deer Lodge River.22

The year closed with a rhetorical question in an advertisement in Deer Lodge's excellent newspaper The New Northwest. The ad asked "Can we get as good meats in Deer Lodge as anywhere in Montana Territory?"

20. Deer Lodge County Deed Book A, Courthouse, Anaconda, Montana, p. 424. Since there are no metes and bounds given, the exact location of the ranch is not known, and it is not shown on the map outlining the growth of the home ranch. In all probability, however, its location on Tin Cup Joe Creek puts it in the southern portion of the home ranch.


Of Kohrs, we can, try him." Presumably the "Con and Bro." meat market--the brother at this meat market being Charles Bielenberg--benefited from such sparkling publicity.23

In 1869 Con Kohrs was nominated on an independent ticket to the post of one of three county commissioners. The independent slate carried, and Kohrs became a county commissioner for two years. Forty-five years later he recalled with pride his service as a county official:

When we went into office Deer Lodge scrip was sold for twenty-five cents on the dollar and at the end of our term of two years the script sold at seventy-five cents. There was a corresponding improvement in the other offices; there was less shooting scrapes and murders in the county and the change of officers did a great deal of good.24

Con Kohrs's entry into politics and government had been successful; and his actions as a county level officer were based on a practical need, as he saw it, to improve local government. That attitude would prevail in his service in State-wide organizations such as the Montana Stock-Growers Association and in the State Senate. His practicality and pragmatic approach to life and business seemed to remain as consistently strong in politics.

Con remained busy in his first year as a county commissioner. In early November he visited and inspected the county jail, announcing that escape from it was impossible if the jailer was present. Such are the duties of cattlemen who shoulder governmental burdens.25

The weather cooperated nicely as 1870 opened, Kohrs noting that "there was not a great deal of snow in the valley in 1870, and this was considered the third of the mild winters."26 To Montana cattlemen, Kohrs and Bielenberg included, a mild winter boded well for a good herd of cattle in the spring.

While Deer Lodge Valley was still gripped by the Montana winter--which, even in its mildest years, is a hard season--the report of the county board of commissioners was released, and commented on in The New Northwest. The editor was fulsome in his praise:

23. Ibid., 31 Dec. 1869. The very real possibility that this ad represented a landmark in the development of American humor should be considered.


The form of publication is the most comprehensive and complete yet presented by a board in the territory. . . . We have good officers, efficient and economical, and the most careful, prudent, sagacious and thoroughly interested Board of Commissioners we have ever seen in office.

The commissioners, Conrad Kohrs among them, also recommended an increase in taxes to cover an $82,000 county debt. Being "thoroughly interested" in area affairs was probably a natural attitude of someone like Kohrs and his business contemporaries. All were building the community in one way or another. Kohrs and Bielenberg concentrated their efforts on cattle and mining, but concurrently retained a vested interest in a solid government and a strong community resting on a firm economic base. Kohrs, the cattle grower and miner, also invested in city lots, and kept an interest in the meat selling business. He and many of his contemporaries actively built their communities, acting as classic pioneers. For Kohrs not to have been "thoroughly interested" in the affairs of the county would have been unusual. What is surprising is that he found time to participate in local government with the obvious intensity that he did, given his numerous commercial and cattle raising ventures.

On March 2 Con and Augusta had their second child, another daughter, Katherine Christine. His memory seared by Augusta's trial during her initial confinement, Con sent Mitch Oxarart to Helena for a Dr. Glick. The doctor came to the ranch, remained for a week, "and received a thousand dollars for his professional services." Obviously Conrad Kohrs had moved to a position of some real affluence by March of 1870, and the payment to the doctor assisting at the birth was hardly a mean one. His business activities during the year further testified to his growing wealth.

In early April a scarcity of cattle in the Deer Lodge Valley caused some of the town's meat markets to close. "Con and Bro." even found it necessary to kill 2-year olds to supply their meat market in Deer Lodge.

27. 18 Feb. 1870.

28. Kohrs' character and place in the community is examined more thoroughly in Chapter VIII.


30. The New Northwest, 1 Apr. 1870.
In the middle of the month Kohrs toured the valley looking for cattle, but the scarcity had driven prices up and he bought only a few. In this instance and in every cattle-buying deal in the future, Con Kohrs insisted on buying cattle at low prices. With less invested than most of his contemporaries, he could sell when he wanted, waiting for the best price. He made his money buying cattle cheap, not in selling them at high prices. (Possibly, by sending a large portion of his herd to Sun River, Kohrs added to the shortage in the valley.)

Kohrs consolidated some of his business affairs in May, buying out his longtime partner, Ben Peel, for $7,000. Consummated early in the month, notice of the deal appeared later that month in The New Northwest, with the statement that the firms named Con Kohrs and Co. and Con and Peel, Helena dissolved [with] Conrad Kohrs becoming purchaser and sole owner of all property of said firms.

signed: Con Kohrs
Joseph Peel
John Bielenberg

Thereafter the businesses would carry the name "Con Kohrs & Bro.," a title which appeared frequently in relation to the home ranch as well over the next few years.

Miscellaneous ranch activities continued that spring. Con scoured the territory for cattle, finding 300 head in the Beaverhead Valley for the high price of $14,000. The seller refused Con's draft and he had to return to Deer Lodge for currency. Late in May he advertised a thoroughbred horse for "stallion service," at $25.

That spring—the exact date is unknown—Kohrs's and Bielenberg's Sun River herd was worked for beef, and the fat cattle driven west over the Lewis and Clark Pass toward Hell Gate, today's Missoula. Purchasing enough additional cattle from ranchers in the Bitterroot Valley there to bring his total to 2,000, Kohrs drove the herd south into Idaho and then

31. Ibid., 15 Apr. 1870.
32. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 1, pp. 619-21.
33. 27 May 1870.
34. Ibid., 20 May 1870.
35. Ibid., 24 June 1870.
into northeastern Utah. From Utah they turned generally east toward Soda Springs, Wyoming, paralleling the overland trail to the vicinity of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Fort Laramie. From there the herd was driven to North Platte, Nebraska, loaded on railroad cars, and shipped to Chicago to market. Until the Union Pacific came to eastern Montana in the mid-1880s, this route and variations of it served to deliver cattle to railheads in Wyoming and western Nebraska for shipment to the cattle markets further east.36

By mid-summer Kohrs had purchased two town lots in Deer Lodge,37 was well established in cattle holdings in the Deer Lodge and Sun River Valleys, and had--in partnerships with John and Charles Bielenberg--solidified his hold on sale of meat in various western Montana towns. He also held interests in mining and selling water from ditches for placer mining. He used two techniques of business activity that would mark his operations as they grew in the years to come. The techniques, possibly better described as entrepreneurial approaches, are classified today as "vertical integration" and "horizontal diversification." His use of the vertical integration concept involved the cattle and meat business. He owned the cattle and oversaw the processing and marketing of the meat, thus controlling all facets of the business: supply, processing, transportation, and sale. In fact, he strengthened his hold on meat sales, in Deer Lodge at least, that August by purchasing a twenty-three by thirty-foot lot in town for a two-story brick building to house a new butcher shop.

Kohrs's horizontal diversification involved his activities in separate fields, all centrally managed by him. With his interests in mining, butcher shops, and the buying, raising, and selling of cattle, he operated dynamic business activities in different fields, addressing disparate markets, yet being assured of overall stability because weakness in one business sector could be balanced by strength in another. In such a way his investment risks remained compartmentalized, with potential losses minimized and overall profits unimpaired.

Within these various businesses, Kohrs often worked with different partners. One herd of cattle was owned by Kohrs and Bielenberg and one or two others, and another herd would be owned by Kohrs and yet another partner. At the same time, different mining operations were owned by Kohrs and one or more partners. Thus the sums of money invested in each of the many business efforts of Con Kohrs were smaller than those which would have been required had he made the investment alone, and, correspondingly, the risk of crippling financial loss was equally lessened.


37. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 1, pp. 632-33.
As Kohrs's and Bielenberg's activities grew in scope and size over the years, it became more difficult to achieve additional vertical integration. Raising cattle in the Deer Lodge Valley, having a cowboy or two drive a few each week to market at a Kohrs-owned butcher shop a few miles at most from the pasture, and then selling the meat was not a difficult feat. But when the yearly sales of cattle rose to number in the thousands, and when the transportation required was not to a local market but to Chicago, Omaha, or Kansas City, Kohrs could not exercise complete control of the raw materials or their transportation and processing. He was then forced to utilize a trusted agent, Rosenbaum, in Chicago, and had to surrender any additional vertical integration in the cattle business. Yet in the 1880s and 1890s and into the 20th century, he continued his many varied business activities, thus staying with horizontal diversification. He had set the pattern by 1870.

That September saw work beginning on the new butcher shop—estimated to cost about $3,000—and another purchase of cattle in the Beaverhead Valley, 320 head this time, for about $13,000.38 The onset of cool weather meant fair time, and Con and Augusta again entered the various competitions. The Kohrs and Bielenberg stock merited high appraisals as they came in for grooming just before the fair. One newsman commented that the Kohrs stock were sure to win some premiums. Another comment at the same time noted "as they are just off the range, they will require to be excellent stock to compare favorably with the well cared for stock that will be in competition."39

The Kohrs and Bielenberg entries reflected the variety of stock being raised at the home ranch. Five cows, two bulls, two beef steers, one brood mare and colt, and one stallion comprised part of the group, and a "drove of Southdown and Scotch Wool Sheep" completed the total Kohrs and Bielenberg stock entries at the fair.40 (Apparently Conrad Kohrs had little truck with the supposedly rigid caste lines between cattle growers and sheep growers. This is not surprising. Kohrs never bore a reputation for anything except business considerations in stock raising. He would raise and sell any animal that adapted to the market and to the country they grazed. Sheep apparently had a place in the operations by 1870, but never comprised a major portion of the business.) In the "Ladies Department" Augusta entered an ottoman cover.41

38. The New Northwest, 9 Sept. 1870.
39. Ibid., 23 Sept. 1870.
40. Ibid., 30 Sept. 1870.
41. The Gazette (Helena, Mont.), 3 Oct. 1870.
In general, Kohrs, and Kohrs and Bielenberg, achieved impressive results at the Territorial Fair. Con took twelve premiums on stock, and Augusta took a "1st Premium" on her ottoman cover, repeating her first premium in needlework (for her sofa cushion) the year before. The victory was less than complete, however, because "Al Peacock rode Con Kohrs' trotter George in a race against 3 others and took last."[42]

Cattle buying and selling continued at the normal pace that fall. Con reported to the local press that about 800 of the herd of 1,300 on the Sun River would be wintered there. They were slaughtering about twenty head of cattle per week to sell to the Deer Lodge butcher shops, which satisfied most of the town's beef consumption.[45] Purchases of ninety head of cattle ($3,500) in one deal,[44] and fifty 3- and 4-year olds near the end of the year[45] ($2,500) helped fill the need for beef in the butcher shops and replenish the stock at the home ranch.

In mid-October the new meat market in Deer Lodge opened, giving the home ranch a larger and improved outlet for beef sales.[46] Late in the month the territorial governor appointed Conrad Kohrs a member of the board of prison commissioners.[47] Kohrs had now entered the territorial level of office-holding.[48]

42. The New Northwest, 7 Oct. 1870.
43. Ibid., 30 Sept. 1870.
44. Ibid., 23 Sept. 1870.
45. Ibid., 9 Dec. 1870.
46. Ibid., 28 Oct. 1870.
47. Ibid.
48. Kohrs the community-builder, cattleman, county commissioner, and entrepreneur remained always Kohrs the miner. Mining was important to him for the duration of his life in Montana, and had, indeed, brought him to the Deer Lodge Valley in the first place. The chatty columns of The New Northwest in 1870--especially the "Local Brevities Section"--give some indication of the level of his activities in the fall and winter of 1870, and help bring the overall breadth of Conrad Kohrs's mining activities into proper relationship with his other interests: 27 May--"New and Kohrs leased the Oro Fino mines and ditch--near Silver Bow--to John Hays of Cable; the terms were private"; 9 Sept.--"Catching, Kohrs and Company made $4,059 on Sept. 8 from their Pike's Peak operations"; 11 Nov.--"Water was shut off from the Rock Creek Ditch which supplied the Pilgrim Bar gold diggings... Catching, Kohrs and Company water bill for the season: $15,000. Seasons intake; upper ground, $45,000, lower grounds $185,000"; 23 Dec.--"Kohrs, Bratterton (continued)
January of 1871 closed with a party at the Kohrs residence, and one attendee wrote of the "very social and happy company of ladies and gentlemen" there. The writer, a newspaper reporter, continued with the earliest description of the interior of the ranch house on the home ranch: "The residence of Mr. Kohrs is one of the largest in Montana, having seven finely furnished rooms on the first floor, besides a magnificently furnished parlor and a spacious dining room, the second floor contains a large hall." 49

Two weeks later, John Bielenberg "left for the States." He planned to travel first to Iowa to visit his family and then to California or Texas to buy "1000 cattle which he will drive to Montana next year." 50 The influx of Texas cattle had slowly been growing steadily larger, though it would not reach its eventual massive proportions until the early 1880s. The 1,000 Texas cattle John Bielenberg planned to buy and those of Dan Floweree on the Sun River ranges, for example, were relatively small herds in relation to the hundreds of thousands of Texas cattle that would graze on the central and eastern Montana plains until the bad winter of 1886-87.

Con and some of his ranch hands drove a flock of sheep from the home ranch towards Helena in early March. The snow became too deep at one point to allow them to continue, so presumably they returned to the valley to await the spring melt. 51

48. (continued) and Hays are building a 500-inch-capacity ditch from the North Fork of Warm Springs Creek to the quartz flats. Estimated cost, $10,000." Kohrs himself summed up the year as follows: "During this year I pursued my regular business, buying and selling cattle and mining on Cable." "Autobiography," p. 89.

49. The New Northwest, 27 Jan. 1871. The party-goer could have served the cause of history a hundred or so years later had he taken the time to describe the outbuildings in more detail, but in the manner of such things he provided only a tantalizing comment on the good quality of the outbuildings at the ranch without enumerating or describing them. The "magnificently furnished" home no doubt reflected Augusta's two years of residence there.

50. Ibid., 10 Feb. 1871. The newspaper inferred that Bielenberg would drive the cattle himself, which he probably did not do. He had to run the home ranch.

51. Ibid., 17 Mar. 1871. Kohrs does not mention sheep in the post-1865 portions of his autobiography. They could not have been a vitally important part of the ranch scene, but they did have a place in the Kohrs and Bielenberg stock raising operations.
Con's work during April involved keeping the home ranch beef herd up to required numbers. Early in the month he purchased a few cattle from Flint Creek; he then went up to the Sun River grazing areas after two or three hundred head ("a little bunch") that had wintered well in this valley and that were needed in the Deer Lodge Valley for sale to the butcher shops he supplied.

From April to June Con, as an administrator of an estate, disputed payments to the county from the estate. The case went to court, resulting in a ruling in favor of the county. It must have been an interesting proceeding because Kohrs still served as a county commissioner--his term expired in 1872--and thus he found himself on both sides of the case. The parties shared court costs, indicating that the whole business was probably more friendly than most such proceedings.

Con drove a small herd to Sun River in mid-June and again in the fall, after deciding which cattle he did not want to carry in the valley over the coming winter. He also purchased "several fine mares," paying as high as $150 per head, at the same time he purchased cattle that fall.

During the late summer and into the fall Con picked up land both in and outside of town. His most significant purchases came in early October, when he acquired about half a quarter section north of the home ranch house and about the same amount upstream on the Deer Lodge River, about four miles south of town, on the "upper ranch." These were the initial purchases of land for the home ranch, which would eventually result in holdings of over 25,000 acres.

52. Ibid., 7 Apr. 1871.
53. Ibid., 14 Apr. 1871.
54. Ibid., 21 Apr. 1871 and 10 June 1871.
55. Ibid., 17 June 1871.
56. Ibid., 16 Sept. 1871.
58. Ibid., p. 492, and pp. 486-87, both dated 10 Oct. 1871. These transactions, and all those concerning the creation of the home ranch, appear on Map 9, "Kohrs and Bielenberg--Home Ranch: Building the Ranch, Land Acquisition, 1866-1908." Because the map shows the areas concerned, an exact transcription of the metes and bounds in each deed does not appear in the text. A listing of land transactions filed under the names of Conrad and Augusta Kohrs and John Bielenberg appears as Appendix 5.
Just before he bought the land, Con took a quick trip to the Sun River range to look over the herd. Presumably he wanted to check his hooved assets prior to the trip to Europe the family planned for late the next month. They laid no plans for exhibiting at the Territorial Fair that year, probably because of the pending trip. But the local newspaper also noted another reason: "Last year Con Kohrs was the territorial fair's largest exhibitor of cattle and collected over $300 in premiums but his expenses were double that. He did not exhibit this year."

In mid-October Con, Augusta, Anna, and Catherine left by stagecoach on their trip. The journey took them by way of Denver, where Con formalized the arrangements probably begun earlier by John Bielenberg to bring in Texas cattle in the spring of 1872. John had returned to Deer Lodge from his visit of Davenport that spring to run the home ranch during the family's German trip. As the family visited in Davenport, en route to New York, John fought early winter storms driving a herd to the Sun River range. Just before leaving for the range, John filed the full power of attorney at the county courthouse that Con and Augusta left him. He would manage the ranch and the various Kohrs and Bielenberg mining and business interests until the family returned to Deer Lodge late in the spring of 1872.

Con, Augusta, and the girls sailed on 29 November on the Harmonia, bound for Hamburg, a fact duly noted in the "Local Brevities" column of The New Northwest. Another item appearing not long thereafter testified both to the level of affluence to which Kohrs had risen and to the charming and open quality of journalism on the northwest frontier. Under a heading of "TAXES" Con's hometown newspaper reported:

Every once in a while the poor man gets his play in on the rich. One occasion is when it come to paying taxes. As an instance of the per centage we Poverty Flat (broke) rustlers

59. The New Northwest, 16 Sept. 1871.
60. Ibid., 30 Sept. 1871.
61. Ibid., 14 Oct. 1871.
64. 16 Dec. 1871.
hold in that awful time of reckoning, we give below the amounts paid by a few persons in this county:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Value</th>
<th>Taxes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Con Kohrs</td>
<td>$40,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Creek Ditch</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For instance, the entire individual tax paid by Con Kohrs is over $1,400. . . .

The Kohrs' winter trip to Germany was pleasant, Con later recalled, save for an incident on the way over. Their ship was a "German steamer," which, although fitted for passengers, would book none for the voyage.

Finally a few of the ship's officers gave up their cabins to me and four other passengers. . . . The main salon and cabins were not used during the voyage, and we were so glad to secure passage that we never inquired why. Our meals were served in the smoking room and one morning the head steward was missing. I asked where he was and one of the waiters spoke up and said, "He has the small-pox." I never before experienced such a shock and I must admit I was dreadfully frightened, for at that time small-pox was far more malignant and fatal than at the present day. Fortunately there was a doctor on board and after breakfast we were all vaccinated. None of us contracted the disease. . . .

The return to Deer Lodge the following spring was by way of the Bielenberg home (of Con's mother and stepfather) at Davenport, Iowa. In Davenport, Con selected a herd of Short Horn cattle from "Paddleford, a man living on the Illinois side of the river." The herd was shipped to Deer Lodge by way of Corinne, Utah, the farthest the railroads could carry them, and then driven overland by Tom Hooban.

Con, Augusta, and the girls arrived home on 5 May, travelling the last leg of their trip by coach. The cattle and a "ten horse power

65. Ibid., 4 Nov. 1871.

67. Ibid., p. 95. Notice of the arrival of the herd to Deer Lodge appeared in The New Northwest on 11 May: "C. Kohrs & Pemberton & Kelly, are bringing fine blooded stock to Montana."

68. The New Northwest, 11 May 1872.
Davenport threshing machine" arrived soon afterward. As well as improving his stock, Kohrs was acquiring the equipment necessary for running an efficient ranching business. He demonstrated his interest in building up the home ranch a few weeks after his return from Europe. In a transaction that probably had understandings not appearing on the document of sale, Kohrs purchased from John Bielenberg about a quarter section of land--but in a long axis, not a corner of a section--just north of the ranch house. The transaction included

Nine Hundred head of Cattle and four head of horses, now on Sun River in Lewis and Clarke County: With all the spring calves, belonging to said herd, also about Eighty-six head of horses in said Deer Lodge County . . . and about one hundred head of cattle in said Deer Lodge County . . . the object, interest & Meaning of this conveyance is to convey to said Kohrs all my right, title, interest and claim in and to all the real and personal property of Con Kohrs and Bro. wherever situated in Montana Territory, whether particularly described herein or not.

Probably John had purchased the land using the power of attorney during Con and Augusta's German trip, and was putting the land into Kohrs's hands upon his return. The deed at least outlines the Kohrs and Bielenberg ranch as of 1 June 1872 and describes the minimum size of the Sun River herd that spring.

After Hooban delivered the registered Short Horns to the home ranch, he rode south, back to Corinne, to pick up equipment (mowing machines, racks, and wagons) and a few animals for "fitting up the ranch he had located on the west side of Snake River, below the mouth of Portnip [Portneuf] River, and some distance above American Falls."

69. Ibid., 18 May 1872.

70. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 2, pp. 286-88. The next entry in the deed book, covering pages 288-89, transfers all Kohrs's interest in the Rock Creek Ditch Company to Bielenberg for the exact sum ($9,000) that Bielenberg was paid for the land he just sold Kohrs. Yet Kohrs did not cut his ties with the ditch company after that transaction any more than Bielenberg cut his with the ranch after selling all of the property to Kohrs. The reason for the transfers is not known, but it did not signify any basic change in the relationship between the two, and might-have resulted from Kohrs's desire to ease his tax burden.

The ranch in Hooban Bottom, named after Tom Hooban, would receive the herd of Texas cattle that had been arranged for the previous fall. The herd of about 2,500 arrived late, and, because of its generally poor condition, was split. About 1,200 cattle, "a lot of strong horses, and 100 mules on the North Platte" remained in central Wyoming, near today's town of Rawlins. The remainder of the herd was taken overland to the ranch Hooban had prepared along the Snake River, arriving quite late in the fall. Con was less than happy with Wesley Roberts, his partner in bringing in the Texas cattle, and dissolved the partnership once the herds were safely in pasture.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 95-97. The quotation is from p. 95. The number of the herd of Texas cattle--3,200--also appears in The New Northwest, 26 Oct. 1872.}

There were other cattle-moving and selling activities that year. Kohrs recalled 1872: "That season we sold the beef we had at fair prices and it was about the last to bring us a profit on our cattle for some years to come, and from this time on dates my hard work."

The part of the Sun River herd that Kohrs and Bielenberg wanted to market and a load of steers picked up in the Bitterroot Valley were driven down to the Idaho ranch Hooban was managing. Cold and wet weather marked the drive, which came late in the fall and featured a stampede one day away from the pasture.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 96-98. The quotation is from p. 96. Kohrs's comment about hard work is interesting. From the day he entered Montana until he was quite aged, Con Kohrs worked hard. Why he chose this time to comment on the difficulties of the cattle business is unclear.}

The summer had not been totally devoted to the cattle business, however. The local Republican Party County Convention had seen Con Kohrs's active participation and subsequent election to the Territorial Convention.\footnote{The New Northwest, 6 July 1872.}

Late in the summer a notice appeared in the local newspaper, drawing attention to some of the dangers faced by the cattlemen who had ventured into the Sun River Valley while the area was still actively used by the Indians: "A few stand of arms were shipped to Con Kohrs for use at Sun River. These arms are government issue and [are] to be used for protection in raids by the Indians."\footnote{Ibid., 24 Aug. 1872.}
Con Kohrs closed the year on an upbeat, of sorts. Possibly through his buying and selling of property to and from John Bielenberg, or by some other technique, such as selling off the butcher shops in Helena and Blackfoot, and possibly because cattle prices were not that good, his personal property assessment dropped to $12,674 with a resulting county tax of $443.58--half of the previous year's bill.  

The year 1873 opened with the purchase of the property about four miles south of Deer Lodge on which the houses of the "upper ranch" now stand. At the rate of $1,000 for 160 acres of bench land overlooking the Deer Lodge River and including parts of both riverbanks, he cannot be said to have spent his money unwisely.

Early in the year Con discussed the cattle business with a newspaper reporter, and upheld his herds' quality in relation to any herd in the United States. He stated that he had compared his cattle with those in California and the East and remained convinced that the Kohrs and Bielenberg herds were as good as any he had seen, if not better. He found, however, that his imported registered bulls did not produce as good a "grade animal" as his best native ones.

But herds had not fared that well over the winter, and when he received an enquiry about buying 1,000 head at Corinne, Utah, Con demurred, not yet ready to set a price and put in a bid. By early March Con and his partner with the herd on the Snake River, Joseph Bell, knew that they would suffer significant winter losses in the Idaho herd. Deer Lodge Valley cattle, however, had held up well. Yet for these latter animals to fare better over a winter than those in other parts of the region was not unusual. Possibly the mountains lining each side of the valley mitigated the harshness of the weather, but Deer Lodge Valley winters often were milder than those in neighboring areas, and usually always easier on the cattle than those on the eastern prairies.

Late that month the figures began to arrive in letters from the various herders watching over Kohrs and Bielenberg herds. From the Sun River Valley came a report of no losses, but at least twenty-five were

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76. Ibid., 14 Dec. 1872.

77. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 2, p. 329.

78. The New Northwest, 15 Feb. 1873. His reference to "grade animal" apparently refers to the cross of the registered bulls with the range cows, "grade" usually referring to an animal with one parent registered and the other of inferior breeding.

79. Ibid., 1 Mar. 1873.

80. Ibid., 8 Mar. 1873.
known dead in the Texas herd along the Snake River, and the expectation was that the loss would easily go to one hundred. The North Platte herd (wintered near Rawlins, Wyoming) had lost ten head to the cold and snow. The animals in the Deer Lodge Valley survived well, with no deaths at all. On considering his winter losses, Kohrs planned for the next winter's feed for the home ranch herd, determining to sow excelsior oats that spring, "100 pounds to the acre."

Kohrs purchased a small outfit late that March, the Prowse Brothers Ranch on Dempsey Creek. The ranch, farming implements, 100 tons of hay, and 200 bushels of grain went to Con for $11,000—a bargain. Con then immediately sold his new acquisition to Nick Bielenberg.  

Con spent much of the spring of 1873 at the territorial legislature, watching over the struggles to move the State capital to Helena (done) and to grant the Utah and Northern Railroad a subsidy to build into western Montana (not done).  

In May both Kohrs and Granville Stuart were nominated by the territorial governor as prison commissioners, their nominations soon confirmed. Kohrs, planning a busy summer, and possibly already pondering a visit to his sister in California that fall, declined. He and Bielenberg (in partnership with Joseph Bell on some of them) now owned over 4,500 head of cattle. Some grazed in the Sun River Valley, others in the North Platte range, and a number on the ranch along the Snake River cared for by Tom Hooban. A sizeable herd at the home ranch formed the fourth increment. In early June Con and Joseph Bell left for a two-month trip to inspect the herds and evaluate any cattle they might want to buy as they worked their way to central Wyoming and into southern Idaho and northern Utah. That part of the herd from Texas wintering along the North Platte was sold, but the herd along the Snake River in Idaho remained intact. 

John Bielenberg ran things at the home ranch that summer, as usual. John had a fondness for horses and was a racing devotee, and must have taken some pride in his trotting horse "Ben" winning the Fourth of July trotting races at the fairgrounds.  


83. *The New Northwest*, 17 May 1873. An announcement of Con's appointment was in the 10 May 1873 issue of the paper.


Con left town again, not more than six weeks after his summer trip with Bell, to visit his sister in California, whom he had not seen since 1862. The visit was a pleasant one for Con, apparently not accompanied by Augusta, and his reminiscences of it in his autobiography are infused with delight. After his return from California, he took time to inspect hydraulic mining near Butte. All told, Kohrs had travelled more in 1873 than he had been home. The year had been initiated with a lengthy stay at Virginia City with the territorial legislature, followed by a trip up to the Bitterroot Valley, then the two-month trip to Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah, and finally the trip to California, from which he returned late in November.\textsuperscript{87} In addition, Con must have made a few local trips to buy cattle. Augusta, on the other hand, had confined her trips to short ones that year, such as the mid-November jaunt she and her sister (visiting from the East) and another lady made to Helena.\textsuperscript{88}

Kohrs and Bielenberg bought another ranch and its cattle that fall. This place, between the home ranch and the town of Deer Lodge, had been owned by Pemberton and Kelly, who had stocked it with "a fine herd they had brought from Missouri."\textsuperscript{89}

Winter struck hard that year, and Con Kohrs graphically described its effects:

It was a bad winter with periods of intense cold. I remember one spell of three days. My brother John Bielenberg and I were out one day. We were well clad, wore mocassins and buffalo overshoes, had a blanket from our saddle that we wrapped around our legs and thighs. We experienced no trouble except with our mouth and eyes. The breath froze on our lips and we had trouble keeping our eyes open. All the quick-silver thermometers in Deer Lodge were frozen and the way we found out how cold it was was by Chris Wibeau's thermometer at Silver Bow, which registered sixty below.\textsuperscript{90}


\textsuperscript{88} The New Northwest, 15 Nov. 1873.

\textsuperscript{89} Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 100. The land between the home ranch and town is included in a 5 Apr. 1884 transaction, Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 4, pp. 502-3, suggesting that the purchase from Pemberton and Kelly was not recorded with the county, or if it was, has not yet been located. In his autobiography, Kohrs refers to the ranch as the "Jim Stuart Place" (p. 100). It is probable that this is the same complex known later as the Tom Stuart Place, site of the present visitor contact station and restrooms building.


33
The year 1874 proved to be as active a one for cattle buying, selling, and driving as the Kohrs and Bielenberg operation had experienced to date. The partners sold the ranch along the Snake River, probably late in the summer. But a great number of cattle remained to care for. Con and John Bielenberg were busy at the home ranch, and Con, Mitch Oxarart, and Tom Hooban assembled herds and moved cattle to market.

The cow business took second place, however, the last evening in February, to a party at the ranch house. Honoring Augusta's visiting sister, about fifty persons danced and played cards in the house where, the newspaper noted, there was "ample room in the largest dwelling in Montana." Con and L. R. Maillett, an old acquaintance dating from Kohrs's early Montana days, did not attend the festivities, having left two days previously for Missoula on the coach. Their trip was planned to check the cattle situation in the Bitterroot Valley and surrounding areas. The return, two weeks later, was reported in the local press, and Con's evaluation of the stock situation was not too rosy:

Con Kohrs, Esq., returned from Bitter Root this week. He was unable to make any purchases of cattle, stock men holding them at higher figures there than they command here. Mr. K had propositions from dealers east to take a large number of cattle from him at certain figures, the cattle to be delivered at Corrine, but the price offered does not leave a sufficient margin to warrant investment.

Con's inability to buy cattle at prices low enough to make a profit did not appreciably slow the operation, since the cattle contracted for in the Bitterroot and Deer Lodge valleys the previous fall were delivered, and, together with the stock on hand, made up at least two herds for Kohrs and his partner.

Kohrs did not neglect his other business interests, and with the price of cattle high, decided to purchase a meat market in the nearby town of Pioneer. The deal, consummated late in the month, included the building, utensils, "a stable on the west side of Main Street," and "a

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91. Ibid., p. 103.

92. The New Northwest, 28 Feb. 1874. In 1874 this publication remained one of Montana Territory's major newspapers. Presumably then, their description of the magnitude of the house in relation to all other Montana homes can be considered accurate.

93. Ibid., 14 Mar. 1874.

slaughter house below town." Kohrs continued to invest in both the production and marketing ends of the stock-raising business, at least on the regional level. He also entered the business of selling high quality stock to other ranchers as cattle-growers in western Montana began to upgrade the quality of their herds. In late April of 1874 Kohrs and Bielenberg sold two fine thoroughbred animals, both on record in the American (Short Horn) Herd Book, one to Joel Moss and one to N. Bielenberg. The local press claimed this as evidence of the interest by stock growers in the upper valley's ability to improve their herds: "Con Kohrs is the owner of the biggest and best herds in Montana and has expended many thousands of dollars in the importation and raising of thoroughbred cattle. He claims to have the best herd of its size in America." In the same issue of The New Northwest Kohrs and Bielenberg offered other thoroughbreds for sale and stud service. They also advertised bulls for breeding service--"Hannibal" and "Comet"--both among the initial imports Con had brought in from the Davenport, Iowa, area a couple of years before.

Kohrs's interest in upgrading the quality of his own and his neighbor's herds is one of the many reasons he is numbered among Montana's cattle pioneers. It is significant that his registered Short Horns were offered for sale and for breeding purposes just two years after he began their importation into the territory. It seems to demonstrate a judgment that the betterment of all the herds, his as well as others in the valley, would eventually work to the benefit of all: producing better stock bringing better prices. It was another manifestation of his belief in "building up" the community, the territory, and commerce associated with them. What he had been doing for his own business interests, and for local and then territorial government, he now did for the cattle herds of the area. As before, this was classic pioneering--improving personal assets, and those of the community, and doing so consciously.

That May the Chicago market for cattle became the object of interest in Deer Lodge. Con considered taking a herd of 3-year old steers to be composed of Sun River, Snake River, and Deer Lodge Valley cattle to Corinne, Utah, for sale. If the animals did not bring good prices there, he would ship them to Chicago to "test the market."

95. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 2, p. 452.

96. 2 May 1874. The American Herd Book and the Canadian Herd Book for Short Horns are discussed in Chapter VIII. Appendix 9 is a condensation of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Short Horn Breeding Book.

97. The New Northwest, 9 May 1874.
Possibly Kohrs did not need to pursue the test, since a buyer from the Chicago market appeared in Deer Lodge later that month, the local newspaper reporting that

A Mr. Allen, a noted stockbuyer from Kansas City is in the area with the purpose of buying not less than 1,000 cattle to drive and ship to the Chicago market. He is paying $18 to $20 for three year old steers, $22.50 for four year olds. He bought a considerable number from Kohrs.98

Continuing to serve the local market as well, Kohrs and Bielenberg sold 425 head of 3- to 7-year old cattle to the Diamond R. Company late in May at an average of $20 per head.99 Presumably this took place as he was consolidating his herds for the drive to the railhead near Cheyenne, Wyoming. Hooban and Oxarart each took a herd. Initially Tom gathered the herd, about 2,500 head, which had wintered in the Bitterroot Valley, and drove them across the Bitterroot Range to the Big Hole Valley, south of Deer Lodge, then down along the Snake River in Idaho and across southern Wyoming to Cheyenne. Mitch Oxarart picked up a small bunch of CK cattle on the Sun River Range, added another that had been awaiting him at the home ranch, and drove the combined group of 2,000 over virtually the same route. Kohrs recalled "the steers from this herd were the first I shipped to Chicago, and were sold by Rosenbaum Brothers."

Con accompanied the cattle to Chicago that first trip. There he began the association with Rosenbaum Brothers, cattle brokers at the stockyards, that would last into the 20th century.100

That part of the herd not shipped to Chicago from the eastern Wyoming railhead was sold off in small lots, some in western Montana101 and some at Laramie City, Wyoming.102 Kohrs cattle would continue to be sold in Montana despite the opening of business with the Chicago market.

98. Ibid., 23 May 1874.
99. Ibid., 30 May 1874.
101. The New Northwest, 20 June 1874, reported 180 head of "choice beef cattle" sold to a Mr. Forbis of Omaha, who had them driven to the railroad and shipped to Omaha. Apparently Forbis was a feeder, and would, after fattening them, ship the cattle to Chicago. Granville Stuart puts the number of cattle at 300 in his Forty Years on the Frontier, 2:98. Whatever the exact figure, 1874 marks the first sale of Kohrs beef to Chicago.
During the gathering and trailing of the herds that summer, Con took time to file notice of intent to homestead portions of section 28 and 33 (township 8 north of range 9 west)—land encompassing the house and outbuildings of the home ranch. The homestead (approved on 10 January 1876) regularized the purchase of the Grant Ranch as to metes and bounds, and gave Con and Augusta Kohrs legal and registered ownership of the land upon which the home ranch sat. His ownership and possession probably never stood in danger of being disputed. Yet until he filed for the homestead, and laid out the property involved, Conrad Kohrs cannot be said to have had full and legal possession of the land. He and Grant probably had a clear understanding of the boundaries involved, and the matter did not weigh particularly heavily on Kohrs's mind as he went about buying up other lots of land, butcher shops, and portions of the upper ranch and home ranch not directly connected with that portion upon which the house sat.

As the ranch hands gathered in the cattle and shipped them to Chicago, Kohrs and Bielenberg bought others, building herds for the coming year. In early September 600 head were purchased, and in mid-October another 117.

In October 1874 Con again traveled to California to visit his sister. He returned before too long, recalling later "that winter I was home a few months but as soon as spring came commenced buying cattle for the drive of 1876."

Cattle purchases, drives, and the sales and purchase of mining properties continued in 1875. Late in March good news arrived from the Snake River area; the herd wintering there, about 1,800 head, had suffered only about one percent loss. This augured well for a good year of stock raising on the Montana ranges.

In May John Bielenberg and Fred Loeber returned from a visit to the herd on the Sun River to report "an unconfirmed rumor on Sun River that Mr. Fred Kanouse, who was on trial here a couple of years ago, killed a man near Whoop-up recently and was captured and hung the next day." Such were the vagaries of cattle-raising along Montana's Sun River in 1875.

103. The New Northwest, 20 June 1874. A copy of the document is on file at the Montana Historical Society, and at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.
104. Ibid., 12 Sept. 1874.
105. Ibid., 10 Oct. 1874.
108. Ibid., 7 May 1875.
With Mitch Oxarart injured and unable to ride for a while, the spring and early summer gathering of the cattle purchased over the winter and early in the spring took a bit longer than usual. That year, as before, the cattle would be fattened and driven in the fall to Cheyenne for rail transport to Chicago, a route and system by now well established.

During the summer, Kohrs continued cattle sales in the Deer Lodge Valley, advertising "Cattle for sale! I have now at my ranch 100 head of prime beef cattle from my Sun River Herd, which I offer for sale at reasonable figures."109

As in 1874, Kohrs' and Bielenberg's cattle, and Kohrs' and Peel's cattle--a combination that had been active for at least two years by then--were again driven in two herds, one from Sun River and Deer Lodge and the other from Bitter Root.110 The drive came in the fall.111 They sold off some of Oxarart's herd near the railhead in eastern Wyoming, while the remainder of the steers went by rail to Chicago. Part of Hooban's herd went to Iowa feeders, with the remainder, "a thousand and four head," going to pasture along the North Platte (presumably near today's Rawlins) to winter because Kohrs could find no buyer.112

During that fall of 1875 two items appeared in the local press testifying to Con Kohrs's continuing financial growth (and by inference, to John Bielenberg's). The October 15 issue of The New Northwest reported the financial condition of the First National Bank in Deer Lodge, whose total resources and liabilities each amounted to $289,079.08. Conrad Kohrs served as a director, and while his salary is not mentioned nor the amount of his bank stock noted, his directorship showed his important place in the local economy and infers that his wealth was considerable. A month later the local press reported under its "Heaviest Taxpayers" column that Kohrs's personal property evaluation had remained about the same for tax purposes as the preceding year--$17,896, requiring a tax of $394.69.113

109. Ibid., 28 May 1875.
111. The New Northwest, 8 Oct. 1875. Con departed Deer Lodge on October 7 to join the herds already under way to Cheyenne.
112. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 105. The autobiography loses some of its sequential clarity following 1874 and appears to jump to 1876. The narrative here, therefore, is based primarily on reports of cattle sales, purchases, and drives in The New Northwest, which reported events as they happened, as opposed to the autobiography, which, while generally quite accurate chronologically, was, after all, composed by Kohrs in 1913, many years after the events he was describing.
113. The New Northwest, 26 Nov. 1875.
Con returned from the Cheyenne trip the week before Christmas, 1875. He had sold 1,600 head at Cheyenne, and had taken about 500 to Chicago, where they sold at low prices. He bought a ranch near the railroad, probably near Cheyenne, and reported plans to winter a herd there and sell them in 1876.114

The Centennial Year of 1876 saw Con travelling in January to the Bitterroot Valley to buy cattle, utilizing an area that had been a source of at least part of his herds for the past few years.115 Later in the spring Con and John added 400 head of stock cattle to the herd at the home ranch. These small bunches, and two others, combined to form a herd of about 1,500, which he planned to drive to Cheyenne around 1 June.116 The herd formed earlier than planned, and was slightly smaller: 1,200. In late May Con left with them.117 Almost three months later, in mid-August, Kohrs arrived near Cheyenne.118 Not long afterward, John Bielenberg, with Augusta and the girls, met Con, Tom Hooban, and Mitch Oxarart at Laramie, and the group "started on our trip to the Centennial at Philadelphia."

The group left the girls with Con's mother in Davenport, Iowa. Then the adults travelled to the Philadelphia Exposition by way of Chicago and Niagara Falls. The trip continued following the closing of the Exposition in November. The group first went to Washington and then to Cincinnati. From here they journeyed to Chicago, where they split up. Con, Augusta, and John continued on to Davenport to pick up the children, Hooban went to Wisconsin to visit family, and Mitch returned to Montana.119

114. Ibid., 24 Dec. 1875. The article closed with the announcement that Con had travelled to California as well, to "observe mining" there. Whether this is the trip that Kohrs places in his autobiography for 1874, or is indeed a trip he took in 1875 and did not mention in his autobiography, is not clear.

115. Ibid., 21 Jan. 1876.

116. Ibid., 31 Mar. 1876.

117. Ibid., 26 May 1876.

118. Ibid., 18 Aug. 1876.

119. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 105-7. The quotation is from p. 105. The chronological sequence is not clear in this section of the autobiography, as was noted in fn. 108. This much is clear. The New Northwest accounts prove that there were drives to the southeastern Wyoming railhead in both 1875 and 1876. (See the immediately previous footnotes.) The "Centennial at Philadelphia" was undoubtedly the Centennial Exposition held at Philadelphia from May until November 1876, noted in Luman H. Long, ed., 1968 Centennial Edition: The World Almanac and Book of Facts (New York: Newspaper Enterprise Association), p. 174. It is possible that the drive described on pp. 104 and 105 of the autobiography is the 1876 one, leaving the 1875 drive unrecorded.

An equally perplexing question concerns who ran the ranch during the absence of Con Kohrs, John Bielenberg, Mitch Oxarart, and Tom Hooban. The answer is not evident in the autobiography.
C. 1877-1880

The pleasant trip to the Centennial Exposition apparently included a Christmas and late winter stay at Davenport, since Con, Augusta, and the girls did not plan to return to Deer Lodge until March. The rest of the year made up for the leisurely vacation the family, Tom Hooban, and Mitch Oxarart had enjoyed.

Kohrs's autobiography introduces the eventful year with: "In 1877, as usual, I purchased cattle in the Bitter Root making a drive from there and also from the Sun River." Typically the younger cattle went to graze on the ranges and grow, while the steers were driven to the eastern rail-head and shipped to Chicago.

Con and his crew drove the herd that had wintered along the head-waters of the North Platte south into Colorado to graze in one of the three grass-rich plains, called "parks," behind the front range of the Rockies. Kohrs described it as having "an abundance of grass, and there were not cattle in it besides ours." Con Kohrs spent much of the summer in Wyoming, and recalled that he met the herds being driven down from western Montana near their crossing of the Green River--in west central Wyoming--and then, presumably after assessing their numbers and quality, would take a stagecoach to the Black Hills (southeast Wyoming, in the vicinity of Laramie) and attempt to prepare deals for their sale.

Con had the steers grazing in the Colorado park driven to Laramie that fall, but found no cattle cars available there, and continued east with the herd toward the eastern Wyoming-western Nebraska railhead at Pine Bluff. Even there no cars were available and he sold the lot to Alex Swan, of Wyoming's Swan Land and Cattle Company. "We made a nice profit," Kohrs recalled years later, "as the cost of keeping and driving them to the railroad had been less than $4,000.00."

120. The New Northwest, 26 Jan. 1877.

121. Kohrs calls the area "South Park." Just south of the range near Rawlins, where the cattle had wintered, is the park today called North Park. From Rawlins, the trip to North Park would have been a relatively short one, while the trip to today's South Park would have required the cattle to be driven across North Park, over a mountain range into Middle Park, and then over another range into South Park. It does not make sense for Kohrs to have driven his herd through two rich grasslands to get to a third--the farthest away from the starting point as well. In addition, the autobiography does not mention crossing any mountains, which it probably would have had both high ranges been crossed. The evidence indicates that what Kohrs called South Park is today called North Park, and can be located on current maps by the town of Walden in its center.
The herd Mitch Oxarart brought in from Montana did not do as well. Part were successfully sold at Laramie. The rest were shipped to Iowa for feeders. They were sold this way, that I was to have half of whatever they gained in weight. Corn fed cattle were low in the spring and I did not make anything. The sale of the two herds epitomizes the business risks that cattle growers had to take. The inability to gather enough cattle cars to ship the beef to Chicago was not common, but could happen from time to time, as it did to the Kohrs and Bielenberg herds in 1877. Luckily, Swan wanted some cattle, and so Con Kohrs managed to unload his herd at a nice profit. He lost money on the other herd, but it might have been profitable had the prices for corn-fed cattle not dropped. Drops in prices, and other vagaries of the beef cattle market place, always stood between the cattle producers and a sure profit. It was a normal way of conducting business, but it could show its harsh side as it did for Kohrs and Bielenberg that year.

The summer marked the only major Indian scare the town of Deer Lodge, and the home ranch, ever had. Chief Joseph's epic march, one of the more successful evasions and retreats in military history, passed Deer Lodge about eighty miles to the south, where the Battle of the Big Hole occurred in August 1877. Con was probably not home at the time, since his autobiography infers that he was in eastern Wyoming with the herds. John Bielenberg probably was there preparing, like the rest of the town, for a brush with Joseph's Nez Perce warriors. Kohrs's description of the events in Deer Lodge is terse but illuminating:

Great excitement prevailed in Deer Lodge. The men determined to put the women and children into the penitentiary and then go out for the defense of the place. Our ambulance was waiting at the door for the warning. Fortunately, Chief Joseph chose another route and later the ambulance was sent to the Big Hole for the care of the wounded.

The family spent the winter of 1877 to 1878 together at the home ranch. Con began cattle buying in March of 1878, purchasing a herd near Flathead Lake, north of the Deer Lodge Valley. This herd and another were gathered and driven down to eastern Wyoming along the standard route, but this was to be the last time the western route (south out of Montana, through Idaho, into western Wyoming, and then east across Wyoming) would be taken. The next year would see a new trail utilized until the railroad came to eastern Montana.

122. Kohrs, "Autobiography" pp. 107-8. The first quotation is from p. 107, the second from p. 108.

123. Ibid., p. 108. The ambulance at the park today is the one mentioned in this account, and is probably the vehicle that brought Con (continued)
That fall Con travelled east--presumably to Chicago--with the cattle, and stopped off in Iowa. Near West Liberty he purchased two thoroughbred stallions, "Regent" and "Strideway." He also picked up some additional thoroughbred cattle there, and shipped them all to the home ranch. Mitch Oxarart left Kohrs and Bielenberg that fall to work in Texas.\footnote{124}

In 1878 John and Con added some lands to the home ranch. In February about a quarter section of land contiguous to the upper ranch was purchased.\footnote{125} In August Con and Augusta sold an "undivided one-fourth interest in lands already owned, part of the home ranch, to John Bielenberg.\footnote{126} But this represented no large-scale acquisition of land for the home ranch property. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s the ranch remained relatively small, since Kohrs's and Bielenberg's large herds grazed on public domain, as did the other large herds of the day, making a large home ranch unnecessary. Con and John added small amounts of land in the 1880s, although the overall size of the home ranch remained small. It was not until the last decade of the century, when much of the desirable public land was beginning to be taken over by homesteaders and railroads, that the huge land purchases came about, bringing the home ranch to its maximum size of about 27,000 acres.

A turning point in the Kohrs and Bielenberg operation came in 1879. That year they chose a new route to market, and that year also the Kohrs and Bielenberg herds began increasing rapidly in size, attaining their largest number in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Kohrs "spent the winter at home"; in the spring he bought a large herd that was driven to the Sun River Range to graze and fatten. They drove the herd east that June, in company with another one because "of the Indian scare." The "eastern route" to Pine Bluff, on the Wyoming-Nebraska line, began on the

\footnote{123} (continued) and Augusta home from Fort Benton in 1868, and the one used for a variety of other purposes by the family over the active years of the home ranch.

\footnote{124} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 111-12. Regent and Strideway are shown in Illustration 3, taken from M. A. Leeson, \textit{History of Montana}, 1885, p. 556. The thoroughbred cattle were Short Horns (also called Durhams).

\footnote{125} Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 3, pp. 359-60.

\footnote{126} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 398-99. The date of initial purchase by Con and Augusta is not known. Most of Kohrs's land transactions--mining, agricultural, and commercial (such as city lots)--were in both his and Augusta's name. Frequently he and Bielenberg jointly owned land as well.
Sun River Range, then turned southeast to the Missouri River. High water prevented a crossing anywhere but at Great Falls, which Kohrs described as "a dangerous crossing," but noted: "we managed to get over safely." From there the trail went southeast along the southern edge of the Judith Basin, across the upper drainage of the Musselshell, and across the Yellowstone. At the crossing the trail turned south through the Tongue and Powder River valleys, continuing south until it encountered the North Platte. It followed this river toward Fort Laramie and western Nebraska. With minor variations, this became the "eastern route" to take cattle to the railheads and to southeastern Wyoming. It served also to bring cattle north from Texas until the railroads took over the chore.127

The initial trip on the eastern route did not start well, nor had the last one on the western route ended too comfortably. On the last western route drive in 1878, Kohrs had been caught in a blizzard. On the first eastern route drive he recalled:

We had a great deal of trouble crossing the Missouri. Tried for days to cross right below Cascade. The water was high and very swift. The cattle would not swim across, would go in but started to milling as soon as they got in deep water. I was in a boat trying to get them to head up stream, but in vain. They struck the boat with their horns and I came near to losing my life. Several of the riders were in charge and one horse was lost.

Somehow, amidst the busy routines of summer, Con found time to travel to Canada (Bow Park, in the province of Ontario) and add some blooded stock to his holdings at the home ranch. He bought "a carload" of Clydesdale mares and two stallions, "Clyde of Brent" and "Glancer" (Clydesdale is the name given to a breed of large draft or work horses, some of which are featured today in beer commercials on television). On the way, he stopped in Iowa and added thirty head of thoroughbred cattle "from Brown-lee Brothers, Hickory Grove, Iowa, and at West Liberty (in nearby Illinois) enough cows and heifers to make about 100 head." The registered cattle--Short Horns--went to the home ranch.128

127. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 113-14. The "Indian scare" was probably a carryover from the Bannock-Paiute War the preceding year, when Con had noted the Indians "were restive" in southern Wyoming.

The eastern and western routes are shown on Map 2, copied from Conrad Kohrs's Papers, with the routes he and C. K. Warren marked on it emphasized. Towne and Wentworth, Cattle and Men, p. 244, notes the use of the Powder River Basin as a grazing area for Texas cattle in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

The home ranch was becoming bigger, and probably the addition of the registered cattle and over a half-section of land to the upper ranch were not coincidental. The addition to the ranch came in late June, and the transfer of lands from the previous owners was to "Conrad Kohrs and John W. W. [John N. W.] Bielenberg." Whatever arrangements there had been previously for ownership of the home ranch land, this parcel and one purchased just prior to it were in the names of Bielenberg and Kohrs.128

The herd on the Sun River had grown significantly, and late that spring the roundup produced about 4,900 calves for branding.130 The registered Short Horn bulls Kohrs and Bielenberg had imported from Iowa had sired many of these. The Kohrs and Bielenberg "CK" cattle now numbered among the largest herds in the territory. An outbreak of "black leg."131 among the animals caused some losses, but not enough to cripple the cattle growing operation at all. Indeed, Kohrs's comment that "we lost a good many" cattle to the disease could mean as few as ten or as many as ten percent. At any rate, it did not merit further discussion and may be characterized as one of the many problems cattle growers then (and now) fall heir to in the normal pursuit of the trade.

The major event concerning the family proved to be the birth of a son to Augusta and Con. The child, William Kruse, arrived on 1 November 1879.

The 1880 sequence began the same as the previous few years, with the Sun River herd gathered for trailing to the east across Montana and then southeast toward southeastern Wyoming. "In June Tom Hooban started with a big herd of steers, mostly two and three years old, some four, and between 300 and 400 head of the oldest cows that I wanted to get rid of, taking the same route as the year before until we got to Tongue River."129

128. (continued) "In the summer of 1879 Conrad Kohrs, then of Deer Lodge, Mont. (of whom more hereafter) spent a few days at Bow Park and bought some stock. Hope [the owner of the stock Con purchased] was immensely struck with his strong personality, and often referred to it. There was a glamour about his talk as he opened up the vein of his past experience." Clay's book, partly memoir, partly history, and partly the report of a participant, is an excellent source for the study of the economics of the cattle business and the approaches to it taken by its various leaders.


130. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 114-15. Fletcher, Free Grass, p. 45, also notes the figure and remarks that it was just such phenomenal growth figures for open range herds in Montana that helped spark the cattle boom of the early 1880s.

131. Black Leg is an infectious disease of young cattle and, less often, of sheep and swine, involving high fever and swelling under the skin. It is usually fatal.
But in the Tongue River Valley, near the junction of the Tongue and Goose Creek, the herd was stopped and wintered. That year Kohrs and Bielenberg sold no cattle, though in his autobiography Kohrs does not mention why. 132

That October Con, Augusta, Anna, Katherine, and young William travelled to Dillon, south of Deer Lodge, "in their own conveyance" (possibly the ambulance) to catch the railroad there for the trip to Iowa. There they picked up a niece, "Willie," and at Hoboken, New Jersey, Miss Anna King, the Kohrs children's governess. The family boarded a steamer and went over to the old country for an extended holiday. In Germany Con settled in for a lengthy stay, and "took the first rest I had had in many years." The children enrolled in a local German school, and kept up their music and English with the governess. Con, Augusta, and Miss King enjoyed the opera and concerts in Hamburg. Con remained until March of 1881, leaving the family there while he returned to a rapidly changing cattle business in Montana.

D. 1880-1883

The 1870s had served as foundation years for the boom of the early 1880s in Montana. Cattle growers like Kohrs and Bielenberg, John T. Murphy, Henry Sieben, Dan Floweree, Granville Stuart, and many others had built on the early herds in western and southwestern Montana's sheltered valleys, and had added thoroughbred stock to improve the overall quality. They had moved onto the western edge of the eastern Montana plains, and, most important of all, had opened trade--on a scale large enough to promise great expansion--with the Chicago, Omaha, and Kansas City markets. As the western supply of beef grew--and Montana cattle formed only a part of that supply--the eating habits of the nation changed and Americans began to include more and more beef in their diet. The meat-packing industry moved operations west toward the supply, and refrigerator railroad cars were developed as well. 133 As the herds multiplied, and the demand of eastern and midwestern cities grew larger in the late 1870s, other factors

132. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 114-15. In his letter to Teigen, 8 February, Con Warren discusses the 1880 drive and wintering the herd on Goose Creek. He notes that "they summered on the Tongue and shipped for the first time on the Northern Pacific from Miles City in 1881." Therein probably lies the explanation for Kohrs's retention of the herd in northeastern Wyoming. He undoubtedly was awaiting the arrival of a railhead convenient to eastern Montana, and was in a secure enough financial position that he did not have to sell the herd gathered at the Sun River Range in 1880 and could await the imminent arrival of the Northern Pacific.

influenced the cattle industry in Montana. Texas cattle, surplus in their homeland, proved to be most profitable on northern ranges, where they added weight and produced more saleable beef than if they had remained in the south. They furnished a large reservoir of animals to fill the eastern Montana plains.

But until the late 1870s and early 1880s buffalo grazed on the plains of Montana Territory, and provided food and shelter—and subsequent mobility—to an aggressive Indian population dependent on them. But by 1880 the supply of buffalo had dwindled greatly, and the Indians were more easily controlled. In 1879 the Sioux, the Northern Cheyenne, and the Crow nations settled on reservations. By 1880 what remained of the northern buffalo herd no longer competed seriously with grazing cattle.

In 1879 four investors had created a cattle-raising operation and put in a ranch headquarters on Box Elder Creek about four miles south of Fort Maginnis. Construction of the fort and of the ranch had begun within weeks of each other. This ranch, east and slightly south of the Sun River Range, in the drainage of the Judith River, was organized by Samuel T. Hauser, a territorial entrepreneur and politician; Granville Stuart, who had been among the earliest settlers and cattlemen and an

133. (continued) first chapter is a summation of developments in the industry from the post-Civil War period until 1900, and discusses the historical background of the changes in the industry, the economics of it, and the subsequent changes in marketing of western-grown beef.

old friend of Con Kohrs; and two Davis brothers, Butte banker A. J., and his brother Ervin who lived in New York City. Called the "DHS" (Davis, Hauser, and Stuart), it too brought cattle onto the central and western portions of the Montana plains east of the continental divide.\textsuperscript{136}

With the Indians no longer threatening the herds that now began to spill onto the Montana plains out of the southwestern valleys and up from Texas, and with the buffalo no longer competing with them for grass in any appreciable numbers, only one factor was still necessary to start the cattle boom. That element was transportation, and it arrived by 1881 in the east and by 1883 in the west. The economic uncertainties of the 1870s had slowed the frenetic pace of railroad construction across the United States. Western Dakota (the Northern Pacific) and central Idaho (the Utah and Northern) had been the points where the westbound and north-south lines, respectively, had stopped. But by 1881 the Northern Pacific had reached Miles City in eastern Montana. By 1883 the Utah and Northern and the Northern Pacific joined at Garrison Junction, just north of Deer Lodge, within sight of John Grant's original settlement.\textsuperscript{136}

The winter of 1880-81 had been hard, and the Kohrs and Bielenberg herds along the Sun River sustained some losses from it. Thus in one respect this winter bore a great deal of similarity to that of 1886-87, but, as Kohrs noted, "that of 1881 was responsible for heavy losses in a local rather than general sense, as it was what is called a 'spotted winter.'" Some of the losses came during the cold weather, but others resulted from water rising behind ice dams on the Sun River late in the winter and drowning cattle on islands. Kohrs's and Bielenberg's aggregate losses stood at about fifteen percent\textsuperscript{137} when the count was made at spring roundup. Kohrs had problems elsewhere that year. One of them involved the railroad long awaited by the western portions of Montana Territory.


\textsuperscript{137} Kohrs, "A Veteran's Experience," p. 1329.
The railroad coming north along the Deer Lodge River to join the Northern Pacific at Garrison—the Utah and Northern—laid its tracks on the low benchland immediately adjacent to the Deer Lodge River on the east. This meant that just south of Deer Lodge, perhaps three and one-half miles, and again just on the north edge of town, lands of the home ranch were crossed. As usual in such cases, a three-man group of commissioners formed to assess the damage to property owners whose lands would be utilized for the railroad right-of-way and who felt that the railroad's offer was too low. The landowner involved chose one man, the railroad the second, and those two commissioners chose the third. Their decision was then affirmed in a district court and the damages paid to the landowner. The case of Kohrs and Bielenberg was like this, and when Con returned in March of 1881 to Montana the decision had been made on his lands. Con objected vociferously, and his description of his reaction shows the intensity of his feeling:

They appraised the right-of-way in front of my house and through my land at a very low figure, only $5.00 per acre. I blamed Sam Word for the low appraisal, abused him for everything that was out and had it not been for Alex Mayhew, in whose office our quarrel occurred, there would have been a shooting scrape.

Kohrs describes no other episode in his autobiography with this level of emotion, and it is not surprising that he brought suit to right the wrong. Kohrs settled eventually for $1,500, a miniscule sum in comparison to those he handled frequently in his business operations. His dogged fight was probably a reaction to the railroad tracks being laid almost at his doorstep.

That summer Con tried to induce John Bielenberg to marry, explaining, "that season I bought the Olin property Had been trying to induce my brother to marry and intended to turn the property over to him..." Bielenberg did not marry during that or any other summer.

The herds on Goose Creek remained there, and Con bought additional cattle, one of the earliest purchases coming from the DHS operation. These and an additional herd were shipped to Chicago; Kohrs accompanied

138. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 116. The actual mechanics of the case appear to have involved the railroad suing Kohrs, and Kohrs contesting the amount involved. The case is on file with the Clerk of the Court, Deer Lodge County courthouse, and was not transcribed for the Powell County Records when the two counties were created from Deer Lodge County. See Cases 1840 and 1841, District Court, Second Judicial District, Deer Lodge County, Montana Territory, Utah and Northern Railroad Plaintiff, Against Conrad Kohrs, et al., Defendant. Photographic copies are on file (continued)
them, then moving on to New York and boarding a steamer for Germany to
rejoin his family for a second winter abroad.\textsuperscript{139}

Kohrs and Bielenberg, like other cattle-raisers that summer of
1881, expanded their range areas. They brought about three thousand
cattle to Flat Willow Creek—the major water source south of the DHS—
located southeast of Lewistown in central Montana.\textsuperscript{140} Adding that
area to their total, Kohrs and Bielenberg now had sizeable herds along
the Sun River (in the western part of Montana east of the continental
divide), along Goose Creek in northeast Wyoming, and at the home ranch
in Deer Lodge Valley. Their animals took part in the great expansion
of the cattle herds of Montana beginning in the early 1880s.

The winter in Germany, 1881-82, must have been a most pleasant
one for Kohrs. He later recalled that it was "even more enjoyable
and delightful than the previous one. I began to get fleshy, weigh­
ing almost 250 pounds, and was flesher than I had ever been before."

In April 1882 he returned to Montana, and upon reaching Miles City
hired a livery horse, intending to visit Tom Hooban with the herd at
Goose Creek and Tongue River. The ride of 150 miles down and back proved
difficult for the "fleshy and soft" rider and not too easy on the horse
bearing the load. An additional mount provided by Tom Hooban eased the
situation on the return trip to Miles City. The rest of the journey was
by stagecoach.\textsuperscript{141} The year 1882 proved to be active for Kohrs and Bie­
lenberg and the cattle industry as a whole. By this time European inves­
tors, especially Scottish and British speculators, had plunged millions
into the business. One veteran described the situation:

The year 1882 was prolific in cattle companies. As I have
said the Scotch and English investors were early in the
game. New York, Boston, and other cities contributed capi­
tal to this western mushroom. It was marvellous how quickly
news spread. The business which had such pillars to support
it in the west as Swan, Carey, Sturgis, Kohrs, Murphy, Gran­
ville Stuart and hosts of others had grown up since 1870.\textsuperscript{142}

\textsuperscript{138} (continued) at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS. The case began on 21 June
1882 and was not settled until 19 Mar. 1884. The right-of-way was granted,
and recorded on 14 Mar. 1884 in Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 4,
p. 495-98 for both the home ranch and upper ranch.


\textsuperscript{140} Stuart, \textit{Forty Years on the Frontier}, 2:165.

\textsuperscript{141} Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 117.

\textsuperscript{142} Clay, \textit{My Life on the Range}, p. 26. Clay was referring to the
whole cattle-raising west, not just Montana. "Stags" refers to incompletely
(continued)
The DHS cattle, as well as Kohrs's and Bielenberg's, numbered in the thousands that year, as natural increase and importations of Oregon and Texas cattle helped fill the spaces left open by the demise of the buffalo and removal of the Indian. The range cattle book for the DHS showed

Recapitulation for 1883

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of Cattle as shown by Stuart for 1882</td>
<td>10500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of calves branded as shown above</td>
<td>3379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steers Sold &amp; Del at Custer Station</td>
<td>644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows Sold &amp; Del at Custer Station</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stags Sold &amp; Del at Custer Station</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchered at ranch</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butchered by thieves estimated</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No on Range Dec 31 1883</td>
<td>13,113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kohrs spent much of his time on the range that summer. In June he purchased a herd of 4-year-old steers and added another of about 1,200 picked up from settlers "across the river," presumably the area just south of the Missouri River near Fort Benton. The first herd--that of Downs and Allen--was rebranded and left on the range. The mixed herd from the settlers stampeded during the drive to Billings near Bull Creek, and "often after that we had a stampede at the watering places." These cattle were the first that Kohrs and Bielenberg had shipped from Billings to Chicago, and, no doubt in part because of their skittishness on the way to the railhead, were in "bad condition and even with the good prices in Chicago made but little money."

With the Downs and Allen herd still on the range and the other one sold in Chicago, Con turned his attention to the bunch Tom Hooban had been overseeing on the Tongue River. The herd of 1100 were driven to Miles City and loaded: 700 3-year-olds and 400 4-year-olds for the Chicago market. Kohrs's description of them testifies to the condition that range-fed cattle could be in if they had access to good grass not overgrazed:

They had been on a new range, had gotten very fat and brought big prices in Chicago.

The four year olds weighed 1583 pounds [average] and brought $5.85 per hundred, the three year olds weighed 1365 [average]

142. (continued) castrated bulls, not functional as bulls, but not gaining weight as steers either.

143. Range Cattle Book, Pioneer Cattle Company, Conrad Warren Papers, p. 12. Custer Station was a rail loading point on the Northern Pacific near Billings.
and sold at the same price. The family and young stock was sold to P. B. Wears and Howard Conrad, the latter at that time having a store at Fort McKinney.144

With the last of the herds to be shipped safely on their way, Con journeyed to New York to meet the family returning from their twenty-month stay in Germany. In New York they shopped for household goods and purchased a set of Rogers silverware—"the first we had." In Chicago they added furniture and carpets to the goods destined for the home ranch house.145 Kohrs and Bielenberg had seen their cattle enterprise and their numerous other business and mining interests grow along with the territory, and in keeping with this prosperity Con and Augusta would furnish their house in much more than Spartan style.

By 1883 the cattle boom on the plains of Montana showed no signs of slowing, and Con's and John's herds grew along with others. So too did the market area for the beef. The Canadians, now filling their open spaces in the West with settlers and (more importantly for cattle growers) crossing the Canadian West with a railroad, became new customers. Construction crews, a large contingent of Northwest Mounted Police, and numerous reservation Indians in the Canadian provinces on Montana's border all required large amounts of beef, and Montana ranchers helped meet the demand. Kohrs recalled that

Our Sun River herd had been improved until it was one of the finest in the state and [the] summer was a busy one. The Sun River herd, including the Downs & Allen steers, were sold to Charley Conrad and to I. G. Baker & Company, who had a large contract to furnish beef to the Canadian Pacific while they were building to the coast. I sold them over 1500 head at $62.50 per head, the total sale amounting to nearly $94,000.00. I was busy so Johnny gathered and delivered these cattle.146

Conrad Kohrs had plenty of reason to be busy early in 1883. He spent a great deal of money in one major transaction that year, and being the alert and serious entrepreneur that he was, no doubt also spent a great deal of time in investigation prior to consummation of the deal.

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144. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 117-18. All quotations but the final one are from p. 117.

145. Ibid., p. 118. A fire at the home that October caused little damage and is discussed in the Historic Structure Report.

146. Ibid., p. 119. Fletcher, Free Grass, p. 48, discusses the transaction but places it in 1882. Kohrs's autobiography is somewhat misleading as to chronology at this point, but a careful examination of the text appears to date the transaction in 1883, probably in the early spring, as soon as the cattle could be moved to a point where the new owners could assume charge of them.

51
Kohrs's laconic report of the transaction begins: "In the meantime I bought out A. J. and Irvin Davis in the firm of Davis, Hauser & Stuart at the rate of $400,000.00 for the cattle, horses, ranches, and everything belonging to the firm." Another account puts the matter into clearer perspective to the times:

In July, 1883, Conrad Kohrs, for Kohrs and Bielenberg, and Granville Stuart, for Stuart and Anderson, bought of A. J. Davis, of Davis, Hauser & Company twelve thousand head of cattle at $400,000. Since Stuart and Anderson were former owners of the herd the sale represented in fact a purchase of the two-thirds interest of Judge Davis by Mr. Kohrs for $266,667. Of the sale it was written at the time: "this is the heaviest transaction in cattle that has ever taken place in the territory..." By this transaction Conrad Kohrs placed himself at the head of the Montana cattle business. It was a distinction he was to enjoy for many years, while his interests steadily grew.

Kohrs and Bielenberg now owned herds on the Sun River, in the Deer Lodge Valley, and a major interest in the central Montana DHS open range.

147. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 119. The deal is also described in Warren to Teigan, Feb. 73, p. 5.

148. Winfield Scott Downs, ed., Encyclopedia of Northwest Biography (New York: The American Historical Research Company, Inc., 1941), p. 22. The story of the DHS and Conrad Kohrs's part in its operations over the years following 1883 is a major part of the Kohrs and Bielenberg history. As such, in this narrative it forms part of the story of range cattle activities following 1883.

The 1883 Manager's Report (Folder 24, Box 62, Collection 37, 1883 Annual Manager's Report, Pioneer Cattle Company, Montana Historical Society) for the DHS indicated that Kohrs and Bielenberg had bought into a rapidly developing stock-raising operation: 13,013 "cattle on range," valued at $35.00 each, totaled $455,455.00; the 78 "horses at ranch" $7,385.57; and the "5 wagons and harnesses, 3 ranches, 320 Tons of Hay," and "cash on hand," lesser amounts. The "Approximate Gain" for 1883 stood at $71,067.95, although it is not clear if this was net profit for the year. The report serves to bring the full magnitude of the DHS operation to a "facts and figures" level, and when the DHS business is combined with the Kohrs and Bielenberg activity, the result represents a major portion of the Montana cattle business for 1883.
ranch. Their cattle now showed the "DHS" brand as well as the "CK," an identification that became well known in Montana cattle history.

While the Con Kohrs-DHS deal was the signal event of the year, other things happened in 1883. It proved to be a most active year for the principals of Kohrs and Bielenberg. The year had opened, literally almost, since the date of the transaction was 2 January, with a small land purchase that added eighty acres to the upper ranch. Improvements, too, took place, though the typically tantalizing yet incomplete announcement in the local press noted only that "Kohrs and Bielenberg are building two large stock barns and stables." Whether these were on the home ranch (which is probable) or on the upper ranch (at least possible) is not stated. Somewhere on the Kohrs and Bielenberg property at Deer Lodge, in Montana Territory, however, stables and barns went up in late 1883.

The travels of Conrad Kohrs, of the whole Kohrs family, and of John Bielenberg during the second half of 1883 demonstrate graphically the demands a widespread cattle business made on its participants, and the ardor with which Con and John addressed both their vocation and recreation. In early August Con, R. S. Kelley, and Lew Coleman [Kohrs's partners in some of his mining ventures] journeyed to Boulder, a day or so away to the east, "to look after their many interests there." Shortly afterward Con, Augusta, and the children, probably accompanied by John Bielenberg, went up to Garrison Junction, about thirteen miles north of the home ranch, to witness the Golden Spike ceremony as the Northern Pacific and Montana Union railroads joined, linking Montana rail service on an east-west axis to that coming north out of Utah and Idaho. (The Montana Union was a Utah Northern subsidiary, with some ownership by the Northern Pacific as well.) Then, on August 20, the family embarked for a leisurely trip to Yellowstone Park, equipped for at least a modicum of comfort. Con Kohrs drove the ambulance and Kenyon the four-horse provision wagon. We had a hostler along and in addition to our teams we had a riding horse for every member of the party, besides one or two extra horses, eighteen in all. We were well equipped with tents,

149. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 4, pp. 563-65. The land was purchased for $400 from the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, and probably involved "lieu lands," those areas granted the railroads out of the public domain that did not lie along the right-of-way but were granted in lieu of such land.

150. The New Northwest, 10 Aug. 1883.

151. Ibid.
beddings and provisions and camped from the time we started until we reached home in early October.\textsuperscript{152}

John Bielenberg, meanwhile, had been out for five weeks of range riding. The local press noted that "John Bielenberg returned last Friday after a five weeks inspection for Kohrs and Bielenberg on Sun River. 'The cattle on a Thousand Hills and in one valley' are all right."\textsuperscript{153}

During John's trip on the range, Tom Hooban "and another man" each took a large herd to the Fort Maginnis range because the Sun River range now experienced serious overcrowding with cattle herds and even larger numbers of sheep. The Fort Maginnis range, the center of the DHS grazing area, while crowded, remained less so in 1883.

After the family's return from Yellowstone, and with John back and running things at the home ranch, Con left in mid-October for the Judith Basin (central Montana, near the DHS herds) and shipped 1,200 to 1,300 head to Chicago after driving them to Custer Station for loading.\textsuperscript{154}

The drive must have been a hard one for Con Kohrs, since it was made without the help of his old friend and cattle foreman, Tom Hooban. Tom's health had been growing worse, and the drain of life on the range proved too hard on him. Tom stayed briefly with the Kohrs family in Deer Lodge, and Con then persuaded him to travel to California "where the climate was mild."\textsuperscript{155} The local press took note of Tom's departure, misspelling his name in the process:

Tom Hogan [Hooban], a cattle foreman, who has been in the employee of Kohrs and Bielenberg for many years, left Tuesday for California, his health requiring a milder climate. His employers say he was the most faithful employee they ever had, and are sorry to part with him.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{152}. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 120-23. Kohrs's description of the park as he saw it in 1883 is most interesting reading and provides a seldom seen view of the very early years of Yellowstone.

\textsuperscript{153}. \textit{The New Northwest}, 2 Oct. 1883. Once again \textit{The New Northwest} serves as a source of data on the Kohrs and Bielenberg activities, while simultaneously reminding the reader of an earlier and more literary era of journalism in America.


\textsuperscript{156}. \textit{The New Northwest}, 19 Oct. 1883.
After Con delivered the cattle shipped at Custer Station he returned by way of Davenport, Iowa, bringing his stepfather, Claus Bielenberg, with him. By this time it was early November 1883. The "Personals" column of The New Northwest picked up the story of Kohrs's travels upon his return: "Conrad Kohrs, Esq. returned Saturday last and on Monday went east to ship cattle from Custer and market them in St. Paul. He will probably be absent until nearly the holidays."¹⁵⁷

The momentous year, filled with travel for everyone at the home ranch, closed with the usual public recitation of taxes paid in "The Heaviest Taxpayers in Deer Lodge County For The Year 1883" column of the local paper. It noted that "Kohrs and Bielenberg paid 866.20 in taxes, Several ranchers paid more."¹⁵⁸ The year that had seen the largest investment in Montana cattle history to date, with the Kohrs and Bielenberg purchase of a share of the DHS, had not seen concomitant additions to the home ranch, which remained smaller than many in the Deer Lodge Valley.

By the end of 1883 the open range lands of eastern and central Montana were filled to near capacity. Twelve herds grazed in the range where Granville Stuart had located the DHS headquarters. Texas cattle by the hundreds of thousands now shared the grass only recently relinquished by the vanished buffalo with an equal number of sheep and a few thousand horses. "By the first of October there were six hundred thousand head of range cattle in the territory and these together with the horses and sheep was as much stock as the ranges could safely carry."¹⁵⁹ The last of the open lands of the West suitable for large-scale cattle raising now stood at maximum capacity or near it.

By early 1884, as greater and greater numbers of Texas cattle came into the State, the problem of diseases they carried became of immediate concern. In March Con called a meeting of cattlemen to discuss the issue. From the meeting a committee of five--Kohrs, John H. Ming, R. S. Hamilton, John T. Murphy, and O. R. Allen--was appointed to watch the progress of disease in imported cattle. If necessary, they were to call a convention of all Montana cattlemen to discuss the problem. This appears to be Kohrs' first active and open effort to organize the cattlemen of the territory to deal with mutual needs and problems.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷. Ibid., 9 Nov. 1883.
¹⁵⁸. Ibid., 30 Nov. 1883.
¹⁵⁹. Brown and Felton, Before Barbed Wire, p. 102, quoting Granville Stuart, whose estimates of cattle do not always agree with Kohrs's autobiography. In this case a few thousand makes little difference.
¹⁶⁰. The New Northwest, 28 Mar. 1884. The work Con Kohrs did in helping create the group that eventually became the Montana Stockgrowers (continued)
At the same time, Kohrs and Bielenberg's purebred cattle continued to aid in the upgrading of Montana stock. Late that March they shipped three young registered bulls to a Madison County ranch. Two of the bulls, "Duke of Knox" and "Meadow Lark Duke," were Short Horns, and the third, "Harry Allen," was a Hereford. This is the first specific mention of Herefords at the home ranch. This breed had been growing in popularity in the late 1870s in Kansas, but had not yet arrived in any real numbers in Montana. In bringing in registered Herefords, Con and John moved somewhat ahead of most of their contemporaries, and although they might not have been the very first ranchers in Montana to raise these cattle, they certainly numbered among the first.  

Con continued to show his interest in Montana cattle-raisers and their needs the next month, when he attended the Wyoming Stock Growers Convention in Cheyenne. He discussed the trip with the local newspaper's reporter, for the notice of his trip mentioned

Mr. Kohrs realizes the necessity of some further legislation in relation to cattle interests in Montana and visits to Cheyenne to learn the working laws of Wyoming and neighboring Territories and States, with a view to ascertaining their merits and having brought up in the Montana legislature next winter a bill that will be equitable and adequate to the stock interests in this territory.  

Shortly after Kohrs returned from the Cheyenne trip, news of Tom Hooban's death arrived. The loss was a major one to the family, and Conrad Kohrs's recollection of it was touched with a quality of devotion and real sense of loss:

The reports from him were not favorable. The damp climate [at his initial location in California] seemed to aggravate his disease. From Los Angeles he moved to Riverside and as

160. (continued) Association is covered in Fletcher, Free Grass. Fletcher's study described the development of the association. Kohrs, while a leader in the organization and an important figure in its early formation, did not work alone, but in the mainstream of the movement to organize.

161. The New Northwest, 28 Mar. 1884. Kohrs and Bielenberg might, indeed, have been the first to introduce Herefords. But the research effort involved in proving this one way or the other would necessitate time that is not yet available, and the issue has less than a first priority rating among the many research needs of Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS. It remains an open question, and a potentially interesting one to pursue.

162. Ibid., 11 Apr. 1884.
he showed no improvement, his physician advised him to go to
a dry altitude in New Mexico. He died at the Sisters' Hospi-
tal in Santa Fe in April. I received the telegram notifying
me of his death and telegraphed back to place his remains in
a metallic casket and send them to his home in Wisconsin and
send expense bills to me.

Tom had left some money with me on which I paid interest and
which I afterwards paid over to his sister. My wife and I
went to Wisconsin and followed him to his last resting place. 163

With Hooban gone and Mitch Oxarart in Texas, the two employees
(foremen, really) who rated specific mention in the Kohrs autobiography
pass from the picture. Both had been with Kohrs and Bielenberg for many
years and had been of major assistance as their cattle business grew
from supplying mining camp butcher shops in western Montana to herds
that filled dozens of cattle cars en route to Chicago and other eastern
markets. The personal element of "Mitch's herd" and "Tom Hooban's herd
on the Tongue" had yielded to far larger herds but far greater impersona-
lity. The size of the 1884 herds, grazing in widely separated ranges
throughout Montana, Con Kohrs's present tendency to view the larger pic-
ture of the western cattlemen's needs, and Hooban's death all seemed to
mark--with complete finality--the transition that had been taking place
for the preceding three or four years. Kohrs and Bielenberg had grown
far too big to foster the personal element in the business.

April of 1884 brought a small acquisition to the home ranch. The
addition was the Tom Stuart place, between Deer Lodge and the ranch
house. 164 Possibly the addition of the meadowland with the creek running
through it provided additional grazing for the growing herd of registered
stock at the home ranch.

The year continued its full-forward pace, with Bielenberg and Kohrs
busy with the scattered large herds, gathering and driving them to rail
loading points for shipment east. In early May a report from the Sun
River range reached Deer Lodge

stating that three cowboys had eaten some wild parsnips
about noon one day recently, and then before 2:30 p.m. two
of them were dead. The third was saved by the most active
exertions of physicians. One of those who died was Tim Leary
(or Tim Fenton as he was sometimes called) whose mother lives
in Phillipsburg. He was employed for several years here by


164. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 4, pp. 502-3. The trans-
action was also mentioned in The New Northwest, 11 Apr. 1884, which noted
that "the ranch adjoins that of Kohrs and has some excellent meadow land."
the Bielenberg boys, and they speak highly of him. He was about twenty-five years old.\textsuperscript{165}

Later that year, in August, a Kohrs and Bielenberg cowboy, "Austin L. Clapper, alias Frank Austin," was killed by lightning while driving a Kohrs and Bielenberg herd near Square Butte, close to the Sun River.\textsuperscript{166}

Con took a trip back to Iowa that June,\textsuperscript{167} returning by way of the central and eastern Montana ranges. Upon his return in the middle of August, Kohrs reported that the calf crop on the ranges had not been as good as expected. The crop in the herds north of the Yellowstone was light, that south of the Yellowstone better. His solution, apparently reflecting what he and other stock growers had discussed, was to have a larger proportion of bulls in the herds.\textsuperscript{168}

Statewide organizations took some of Con's attention that August as well. The revitalized Montana Stockgrowers' Association named Con Kohrs as Deer Lodge and Meagher County representative, and to the executive committee. At the same time a call went out for citizens in the territory to join a new Pioneer Association.\textsuperscript{169} Kohrs remained active in both these groups for many years.

Early fall brought the territorial fair, and in 1884 Kohrs and Bielenberg entered Short Horn and crossbred heifers, Short Horn bulls, one Polled Angus bull, and an Ayrshire cow. The results attested to Kohrs's and Bielenberg's stock quality, because their animals took a total of ten prizes, or as they were then termed, "Territorial Fair Premiums."

Roundup time followed the fair: the third week in September saw them gathering horses for the drive to the Sun River country; then came the fall roundup of cattle to be sold in the east. The drive would be from Sun River to Billings and Custer for shipment to Chicago.\textsuperscript{170}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{165} \textit{Ibid.}, 9 May 1884.
\item \textsuperscript{166} \textit{Ibid.}, 22 Aug. 1884.
\item \textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}, 20 June 1884.
\item \textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid.}, 18 July 1884.
\item \textsuperscript{169} \textit{Ibid.}, 1 Aug. 1884.
\item \textsuperscript{170} \textit{Ibid.}, 9 Sept. 1884.
\end{itemize}
Con had travelled to the ranges more than once that summer, making "several trips to Fort MacGinnis" (the DHS headquarters were just four miles south of the fort) to check the part-Kohrs-owned DHS herds as well as his own CK cattle. The train that ran through Deer Lodge, connecting with the Northern Pacific, which in turn traversed much of the range country, considerably eased and facilitated travel to and from the ranges. In early November Con left Deer Lodge for the DHS to ship cattle to Chicago and, after seeing the process underway, returned just three weeks later in order to take Augusta and "Willie" back to Miles City, bound for Chicago, St. Louis, and then New Orleans.

Con made the trip to St. Louis to attend the stockgrower's convention there. It proved to be a stormy session, with conflicting sides—the northern and southern cattle growers—dividing on the issue of a National Cattle Trail. Con recalled later that "it was a large convention, attended by most of the prominent men of Montana as well as other states and St. Louis entertained these members royally."

Kohrs managed to keep goodwill among all factions. John Clay, both participant in and historian of the open range cattle business, recalled Conrad Kohrs's part in the proceedings with a great deal of fondness:

He took no part in the discussions. He did not join in the fray. We went for the fellowship more than anything. However, we had a pleasant time and one night the grand old man from Montana entertained a lot of us to supper at Tony Faust's where sausages and sardines were washed down with a special brew.

172. The New Northwest, 10 and 31 Oct. 1884.
174. Clay, "The Passing of Conrad Kohrs," p. 1162. In his combination history and reminiscence My Life on the Range, p. 119, Clay recalled the same evening but added a significant detail showing the heights to which some rose that night: "Con Kohrs, as I remember, gave a supper at Faust's one evening. One of our Wyoming bunch became very hilarious and a kind hearted policeman had to eject him and show him the way to his hotel." The 1884 convention, an important part of the range cattle story, is discussed in Clay, My Life on the Range, and in Osgood, Day of the Cattleman, Chapter VI, "The Cattleman and the Public Domain," pp. 176-215. The chronological sequence of the Kohrs autobiography is (continued)
The Kohrs family returned by late November. Kohrs had been elected to the legislature that fall and remained at home over the Christmas holidays and up until the time the legislature met in early 1885.\textsuperscript{175}

In review the year had been a rather good one for Kohrs and Bielenberg, whose stock had won so many prizes at the territorial fair, and whose cattle herds had grown to be—with the CK and the DHS combined—probably the largest in the territory. Con had sat among the leaders at the cattlemen's meetings, and his opinions formed a considerable part of group policy. Ranchers throughout Montana still sought Kohrs and Bielenberg registered stock, and in May and June some of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Short Horn bulls were sold to Montana ranchers.\textsuperscript{176} In numbers of stock, too, it had been a significant year. The DHS shipments of cattle from Miles City (possibly CK and DHS combined) had utilized sixty-nine stock cars.\textsuperscript{177} The recapitulation for 1884 for the DHS herds showed a good increase despite over 1100 cattle being shipped from Custer Station. The herds had stood at 13,113 at the beginning of the year and had grown to 16,927 with the spring calf crop and some small additions. The total sold was 1,322, and with a few calves branded on neighboring ranges, the total at the end of the year for the DHS was 15,686.\textsuperscript{178} The increase in Con Kohrs's wealth, in Deer Lodge County at least, was reflected in his tax bill of $917.80, up a little over $50.00 from the preceding year.\textsuperscript{179}

The year 1884 also saw a decision by a secret group of cattlemen to deal with the menace of cattle rustling along the Missouri River in Montana and in western North Dakota. Apparently led by Granville Stuart, and possibly involving such luminaries of the cattle industry in Montana as Kohrs, Fergus, Ford, Adams, Bryan, and others, the group planned their

\textsuperscript{174} (continued) somewhat unclear at this point, pages 125-29, where Kohrs discusses the 1884 convention. Since many other sources noted placed Kohrs there in 1884, and the autobiography does not, Kohrs's recollections have yielded in this case to the numerous other sources.

\textsuperscript{175} Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 125. Kohrs's plans to remain at home until early 1885 are noted in \textit{The New Northwest}, 26 Nov. 1884.

\textsuperscript{176} \textit{The New Northwest}, 23 May and 20 June 1884.

\textsuperscript{177} \textit{Ibid.}, 31 Oct. 1884.

\textsuperscript{178} Range Cattle Book, Pioneer Cattle Company, Conrad Warren Papers, p. 14. One item, "Estimated Killed by thieves . . . 100," indicates some of the problem of rustling and slaughter of range cattle by people other than the owners.

\textsuperscript{179} \textit{The New Northwest}, 16 Jan. 1885.
moves in a meeting at the DHS ranch after spring roundup, in June of 1884, and not long thereafter swooped down on various rustlers and hanged, shot, or burned them out. The vigilantes planned their moves with great secrecy and struck fast. While some complaints have been heard since that in the process of cleaning out the rustlers, not a few small farmers and ranchers were also taken care of, the overall effect was to "put such fear into the hearts of the rustlers that those alive soon quit the country and wholesale stealing became a thing of the past."

Con Kohrs mentions the activities of the vigilantes in his autobiography, and names Granville Stuart, one of his partners in the DHS and the manager at the ranch headquarters, as the leader. He does not cite his own participation, but neither does he display any remorse at the fate of what he calls "the outlaws." Whether Con Kohrs or John Bielenberg, or both, played an active part in the operations of the "stranglers," as they were once called, is a moot question, but one that should at least be considered. There is no evidence yet uncovered to indicate that either did. so their participation in this unique chapter of Montana cattle history is unproven.

The second day of 1885 witnessed another addition to the home ranch, Con purchasing, "for $1.00 and other considerations," a quarter of a quarter section, totalling 160 acres for the home ranch, from one of his half-brothers Charles Bielenberg and his wife Mary. It was to be the last addition to the home ranch for five years, because Con's and John's attention, as far as land was concerned, lay with the open range grazing lands on which the CK and DHS herd ran.

Con spent much of the late winter and early spring in Helena, as a member of the legislature known in Montana history as the "Cowboy Legislature," and recalled by Kohrs as "a great legislature that had great times." This body reflected the strong influence that the cattlemen wielded by 1885, and it passed many laws regulating and protecting the cattle industry. As Kohrs noted, "many of them are used to-day [1913] though several, on account of their being considered class legislation, were repealed in 1909." Typically, Con worked a demanding schedule. He had expected to spend most of the session at Helena, but

180. Brown and Felton, Before Barbed Wire, p. 120.
182. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 4, p. 585.
managed to come home three weekends in February, some for just a Sunday with the family, sometimes longer.\textsuperscript{184} The explanation for the frequency of his visits was not long in forthcoming. The local press explained that

Representative Kohrs was home last Sunday. When he went to the Legislature he proposed to only come home once during the session, but it has so fallen out that all the wedding and birthday anniversaries in the family for several generations come on the Sunday or Monday of January and February--and of course he has to be home on these occasions. If there is any place our worthy representative would rather be than with his family, we don't think he has found it yet--and don't think he ever will.\textsuperscript{185}

The major event of the year came in the first month, when many of the principals of the DHS organization came to Helena to attend the legislative session. Granville Stuart recalled that "The name was changed from Stuart, Kohrs and Co. to the Pioneer Cattle Company."\textsuperscript{186} It was as the Pioneer Cattle Company's symbol that the DHS mark would become one of Montana's most widely recognized cattle brands. The owners decided on 10,000 shares of $100 each, bringing the total capitalization to one million dollars. The stock was divided as the shares had been; Con Kohrs became president, and Samuel T. Hauser vice president. A. J. Seligman was named secretary and Granville Stuart retained his role as superintendent.\textsuperscript{187}

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{184} The New Northwest, 13, 20, and 27 Feb. 1885.
\item\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 6 Mar. 1885.
\item\textsuperscript{186} Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier, 2:214.
\item\textsuperscript{187} Hakola, "Samuel T. Hauser," p. 244, citing the Helena Weekly Independent, 8 Jan. 1885. A later "List of Stockholders, Pioneer Cattle Co." showed "Con Kohrs, J. Bielenberg 3333; A. J. Davis 3333, A. J. Seligman 1743; H. P. Kenneth 363; E. G. Bailey 432; H. J. Davis 433; G. Stuart 1." Folder 29, Box 62, Collection 37, Montana Historical Society.
\end{itemize}
Despite overcrowding on the range that year, the DHS herds did well. Their books showed

RECAPITULATION FOR 1885

Number of Cattle Shown by Stuart for 1884 15,686
" " Calves branded in 1885 4,309
Steers Shipped from Custer Sta 592
Cows " " " " 381
Bulls " " " " 9
Sold Broadwater McNamara & C at Ranch 114
" Bynum " " 16
" Various parties " " 15
Estimated killed by thieves 25
No on the range Dec. 31, 1885 1,885 18,843

So 1885 proved to be a signal year for the State of Montana, with the "Cowboy Legislature" passing its code for the cattle growers, and the DHS formally becoming the Pioneer Cattle Company. The home ranch in 1885 underwent no startling or unique changes. The fame of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Short Horn herd was trumpeted in the local press, which carried a story from England noting that "Mr. Morton Frewen says, in the London (England) Telegraph: Mr. Kohrs, of Deer Lodge, in Montana, has the largest herd of Bates Shorthorns in the world."189

Con travelled into the Pacific Northwest in the later part of the spring, but found no Oregon or Washington cattle at prices he liked. He ran into a severe rainstorm in the Musselshell country not long after his return from the northwest, but after that things settled into the routine of "shipping and going east" with the cattle.190

The nineteen years between Conrad Kohrs's purchase of the John Grant Ranch and the close of the year 1885 had seen many changes besides Con's marriage and the growth of his family. He and John Bielenberg had increased their regional cattle and butcher business to a range cattle operation ranking among the very largest in the new state of Montana. From hundreds of cattle, raised for sale in a local market, they had expanded their herds to thousands, destined for both local and far distant sale. They had improved the already good quality stock on which the Montana herds had been based, and had been in the forefront of the movement to bring in registered cattle to the territory. Con had been a major figure

188. Range Cattle Inventory Records, Pioneer Cattle Company, Conrad Warren Papers, p. 16.


in the stockgrowers' associations and a respected member of the local community and State legislature. It had been a period of great growth for Kohrs's and Bielenberg's enterprises, and they would prosper more in the years ahead. But in the immediate future lay transformation of the cattle industry in Montana, and the response to it at the home ranch.
CHAPTER III: THE BAD WINTER

"The Montana pattern has been brief, explosive, frenetic, and often tragic. The economic picture has often been one of exploitation, over expansion, boom, and bust."

K. Ross Toole

"Ranchers, huddled about their stoves, did not dare think of what was happening on the range--of helpless cattle pawing at frozen snow in search of a little food or fighting to strip bark from willows and aspens along streams, "dogies" and unseasoned eastern cattle floundering in drifts, whole herds jammed together in ravines to escape the frosty blast and dying by the thousands."

Ray Allen Billington

The bad winter alone did not bring about the changes in the range cattle industry that began in 1886 and 1887, but it served both as the deciding factor and the catalyst that coalesced the elements of disaster and subsequent response. Warnings of trouble on the open range had been voiced years before the momentous winter descended on the Montana plains.

Overstocking the ranges here had been the norm since the early 1880s. Texas cattle, often carried part way north by rail and driven the rest of the way, and eastern cattle, brought in on the newly completed Northern Pacific, were added to the herds already feeding on the rich grasses of the northern plains. By the fall of 1883, possibly 600,000 head of cattle filled the Montana ranges, sharing the resources there with an equal number of sheep and a proportionately smaller number of horses. By that time the range stood at or quite near capacity. Yet, as Conrad Kohrs and others observed, more cattle came in the next year. Con placed the 1884 importation of eastern cattle alone at 75,000, adding tremendously to the 94,000 already shipped to Montana in preceding years. The natural increase of the herds and the importation of more Texas animals added to the cattle population. This resulted in more animals grazing on the same amount of grass, which became thinner, requiring more acres per animal even as more animals per acre arrived. By the mid-1880s the Montana rangelands began to show

1. Toole, Montana, p. 5.
the effects of this vicious circle. Kohrs had noted, about that time, that "It takes 20 acres on a new range to feed one cow, after the range has been grazed two years it will take almost 25 acres, and after six years all of 40 acres". 5

By 1885 the situation worried Granville Stuart considerably. In June he, Kohrs, and the other DHS partners considered one of many proposals by investors, in this case Europeans, to purchase the DHS ranch and stock. Stuart's comment to Kohrs about the deal included a straightforward and worried comment on the range conditions: "I hope the sale will go for I am afraid of the overstocking that is going on, if we could prevent that I would never want to sell. It would be the best business in the world". 6

By the beginning of 1886, the factors that would eventually combine to bring disaster were coming closer and closer to fusing. More cattle, which had not yet developed the ability to meet the rugged Montana winter, filled the range. This situation, plus the fact that the freshly imported cattle were receiving less nourishment from the sparse grass, meant that only one other adverse factor might bring about destruction of the herds. It might have been disease; it could have been a prolonged drought. But, as it happened, a dry summer and a concurrently poor grass crop preceded a severe winter that started early and ended late. The cattle were weak as they entered the always dangerous winter season, and 1886-87 proved to be the most dangerous one for years.

"The alders are in bloom and the trout running up--six weeks ahead of the ordinary seasons" exulted the Deer Lodge newspaper in late February 1886. "And Sam Scott says the Race Track is as fine as it is in June. This is getting to be a great country," the story continued. 7 The year was off to a fine start in the Deer Lodge Valley of Montana. But from the south came a report that would prove to be tragically prophetic for Montana within twelve months:

Reports from Dodge City, Kansas, Tuesday, reported very severe weather the preceding ten days. Cattle were drifted up to the fences and river by the storms and many were perishing. The grass was snowed under, water holes were frozen up, and it is feared the loss of stock will be heavy. 8

5. Kohrs, "1885 Autobiography," p. 20. (This is the manuscript autobiography on file at the Montana Historical Society and not the eventual 1913 product that has been extensively referred to in the preceding chapters. See fn. 26, Chapt. I, for the initial citation of this source.)
7. The New Northwest, 19 Feb. 1886. The "Race Track" might be that at the north edge of town, but it probably refers to Race Track Creek, about five miles south of Deer Lodge.
8. Ibid., 15 Jan. 1886.
At the home ranch, Con Kohrs lay low, weak and sick, puzzled and irritated at being unable to find the cause of, or a cure for, his enervating sickness. The winter of 1885-86 had not gone well for him. It had included a trip to Canada to buy stock, and, in early February, the death of his mother in Davenport, Iowa. Con recalled later:

I had been miserable all the winter. The physicians seemed unable to find out what ailed me. Their diagnosis varying from consumption to the lesser and greater ills to which flesh is heir. I was not able to work and remained at home the greater part of the summer.

Con's unidentified sickness was to trouble him the rest of 1885 and keep him from the typically heavy activity he had performed as a matter of course since his arrival in Montana twenty-four years before.\(^8\)

Business, however, was not too bad. And, had the overgrazing situation not been a clearly present danger early that year, the size of the DHS herds and the rest of the Pioneer Cattle Company's assets would have been even more impressive than they looked in the Manager's Report of 16 January 1886. It showed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18,843 Cattle on range @ $31. Ea</td>
<td>18,843</td>
<td>584,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>164 Horses</td>
<td>12,886</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Wagons &amp; Harnesses (badly worn)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 Acres of Hay land @ $25.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 Tons hay @ $10.</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amt due from Sundry parties</td>
<td>4,212.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash on Hand</td>
<td>108.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Stock</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amt Due parties</td>
<td>3,764.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per trial Bal</td>
<td>211,974.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate gain</td>
<td>615,739.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yet the figures meant little, since the foundation of any cattleman's wealth, the animals themselves, did not thrive that year. In a letter to one of the DHS partners, a DHS manager wrote that the cattle are looking poorer on this range than I have ever seen them. There is actually no grass on the range & if we do not sell the most of the cattle will have to be moved onto a new

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67
range or they will all die next winter. The range is now the poorest in the country. Thoroughly eaten out.\textsuperscript{12}

The situation worried the DHS partners, who carefully considered all opportunities to sell that came along that year. Kohrs and Bielenberg's herds--both those owned fully by them and the DHS herd--totalled 35,000 that year. Con numbered the DHS herd, of which he and John were about one-third owners, at 25,000. The CK herd, owned completely by Con and John, numbered 12,000. One particular deal, an offer to sell to "Steve Elkins and other eastern capitalists," resulted in an investigation of the herd by their agent. Kohrs recalled that "we rounded up many herds for him. He was well satisfied with the cattle, but advised our clients not to buy unless rains came to insure a good growth of grass."

The rains did not come that spring or that summer and the deal fell through. Faced then with a situation of very poor grass, prolonged lack of rain, and undernourished cattle, the

Pioneer Cattle Company asked me to go to Canada to see whether I could lease some land on the Canadian side. We secured a lease of about 100,000 acres in the Cypress Hills with the expectation of driving our cattle across. The herds were not started until after the beef roundup. The river was bad and only a few crossed and these had to be left in the Little Rockies as it was too late to take them across the line.

With Con still ailing that spring and not as energetic as usual, "Johnny [Bielenberg] attended the beef roundup and helped us to drive the cattle to Custer's Station and I was present at the loading."\textsuperscript{12}

Nor had the weather changed by September. The dry summer that followed the dry spring gave way to a dry fall as Con and Johnny loaded beeves for the eastern markets at Custer. The New Northwest, with its typical mixture of boosterism and realism, referred to the parched conditions by noting: "splendid weather, but it makes low wells."\textsuperscript{13} It also made sluggish streams, low rivers, poor grass, and weak cattle. Those shipped east that year could not have been up to the normal CK and DHS high standards.

Con soon travelled east, probably in a caboose of one of the cattle trains leaving from Custer Station. At St. Paul (en route to Chicago) he took the train to Davenport to see a Dr. French. Kohrs had developed bronchitis by this time, in addition to his asthma and generally "poor condition." Dr. French examined Con and told him the baleful news that one of his lungs

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12. Kohrs, "Autobiography," pp. 130-31. Appendix 7 is a newspaper article dated 10 Sept. 1886 in which Kohrs discusses the leases at some length and infers that leasing Canadian lands had been under consideration for some time.

13. 24 Sept. 1886.
was "entirely gone and the other badly affected." There might be a few years of life left, if Con would go to southern California and live back from the coast. Discouraged, he returned to Deer Lodge. Con later recalled that he "felt poorly all winter."

This was the beginning of the winter that followed the dry spring, summer, and fall. Already alarmed, Kohrs saw the winter begin in November, "and in such a manner as to make us fear the worst. A top mantle of snow covered the earth and all of the roads were blockaded." With the range conditions that winter all too well in mind, Con Kohrs and John Bielenberg must have wondered how spring would find their herds. The year, had it been other than an intensely dry one, would not have been too bad, because the heifers on the range produced a relatively good calf crop. The total number of calves branded for the DHS on the 1886 spring roundup stood at 3,118. This represented the total of the various DHS herds on the home range (the DHS home range, near Ft. Maginnis), the Musselshell, Cove Butte, and Moccassin, and stray groups detached from these herds. The fall roundup added 1,462 calves, for a combined 1886 calf crop of 4,580. While this calf crop from a herd of 23,000 could have been significantly better, this total was at least adequate. The 1886 herds had a larger percentage of steers than normal because Con and John had held them back in the face of low prices. Given this situation and the range conditions, a calf crop of 4,500 from such a large herd probably represented a good production and happily--albeit busily--engaged bulls. It was not what the herd would have produced in a good year in good pastures, however.

Still there was little to do but wait for spring, and in the meantime Con Kohrs's health continued poor. The imminent death from consumption of Charles Bielenberg's wife added to the gloom at the home ranch that winter. Mrs. Bielenberg died in mid-January. After the funeral, Con, Augusta, and the children departed for Hot Springs, Arkansas, on January 22. The onslaught of winter that was even then killing cattle at an awesome pace manifested itself to the rail travelers as well. For the family, grieving at the loss of Charley's wife and for Con with his debilitating sickness, the railroad trip proved tedious: "Most of the stations were short of coal, our engine could not get full supplies and we were often stuck in the snow

14. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 131. The New Northwest, 29 Oct. 1886, carried an item stating that "We regret to learn that our esteemed citizen, Conrad Kohrs, Esq. is not recovering as rapidly as he had hoped and has started on a journey to New York for medical treatment." Possibly the newspaper was reporting Kohrs's Davenport trip. The late October date would coincide with fall roundup and loading and shipping followed by Kohrs's travelling to Davenport for medical aid.


before we reached St. Paul." At St. Paul, Con sent wife and children ahead and determined to travel to New York for medical treatment. There he looked for a Dr. Curtis who had been recommended to Kohrs when he had been in Canada leasing rangelands earlier that year.

Kohrs reached New York on 4 February and immediately sought the doctor out. A quick examination revealed not only that Kohrs's lungs were healthy, but also the cause of the problem that had kept him from his usual steady pace of long days of work. Dr. Curtis told him: "'your nose is full of polypi.' He commenced operating at once." With the large polypi (probably akin to what is known today as adenoids) removed from one nostril and two not-so-large ones from the other, Conrad Kohrs immediately began to breathe easier than he had in at least a year. For three weeks he visited Dr. Curtis for the removal of more and more growths from his breathing passages. The total bill, for what to Con was a virtual lifesaving treatment that would enable him to meet the heavy demands the winter back in Montana was beginning to lay upon stockmen, was $58.00. Con "felt like a new man, and was more thankful than anyone may ever know."  

The cure came just in time. Even before he reached Montana, Con had begun to hear the first of the bad news. On 22 February he had received John's letter telling of a big chinook in progress. But he had not then heard that those warm winds, which began a snow melt, had yielded to a massive blast of frigid weather that froze the melted snow, added to the snow cover on the plains, and kept all but the most determined cattle from the grass deep beneath the snow-covered ice. Kohrs tells of his first intimation that things were as bad as some feared. On his way back from New York he met a fellow stock-grower named Broadwater who told him that losses throughout Montana had been very heavy. I said "Broad, I have my health again, and this is worth more than the cattle." To which he replied: "Con, you have more nerve than any man in Montana." Granville Stuart denied the losses until after the spring roundup, when he found that branding had dropped from 8,000 to 900.

18. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 133.
21. One of the best general descriptions of that winter and its effect on the range cattle industry can be found in Billington, Westward Expansion, pp. 686-87. See also Robert S. Fletcher, "That Hard Winter in Montana, 1886-87," Agricultural History 4 (1930):123-30. See also Appendix 8 for newspaper accounts of the winter and of the cattle situation, as taken from the pages of The New Northwest.
The demands of recovering from the disaster would require Kohrs's active participation, and it was a lucky stroke that the cause of his ailment was found and that he received successful treatment in time to be up and about for the spring of 1887.

The situation that Kohrs met upon his return to Montana that spring has been, since 1887, part of both the history and legend of the range cattle industry. Cattle had died by the tens of thousands. Weakened from the poor nourishment of the preceding two or three years, and from the dry year that set the stage for the hard winter, many of those cattle who had managed initially to find grass under the heavy snow cover later succumbed to the biting cold that followed the chinook of late January. This killing cold air, as much as sixty degrees below zero on the northern ranges of Montana, took its toll of the herds.23

One of Montana's historians succinctly described the effect of the 1886-87 winter on the Montana open-range cattle industry: "The losses were appalling--so much so that old cattleman Granville Stuart was sickened and vowed never to ranch again. . . . The Montana range-cattle industry was in ruins. Bankruptcy followed bankruptcy."24

"Old cattleman" Granville Stuart did take the blow as hard as Toole described. In his own rich reminiscences Stuart graphically describes both the scene and his feelings:

In the spring of 1887 the ranges presented a tragic aspect. Along the streams and in the coulees everywhere were strewn the carcasses of dead cattle. Those that were left alive were poor and ragged in appearance, weak and easily mired in the mud holes. . . .

A business that had been fascinating to me before, suddenly became distasteful. I wanted no more part of it. I never wanted to own again an animal that I could not feed and shelter.25

Another stock-grower took a somewhat more detached view, although he, like Granville Stuart, felt the disaster financially and emotionally. This was John Clay, the Englishman who became an open-range cattle industry participant and chronicler. Clay's summation describes the overall effect on the open-range cattle industry about as neatly as any participant or historian has done.


The cowmen of the West and Northwest were flat broke. Many of
them never recovered. They had not the heart to face another
deabacle such as they had gone through and consequently they
disappeared from the scene. Most of the eastern men and
Britishers said "enough" and went away. Some remained and their
story we shall develop as we go along. The late summer and fall
of 1887 was, to use a western expression, simply a fright. The
big guns toppled over; the small ones had about as much chance
as a fly in molasses. Swan, Sturgis and others in Wyoming went
to the wall; Kohrs, Murphy, Granville Stuart, Joe Scott and
many others in Montana were badly hit; Russell Harrison, other­
wise known as Prince Russell, disappeared from the range, while
Theodore Roosevelt left a good many bones behind him north of
Medora.26

The effect on the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle empire--those herds they
owned fully (the CK herds), as well as those of which they owned one third
(the DHS cattle)--is known more exactly. The number of calves branded at
the DHS in the spring of 1887 was less than one eighth the number branded
in the spring of 1886.27 The Pioneer Cattle Company inventory for the year,
written in Stuart's hand, makes it a little more graphic: "Total Cattle
on Range Jan'y 1, 1887 . . . 22622." Further down the column comes "Less
Loss of winter of 1886-7 . . . 15081." Then, with the small calf crop
added, a few purchases, and a few strays on the fall roundup, "Total on
range Jan'y 1, 1888 . . . 8262."28


27. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 133. This does not tally with the
figures given in the manager's report of about 4,500 calves branded. The
manager's report might not have represented the entire DHS herd, however.
Or possibly the 8,000 figure might have been the total of Kohrs's and Bielen­
berg's CK herds added to the calf crop of the DHS herds of 1886. While the
exact figures are not clear, one thing most certainly is--the losses suffered
by the Pioneer Cattle Company, the Kohrs and Bielenberg partnership, and by
most other Montana cattle-growers that winter were horrendous. Brown and
Felton, in Before Barbed Wire, p. 109, comment: "The Pioneer Cattle Company
lost 66 per cent of its cattle; and Stuart left the battle of getting the
outfit back onto its feet to Kohrs and others."

28. Range Cattle Inventory Records, Pioneer Cattle Company, Conrad
Warren Papers, p. 20. This loss was far above the hopeful and, for condi­
tions, naively optimistic prediction that appeared in The New Northwest
early in the spring before the total losses were known: "Mr. N. J. Bielenberg esti­
mates the average loss of cattle in Montana at 25 per cent--mostly of immi­
grant cattle--and of sheep a little heavier. His loss of sheep is about eight
or nine per cent." 22 Apr. 1887. It was Nick Bielenberg who made the esti­
mate to the newspaper, not John, who was apparently a bit more taciturn in
his relations with the fourth estate.
Kohrs and Bielenberg, then, had not been wiped out completely. Yet, badly hurt financially, they faced a major rebuilding job to re-form the herds that had taken them twenty years to build. But at least a foundation, composed of diverse elements, existed from which to work. Those remaining animals surviving on the now much less overgrazed Montana rangelands comprised one of the elements. Another was the good credit Kohrs and Bielenberg enjoyed along with their widely acknowledged acumen in cattle and mining matters. Few investors would not want their money with them, even in such gloomy times. Finally there was the horizontal diversification that Kohrs and Bielenberg had nurtured over the years. With mining, real estate, and commercial interests in their economic holdings, even a major cattle loss could not destroy the entire structure. The near destruction of the herds, of course, could hardly be classified as anything but a heavy, weighty blow. But it did not wipe out the partnership. It represented a loss for the financial structure of Kohrs and Bielenberg, but a recoverable one. Indeed, if recovery was managed carefully, profits could eventually ensue from the hard winter, and Kohrs and Bielenberg might even prosper.

One of the "bright spots" (for Con and John at least) in that dark spring for cattlemen in Montana was

the kindness of Mr. A. J. Davis of Butte [a former DHS partner of Con and John]. Hearing of my losses, he sent for me and offered $100,000.00 without any security. The confidence of such a friend added to my courage and I was very happy. While I did not accept it then, I made use of it the year following in the purchases of cattle.  

In this statement in Kohrs's autobiography probably rests his entire view of the hard winter. He admitted losses, and even a little faltering perhaps, in his offhand admission: "the confidence of such a friend added to my courage." But his courage never waned so much that he felt the need to jump at the chance for money to rebuild his herds; he would wait the market out and watch the results of the massive cattle kill on his competitors. He could invest the $100,000 when and where it would do the most good. He knew, as well, that the foundation for rebuilding remained solid. It was in the home ranch pastures that the greatest number of the registered Short Horns and Herefords grazed. And the home ranch, located in southwestern Montana, had come through the bad winter quite well. The killing storms had hit hardest at the Montana hills and plains east of the divide. So the Kohrs and Bielenberg registered herds came through the winter virtually unscathed, and could be employed to upgrade any replacement animals Kohrs shipped in. The herds could be rebuilt.

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30. Fletcher, Free Grass, pp. 86-87, contains a discussion of the less severe nature of the 1886-87 winter in the southwest Montana valleys.
Possibly some of Kohrs's buoyancy was also the result of the kindness of another good friend and business partner, Joseph Rosenbaum, in Chicago. He served many Montana ranches, including that of Kohrs and Bielenberg, as their commission agent for selling cattle on the Chicago market. Rosenbaum would often retain the receipts of the sales and Con and John would write drafts on that account as needed. So Rosenbaum acted, to some extent at least, as a banker for the brothers. He also advanced money to Kohrs and Bielenberg and numerous other Montana ranchers. As a prime lender, and possibly the prime creditor for the Montana herds, he stood in a particularly powerful position that gloomy spring of 1887. He could easily foreclose on those who could not pay their indebtedness to him. But Rosenbaum did not see things this way and responded in a manner both astute from a business standpoint and humane beyond normal expectations. One of the grand studies of the cattle industry describes the situation:

Following the disaster, a number of Montana cattlemen, to whom Rosenbaum loaned approximately a total of one million dollars, were struck speechless when their creditor called them to Helena and announced he would not foreclose, but would actually loan them an additional million. This double indebtedness they eventually paid in full. Twenty years later, when the Chicago man faced ruin on the Grain Exchange, Conrad Kohrs and other beneficiaries pooled their resources and loaned their benefactor more than one million dollars. With this, Rosenbaum was enabled to stage a comeback, continue solvent, and reap a large profit.

Those with the wherewithal to hang on for a year or so and friends such as Rosenbaum would survive. At least one factor operated to allow those with cattle to increase their herds somewhat. The competition for grass was dramatically lessened. With the diminished herds tearing up less grass, there might even be a chance for the ranges east of the divide in Montana to recover. It seemed, too, that after the clear demonstration of her power in matters of weather, Mother Nature became almost benevolent that spring. The New Northwest, which had pooh-poohed the fears of many during the winter, rhapsodised early that summer, after the ranges had greened up a bit and it seemed that life in Montana would go on, even for cowmen. In an announcement mixed with the hope that things would soon get a great deal better, and with an almost audible cheer, the paper rejoiced at the state of the ranges in mid-June:

The grass crop has never looked better than it does this season. The grazing is splendid and the bunch grass is seeding. Whether this is the seed year, coming triennially, as some believe, or always coming when there is plenty of rain, makes no difference. It is seeding just the same. Two or three years' rest would restore the ranges to their original wealth of grasses.

31. Warren interview, p. 5.
32. Towne and Wentworth, Cattle and Men, pp. 268-69.
33. 24 June 1887. Stuart, in Forty Years on the Frontier, 2:237-38, agreed on the quality of the spring grass: "The spring was very wet, one
For the CK and DHS herds, of course, adjustments would be necessary. But Kohrs is not abundant with words in his description of 1887, and it appears that neither he, John Bielenberg, nor the remaining DHS partners held any ambitions but minor range and herd adjustments, at least for the moment. Kohrs took much more active charge of the DHS herd, with Granville Stuart refraining from active management, admitting that "a business that had been very fascinating to me before, suddenly became distasteful," and that "Conrad Kohrs took charge of the herd." The DHS shipped some cattle up to Canada to graze on the leased land acquired in 1886. The partners moved the Sun River CK herd to Flat Willow Creek (near Lewistown) and the remnants of the DHS herd onto the Milk River range (northeastern Montana). But they purchased no great numbers of replacement cattle and devised no new marketing techniques.

Con and John shipped a few cattle to the eastern markets that year—but nowhere near the huge numbers of previous fall shipments. The Pioneer Cattle Company cattle inventory record for 1887 notes "Shipped to Chicago . . . 664." It was hardly a pleasant time to ship, Con recalled in his autobiography, with the temperature sometimes at forty degrees below zero. They transported the cattle on the Great Northern out of Bowdoin. Con used his pass (typically granted by the railroad to cattle shippers) and went on into Chicago for more medical treatment on his breathing problems.

There he almost failed to survive the minor operation because of an overdose of cocaine administered prior to the removal of those polypi that had grown back since the previous treatments in late 1886 in New York. But he did survive, and following the medical work went to Davenport to pick up dresses for the girls and Augusta from the family dressmaker there, and then returned to Deer Lodge. In a brief glimpse of the inner family that Con Kohrs only occasionally allows in his autobiography, he remembered fondly that "In spite of hard times we had a merry Christmas. The gifts were never displayed at my homecoming, but were kept until Christmas Eve, when we had our tree."

33. (continued) heavy rain followed another in rapid succession and the grass come on luxuriantly."

34. Stuart, *Forty Years on the Frontier*, 2:237-38. See also Warren to Teigen, 8 Feb. 1973, where Warren notes "Stuart was out as owner-manager," p. 5.


The year 1887 closed well enough then for Kohrs and Bielenberg, at home at the ranch in Deer Lodge, but hardly on a high note. The strongest animals at the CK had survived and the herds would grow in the future; Con's and John's reputations for astuteness in cattle raising and mining assured them of plenteous credit when they needed it. Rebuilding of the DHS and CK herds would follow the bad winter, but at a measured pace. Following the hard winter of 1886-87, and because of the readjustments that it forced, the home ranch began to take on a stronger importance than it had held previously when Con and John were away so much on range cattle operations. The outfit would grow dramatically in the next dozen years, at a pace unmatched in the period since 1866.
CHAPTER IV: "GROWTH"

TO SELL OR LET ON SHARES. Owing to being overstocked on our limited home range, we will sell or let on shares, on favorable terms, to a responsible person or persons,

About 40 head of cross-bred Polled Angus and Short Horn Heifers.
Also a lot of cross-bred Hereford and Short Horn Heifers.

It being a condition of such lease that the leasee shall have good range, sufficient hay and facilities to keep the breeds distinct.

Kohrs & Bielenberg, Deer Lodge, Mont.

Kohrs and Bielenberg would recover from the bad winter. For them and their fellow stock growers, however, the recovery process would bring great change. For the home ranch, the post-1887 period meant expansion, which reflected, in part, the metamorphosis of the range cattle industry from the earlier freewheeling open-range days to the more careful and solid approach of the late eighties and early nineties.

For the ranchers who stayed following the bad winter, there could be no return to normalcy. Instead, the practice of allowing cattle to range for themselves, to "rustle" for the grass beneath the snow, was replaced by increasingly more careful range herd management, by supplemental feeding, and by careful observation of the range to avoid overgrazing. K. Ross Toole, in his wide-ranging review of Montana history, summed up the change nicely:

A new and different kind of cattle industry arose from these ruins. The days of the "open range" were gone. They had, in truth, been doomed from the beginning. The boom of 1880-1886 had been speculative. . . . The rancher was no longer a nomad. He could not overgraze and then move on. Barbed wire forced him not only to become more self-contained, to husband his resources, but made him into something of a conservationist. He was forced also, to improve his blood lines.¹

Ranchers began to add new skills to their work, recognizing that changes had to come. Bloodlines, the heritage of good breeding cattle, became more important than before, and those ranchers who had a base of registered cattle to use in upgrading the quality of their herds--to produce animals yielding more meat, and with the ability to withstand the winters--stood to gain in the buying and selling of top grade animals. So

1. The New Northwest, 5 May 1887.

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stock growers became stock breeders more than ever before. Along with concerns for the quality of the cattle came the recognition that winter feeding would now be a major activity. Montana ranchers began to grow hay, and many began to buy the lands they planted. Planting hayfields meant fencing more land than ever before; the necessity for hayfields and river bottom pastures forced ranchers to purchase large blocks of railroad lands because the lands available under homestead and similar laws would not begin to fill the need. The process began slowly, but it continued over the decade of the nineties as the range cattle industry transformed itself from an informal arrangement based on plenteous open range to a more methodical business, a more carefully considered system of producing beef for market. The winter had been

a hard lesson, but it had its compensations. Methods would change—were changing. The big companies bought large blocks of railroad land. They planted hay—redtop, timothy, alfalfa—and irrigated it. In 1880 there were 56,800 acres of Montana land in hay; by 1900 there were 712,000. And by the same token, there were 6000 brands recorded in 1889 and 16,000 in 1900.³

At the home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg just on the north edge of the town of Deer Lodge, these changes came in the decade of the nineties and during the early years of the new century. The pastures grew bigger through purchase, much of it of railroad lands. And, though the range operations continued, the size of the home ranch grew. This complex, for so long merely a base of operations and a home for registered cattle that would be shipped out to the range for herd improvement, continued to serve the range herds, but added hundreds of grazing animals to its rich bench-lands as its holdings climbed towards their greatest size—over 25,000 acres.

Kohrs and Bielenberg bought little in 1887, but began stock purchases in the early spring of 1888. With the threat of foreclosure on the losses of 1886 and 1887 erased by Rosenbaum's gracious—and financially wise—action, and with the promise of support in the form of a $100,000 loan from A. J. Davis, Con began the recovery process carefully. It would require the purchase of large numbers of animals. In January 1881, accompanied by another well-known Montana cattle-grower named Henry Sieben, Kohrs made a reconnaissance toward the west, examining cattle in Idaho. He bought none on that

³ Fletcher, Free Grass, p. 111. Billington, Westward Expansion, pp. 685-87, also discusses the changes in the range cattle industry as a whole, though not in Montana specifically. Brown and Felton, Before Barbed Wire, pp. 151-56, touches on the changes as well. The bulk of the photographs in the work, and the accompanying narrative describe post-1887 open-range cattle operations, chronicling what was slowly ending as it was ending. A contemporary evaluation of the changes then beginning, and the clear statement that the open range was not doomed instantly after 1887, can be found in Fletcher, Free Grass, pp. 113-17.
trip, but utilizing the Davis loan, he picked up large numbers of cattle that summer in Washington, Oregon, and especially in Idaho. The purchasing "began in the Boise Valley, and then went to Payette, Ontario, and up to the Malheur. Contracted all stock to be delivered for shipment on certain days, paying $10.00 for yearlings, $14.00 for two and $18.00 for three year olds."-

Most of the 9,000 cattle bought that early summer of 1888 went to CK herds and "were shipped and unloaded at Big Sandy and taken charge of D. J. Hogan. Those for the Pioneer Company were shipped to Bowdoin." This began the recovery process, which in 1888 meant increasing the number of cattle in the herds. But creating the quantity needed for the large-scale operation that Kohrs and Bielenberg had enjoyed before the bad winter would require even more than the 9,000 cattle he picked up that early summer of 1888. In an article in the Breeder's Gazette many years after the fact, Kohrs outlined his strategy in rebuilding:

I restocked my herds with steers from Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, and others adopted the same method of recuperating. A year or two later, steers as well as female stock were brought up from Texas and the progeny graded up by use of good bulls.

But in 1888, with the recovery and herd rebuilding just beginning, the numbers of cattle shipped remained small. Con and John shipped about "400 CK's and about 600 Pioneers" that fall.

Along with the effort of assembling herds came the beginnings of growth for the home ranch, as the brothers began to purchase lands near the ranch house complex. While the 16.75 acres involved in the first such land transaction were only a small addition of some of the richly grassed rolling benchlands in the Deer Lodge Valley, they presaged much more significant additions to come in the next dozen or so years.

6. Ibid. Big Sandy is just northeast of Fort Benton, near the bend of the Missouri River. Bowdoin was near the DHS ranges to the southeast.
9. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 9, pp. 408-9. The transaction took place on 18 July 1888. Other business transactions transpired at about this same time. Kohrs devotes a few pages of his autobiography at this juncture, between the end of 1888 and beginning of 1889, to a resume of his mining activities in the period 1884-88. It shows that the mines provided him problems, losses, and then, around 1888, moderate profits. That he could be (continued)
Early in 1889 (the year Montana entered the Union) Kohrs again travelled to central and western Idaho and adjacent portions of Oregon and Washington to buy cattle. In mid-spring he gathered and shipped the herds he had acquired. Having been elected to the State's Constitutional Convention just prior to this, he returned from a second cattle-buying trip west to participate in the convention proceedings at Helena. Following the adjournment late in August, Con picked up even more cattle in Idaho and Oregon, mostly for the CK herds. In this transaction Kohrs's recovery from the 1887-88 blow can be seen most clearly. He recalled:

In trading and buying I found there were many fine four year old steers at Wood River, Camas Prairie, Payette, and Weiser and even toward the Salmon River [all in the western Idaho-eastern Oregon area]. Stockmen there had never shipped east and were timid about undertaking it: were anxious to sell at $25.00 per head. I counseled with Mr. Davis, told him I thought there would be a nice profit in the trade and that the money would not be invested long. He advised me to go ahead and check on him. I have forgotten the number I purchased. Picked out those that were not good and sent them to the range and the balance to Chicago. They netted a profit of $15.00 per head.

He had caught the market at the right moment, and he and Davis had netted a cool $15.00 profit per head. With deals such as these, Kohrs and Bielenberg would find the cattle business more than usually profitable.\(^\text{10}\)

But it was not always this rewarding. While the grass remained thick now that the range suffered much less from overgrazing, 1890 did not permit a repeat of the heavy profits of the year before. Many eastern cattle were forced onto the market, evidently due to a drought, thereby depressing prices, so that "Kohrs and Bielenberg shipped very little that fall." They sold enough cattle to cover expenses and interest on borrowed money, allowing the remainder of the herds to range on the grass of Montana, and awaited next year's hopefully better prices. Kohrs recalled that "fine smooth cattle were turned back."\(^\text{12}\) Possibly the money for "expenses" from the CK and DHS herds

9. (continued) purchasing stock in mining operations, mining, and selling water from ditches partially or fully owned by him at the same time he was rebuilding the CK and DHS cattle herds is strong enough testimony to the validity of his theory of horizontal business diversification. It might also provide a clue to Kohrs the businessman, who proceeded with vigor in diverse business operations such as mining and cattle raising, not necessarily slowing one down when experiencing hard times in another facet of his enterprises.


11. Ibid., p. 143.
that year went, in part at least, for 8.92 acres added to the home ranch on 27 March 1890, which was added to the 17 plus acres in the same area purchased years before.\(^\text{12}\)

The summer of 1890 witnessed the major addition to the home ranch house, the east-west oriented, brick, two-story "T" with a full basement, a first story with the living and dining rooms, kitchen, and pantry, and a second floor containing bedrooms. The addition brought "a great comfort" to the lives of Con, Augusta, John, and the Kohrs children. A furnace provided more steady and fulsome heat during the long, cold Montana winters, and a hydraulic ram brought in running water. The "gasplant" (a carbide gas generator) allowed gaslights to displace kerosene lamps in the home. The logistics of running what had by now become a prosperous cattleman's large home were eased somewhat, and in his autobiography Con Kohrs remarks that the gas and running water "gave us all the conveniences of the city and lightened the burdens of the housekeeper perceptibly--no carrying wood for six or seven stoves and the filling of lamps."\(^\text{15}\)

With the house addition came the beginnings of major land growth for the home ranch. The purchase in March of 8.92 acres had been just the tiniest hint of things to come. The first big chunk of land added to the home ranch came on 13 May as Con Kohrs bought a 640-acre section of public lands under the Desert Land Act.\(^\text{14}\) This property lay about a mile north of the ranch house and on the west side of the Deer Lodge River. Sixteen days later John Bielenberg and Con jointly acquired a section west of the ranch house about two miles from Charley Bielenberg.\(^\text{15}\) In September John Bielenberg took his portion of land under the Desert Land Act, adding "635 20/100 acres" to the home ranch pastures.\(^\text{16}\) Then, in December, Augusta exercised her option to purchase (again under the Desert Land Act) a little over a half section of land just north of the house.\(^\text{17}\) Roughly figured, the three of them had added over 2,200 acres of land to the home ranch in 1890.

Funds to acquire the land were not insignificant, so it would seem that by 1890 Kohrs and Bielenberg had pretty well recovered financially. No doubt they recognized that every day brought new settlers into the public lands on which the great cattle herds ranged, and that every day more and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{12.} Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 7, p. 163.
  \item \textbf{14.} Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 6, p. 66.
  \item \textbf{15.} Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 7, p. 182.
  \item \textbf{16.} Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 5, p. 73.
  \item \textbf{17.} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 74. Map 3 shows the growth of the home ranch graphically.
\end{itemize}
more ranchers, sheep-growers, stockmen, breeders, and feeders of cattle would have to own land in order to use it. Realizing this by 1890, Con, John, and Augusta acted with characteristic promptness.

In April 1891 came the wedding of the oldest Kohrs daughter, Anna, to John Boardman. The event highlighted the social year for Deer Lodge. It rated a front page story in The New Northwest, which emblazoned a column head with "HAPPLY MARRIED," with a subordinate headline underneath reading "Hon. J. M. Boardman and Miss Anna Kohrs Join Hands and Hearts." The local press characterized the occasion as "one of the most brilliant weddings ever celebrated in Montana." The small Presbyterian church in Deer Lodge (attended by Mrs. Kohrs) revelled "from aisle to ceiling" in flowered decorations, including a huge horseshoe and an "arch of green dotted with roses" that spanned the altar. On the sides of the arch shone a harp and lyre of flowers. Five hundred Montana citizens had received invitations to the wedding and to the reception that followed at the home, and apparently the crowd was almost that large. The bride, Anna Kohrs, "decked in a heavy white faille silk en trains without trimmings, wearing a wreath of myrtle and carrying white roses was in truth loveliness," matched in beauty by her sister "Miss Katie" (Katherine Kohrs) and by Mrs. Kohrs, "attired in black silk velvet" and who wore "Diamond Ornaments." Augusta Kohrs had been ill earlier in the year, and because of that the wedding had been delayed. But with the beauty of the occasion highlighted by what must have been a virtual forest of flowers and greenery, no doubt all appreciated the delay until the spring flowers were available and the nurseries and greenhouses could produce the thousands of blossoms necessary for the event. Following the ceremony the celebrants and guests retired to the "paternal home."

Here again the florists have been heavily drawn upon and festoons of evergreen and smilax hung from doors and chandeliers and cut flowers in profusion were in vases and jars, shedding fragrant perfume everywhere. . . . The wedding dinner was served in the large dining room, brilliantly lighted, and the tables were trimmed in smilax and flowers.\(^{18}\)

Not only did the splendor of the occasion bring a moment of warmth and happiness to the Kohrs family, but the union added an acting participant in the family business. The Kohrses liked John Boardman, the first son-in-law to join them, a great deal. Con and John obviously approved of his managerial abilities because they brought him into the cattle business, where he ran more and more of the range operations during the 1890s and into the new century.

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18. 1 May 1891. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 144, indicates that the wedding had originally been scheduled for the last of December. The "smilax" referred to in this case was probably the florist's "smilax," a green twining plant used for decorations but no relation to the evergreen of the genus Smilax. The two "smilax" plants are described in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 2d ed.
The wedding in April seemed to presage a good year, at least for a while. Con recalled it as "a prosperous year, there was an abundance of grass, cattle were fat and owing to the shortage of corn fed cattle, prices good." The first shipment of the spring, gathered and loaded at Chinook, mostly "fine five year olds," averaged 1,585 pounds and brought $5.25 (per hundredweight) for Kohrs and Bielenberg. The Pioneer Cattle Company animals also sold well, averaging $62.50 per head. Total sales that year came to $190,000.\textsuperscript{18} It is safe to assume that both the CK and DHS cattle operations had pretty well recovered by 1891. Kohrs's reminiscence of that year is a typical stock grower's view on the business and merits quotation at some length:

The spring was early on the range. In May the grass was six or seven inches high and the cattle fat. Beef in the markets was so scarce that feeders could not secure enough to supply their markets. Carier, of Butte, Kauffman & Stadler, of Helena, and a Great Falls feeder accompanied me to Malta. They were so pleased with the cattle that we sold a large train load to Helena and Butte parties. They accepted them as they had been rounded up with a cut. The cows brought $45.00 per head and the steers, $65.00. . . .

The fall market was not good. We received more for the cattle sold in the spring than those shipped to Chicago.\textsuperscript{20}

The autobiography goes no further in describing the fall market. It could not have been too bad, since Kohrs and Bielenberg executed a major land transaction in early December that added the biggest single chunk of pastureland to the home ranch to date. The deal involved land owned by the Northern Pacific Railroad. The smallest parcel included 520 acres, comprising two pieces of land west of the Deer Lodge River but roughly parallel to it, about a section and a half north of the ranch house.\textsuperscript{21} At the bargain rate of $1,400 for 520 acres, Con and John acquired some nicely grassed benchlands within sight of the ranch house. The second deal of the day also included both John and Con on the deed but took in six full sections of land and portions of others. This purchase—"5190 acres more or less, less 3.00 acres right of way"—cost the partners $8,739.18. As they had many times before and would many times in the future, the brothers bought good lands at low prices.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{itemize}
  \item 20. Ibid.
  \item 21. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 5, p. 431. (A section is a mile square.)
  \item 22. Ibid., p. 432. The cattle business probably did not furnish all the capital for these land purchases. Throughout the 1890s, Kohrs and Bielenberg continued operating in the mining and real estate businesses.
\end{itemize}
These 1891 purchases brought the "upper ranch" to its fullest size save for two quarter sections, one added in 1895 and the other in 1895. These land deals comprised almost four full sections added to the fields near the ranch headquarters complex just north of Deer Lodge. Oddly enough, Kohrs does not mention this large growth at the home ranch in the early 1890s in his autobiography. Thus there exists no firm knowledge of the motives behind acquisition of the land. By inference, however, they used it as pasture in their fast growing business of raising and selling thoroughbred horses and registered cattle--Herefords and Short Horns. The bulk of the cattle being raised for sale remained on the open range in the DHS and CK herds east of the divide. Local markets no doubt bought beef on the hoof from the home ranch pastures, and the lands there furnished stock such as beef, sheep, and poultry for home consumption. But the major reason for the growth of the home ranch was probably the development of the business of raising and selling fine blooded stock. An additional motive could have been that the brothers, who were witnessing the continual growth of southwestern Montana, decided to invest in land that could be sold in the future while serving in the present to support cattle.

The next year Con and John imported yearlings from the south, probably Texas, only to expose them to the severe winter of 1892-93. They lost about half the animals, but "the remainder proved profitable and even with the heavy loss we made a profit in the investment." The Kohrs and Bielenberg landholdings had, by this time, grown enough to add to their property tax bill. Their 1892 taxes totalled over $2,000. In Deer Lodge County the bill was $799.51, representing the lands of the home ranch and the buildings at the home ranch and upper ranch. For Dawson County (probably lands carrying CK herds) the bill was $673.17. While this was less than Deer Lodge, it was in unsettled eastern Montana--against the North Dakota border--and no doubt represented a good piece of land there, but one with a lower level of assessment than property in Deer Lodge County. Likewise, the property tax for Chouteau County (central Montana, near the big bend of the Missouri, and no doubt representing DHS lands) was $635.80. Since Kohrs does not formally address the question of real property other than the DHS and home ranch holdings, it can be assumed that the taxes represented landholdings he felt to be a normal part of range operations. He had no major ranch in eastern Montana until later in the decade.

That summer Kohrs and Bielenberg picked up forty acres for the upper ranch. Purchased from an absentee owner (S. H. Bathkin of Minneapolis, Minnesota) for $300 it was the only land added that year.

23. Kohrs, "Autobiography," p. 145. Again the profit margin was probably provided as much by buying low as by selling high.


25. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 7, p. 355. The transaction was entered on 11 July 1892.
With the yearlings brought in from the south at half the number they had been prior to the 1892-93 winter, the task of bringing the herds to proper strength again faced the brothers in the spring of 1893. They acted as they had in 1888, buying Idaho cattle and some from nearby Oregon to replenish the herds.\(^{26}\) Also, they moved some of the herds east of the divide that year. The changes show in the tax bills. Con's taxes rose appreciably in Deer Lodge County, to $944.48 from the previous year's $799.51, an increase of $145. This increase probably resulted from improvements on the land, such as barns, cow-sheds, squeeze chutes, and corrals. For Dawson County, however, there are no 1893 taxes. Presumably, then, the herds there had moved or else the range of CK cattle ended in extreme eastern Montana in 1893. Two other counties, however, did assess taxes on Kohrs. Valley County, in northeast Montana, levied $993.90 on Kohrs property, while Choteau County only demanded $348 for DHS grazing herds.\(^{27}\)

Stock growing and mining gave way briefly to politics in 1893, but with somewhat less than cheering results for Con. Deer Lodge County was divided, much against Kohrs's strenuous lobbying efforts, and school legislation also passed despite his opposition to it. Kohrs's comment on the two defeats he suffered in the legislature explained the results: "But these were the days of [Montana copper king] Marcus Daly's power and buying of votes and little could be accomplished."\(^{28}\)

The next year, 1894, marks a major turning point in the Kohrs and Bielenberg range cattle business. Con was fifty-nine years old that year and possibly the strain of the hard work and strenuous life of the past few years began to manifest itself. An accident in the spring--Con fell from a horse into water, hitting the pommel of the saddle on the way down, and "received an injury from


27. Kohrs Ledger, 1892-1901, Montana Historical Society, p. 75. While there is no doubt that the taxes represent property of some kind, its exact nature is not known. It could be that the taxes represented assessments of cattle themselves, and if such is the case, it indicates that the size of the herds in Deer Lodge County--presumably on the home ranch--far exceeded anything yet imagined. Probably they represent realty taxes, and as such indicate the size of real property holdings in the counties involved, and provide, roughly a gauge to the extent of the cattle business in each of the counties in any given year. Yet this is speculation, and to use the tax data in a concrete and definitive manner, a careful examination would have to be made of the as yet inaccessible assessment records and tax bills in the counties involved. The tax bills, while indicative of business activity level, provide only a rough idea of that level, and that they are cited in the text in this study is not a reflection of any serious or probing investigation. Whether or not these taxes represent Kohrs's and Bielenberg's mining activities as well as their cattle-raising business is also unknown.

which I have never recovered"—laid him up, and John Boardman, his son-in-law of but three years, took over much of the range cattle management. 29

Boardman and Dick Williams "did the contracting and receiving" of the Utah cattle that year. Kohrs and Bielenberg "continued to buy every spring," but "aside from planning I [Con] took no part in the purchases." Boardman ran the range cattle herds and John Bielenberg the home ranch. This established routine continued for the next few years. 30

During the remainder of the decade a few misadventures inevitably enlivened the routine of spring buying, roundup, and branding. In the fall another roundup was held, culling out those cattle to be sold, which were then shipped east to the markets of Chicago, Kansas City, and Omaha. One of the herds brought in from Idaho in 1894 had to be unloaded from the cattle train far west of its destination because the track was washed out. "Horses were bought and they were driven along the old government road from Medicine Tree Hill, reloaded at Cascade, and shipped to Malta for branding and release onto the range." 31

Another problem arose from time to time when cattle drifted across the Canadian line. Once this involved 1,200 head, which the Canadians seized, "and it was necessary to make a trip to Ottawa to have them released." Con's negotiations eased the problem, and from that time on the Canadians and the Americans with the CK and DHS herds worked together. The CK line riders "were permitted to stay with the Mounted Police and we furnished them beef in exchange for grain and hay for our horses." 32

The remainder of the decade continued to be a period of large-scale range cattle grazing east of the mountains, and, toward the end of the 1890s, of major land acquisitions for the home ranch. In 1894 the Kohrs and Bielenberg account books show taxes paid in Deer Lodge, Choteau, and Valley counties, and the next year the addition of Teton County (just north of the Sun River). In 1896 the list of counties in which Kohrs paid taxes had expanded to six, with Ravalli

29. Ibid., pp. 148-49. John Boardman's increasingly major role in the range cattle management is also noted in McDonald, "Conrad Kohrs, Montana Pioneer," pp. 482-83. Kohrs's injury that spring was not serious enough to cancel a planned party. Kohrs wrote that "invitations had been issued for a large party at our house, to be given on the 25th of May. My wife and daughters wished to recall the invitations but I insisted that they go on just the same. It was a happy party. There were eighty present. The sitting room was large enough to accommodate four sets and dancing continued until half past five in the morning, the birds were singing and the sun high above the horizon." Kohrs's injury occurred as he crossed a ditch on an inspection trip of some of his mining properties. "Autobiography", p. 148.


32. Ibid., p. 149.
County (near the Idaho line in the Bitterroot Range of mountains of south­western Montana) and Granite County (between Deer Lodge and Missoula) added. By 1897 the list had shrunk to five counties again. Thus the herds of cattle and the Kohrs and Bielenberg mining ventures grew and changed, with the attendant land and equipment supporting these activities being bought and sold.

The home ranch grew larger all the while, as the herds moved from range to range, and as Con Kohrs, often in company with John Bielenberg, but often with others as partners, opened and closed various mining claims and purchased and sold various pieces of city property in Butte, Helena, and Missoula. John Bielenberg picked up 160 acres under the Timber Culture Act of 1873 in January 1895. Then he and Con jointly bought 40 more acres in July. In 1896 another 160 acres for the upper ranch came under Kohrs and Bielenberg ownership. No land was bought in 1897, but then, as if to make up for lost time, land purchases began in earnest in 1898, and the home ranch took on some major pieces of property. Late in the year—the deal being recorded on 10 October 1898—Con and John paid the Northern Pacific Railroad $2,370.60 for "All of fractional Section Seven (7), And all of Sections No. Thirteen (13) and Twenty Three (23) in Township Eight (8) North of Range Ten (10) West . . . (1896.48) Acres."

A month and a half later they added another two sections (1,280 acres) of Northern Pacific land, west of the ranch house complex and across the Deer Lodge River. The brothers ended their land acquisitions that year with a 200-acre chunk of pasture, for which they paid $800. This land was added to some already purchased east of the ranch headquarters where the grasslands slope gently upward toward the Continental Divide.

Far to the east of the home ranch, and along Prairie Elk Creek in Dawson County, northeastern Montana, the partners bought out the N-N (N Bar N) Ranch that year. With this ranch added to the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle and land holdings, the business became one of the largest in the State and among the

33. Kohrs Ledger, 1892-1901, Montana Historical Society, p. 75.
34. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 12, p. 12.
35. Ibid., pp. 160-61.
36. Ibid., p. 359. Through an as yet unexplained quirk of the purchase, by some other confusing mechanism, this land, carefully described in the metes and bounds of the deed transfer, was already owned by Kohrs and Bielenberg. Possibly this is a late entry, or a repurchase of land once owned and then sold.
37. Ibid., pp. 595-96.
grandest in western America. The home ranch, the DHS, and now the N-N ranch were all under one ownership. The combination proved to be a profitable one in the years to come, as Con Kohrs's grandson notes:

In 1898 they acquired the N-N ... on Prairie Elk Creek in Dawson County. Using scrip they took up the water that controlled a million acres of range on the Big Dry and moved their range cattle. Three hundred and sixty-five carloads were shipped from Baltic and Galata in the fall of '99. The cattle were worked and the steers were left on the Peck reservation. The cows and calves swam the river and were driven to the new range. A contract in Texas brought a yearly supply of light southern yearlings to the new range and the range cattle business went on for another fifteen years, the most lucrative years for Kohrs and Bielenberg and the Pioneer Cattle Company. Over the years the beef were shipped to Rosenbaum Bros. in Chicago. A well bred native year old steer weighted from 1,300 to 1,350#. Kohrs and Bielenberg shipped on the average between 8,000 to 10,000 cattle per year from 1888 to 1913. Prices ranged from 5 1/2 to 7¢ per pound. The big three and four year old steers almost invariably went as slaughter cattle and some found their way into the export trade aboard ship for England. Arthur Leonard, President of the Union Stock Yard Company, made the statement in the late '20's that Kohrs had shipped more cattle to Chicago than any other individual in the business and had truly earned the accolade "King of the Cattlemen." 40

Along with land buying on a grand scale, Conrad, Augusta, William (now nearing twenty), and the girls made a grand tour of Europe and the Middle East in 1898, returning to Deer Lodge in late summer.

The next year, 1899, Augusta and Con moved to Helena, while John remained at the home ranch. The move from Deer Lodge came for personal not business reasons:

Deer Lodge had changed so much, so many of our acquaintances had moved or passed away that there was little to hold us there, so in the fall of 1899 I concluded that we would go to Helena for the winter and then if we liked it take up our residence there. We rented the D'Archeul house for six months and took possession November 1st. My wife was very much pleased with the house and having made many pleasing acquaintances said she would like to live in Helena. So without her knowledge I telegraphed to Mr. D'Archeul and bought the house presenting it to her on our wedding anniversary. 41

Despite moving to Helena, Conrad continued buying land for the home ranch. In 1899 more big parcels of land were acquired. In January Con and John paid $3,103.85 to the Northern Pacific Railroad for 2,481.08 acres, over four full

sections. Then in August they added a quarter section of land, followed the next day by another big purchase--1,920 acres--from the Northern Pacific. A final buy that year from the railroad, 1,894 acres for $2,521.88, came on the last day of October.

The thirteen years since the disaster of 1886-87 had been active ones for the CK and DHS herds and their owners. Recovering from the loss of about one half to two thirds of their stock in 1887, the brothers took advantage of the quickly offered financial support from investors who retained faith in their stock-growing abilities, and soon surpassed their record size herds of 1886. By the mid-1890s they had begun a large expansion of the home ranch and of their considerable holdings east of the divide. At the close of the century they owned three ranches--the home ranch, the DHS (at least partially), and the recently acquired N-N. Their mining business thrived as did their cattle. Yet in 1900 they stood on the verge of even more growth in landholdings in the Deer Lodge Valley.

42. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 12, pp. 625-26.
43. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 7, p. 578.
44. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 10, pp. 501-2.
45. Ibid., pp. 510-11.
CHAPTER V: "CONSOLIDATION, THEN DISSOLUTION"

By 1914 the range was pretty well fenced in. The nesters were staking out their claims on every creek and spring in every coulee. No longer was it possible to swing the big herds across the country in a never ending search for grass. Kohrs determined to sell out and by 1918 all that was left were remnants.

Conrad Warren

The arrival of the new century brought no immediate or dramatic change in the development of the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle empire. Already owning one of the largest cattle enterprises in America, and surely one of the best-known stock-growing businesses in Montana, the brothers continued to enlarge the home ranch even more during the first decade of the new century. Likewise, they continued massive open-range cattle grazing and shipment of the beef to the Chicago market.

Then, in 1908, they transferred their cattle business to the newly created Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company, a corporation of three stockholders: Con, John, and Augusta. They then owned the company that owned the ranch. This arrangement would not have been necessary had the Kohrs's only son and obvious heir, William, not died of appendicitis in the spring of 1901 while attending Cornell University. With the prime inheritor of the ranch gone, an arrangement such as that devised by Con, John, and Augusta probably represented the best choice available to ensure continuity of ownership within the family. Earlier, in 1906, and again in 1907, John's and Con's mining and realty interests had been formalized by the creation first of the Rock Creek Ditch and Mining Company and then of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Realty Company.

These early-twentieth-century years saw Kohrs and Bielenberg prospering as they had in the 1890s. But the growing numbers of homesteaders—"honyockers"—farming the lands that once supported grazing cattle, and the partners' own advancing years, perhaps, caused them to liquidate their holdings. By 1915 the process had begun, and before very many years much of the vast acreage owned by Kohrs and Bielenberg was gone. By chance, or possibly by a shrewd ability to guess the probable sequence of events in agriculture, Con and John sold out just a couple of years before American agriculture entered a period of serious economic decline in the early 1920s. By 1924 Conrad Kohrs and John Bielenberg, and John Boardman, who had taken active management of much of their interests, had all died. Augusta Kohrs remained, the sole survivor of the pioneer band at the home ranch in Deer Lodge.

The home ranch itself shrank to about 1,000 acres and slipped into a somnolent caretaker status. This static period in the life of the home ranch lasted only until the early 1930s when Conrad Kohrs Warren, Con's and Augusta's grandson (Katherine's son), took over its management. The thirty years since the beginning of the century, in retrospect, had been years of profit, consolidation, and then, of dissolution.

The story of the Kohrs and Bielenberg home ranch early in the new century is a continuation of the preceding ten years. The home ranch raised thoroughbreds, provided the range herd with Hereford and Short Horn bulls to upgrade the quality of the range herds, and sold plenty of top quality bulls to other Montana ranchers. Market cattle grazed on the range and, as before, the home ranch grew. The year 1900 witnessed the addition of two sections of land to the home ranch pastures, one in August¹ and the other in October.² That year the matter of leasing lands also appeared in the Kohrs and Bielenberg account book. Con and John would, in the next few years, buy more and more sections of land for the home ranch on the northeast side of the ranch house, where thickly grassed pastures surrounded sections of state-owned lands that they leased. Possibly these were the leases noted in a 1900 ledger.³

Large numbers of imported cattle, mostly from Texas, came in by railroad that year to graze on northern grasses, the heifers, perhaps, to be bred to Hereford or Short Horn bulls. One such shipment is reflected in the Kohrs and Bielenberg Day Book, representing herds put out to graze on DHS lands when delivered in 1900:

Freight paid on Stock cattle on a/c of delivery to Pioneer Cattle Co. at Oswego. July 1, 1900
$10,612.19.⁴

The sizes of the DHS herds and of the CK herds were about equal by 1900, if the amount of cattle shipped that year is an accurate gauge of their relative size. The 1900 roundup began in August, and a few small loads were shipped then, but the bulk of the cattle went east in trainloads in September and October. The CK herds provided 940 steers, 324 cows, 8 bulls, and 28 calves, valued at $51,190.07. The DHS herds furnished 1,113 steers, 291 cows, 24 bulls, and

2. Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 5, pp. 524-25.
4. In the Kohrs and Bielenberg Day Book, Montana Historical Society, p. 25, is the notation dated 8-25-99, "Ranch Land a/c: Larabie Bros. & Co. Paid Register of State Lands: Lease #1102--$30.00: Lease #1471--$80.00." This book is numbered as Item K827, Acc. #42771 in the collections of the Montana Historical Society. Larabie Bros. & Co. were the Kohrs and Bielenberg bankers in Deer Lodge, so presumably the fact that they paid this from the "ranch land account" meant that the land in question was that of the home ranch. These leases, however, have not been checked.
5. Ibid., p. 64.
47 calves, which sold for $61,772.27. Other Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle shipped that year included 61 steers, 32 cows, 2 bulls, and 4 calves with the "seven-five" (7-5) brand, which brought a price of $3,846.93. These were cattle from the newly acquired N-N ranch in northeastern Montana. The "five-up-and-five-down" (the numeral 5 followed by an inverted 5 and a period) herds added 344 steers to the total for $16,878.91, and the "wineglass" brand (the letter Y with rounded extensions on the diagonal members, and resting on a bar) provided 55 steers and 53 heifers for $5,200.59. The impressive total in 1900 of range cattle shipped East was 3,326 animals, which brought a gross of $138,888.77. Figuring about 18 cattle per car, 184 stockcars on the Northern Pacific would have been used.

Of course, expenses, such as the cost of labor, had to be applied to gross profits. Examination of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Day Book reveals a fluctuating work crew, heavy during roundups and much lighter in between. The "Labor Account" by month in the Day Book, for the months of May through November 1900, illustrates some of the labor costs incidental to stock raising in Montana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Individuals</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May, 1900</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$454.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June, 1900</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>250.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July, 1900</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>416.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August, 1900</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,061.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ 450.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(this second figure probably contains some of the home ranch hands assigned to augment the roundup crew)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, 1900</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+ 143.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(roundup completed, and stock being loaded and shipped, mostly with home ranch hands)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October, 1900</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>681.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November, 1900</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>574.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. *Ibid.* The "five-up-and-five-down" and "wineglass" brands, along with many others, such as "CD," represent Kohrs and Bielenberg partnerships with other investors, sometimes for only a limited period or for only a specific herd. The CD was a herd brand for a partnership of Con Kohrs and Marcus Daly, the brand combining the names Con and Daly. The "five-up-and-five-down" and "wineglass" might stand for Kohrs-Bielenberg-Boardman cattle. Sam McKennon was also a frequent partner.

7. *Ibid.*, n. p. It is easy to interpret too much data from the somewhat spartan ledgers and accounts noted above. The phrase "Labor Account" might have had a special meaning to Kohrs that is not immediately apparent today, and the additional costs might reflect overtime or some other unusual pay.
The crew at the home ranch assisting manager John Bielenberg numbered ten in May 1900:

- Henry Vaughn $40.00
- William Stockman 35.00
- Antoine Menard 35.00
- James Meany 25.00
- James Wills 15.00 expense on road
- Ham Sam 200.00 [probably two months pay]
- James Wills 6.80
- Henry Graham 10.00
- C. P. H. Bielenberg 100.00
- William Pinkert 25.00

In December the number of hands was even smaller than in May—including only Henry Vaughn, A. Menard, William Stockman, N. J. Bielenberg, Wilhemenia Schuhardt, "cook" (at the main house), and W. Pinkert. In the winter of 1900 the home ranch crew consisted of about seven persons and John Bielenberg.

8. Ibid., May 1900. Antoine Menard was, for about thirty years, the handyman at the ranch and lived for part of that time in the old Tom Stuart place, which sat in the field where the visitor contact station is now located.

9. Ibid., December 1900. The additional hand listed this winter was "Ham Sam, Chinaman," as he usually appears on the various ledgers and in the check stubs that remain among the papers at Grant-Kohrs Ranch. He was frequently only paid every other month. Assuming that he remained at the home ranch in December 1900 and performed his regular cooking duties for the bunkhouse crew, but did not appear on the ledger, the total work force at the ranch stood at seven, not including John Bielenberg, plus J. M. Boardman, whose name appears from time to time in the account books. Presumably Boardman, as a manager of the range herd, frequently came to the ranch to confer with John Bielenberg or to pick up horses for the range cowboys and ranches, since by 1900 he would have done any conferring with Con Kohrs at the Helena house.

The small crew retained at the home ranch, as opposed to the large one providing manpower for the roundup, is also mentioned in a letter to the Montana Historical Society by a nephew of Conrad Kohrs, J. H. Gehrmann of Davenport, Iowa, dated 19 Nov. 1974. Mr. Gehrmann visited the ranch in 1904 when he was twelve and again a few years later. (His recollections in the 19 Nov. 1974 letter and in an interview with Historical Architect Peter Snell of the Denver Service Center will be used later in this chapter as well.) Mr. Gehrmann recalled that "A skeleton crew of cowboys was employed during the winter." The 19 Nov. 1974 letter also contains a delightful account of the two cooks, Wilhemenia in the ranch house, and Ham Sam, the Chinaman, in the bunkhouse:

Augusta had brought back from Germany a distant relative, Wilhemenia, who was an excellent cook, but brooked no interference in her kitchen. Especially the presence of small boys. So my brother and I when we (continued)
With the coming of spring in 1901 the routine of buying cattle and getting them to the range, followed by the roundup, began again. Likewise, Kohrs and Bielenberg continued acquiring more land for the home ranch. On 15 June that year Con purchased property equaling one-half section in three separate deals involving two parcels of land of 120 acres each and one of 80 acres. The three pieces of land tied into pastures already owned north of the ranch house.

But 1901 proved to be a year of tragedy for the Kohrs family. Their only son, William, by then twenty-one, lived in the East attending college. Word came one day in the spring that he had become seriously ill. Con and Augusta immediately made ready to travel east, but then were informed that Will had died. "It was the hardest loss Con had ever been called on to bear." Yet the real impact on Con's and John's plans and goals remains unknown. John Bielenberg left no diary or autobiography to reveal his feelings, and Con Kohrs, possibly because of the pain of the experience, never mentioned it in his autobiography. Within seven years Con, John, and Augusta put their land and cattle holdings into corporations, a move that may well have been prompted by the death of the young man obviously destined to inherit the cattle empire his father and uncle had created. The move might also have come for very different reasons involving ease of property management, advancing age of the principals involved, or even tax considerations. There can be little doubt that young Will's death came as a sudden and heavy blow to Con, Augusta, and Uncle John Bielenberg. Yet to view all subsequent actions involving the ranching operations of Kohrs and Bielenberg only in relation to the young man's passing is surely naive, since there is little known yet of the partners' motives in the property consolidations

9. (continued) were hungry went to the ranch hands kitchen which was under the control of a Cantonese Chinaman who had been named Sam, because his own name was unpronounceable. Sam always had a pie for us. If the ranch hands were around we knew the pie was in the flour barrel in the store room, because a loose pie was always disappearing when the ranch hands were around. Sam's favorite pie was "Fly Pie" (Raisin Pie). Sam had a very good friend who had a vegetable garden in Deer Lodge. Once a week the vegetable man walked from Deer Lodge to the ranch with a yoke over his shoulders and two baskets of vegetables suspended on the ends of the yoke. He had one other ranch between Deer Lodge and the Kohrs Ranch, but he adored Ohma Kohrs and the walk was nothing. She had learned a little Chinese and could count up to one hundred in Chinese. After he had delivered her vegetables, he and Sam convened in Sam's kitchen to shave each other heads down to the pigtails.

10. Beginning in 1901 the Powell County Deed Books are no longer transcribed from the original Deer Lodge County Deed Books. All the following Powell County citations, therefore, are not Transcribed Powell County Deed Books, but simply Powell County Deed Books. The three purchases involved are recorded in Powell County Deed Book 1, pp. 135, 136, and 137.

of 1906, 1907, and 1908, and in the sale of the rangelands in the second decade of the century. In addition, Con and John took no major actions immediately following the death of William save to create a library at Deer Lodge in his name.\(^{12}\)

In the year following William's death, Con continued to buy small parcels of property in Deer Lodge and for the home ranch. Early in the year, on January 8, 1902, he picked up a town lot in Deer Lodge,\(^{13}\) and the next month bought two separate parcels of pastureland of 120 acres each,\(^{14}\) and more Deer Lodge town lots.\(^{15}\) In March the partners bought more town lots and they closed the year by acquiring another quarter section of ranch land.\(^{16}\) In the next year the pace slowed somewhat, with only two 40-acre pieces of property coming to the home ranch.\(^{17}\)

By this time the range cattle industry as it had been functioning since the 1870s in Montana had but a few years remaining. The onset of the "honey-ackers," whose numbers seemed to increase daily on the Montana plains, cut into the open-range cattle business. For the CK, and probably for the "five-up-and-five-down" and "seven-five" herds of Kohrs and Bielenberg as well, 1904 marked one of the last general roundups. The roundup and the creation of the "pool," which had so long been a part of the Montana open-range cattle business, would function only on limited rangelands after 1904. The pool and its activities is described succinctly by one of the Montana cattle industry's best known historians Robert H. Fletcher:

Neighboring outfits using common range found it economical to combine their roundup activities into what was commonly called a pool.

\(^{12}\) White, \textit{ibid.}, writes: "They say we live for our children after we're forty and Con Kohrs' years were much beyond that in 1901. Bill's death seemed to sweep from Montana's Mr. Cattleman much of the purpose of life." Unfortunately White provides no citation to his statement, and it would have been strange for as strong and resolute a character as Conrad Kohrs to give up his purpose in life regardless of the loss he and Augusta and John had suffered. The task of assessing the impact of William's death remains to be accomplished, and probably should not even be attempted by anyone except a biographer immersed in the Kohrs autobiography and available supporting historical data. A key point is that nothing unusual happened until 1906 when corporations began to be formed to manage the Kohrs and Bielenberg interests.

\(^{13}\) Powell County Deed Book 1, p. 385.

\(^{14}\) \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 430, 431.

\(^{15}\) \textit{Ibid.}, p. 445.

\(^{16}\) Powell County Deed Book 2, p. 63.

\(^{17}\) Powell County Deed Book 5, pp. 161-62.
The number of riders and chuck and bed wagons to be furnished by each outfit was determined on an equitable basis. Day and night horse wranglers were hired and the custodian of the pots, pans, and dutch oven. 'Reps,' as representatives from other districts were called, rode with each roundup crew. They were usually favored in the work assignments as they had to be in a position to keep an eye out for their employer's brands.\(^\text{18}\)

The pool had been part of the Kohrs and Bielenberg and DHS roundup since the very earliest days of grazing cattle on the plains east of the divide. But this year was the last roundup for the CK, "five-up-and-five-down," and seven-five herds in northeastern Montana.\(^\text{19}\) The two Gehrmann boys ("J.H." was twelve that year) participated in the 1904 roundup during their visit with Uncles Con and John and Aunt Augusta. Gehrmann provides a retrospective view of the event as remembered over seventy years later:

In the fall of 1904 we were present at the last general roundup in this section. The different owners all gathered their cattle in one big herd. Each 'spread' drove its cattle into a large enclosure where the cowboys each marked its brand. Then the calves were separated from the mothers into another corral and they were branded with the same brand as the mother cow. My brother and I heated and sorted the branding irons as they were called for. All the male calves were castrated for sale as steers.

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18. Fletcher, *Free Grass*, p. 95. Fletcher's Chapter 10, "The Rawhide Era," pp. 94-100, describes the roundup in Montana in Fletcher's exclusive style, blending the facts with the phrases and attitudes peculiar to the Montana range cattle business. Fletcher's account does not mention that one outfit took responsibility for the pool, hired the hands necessary for the overall effort, and fed those who worked a certain area. That organization was then reimbursed by the other outfits and payments from other ranchers frequently appear in the Kohrs and Bielenberg account books. One of the most common is the "Malta Pool." Another excellent description of the 1904 general roundup, this one involving CK cattle and richly illustrated, is the account in Brown and Felton, *Before Barbed Wire*, pp. 202-9. William H. Forbis, *The Cowboys* (New York: Time-Life Books, Inc., 1973) describes the roundup in his Chapter 4, "Roundup Time." This work, as good as some others in the Time-Life series "The Old West" have been bad, describes in narrative detail and in drawings the machinations of the roundup crew and how they went about their work.

19. This is a somewhat speculative statement. But based on the description that J.H. Gehrmann provides in his 19 Nov. 1974 letter and on the narrative in Brown and Felton *Before Barbed Wire*, pp. 202-9, it would seem that the same roundup is being described, and that it occurred near the old N-N ranch acquired by Kohrs and Bielenberg in 1899.

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The roundup was held in an area surrounding a rangers cabin. Each group had its own tents. We were three in a tent: Uncle John Bielenberg, my brother, and I went to bed on a buffalo robe, with another over us. We were completely clothed except for shoes and hats. This was in early September but the nights were cold. In the morning I asked a cowboy where I could wash up. He gave me a hatchet and pointed to the frozen creek. I chopped a hole and took a quick face wash. Probably the only clean face in camp.

At breakfast I asked for a glass of milk, and the cowboys laughed. One of them said, "We are cowboys, not farm hands." With over 10,000 cows right in the vicinity we had no milk.  

Gehrmann's recollections are the last ones of a Kohrs and Bielenberg open-range roundup. Doubtless, on the DHS ranchlands, on the N-N lands, and at the home ranch itself, roundups continued for a few more years, but they are not recorded in the Kohrs autobiography. In fact, few activities of the twentieth century are. Kohrs sums up the entire sixteen or so years between the purchase of the last large piece of rangeland—the N-N, bought in Dawson County in 1899—and the end of the whole operation, by noting that we had many miles of country, and while our losses were heavy, we kept our herd replenished with herds from Texas. With our good friends and our good credit we could always restock with steers and as the market prices increased, we received more for our output. The last large purchase was made in 1898.

Since then we have been gradually winding up our business and have been fortunate as the market prices were such as to make our sales very profitable and by 1915 we had all sold except remnants.

Before Kohrs and Bielenberg began "winding up our business" they formalized it. This they accomplished by gathering the hundreds of separate transactions in city property, mining claims, and thousand of acres of ranchlands into corporate holdings owned by Con, John, and Augusta. The first such action came on 1 June 1906 when the Kohrs and Bielenberg Realty Company was organized to bring the various urban properties under one management system. Then about seven months later, the Rock Creek Ditch and Mining Company, which had long been organized to manage some of the Kohrs and Bielenberg mining properties, received

20. J. H. Gehrmann to Montana Historical Society, 19 Nov. 1974. The Gehrmann boys were the sons of the daughter of Henry Kohrs, Con's older brother; thus Con Kohrs was the boy's granduncle, Augusta a grandaunt, and John Bielenberg, being Con's half brother, was their grand half uncle, not their half grand-uncle.


22. Powell County Miscellaneous Records Book 1, p. 421.
a Certificate of Extension of Corporation, thus ensuring continued control of that side of the multifaceted Kohrs and Bielenberg business ventures. The next corporation was formed on 12 May 1908—the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company; on the same day the Pioneer Mining Company was organized. Of these two groups, the most important to the story of the home ranch is the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company.

On the date of incorporation, 1 June 1908, Con, John and Augusta sold the home ranch to the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company for $200,000. The deed records the sale as involving three parcels of land, one of 21,388.50 acres, another of 942 acres, and the third of 27 acres. The grand total of land owned, as of that date, totalled 22,307 acres. When the leased lands—and at least seven sections are indicated on an old Kohrs and Bielenberg map of about 1907—are added, the total size of the home ranch as of June 1908 comes to about 26,787 acres.

A. The Ranch in 1907

The ranch at Deer Lodge never retained the same boundaries for long. Small parcels, maybe forty acres here or there, came to be part of the ranch and then were sold off at times in the normal dynamics of the cattle business. But by 1908 the ranch had reached its greatest size, give or take a few small pieces of property added or deleted later. Around this time (1907) a railroad surveyed a right-of-way through the ranch, and in so doing provided the earliest known detailed map of the home ranch yet discovered.

The Northern Pacific Railroad's office at Missoula prepared the map in the Office of the Division Engineer, and dated it 25 February and 6 July 1907, probably the dates the area was surveyed. Then the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway of Montana—the "Milwaukee Road"—copied the map as they prepared to run their line parallel to the Northern Pacific, in which process they cut off an


25. Powell County Deed Book 9, pp. 457-76. There were probably other lands involved in Forest Service leases, although they do not appear in the Powell County Records. Since the figure of 26,787 acres is a conservative one, the addition of only 3,000 acres would put the home ranch up to 30,000 acres, which the family and Deer Lodge tradition hold as being its greatest size. The final purchases of land for the home ranch prior to its consolidation under the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company in 1908 had come the year before, when 120 acres of land along Mullan Creek, west and north of the ranch house, were bought. *Ibid.*, p. 48. Among the final purchases by the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company was the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 24, Township 8 North, Range 9 West, comprising 40 acres, recorded in Powell County Deed Book 13, p. 191.
26. The destruction of some of the structures, the partial destruction of at least one other, and the removal, intact, of at least one building posed difficult choices concerning nomenclature. One solution, and the one adopted by the authors of this study, designates those structures that no longer exist as "Non-Extant" and all others as "Historic Structures," per National Park Service practice. This brought its own difficulties concerning two structures, however. Both Historic Structures 17 and 12 are on sites where they were relocated in 1907. They were removed to make way for the Milwaukee Road right-of-way about that time. When referring to them in their original site, they carry a "Non-Extant" title, followed, in parenthesis, by their "Historic Structure" number. The other seven "Non-Extant" structures were destroyed and thus carry only "Non-Extant" labels.
Also shown on the 1907 map is an Ice House, Historic Structure 5, where
tack has long been stored. Nearby, another "Cow Stable," 18 by 21 feet, is
today's Oxen Barn, Historic Structure 10. Next to it is yet a third building
designated "Cow Stable" on the map, and measuring 18 by 36 feet. This is the
north portion of today's Historic Structure 7, the Draft Horse Barn.

The remainder of the ranch is not shown on the 1907 map. In summary,
today's Historic Structures 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 15 are on the map and in
their present locations. Today's Historic Structure 12 is shown on its original
site, and today's Historic Structure 17 remains as part of the bunkhouse building.

There are, in addition to the buildings, fence lines shown on the 1907 map.
Many of these delineate approximations of some of today's fenced-off areas. The
area surrounding the ranch house is fenced now about as it was then. There was
a working pen created by the L-shaped complex of buildings north of the bunk-
house, of which only Historic Structure 11 remains. The rear of the "Buggy
House" (Non-Extant Structure F) had a pen for the horses, about seventy feet
square. The pasture through which Fred Burr Creek passes was somewhat narrower
than it is at present. In the southeast corner of the house yard a small, rect-
angular area, oriented east and west, was formed. The pattern of fencing
formed a lane from the east that then ran westerly along the front of the bunk-
house, past the side of the house, and past the north side of the 1890 addition,
approximating the line of today's road there.

Unfortunately, there is not enough data on the map to determine the configu-
ration of the corrals west of the thoroughbred barn or at the north end of the
headquarters complex.

The picture provided by the 1907 map is, of course, an incomplete one. Yet
it shows most of today's larger structures in the same sites, with the exception
of the machine shed and the buggy shed. The additions of the Warren era, from
the early 1930s to the present, were yet to come. But the number of sheds and
barns even in 1907 demonstrated a major stock operation at the home ranch involv-
ing animals other than range ones. The home ranch, producing breeding bulls,
horses, and work horses, possessed an unusually large number of barns and sheds.
It was a complex consisting of many more buildings than those portrayed on the
limited area of the 1907 map.

B. The Closing Years--to 1933

In his autobiography, originally composed in 1913 and updated at an unknown
date after that, Conrad Kohrs closed the story of his life, in which seventy-
eight years had spanned 153 pages, with an all-inclusive sentence condensing the
last active fifteen years of the life at the home ranch of the Kohrs and Bielen-
berg cattle empire:

Since then [about 1900] we have been gradually winding up our busi-
ness and have been fortunate as the market prices were such as to
make our sales very profitable and by 1915 we had sold all except
remnants.27

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Yet the exact procedure involved in the dissolution of the land comprising the home ranch remains somewhat unclear. Those legal documents (many quite involved) that appear in the county records do not fill in all the gaps. Nor does the presently available material reveal how and when the other properties, the N-N and the DHS ranches, were sold.\textsuperscript{28}

The outlines of the dissolution of the home ranch, however, are fairly well established. The process of selling it off seems to have begun informally, with agreements not recorded in the deed books until well after the transactions. Given Kohrs's own date of 1915, it is safe to assume the process began then. The upper ranch was either leased or sold to a group of investors for use in raising wheat, because World War I was providing the impetus to raise wheat prices considerably.\textsuperscript{29} Later in the year, 29 December 1915, John, Con, and Augusta transferred whatever land the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company did not own over to the company, noting that it would then own

all our right, title, interest, and estate in and to any real estate owned by the said Conrad Kohrs and John Bielenberg jointly as members of said co-partnership, in the state of Montana.\textsuperscript{30}

So, in the exact sense of the word, Con and John had dissolved their cattle empire. But the home ranch remained intact under the ownership of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company until it was sold in three big chunks. First, the lands to the east of the ranch house, those twelve-plus sections of land contiguous to the property around the house, went on the market on 2 June 1919, and on 1 July were purchased for $100,000 by Charles H. Williams and Peter Pauly, a partnership of ranchers in Deer Lodge.\textsuperscript{31} Williams and Pauly eventually

\begin{itemize}
  \item The data is, no doubt, available in various locations, and might well be assembled later. The microfilming of the Kohrs-Bielenberg-Warren Papers, completed in the fall of 1975, has provided one collection that could be surveyed. The Powell, Dawson, McCone, Phillips, Valley, and Roosevelt County land records might also be surveyed to determine the exact sequence of the dissolution of the land and cattle empire. Such an extensive survey was not possible with the time and funds available for this study. Additional research needs are mentioned in the Recommendations and Suggestions for Additional Research section of this report. It is generally accepted that all the DHS and N-N remnants were gone by the mid-1920s.

  \item Gehrmann, in a letter dated 19 Nov. 1974, p. 3, notes: "During the war food was scarce and a wheat combine purchased all but the home ranch." Howard Mayo, in a conversation with John Albright at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch, 3 Mar. 1975, mentioned that there was wheat on the upper ranch. As a young man, Mayo had worked summers there.

  \item Powell County Deed Book 22, p. 209. This act was executed on 29 Dec. 1915 but was not entered in the Deed Book until 18 Oct. 1923, after Con and John had both died.

  \item Powell County Deed Book 18, p. 556. See also Powell County Deed Book 17, p. 101.
\end{itemize}
bought much of the old Kohrs and Bielenberg home ranch, but the June 1919 deal represented the first major portion to pass into their hands. Another part of that day's transactions with Williams and Pauly came with the sale, for $50,000, of about 1,200 acres of land and, most importantly, of the water rights held by the Rock Creek Ditch and Mining Company. By June 1919, then, two major portions of the ranch had been disposed of, and a third smaller parcel of land, 1,120 acres, went to Williams and Pauly on 29 July 1922, after both John and Con had died.

This left lands to the east, fourteen sections owned and seven leased known as the Dog Creek Pasture (although a smaller portion was called the Humber Ranch). From the time of transfer to the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company from the private Kohrs and Bielenberg ownership, John had remained at the ranch and continued to raise bulls and horses, but on a somewhat reduced scale. The "Helena Herd" of Herefords comprised the foundation of the bull-raising business John ran until his death, and this fine group of animals grazed in the Dog Creek Pasture. Probably, however, much of the land was leased out by this time, since John, who had turned sixty-seven in 1915, could not have been as dynamically active as before. But the 1919 sales left only the upper ranch now under wheat cultivation, and probably it was leased partly for that purpose as was the Dog Creek Pasture.

So a small portion of land totalling about one section on a north-south axis and the huge twenty-one-plus section of pastureland to the east were all that remained of the original holdings into 1920, when Conrad Kohrs died, and 1922, when John Bielenberg passed away. Later that year, John Boardman, who had taken on an increasingly large amount of the management of the rangelands and the investments, died also.

In the fall of 1924, the final portions of the home ranch, fifteen-plus sections of pastureland and seven additional leased sections, the Dog Creek and Humber Ranch portions, sold, on contract, for $75,000 ($91,020 when all interest and principal was paid on 1 November 1931). "Kohrs & Bielenberg Land & Livestock Company, a corporation, with its principal place of business at Deer Lodge, Powell County, Montana, the party of the first part, and NELSON NELSON, NELS EDWARD NELSON AND RALPH A. NELSON, a co-partnership known and designated as NELSON & SONS," agreed on the transfer of the remaining portions of the home ranch. The agricultural depression that had begun in the early 1920s had no doubt lowered the value of pastureland in the valley. The major parcel of land sold in 1919, a little over thirteen sections, had brought $100,000. The land sold in 1924, fourteen sections plus leasing rights on seven more, brought only $75,000.

32. The 2 June 1919 offers to sell to Williams and Pauly, including a description of the lands involved, are in Powell County Miscellaneous Records Book 4, pp. 141-48.

33. The survivors, Augusta and her daughters, Mrs. Katherine Warren and Mrs. Anna Boardman, sold two pieces of land, one of 720 acres, another of 400, to Williams and Pauly, Powell County Deed Book 21, pp. 428-29.

34. Powell County Miscellaneous Records Book 5, pp. 268-75. The three major land transactions, two on 2 July 1919 and one on 18 Sept. 1924, were the (continued)
So, with the exception of about a thousand acres around the ranch house, the home ranch as a major stock-growing concern had disappeared by 1924. The Kohrs-Bielenberg partnership still existed in the holdings of the companies, some of the banking interests, urban property, and stock investments. But the cattle empire had been dissolved, although profitably so. The winding down of cattle-raising at the home ranch paralleled the breakup of the pastures and their sale to Nelson and Sons and to Williams and Pauly. The Helena herd, grazing on the Dog Creek Pasture, formed the basis of the home ranch herd by this time. In 1923, on the eve of the sale to Nelson and Sons and just after John Bielenberg's death, the ranch manager sold off about 1,000 cattle, the last big sale of cattle from the home ranch or from any Kohrs and Bielenberg herd. John had kept about 150 to 200 bulls as stock for sale until he died. Remnants of the Helena herd remained on the lands retained around the ranch house.

The next few years saw little of the once dynamic pace of life at the home ranch in Deer Lodge. Managers ran the small herd, supervised haying and occasionally painted a building or repaired a fence. Perry Cline took over active management following John Bielenberg's death, and he in turn was replaced by Perry DeMotte and others. The last manager of the ranch in the period prior to Conrad K. Warren's assumption of control was Pem McComis, an old Kohrs partner and friend, ran the Conrad Kohrs Company. But the ranch lay in what was essentially a caretaker status during the period, and little but the passage of time marks the years from Bielenberg's death in 1922 until 1932. Young Conrad Kohrs Warren, Conrad's grandson, attended college, but spent the summers of 1926-28 haying at the ranch. Augusta would come for a few weeks each summer and visit old Deer Lodge friends, but would leave later in the summer for Helena and her home there.

On January 1930 the end of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company occurred when their charter expired. The Conrad Kohrs Company received all real estate, mining property, and water rights owned by said corporation in the State of Montana, which may not have heretofore been conveyed by a specific conveyance. Con Warren came to live at the ranch in April of 1930, settling in the ranch house in the winter and using the shed on the north end of the house in the summer. He worked at the ranch as a hand until 1932.

34. (continued) most important ones executed in the dissolution of the ranch. Other small additions and deletions took place from 1916 to 1927. They are reflected in the following Powell County Deed Books: 21, pp. 367-68; 19, pp. 579-80; 20, p. 83; 19, p. 578; 19, pp. 580-81; 21, pp. 357-58; 21, pp. 355-56; 19, 577-78; 24, p. 214; 24, pp. 141-47; 23, pp. 542-43; 24, p. 255.

35. Warren Interview, May 1975, pp. 19-20. The "Helena Herd" was registered but carried no papers, because the herdsman in charge of them prior to their acquisition by Kohrs and Bielenberg had burned their papers in a dispute with the owner.

36. Ibid., pp. 23, 25.

37. Powell County Deed Book 25, p. 439. Other pertinent entries regarding the transfer in the same Deed Book are on pp. 423-27.
In the spring of 1932 the ranch manager, Pem McComis, retired. Sam McKennon, still managing the Conrad Kohrs Company, which by now owned the property at Deer Lodge, came to Warren and said "Well, Pem McComis is going to retire, why don't you run the ranch?" Warren agreed.

From 1900 until 1908 the home ranch had continued to grow, then it came under the corporate ownership of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company. Beginning in 1919 it was sold off in three major transactions, and by the close of the Kohrs and Bielenberg era in 1932, all that remained was the remnants of the Helena Herd of Herefords, about a thousand acres of land, and the ranch house and buildings surrounding it. It would grow again under the management of Conrad Kohrs Warren, who took control of the once great ranch at the depth of the great depression.
... The old ranch, once a vast area of wild grass, is now dotted with fattening pens, haystacks, sheds, granaries, and small barns. It means that a shiny, new three-ton truck and a fleet of horse-drawn hay wagons rumble over the land-scape, hauling hay and grain to feeding pens adjacent to cultivated fields, carrying feed and supplies to farther winter ranges. It means a shedful of the latest styles in farm machinery, numerous gasoline and electric motors, a crew of cowboys who have learned to double as farm hands, veterinarians, milkmaids, and nursemaid to mothering cows.¹

April 1932 began a new era for the home ranch, which during the caretaker period, had remained static, neither shrinking nor growing, but maintaining the herds, buildings, and memories left from the greater days just past. But Con Warren's appointment as manager changed that, ushering in a new period of dynamism. Once again a cattle herd was built up and horses were brought in to form a foundation for a registered breeding herd. As at the height of the active years of Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle raising, the barns and pens again housed blooded stock.

But the old era had not been reborn nor the former ways reinstated. The rejuvenated ranch had a different orientation, and looked for its pastures close at hand, not in the millions of acres of open rangeland east of the mountains. The ranch remained that of Kohrs and Bielenberg, property of the Conrad Kohrs Company, but no longer served as the base of operations for a range cattle, mining, and investment empire. The lands immediately at hand would now have to serve to graze all the cattle and horses that would provide the economic base of the stock-raising venture. So while the facade remained, the purpose changed.

The new manager, Conrad Kohrs Warren, did, indeed, link the present with the past. The grandson of Con and Augusta, he had been virtually raised on the ranch, with time out for schooling in Helena and at the University of Virginia. Among the members of the third generation of the Kohrs-Bielenberg family he remained the most interested in the ranch. Yet Con Warren's link to the former days of glory of the home ranch can be overstated. In 1932 the same assumptions, ¹

1. Charles Morrow Wilson, "6000 Acres and a Microscope," Scribner's Magazine (September, 1937), p. 47. Wilson's effervescent prose and numerous illustrations describe a visit he made to the ranch in 1937, and the resulting article proved to be invaluable to this study. The comparison of the old techniques in ranching, as adhered to by Con Kohrs and John Bielenberg, with those of Con Warren in the years following 1930 was greatly facilitated by Wilson's article. It is featured in Chapter VII in the section dealing with older versus more modern techniques of ranching at Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. Herb Jilson, "My Ranch Situated on Cottonwood Creek," Western Livestock Reporter, (continued)
the same economic options and choices that Con Kohrs and John Bielenberg had exercised, no longer existed. Con Warren's choices would be quite different. Con Kohrs began his cattle growing business amidst a boom when the demand for beef was almost unlimited. Con Warren began his stock-growing career at the depth of the nation's worst depression and with cattle prices almost negligible. So while the buildings and some of the land and even a few of the cattle and horses remained the same as when John and Con had been alive, the new manager would approach the whole exercise of raising cattle from an entirely new perspective. The Warren era, then, began with the heritage of the old days intact, but with the challenges of the new age requiring new approaches.

Con Warren had grown up spending much of his time at the ranch, and after working there for about two years prior to assuming the manager's position, took up his duties with a clear understanding of what was needed for efficient operation. Certainly one major change needed to be made immediately, that of attitude. The "caretaker" approach had to go now that Warren was in control and, recently married, faced the necessity of supporting a family. The ranch would have to become a functioning cattle growing operation once again.

The ranch at this time contained a little less than one thousand acres. But Con Warren knew that "with less than a thousand acres we couldn't live with thirty five cows. It took one hundred cows to support a family, even then." So

1. (continued) Ranch Feature Issue (6 Oct. 1948), pp. 52-53 also contains a great deal of material on Con Warren's management of the ranch from 1932 to 1948. Warren's increased irrigation projects at the ranch and the creation of the registered Hereford herd are featured in the article.

2. The upper ranch, close to 6,100 acres in 1932, had been sold, but within a few years would be repossessed by the Conrad Kohrs Company. In 1930 the company still owned all of the upper ranch, but sold it not long afterward (see Powell County Deed Book 25, pp. 523-24). The ranch that Con Warren took over in 1932 was the old home ranch around the ranch house and buildings complex. Only later in the mid-1930s did he pick up control of the upper ranch, after the CK Company had repossessed it.

In this chapter a detailed examination of the growth of the ranch under Con Warren will not be attempted as it was in the chapters dealing with Kohrs and Bielenberg. While the limited time available is one reason for this, another is that many of the principals involved are still residents of Deer Lodge and nearby communities and cities. Disclosure of their real estate and financial dealings in detail might prove to be an unnecessary invasion of their privacy and, in addition, would serve little purpose in this chapter. The story is told, but in less than exact detail concerning acreages involved and financing—except for those figures already in public print. The appendices in this report, especially Appendix 5, list most of the entries in the public records at the county courthouse. These, of course, can be utilized whenever desired, and when compiled will provide detail for the Warren era matching that of the Kohrs period.
the new manager convinced the Conrad Kohrs Company to begin buying some contiguous lands and other pastures to bring the ranch to an efficient size. The initial purchase proved to be the Keating Ranch, west of the ranch house complex, about a section of land. Not long afterward, the Conrad Kohrs Company, at Warren's request, picked up two parcels of land from the Larabie family in Deer Lodge (between the ranch house and east to the present site of Interstate 90). To the northeast of the ranch house about four or five quarter sections of pasture near the old Kohrs and Bielenberg Dog Creek Pasture were added. A final purchase early in Warren's tenure as manager put another half section, the Evans Place, into the holdings. With these accretions to the diminutive acreage of 1932, Con Warren felt that he had a "self-sustaining unit without the upper ranch."*

In addition to the problem of overall size, Warren faced the need to stock the ranch. A few animals of the Helena herd of Herefords remained along with some old draft horses, Belgians, and a few dairy cattle. By about late 1933, Warren began to build the Hereford herd back up. He held back most of the heifers, and, with "Dandy Perfect the Second" as one of two herd bulls, began to rebuild the Helena herd. Soon it numbered about 150 animals and the two bulls available reached the straining point in providing their essential services. At this juncture Con Warren reasoned that "we're putting out six, seven, eight hundred dollars apiece for these bulls--why not raise some?" He proceeded to buy cattle to build his own registered herd. It was late 1933 or 1934 when he began to buy, and, with the depression bottoming out then, cattle prices stood as low as they had been or would be for years. So "Prince Blanchard the Fifth," to serve as a herd bull, and ten registered heifers came to the ranch from one owner, and eleven heifers at $75.00 a head from another. Con Warren had then brought a registered herd of cattle back to the old Kohrs and Bielenberg Ranch. By the late 1930s another bull "Domino the Twentieth," son of "Prince Domino," had joined the herd, and as the registered animals grew, sired numerous registered and nonregistered calves. "Domino the Twentieth" was joined in the early 1940s by "D Blanchard," son of "Prince Blanchard the Fifth." The Helena herd grew and became the base of Con Warren's commercial operations.

As the group of registered Herefords grew in numbers, quality, and renown, Con built up the draft horse herd. His reasons for working with draft horses paralleled those for his interest in the cattle. Con saw that the few holdovers from the Kohrs and Bielenberg era, the old "Dutch K" branded horses, were getting old. Rather than replace the herd of workhorses in a piecemeal fashion--and he needed them for the ranch--he decided to raise them there, using draft horse teams as needed around the ranch and selling the others to fellow ranchers. The major difference in his building of the Hereford registered herd and of the draft horse herd was that of financing. He built the herd of Herefords with Conrad Kohrs Company financing. But the bulk of the Belgian draft horse herd financing came from Con Warren.


4. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
He began in 1933, about the same time the Hereford development started. Con had decided that "if we're going to raise some horses, let's raise good horses." And he proceeded to do so systematically. First he visited horse shows in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. After viewing the available stock, he ranged east to Ohio and picked up his first two brood mares from the State university and then added a third from Earl Brown's herd in Wisconsin. The next year more mares and colts came from Brown's stock farm. By 1936 Warren's herd of Belgians totalled about fifty brood mares, three stallions, and four draft horse teams. Many of the horses carried names still remembered at the home ranch and in Deer Lodge for their fine quality descendants and their own grace and stature. Mares named "Sarah De Chorise," and "Re Coninsante" (all showing their geographic origins within Belgium) were some of the earliest and most fondly recalled animals in the new herd at Deer Lodge. One of the prize stallions, "Bloc II de Nederwalsm of Antwerp," sired many colts, as did "Brooklyn De Uccle."

The two herds grew during the 1930s and rose to greater fame in the next decade. And as Warren guided their development, the ranch buildings themselves began to experience some modifications. Numerous old and rotting structures--usually stock shelters made to last only a limited time--were torn down, as were some rotted fences. Useable feed bunkers received new portions of logs, and countless wood "jack-legs" in the miles of wooden fence at the ranch were replaced. Most of the buildings received fresh coats of whitewash for the first time in many years.

Among the buildings that came down was a shed, about fifty by sixteen feet with a thatched sod roof, in the corral west of the large barn. Warren directed the removal of that structure, four small feed bunks, and some of the other log structures that no longer served a useful purpose and had not remained in good condition.

5. Ibid., pp. 29-30.
10. This data was taken down during a May 1975 conversation involving Mr. Warren and numerous others at GRKO offices in Deer Lodge, and was put onto the draft historical base map nearby. It is otherwise undated. Using the map, Mr. Warren placed the buildings at their former locations and gave the approximate date that he removed them. The structures involved are Non-Extant Structures H, I, J, and K.
Other buildings received new siding, such as the horsebarn (Historic Structure 11) north of the bunkhouse row. Warren erected new structures, too, as needed. A dairy barn (Historic Structure 9) to house the small herd of milk cows he maintained went up about 1932, as did a new wood frame granary (Historic Structure 6) on the site of the Kohrs-Bielenberg chicken house.

In 1935 Warren put up a white wood frame building just to the rear of the main ranch house to house a blacksmith shop and serve as a garage (Historic Structure 3). It, the new granary, and the dairy building were Warren's major additions to the ranch service buildings in the 1930s.

But Warren also added corrals and feedlots west of the main ranch house. He placed corrals on each side of Johnson Creek and erected sheds (Historic Structures 26, 27, 28, 29), feed racks (Historic Structures 45 and 46), and squeeze chutes (Historic Structures 47 and 53) to feed and work the calves and other cattle fed and housed there.

To house the poultry raised on the ranch for use by the family and crew, Con ordered the erection of a frame chicken house and brooder house (Historic Structures 21 and 22 respectively) west of the main ranch house and near the two new feedlots and corrals. As he modernized the facilities, Warren did not neglect the water supply critical to growing feed and watering his expanding herds. Using long-neglected irrigation ditches and under-used water to which he retained rights, Con soon had pastures producing feed in much larger quantities than before.

The new buildings, the growing herds of Herefords and Belgian draft horses, the paint, and repaired fences, combined to give a new freshness to the ranch and a new vigorous purpose to the establishment. The routine and the appearance of the place, now a busy breeding and feeding ranch, received some journalistic scrutiny in 1937 in *Scribner's Magazine*. The article describes the ranch as it looked and operated in 1937 and graphically conveys the impact that Con Warren had made on it.

A. The Ranch in 1937

Charles M. Wilson, the writer from *Scribner's Magazine* (his work, at least, appeared there), spotted that combination of old and new that characterized the ranch in 1937 when he visited it. He reported that upon his arrival he "found Con Warren working at mechanical impregnation of mares; insurance of colt crops by means of impersonal gadgets," and noted further that Warren kept a microscope in the instrument cabinet in his shed. However, modernity and impersonality had not taken complete command of the Warren breeding operation, for


13. Unless otherwise stated, the material under this subheading is taken from Wilson, "6,000 Acres," pp. 42-47, 69.

though ultramodern cattle breeders are beginning to use mechanical impregnation to multiply progeny of highly valuable herd bulls, Con Warren finds that healthy purebred cattle usually breed readily enough when left to their own devices.\textsuperscript{15}

Warren obviously could work well with both new and traditional methods at the same time.

The physical appearance of the ranch reflected this as well. The article noted a "multitude of spick-and-span corrals down to the horsesheds,"\textsuperscript{16} and one of the illustrations showed freshly-painted barns, new fence posts, and a neat, almost militarylike order to the area. Yet none of the older but still functional buildings had been torn down; nothing new for the sake of newness alone had been erected. The image was functional, with a blend of the old and new, but utility was the paramount concern.

Wilson remarked on Warren's activity as a whole:

The ranch is broadly typical of the cattle-country West. Here are 6200 acres of which 500 are put to crops. Thus about 90 per cent of the entire ranch is range, and at least half of this is valid range [range not requiring irrigation] in normal seasons.\textsuperscript{17}

Continuing, Wilson describes Con Warren's crops, grown to supplement the grasses available to his four types of operations—Belgian horses, registered Herefords, feeder (commercial) cattle, and the thirty or so Durhams and Guernseys he maintained to supply the Deer Lodge dairy with milk.\textsuperscript{18} The breakdown listed about 200 acres of irrigated land in feed grains—oats, barley, and wheat. Twenty acres were in mangels, or mangel-wurzel, "a root crop similar to sugar beets which makes an excellent sweet feed for cattle." The remainder of the irrigated acreage was in Timothy and native hay. The crops grew in the irrigated fields on the west side of the ranch.\textsuperscript{19}

The yearly routine of the ranch had changed somewhat from the older days of Kohrs and Bielenberg, but not that much. "As soon as the late snows thaw,\textsuperscript{20} Warren's crew, no longer strictly cowboys but now better entitled "cowboy-farmer-utility man," began spring planting for the feed crops. Then the cattle were moved from the pastures they had grazed in during the long Montana winter to new

\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., p. 45.
\item Ibid., p. 44.
\item Interview, C. K. Warren with John Albright, 21 Feb. 1975, in which the Guernseys were noted. A later interview, 12 May 1975, mentioned the Durhams.
\item Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, p. 36
\item Wilson, "6,000 Acres," p. 46.
\end{enumerate}
ones. Cows about to calve went into a calving pasture close to facilities such as barns and sheds where they could be taken should the need arise. The mares about to foal, too, would be moved into pastures or holding areas where they would be nearer help, if needed. The commercial cattle had to be driven to corrals or pastures to be ready for sale.

With the arrival of the new generation of registered calves and colts, the needs of each of the valuable additions to the registered herds had to be met. Hand feeding was undertaken if needed, papers were filled out recording breed, strain, and heritage, and other myriad administrative tasks that registered animals demand were attended to. And all the while the routine feeding and animal husbandry continued. With the onset of the warmer spring weather, the painting, hammering, sawing, plumbing, and electrical work so endemic to ranching began.

In mid-summer came the cutting of hay, and depending on weather and moisture, the harvesting, transportation, and storage of feed crops. The hay had to be set up, the feeds mixed, and the barns, pens, and sheds made ready for the cold weather that would usually hit by early October. When time or circumstance permitted during the year, the animals had to be tested for disease and vaccinated to prevent the various medical problems common to horses and cattle. In late summer, as the time approached to transport and sell the feeder (commercial) cattle at market, and when the registered calves had grown old enough, branding would occur.

Wilson described the process:

Finally, there is branding, intermittently the gayest and most gruesome of cowboy chores. The ranch uses the same old CK (Con Kohrs) a brand which has ornamented Montana cowbrutes for three-quarters of a century. But branding is rid of most of its former brutality. In place of the old-time branding round-ups, ... workmen lead the calves from the corral to the branding chutes. While the calf stands imprisoned in a narrow board-built cell, the brand is heated ... then applied to the flank lightly enough to prevent damaging the leather. The calf bellows, plunges out to a snack of hay.21

Wilson also discussed the economic aspects of the ranch in 1937, noting that cattle then sold for about seventy or eighty dollars a head, while in 1932 they had sold for thirty to forty. The difference was not all profit, however, because feed prices and the cost of overhead, such as lumber, building materials, farm equipment, and livestock medicines, had about doubled since Warren took control of the ranch. Wages, too, had increased about twenty to forty percent. Placing an estimated $200,000 evaluation on the ranch then (1937), Wilson estimated gross profits at about $25,000, with a resulting net gain of about three

21. Ibid., p. 47. The "narrow board-built cell" is a squeeze chute, such as Historic Structures 47 and 53. The CK brand, of course, still belonged to the Conrad Kohrs Company, and since the ranch was still owned by them, it was entirely appropriate that the CK brand remain.
percent of evaluation. His economic picture of the Conrad Kohrs Company ranch suggested that profits were not particularly large, but that the buildup from scratch that Warren had accomplished boded well for the future.

The article contained a statement outlining what Warren had done. Noting that, as manager for the company, Warren had enjoyed strong resources to draw upon, Wilson wrote:

He had made extensive sale of pure-bred strain bulls and heifers to ranches throughout Montana and other western states. He has become a significant pioneer in introducing a utility breed of thoroughbred horses (Belgians) in the West. He has, through extensive sale of those Belgians, supplied Montana with a creditable foundation of good horseflesh. He has maintained a modern livestock establishment, from a standpoint of equipment as well as management—one visited by livestock breeders and growers from all parts of the West. And he has instituted an active and well-managed farm as part of a landholding which had never been seriously farmed. Raised as a cattleman, he has actually become a practical farmer, and it is a transition of practical and timely significance.22

The tradition passed to Con Warren from his grandfather (and granduncle John Bielenberg) comprised in equal parts hard work and quality stock. He had kept the tradition alive, and had simultaneously maintained contact with the foremost elements of contemporary stock-raising as well.


Cattle prices crept slowly upward as Con continued to improve the quality of his herds. And the cattle and horses continued to gain in national and especially in regional repute. During these busy years of the late 1930s he kept a crew of four to six cowboys (utility workers, really) who lived and ate in the bunkhouse and worked for $50 to $100 a month.23 The ranch continued the careful management and measured growth approach that Warren had used since 1932.

By 1940, as the Conrad Kohrs Company manager at the ranch in Deer Lodge, Warren had constructed a functioning and profitable commercial cattle operation as well as a ranch stocked with purebred Herefords and Belgians. That year he purchased the home ranch from the Conrad Kohrs Company. (The ranch was part of the capital assets of the Conrad Kohrs Company and could not be given away—not even to Con Kohrs's grandson.)24 The improvements Warren had made as manager

22. Ibid., p. 44.

23. Ibid., p. 47. See also Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, pp. 27, 49-50.

now became costly to him, for they increased the value of the ranch considera-

tably. The ranch he had lived at during summers as a boy, had worked at as a ranch

hand, and then managed successfully and dynamically for eight years now was his-
or would be once he paid off the debt he had signed for. He had inherited the
great tradition and the spirit of Con Kohrs and John Bielenberg, but the ranch
had come to him through hard work, heavy investment, and only after he had been
able to show his ability to pay off the considerable figure the Conrad Kohrs Com-
pany charged him for the establishment. One small part of the ranch, however,
had been a gift, a most gracious one. It had come in 1934 from his Grandmother
Kohrs, a wedding gift for Con and his bride Nell, the cost of a new house on
"71/100 acre of land." Con and his men had built the cottage just east of the
main ranch house, and across the railroad tracks. The design of the structure
had come from a magazine featuring "a country home for apartment living."26

The upper ranch had been repossessed by the company in the mid-1930s, and
in 1940 Con bought that too. So Warren had carved out a complex about half the
size of the original home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg. Having started under
entirely different circumstances, ones as unfavorable as Con Kohrs's had been
favorable, this was not an insignificant accomplishment.

But things could not remain static, and the same year that Con signed on
the dotted line for the ranch--now, incidentally, the Warren Hereford Ranch,
but still carrying the old CK brand--he sold the beautiful and renowned herd of
Belgian draft horses. The satisfactions of raising them had to yield to practi-
cal economics as the nation began rising rapidly out of depression and into the
bustling economy of the early war years. During the depression few American
farmers had been able to buy new tractors, at least up until about 1937 or so,
and the demand for horses remained steady. Warren even recalled, when questioned
about the draft horse venture, "the horse business kind of saved us during the
depression."27 But America's farms became more and more mechanized during the
last few years of the 1930s. The draft horse business tapered off then, so when
the Holbert Horse Importing Company of Greely, Iowa, approached Con on the matter,
he sold the entire herd. They soon became a prize of the Rockefeller Estate.
The Warren Ranch dropped both the horse operation and the dairy business as World
War II brought rather austere days to the ranch.

While austere, the war years remained busy and productive. Although the
government put ceilings on cattle prices, they levelled off high enough to war-
rant the effort but not high enough to produce significant profits. In a word,
things remained static. Con fed steers and maintained the registered Hereford
herd, which was supported, in part, by feed made possible by a new water pump
that made formerly dry pastures productive. 28 Ninety to a hundred steers formed
the commercial operation, which, in addition to bull sales of the registered


27. Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, p. 35. Warren had split profits from
the horses with the Conrad Kohrs Company.

Herefords and grain farming on the upper ranch and on the lands around the ranch house, kept the whole business going. But with little or no help available, there would be little or no expansion. Warren recalled the frustrations that faced stockgrowers and farmers during the war years, when "you couldn't develop very much. You couldn't get equipment. I had one F-20 Tractor that was down two years during the war for the lack of a thirty-five cent magneto cap."  

With the moderate profits during the war going toward the interest on the contract to purchase the ranch, the operational debt--normally a heavy burden on most modern ranchers--was a tremendous weight on Warren. In 1945, anticipating a drop in cattle prices (an erroneous assumption, he ruefully discovered), he sold the upper ranch and paid off a great part of this debt. He now operated with freer capital but with smaller territory to carry cattle.

Quality continued to be as important as it had been before. To make things pay well, the herd's characteristic excellent quality would have to be maintained. It was, and continued to develop. Beginning in 1946, the Warren Hereford Ranch began to take bulls to consignment sales throughout the northwest: to Dillon and Billings (the Tri-State Futurity), Montana, and annually to Ogden, Utah, among many other places. The Warren Ranch itself became the center of numerous sales as hundreds of buyers and spectators gathered in the tent erected on the south edge of the thoroughbred barn to watch and bid as the heifers and bulls came out, led by handlers, onto the fresh straw of the ring. The Warren Herefords gained and maintained national prominence.

The big barn west of the ranch house served for the sales until 1954, when Con built the large sales barn on the higher ground just east of the railroad tracks. Smaller sheds and attendant corrals had been built earlier (about 1950), and with the erection of the large barn, active operations at the old place ceased. By 1954, "we'd kind of abandoned the old place. The mud was so deep over there in the spring that you would have to take some buyer out to show him the bulls and would have to give him a pair of hip boots to wade out into the mud." 

The move to the newer buildings across the tracks spelled the end of the active history of the group of structures that had been known for seventy-two years as the Home Ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg, and that since 1940 had been the Warren Hereford Ranch. The cattle business was now carried on across the tracks, while these buildings remained in use for storage and for limited occupation by the Warren Hereford Ranch stock.

29. Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, pp. 36-37.
31. A sale in which various breeders would consign two or more specific bulls, help pay for publishing a catalog, and then deliver the bulls to the event.
32. Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, p. 46.
Con dispersed his registered herd in 1958 and entered the business of feeding and selling feeder cattle, working a herd of about 350 animals. Then in 1963 he went into the yearling cattle business for another three years; following that, he worked raising cows and calves.\textsuperscript{33}

By 1972 Warren's efforts to interest the National Park Service in obtaining the home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg at last bore fruit, and the buildings and the field immediately around the home ranch house, and that large structure and its furnishings, came into the possession of the government.

The Conrad Kohrs-John Bielenberg period at the home ranch had lasted fifty-six years, from 1866 to 1922, the year of Bielenberg's death. Then had come the ten-year caretaker period, followed by the Warren era, 1932 to 1972, with Warren as manager the first eight years and as owner during the succeeding thirty-two.

While Con Warren's tenure with the ranch continued the Kohrs family association, unbroken from 1866 to 1972, the imprint of Warren's style of ranching and of modern techniques lay heavily on it. Under Warren's ownership, the place had its own identity—highly individual and dynamic. In the continuities shared and in the differences between the home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg and the Warren Hereford Ranch lay the story of the open-range days of the late nineteenth century, of the transition that began following the hard winter of 1887 and the influx of homesteaders who followed close on its heels, and of the ever-developing changes of the twentieth century. Conrad Kohrs began the story in 1866; 106 years later Conrad Kohrs Warren closed it.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., pp. 50-51.
CHAPTER VII: ASPECTS OF THE HOME RANCH

A. The Stock

The home ranch served as the headquarters for the range cattle herds, and supported the purebred stock that was used in upgrading the range herds. The equine stock at the home ranch served as the core of the remudas used in the range operations and provided both race and draft horses for the ranch and for public sale. The bull business, run carefully by John Bielenberg almost to the moment of his death,\(^1\) also accounted for much of the daily stock raising routine. The ranch always had cattle and horses (with varying breeds among each often present), as well as the normal complement of dogs and chickens. It was somewhat different from many Montana ranches in that it also fostered a sizeable turkey population.\(^2\)

Kohrs and Bielenberg are well known in Montana cattle history for their early efforts to introduce purebred stock into the territory. Many credit them with being the first; surely they were among the first.\(^3\) The Kohrs and Bielenberg Short Horn Breeding Journal (reproduced in condensed form as Appendix 9) carries numerous entries noting cattle born to the herd in 1871. Other entries, most heavy in the decade of the 1870s, show that the herd's numbers grew by importation, mostly from Iowa and Illinois, and that animals were added to the herd until the mid-1880s. The Short Horns were a major source of upgrading stock for the range cattle herds.

An 1881 letter from Con Kohrs to his daughter (Appendix 10) is written on stationery with the letterhead "Kohrs and Bielenberg, Breeders of Short Horn Cattle, Thoroughbred, Clydesdale, and Coach Horses." Assuming that this accurately reflected the types of animals at the ranch in 1881, then there were one kind of purebred bovine as well as racing, riding, coach, and draft horses. By 1884 the ranch enjoyed milk from Ayrshire cattle as well. Kohrs and Bielenberg even entered Ayrshires in the 1884 Territorial Fair.

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2. Interview, J. H. Gehrmann with Peter Snell, at Davenport, Iowa, 7 July 1975, p. 2.
3. The myriad publications on the cattle industry in America might be consulted for definitive proof—if it exists—of who first introduced purebred cattle to Montana Territory and when. In the interests of time available for the conduct and completion of this study, the issue has not been examined to any great lengths. It is quite correct to state that Conrad Kohrs was among the early cattlemen to introduce purebred stock to Montana. It is not yet known if he was the very first.
Within a matter of only two to four years, more blooded stock had been added to the home ranch. M. A. Leeson's *History of Montana*, published in the late 1880s, contains an illustration of the home ranch carrying the caption "Residence of Conrad Kohrs, Deer Lodge, Mont. Kohrs and Bielenberg, Breeders of Short-Horn & Hereford Cattle, Thoroughbred, Clydesdale, Percheron-Norman, and Coach Horses" (see Illustration 3). Dating this view at about 1885—and it is probably no later than that—it is inferable that Kohrs and Bielenberg had imported some Hereford cattle and Percherons (draft horses). By this date, the home ranch housed two distinct breeds of cattle of English origin and one breed of riding/racing horses (thoroughbreds), two types of draft horses, and coach horses. Presumably at this time the western quarter horse also formed part of the equine stock at the ranch. It is almost inconceivable that it did not, but no definitive proof has yet been noted—except the comment in a letter dated 1887 that "we have got twice the number of cattle Con Kohrs has here [on the DHS ranges] & our expense has not been twice as much. We have had to buy horses & he has raised his." The horses in use on the range would have been quarter horses, possibly with an additional thoroughbred strain. Both John and Con, but most especially John Bielenberg, were devoted animal breeders, and it is likely that the horses they raised at the home ranch for the ranges represented the best mix of horse breeds they could blend.

An advertisement in *The New Northwest* is the next piece of definitive evidence that has surfaced dealing with stock at the ranch. The notice, posted in May and June of 1887, just as the full extent of the disaster of the previous winter was making itself known, listed a third type of English-origin cow at the ranch. It offered

About 40 head of cross-bred Polled Angus and Short Horn Heifers. Also a lot of cross-bred Hereford and Short Horn Heifers. It being a condition of such lease that the lease shall have good range, sufficient hay and facilities to keep the breeds distinct.

Obviously, then, Kohrs and Bielenberg had Polled Angus cattle on hand, at least in limited numbers, by 1887. Yet the Polled Angus has not been commonly associated with the ranch in family tradition or in the many references to Kohrs and Bielenberg in publications about the cattle empire. Presumably, then, the strain did not represent a major Kohrs and Bielenberg effort, although it was present at the ranch in the spring of 1887 along with the Short Horns and Herefords.

The 1893 Kohrs and Bielenberg Stock Farm Catalog (Appendix 6) lists thirty-one thoroughbred horses. Whether all were for sale, or whether they were advertised for breeding only, was not stated. The number of horses advertised, however, shows the considerable size of the thoroughbred business at the ranch.


5. The advertisement is quoted in full at the beginning of Chapter IV.
No other types of cattle were introduced by Kohrs and Bielenberg, but another type of draft horse, the Belgian, was added. The exact date it was brought in is not known. Belgians were there during the caretaker period of the 1920s along with the Hereford herd. Most of the Short Horns had long since blended in with the commercial herd or had been sold, so that when Con Warren took over active management of the ranch in 1932, only two distinct breeds--Hereford cattle (the Helena herd) and a few Belgian mares--were present. No doubt the appropriate number of utilitarian riding and work horses were there, too. Warren introduced no new breeds, but, as noted in Chapter VI, upgraded the quality of the existing herds.

Family tradition adds another breed of draft horses to the ranch--Shires, a large English draft horse originally from central England. They arrived after 1885, the approximate date of the M. A. Leeson illustration. Apparently Shires formed part of the ranch's equine stock in 1906.

The stock-carrying capacity of the home ranch at the height of its productivity is not known exactly. Because portions of the pastures included in the ranch were naturally well watered, while others were somewhat dry and still others were richly irrigated, the usual figures of acres-per-cow do not apply very well. Con Warren suggested that the home ranch never carried more than 1,500 cows in its pastures. Using this figure, and recognizing that Kohrs and Bielenberg had breeding stock, both horses and cattle, for sale at all times, an accurate estimate might be that the home ranch held possibly 2,000 cattle of all types and perhaps 150 to 200 horses.

Until the Warren era, the ranch did not primarily raise commercial cattle, but instead sold horses and cattle for breeding purposes--the cattle to upgrade the range herds and the horses to be used in range cattle operations. During the Warren era, both commercial and breeding cattle and draft horses added to the economic base of the ranch. And for most of the 1930s a small dairy herd of Guernseys and Durhams even formed part of the stock assets of the establishment.

The development of the herds at the home ranch paralleled the changes taking place throughout the West. Short Horns, the first of the purebred cattle, were introduced after the breed had established itself as the dominant one in America. (While Con Kohrs can be called a pioneer because he was among the very first to bring Short Horns into Montana, the breed was quite well established in the midwest and Canada when he decided to upgrade his Montana herds.) Herefords had proved their value in Kansas in the late 1860s and early 1870s, but did not become nationally important until the 1880s, the years Kohrs and Bielenberg introduced them into Montana. Like the rest of the serious breeders among American stock-raisers, Con and John experimented with crossbreeds--Herefords and Short Horns--and with some of the lesser known types, such as Polled Angus, during the 1880s.

By the turn of the century, and certainly by the end of their first decade here, the Herefords had established their supremacy in the American West. By then the number of Short Horns at the home ranch had dwindled and the Helena

6. Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, pp. 9-10. "Leeds-Lion" was a Shire at the ranch shortly after the turn of the century.
herd of Herefords had become the largest prime quality herd. A few Short Horns remained, however, until as late as 1919, when they were sold off. As the 20th century progressed, and ranchers throughout America strove to strengthen the good qualities of their Herefords, Con Warren moved in exactly the same direction. His Herefords gained national recognition as one of the Northwest's finest herds, firmly establishing Warren's position in the mainstream of stock-raising in America in mid-century. Con Warren's cattle were among the very best of the standard breed, emphasizing his link with John Bielenberg and Con Kohrs, who also succeeded in building herds of the very best quality. There is another trait common to these three stockmen, and that is the pride that both generations took in their animals beyond the mere recognition that the herds formed the core of the ranch's economic life. That pride was also the result of hard work with the animals, the great amounts of capital lavished on them, and the closeness to the animals brought about by intense daily contact.


Con Warren's attachment to his fine stock is apparent as well in his reminiscences of "Bloc II de Nederswalm of Antwerp" and his other fine Belgian horses. "Prince Blanchard the Fifth" and other Herefords remain an important part of the legend, as strongly remembered today as they were precisely and energetically cared for in their lifetimes.

The particular mix of feelings towards the animals was an individual thing with each man. But each rancher was cognizant of the same two truths: That the animal must pay and be economically worthwhile, and, equally important, that working with them was an immensely satisfying experience.

Ranching is hard and chancy work. It requires strong determination from its participants. And that devotion is inextricably tied up with the stock that forms the core of the ranching effort. This was as true at the ranch in Deer Lodge as anywhere else. Indeed, both generations at the home ranch led their peers in animal development and improvement, and their closeness to their herds might well have been correspondingly stronger than that felt by their contemporaries.

B. Old Ranching and New

The question of old ranching methods versus the new, when put to Conrad K. Warren, elicited a somewhat laconic response. Size was the difference, he reasoned, "the scale they operated on in comparison to the scale that I operated on." And size is the key to a comparison of the Kohrs and Bielenberg period and the Warren era. Cattle ranching in the open-range days involved thousands and thousands of cattle grazing over the public domain of the West as the Indians went onto reservations and the numbers of buffalo dwindled. The herds grazed freely, were only loosely controlled, and were gathered twice a year for branding,
But the passage of time brought the bad winter of 1886 and 1887. Then close on its heels came the influx of homesteaders onto the dry lands that had supported first the buffalo and then millions of cattle. By the 20th century even the large sections of public domain that had escaped the plow of the homesteader were privately owned and fenced, so that the technique of throwing cattle onto free grass for five or six months, branding the offspring, and shipping the fat ones off to market simply could no longer be applied. By then the changes in the industry and the shape of things to come could be summed up well in one word--"smaller." The cattle themselves improved as breeders learned to emphasize weight gain and marketability, while the ranches grew smaller, more self contained, and self sufficient. Stock growers began to raise some of their own feed and to cut hay for the winter months. With smaller land areas and fewer cattle came the need to make more money from each cow or steer. Breeding became important, and the growing of economical and nutritious feed for the animals paramount.

Kohrs and Bielenberg moved with the rest of the cattle-growing West, and the development of their herds and the modification of their operation was indicative of what was happening in the rest of Montana and in the western stock industry. Sequentially, the growth of the home ranch in the late 1880s through-out the 1890s and up to about 1906 meant that less and less public land stood open to take the herds. In order to keep the profitable open-range cattle-growing operation afloat, Conrad Kohrs purchased large amounts of land. But he purchased the land instead of simply appropriating it. That could not be done any more, because the demands on the range no longer allowed it. The halcyon days of grass for the taking had passed with the end of the century. Large herds of cattle still grazed, but on leased or owned land, not on the public domain with squatter's rights as the procedure. This gradual winding down of open range and public domain grazing beginning in the 1890s (1899 for Kohrs and Bielenberg, when they purchased the N-N) was the first change from the old ways to the new.

8. The process of change from the open range days to the current methods of raising cattle is described in numerous references. One of the best current works on the subject is Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising on the Plains*, cited in full earlier. Brown and Felton, *Before Barbed Wire*, discusses Montana's transition from the old to the new in detail. Fletcher, *Free Grass*, p. 129, explains that transition also. He wrote that the new breed of granger-cowmen were using controlled water on their land, too. The current belief [about 1900] among practical students of the livestock industry was the open-range practice was well on its way to extinction. It would have been a deaf cowman of the old school who had not heard the repeated predictions and warning. They didn't have to be told that the small rancher was in the ascendancy. He had more than a foot in the stirrup--he was firmly in the saddle. His irrigated forage crops of redtop, timothy, clover and bluegrass replaced native grass. (continued)
The second major change, a result of the first, was the development of smaller ranches with more ranchers raising fewer cattle. For two reasons this step came a little later for Kohrs and Bielenberg than for most of their contemporaries: first, they had been able to purchase the large acreage of the home ranch (just under 27,000 acres) by about 1900, and secondly, they owned the N-N and water rights over possibly a million acres contiguous to the new ranch. This situation passed by 1919 when The Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company, The Conrad Kohrs Company, and The Rock Creek Ditch and Mining Company began to sell off the land carefully accrued since 1866. Had Con and John not been very old men at the time, it is possible that they would not have sold. But it is almost certain that the grand empire of land and cattle that they had created would soon have had to face the realities of greater taxes and rising land values, and before too long, would have yielded to the pressures that many other large outfits had already felt. But chronologically this second step, ranch size shrinkage, did not come for Kohrs and Bielenberg until about 1918. But then it came with a vengeance, the home ranch shrinking to miniscule proportions compared to its earlier size.

After a hiatus in the twenties the resurrection of the ranch began under Con Warren, as it grew again and served new cattle marketing procedures and a new cattle business. This step, the third one, brought the ranch into the modern mold with carefully managed and planned herd of one dominant breed (Herefords). Warren's techniques, like those of his contemporaries, combined all that had been learned in the business to date, plus all the burgeoning knowledge the new land grant colleges, their animal husbandry schools, and the experimental stations could provide. Medicines abounded, as did new genetic knowledge to use in breeding concerning size, handling, meat production and resistance to disease. Ranching had come full swing in at least one arena. It had been gloriously informal, but now operated under strong control, with each step taken based on an almost certain result in an almost exact given period. Testing scientifically for disease and pregnancy replaced the practiced eye of the line rider, trained only in the school of the drive, the roundup, and the branding fire. The process continued as the 20th century progressed, and by the early 1970s, when Con Warren sold his Hereford Ranch to the National Park Foundation, breeding had progressed even beyond the state of the art he had practiced from the 1930s almost to the 1960s. Cattle feed, too, had developed from the grains grown by the ranchers and fed not long afterward, to programmed feeding of blended feeds prepared in distant mills, feeds supplemented by minerals, growth-inducing chemicals, and antibiotics to ensure fast and sickness-free growth.

Great differences had taken place between the Kohrs and Bielenberg era on one hand and the Warren era on the other. These changes—the closing of the open lands resulting in smaller ranches, the growth of supplemental feed, and the dominance of the Hereford—showed clearly in the operations of the Warren Hereford Ranch as opposed to those of the earlier home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg.

8. (continued) In the western valleys, ranchers had diverted mountain streams to flood hay meadows before extensive irrigation was practiced east of the mountains. Montana's first alfalfa field was planted in the Madison Valley about 1880.
The Wilson article, "6,000 Acres and a Microscope," dwells at some length on the differences that could be discerned in 1937. Con Kohrs, Wilson noted, could figure on hiring three cowboys for every thousand cattle, but modern ranching, with its attendant care of the animals, required three times that many. Kohrs and Bielenberg raised cattle "to be butchered and eaten," while Warren raised them to become "parents and grandparents of cattle to be eaten." The old system certainly focused on raising the fattest, fastest growing, and strongest cattle possible. The new style continued this emphasis, but "as a student of cattle eugenics Con Warren is now more ambitious, better primed with details." So even in the similarities, differences existed.

The cattle drover, that folk hero of many a Saturday afternoon matinee and, more recently, the center stage character of the adult psychological western, changed as well:

A cowboy is an agricultural laborer who has been fantastically romanticised. In the movies he still rides a bronco at breakneck speed and waves a ten gallon Stetson. But the demands of modern ranching are more mundane and practical. As soon as late snows thaw, they man the two tractors, tear into the fields for spring planting.

Yet the new and old ways still converge at certain basic points. The cattle must still be raised as economically as possible. They must still be watched, helped as needed, shipped, and sold. The investment in them now, as before, is based on hope and chance. The money must be spent for two, sometimes three, years before it can be recouped, hopefully with a profit. Cattle bought cheap might sell cheaper, or they might sell at considerable profit. But just as the old cattlemen watched so do the new--the market at sale time, both equally vulnerable to its gyrations. Likewise, weather, then as now, played an unpredictable game. So some things in the cattle business have not changed much, and it is likely that they won't change in the future, either.

Con Kohrs lived a long life spanning both these eras. In 1913 he and many of his contemporaries began closing down the vast cattle growing businesses they had long directed. Kohrs saw the new times coming and addressed the challenges that faced future generations of cattle growers:

The principal actors of the early periods have nearly all passed away. They were a rugged set of men, these pioneers, well qualified for their self-assumed task. In the pursuit of wealth a few succeeded and the majority failed, as in all other spheres of activity. The pioneers ousted the aborigine, utilizing the country for what it was best adapted at that period, and the range cattle industry has seen its inception, zenith, and partial extinction all within half a century. The changes of the past have been

9. Wilson, "6,000 Acres," p. 47.

10. Ibid., p. 46.
many; these of the future may be of even more revolutionary character. What was the beef-producing ground of the nation a few years back is now being used for other purposes, whether practically or not, time will tell.

The cattle industry as it existed a quarter of a century ago is no longer possible. Eventually the problems now confronting the West will reach the self-solution state. It is destined to be a populous and wealth-producing country. The pioneers did their part and it is reasonable to assume that posterity will successfully solve each problem as it presents itself. Nature, while imposing some handicaps, has done much for humanity in this vast region, and humanity have ever manifested an ability to make the most of nature's lavishness.\textsuperscript{11}

C. The Family

"Town is very still and our old ranch don't look like home without you all," wrote Conrad Kohrs in 1881. "It is so still," he continued, "so quite have not been mutch at home, it makes me feel to bad to stay here."\textsuperscript{12} This excerpt came from an affectionate letter Con wrote to his eldest daughter Anna. She was with the family in Germany, and he was at home attending to business affairs. The letter illustrates well the strong ties that bound the Kohrs-Bielenberg family at Deer Lodge. While Conrad Kohrs's public image and, to a great extent, his personality as gleaned from his papers, present the picture of a somewhat restrained and controlled man presiding over a rather formal family, letters such as this one balance out the view, revealing a close-knit family living at the home ranch in Deer Lodge.

Kohrs had come to Montana alone in 1862 and begun his career then. Within a few years he had reached the stage where he could help his brothers out, and he invited them to Montana. Apparently the half brothers, John, Charles, and Nicolas Bielenberg, did come out about then, and Kohrs soon had them placed operating his butcher shops throughout the territory.\textsuperscript{13} They all stayed on, remaining partners with Con in various business arrangements for most of their lives. He refers to each on occasion as "my brother" in his autobiography. Yet of the three, John was the closest to Con, and after Con and Augusta's marriage, he remained close to both of them. There are references to the relationship of the other brothers to Con and Augusta, such as in the 1881 letter in which Con writes "I have not seen Onkel Nick or Aunt Annie, will try and go up this week." Yet John and Con lived together, probably from the beginning of their partnership. After Con married Augusta, the couple provided a place for John in their home, and he lived with them until he died.

\textsuperscript{11} Kohrs, "A Veteran's Experience," p. 1401.

\textsuperscript{12} The letter is shown in full as Appendix 10. Kohrs's grammar and spelling improved markedly in future years. But in the letter from which this quotation is taken, he reveals a quality of style and colorful phrasing that appears later in his article in the \textit{Breeder's Gazette} and in his autobiography.

\textsuperscript{13} Discussed in more detail in Chapter I.
Part of the Kohrs family lived in Iowa, and Davenport remained the home of Con's mother and his stepfather, Claus Bielenberg. Conrad and Henry Kohrs's father had died at their home village of Wewelfleth, in Holstein, in Denmark (soon to become Prussian and then German-owned) when Con was a small boy. Mrs. Kohrs had married Claus Bielenberg later and had emigrated with the family to Iowa.

On trips east family members almost always stopped by Davenport to visit. Con took his fiancee to the home manse to wed her, and Augusta and the children frequently paid prolonged visits there. J. H. Gehrmann, part of the Henry Kohrs family at Davenport, recalled that

Just after my parent's wedding, Conrad Kohrs' family of five was returning from Europe and stopped to visit with his brother Henry. They invited my mother and father to return with them and stay at the ranch until they could get properly settled. As mother said, "Aunt Augusta was like a mother to me and was with me in Walkerville [Iowa] when both boys were born." This close relationship continued throughout our lives. Our second home was the ranch.  

The pages of The New Northwest record the visits of the elder Bielenberg to the home ranch in Deer Lodge with some frequency. The local press reported one such trip in 1885:

Mr. C. Bielenberg, of Davenport, Iowa, father of N. J. Johnnie, and Charlie Bielenberg and almost as young-looking as the boys, arrived last Sunday and will spend a few weeks with them. He was here three years ago and has many friends in the community.  

So the visits went both ways. Con's autobiography mentions travelling to see his sister in California at least twice, as well, and J. H. Gehrmann noted that

every fall Conrad's sister, Catherine Berwald, [née Kohrs] packed dried fruit at her home in California to send to Conrad and Henry. This was really the only fruit available in Deer Lodge. The same time grandmother packed Sauerkraut and cut beans or "Snitzelbohnen" packed in salt in special oak kegs for shipment to Montana. These were considered especial treats on the ranch.  

Because of the closeness of the family at the ranch house, birthdays and anniversaries received appropriate celebration and recognition. Even the local press took note of the family's warm relationship, noting that "If there is any

15. The New Northwest, 22 July 1887.  
place our worthy representative [Con Kohrs] would rather be than with his family, we don't think he has found it yet--and don't think he ever will."\(^{17}\)

The grandest event of that nature had to be the time that Con bought Augusta a house. They had moved to Helena for the winter of 1899 and found that they enjoyed it there. Augusta decided she wanted to live in Helena in their rented home. That was sufficient to prompt Con to action, "So without her knowledge I telegraphed to Mr. D'archeul and bought the house, presenting it to her on our wedding anniversary."\(^{18}\)

The family showed its happy solidarity in other ways as well. With Con on the road so much, many trips had to combine business and family interests. The family went along whenever possible. An example is the Yellowstone trip in 1883. With horses, a provision wagon, a cook, and assistants, Con, Augusta, Miss King, and the children travelled from Deer Lodge to Yellowstone National Park and leisurely wandered through it for six weeks. The local newspaper note on the story reported that "the family will return by rail from Mammoth Springs. Mr. Kohrs goes to Chicago before returning."\(^{19}\) This combination of a business and family trip was typical.

The Deer Lodge family cherished its friends too. Their actions upon Tom Hooban's death--transporting his remains to his home in Wisconsin and journeying there for the funeral--testify strongly to their devotion to him. Likewise, the children's governess, Miss Anna King, became virtually a member of the family, accompanying them to Europe and taking trips with them throughout Montana. After Anna King left the employ of the Kohrs to pursue a singing career, she would return for lengthy stays, as she did in the fall of 1884.\(^{20}\)

Con Warren remembered the family during the summers at Deer Lodge. In the years following Con and Augusta's move to Helena, both Con and Augusta would telephone John Bielenberg at the ranch in Deer Lodge once or twice a week just to see how he was doing. If they hadn't called for a few days, John would call them. They always remained in close contact. In the evenings, Con Warren recalled, "They would sit down and talk for hours on end." Even taciturn John Bielenberg, who seldom spoke except when absolutely necessary, would join in. They would gather in the dining room "in the evenings . . . around the table and talk, talk, talk." Con Warren observed that "they really were a close-knit family. And they had this extraordinary regard for each other."\(^{21}\)

Con and Augusta and John remained the core of the family, but of course there were the children too: initially Anna Kohrs (born 18 December 1868), then Katie (Katherine, born 2 March 1870), and finally William or "Willie" (born 1 November 1879). Anna married first, in 1891. She wedded John Boardman, who eventually became manager of many of the Kohrs and Bielenberg interests. The younger daughter, Katherine, married a physician, Dr. Otey Yancey Warren, a few years later. Dr. Warren died just a few months after the birth, in 1907, of the couple's youngest child, Conrad Kohrs Warren, who became manager and later owner of the ranch.

Con and Augusta's only son, William, died on 20 March 1901, while attending college in the East. Willie's death must have been a major shock to Con and Augusta, but an exact measure of its impact remains unknown. Con Kohrs apparently could not bring himself to mention the tragedy in his autobiography. In as intimate a group as the Kohrs family, any death would be strongly felt. That the first child to die was the only son must have brought even greater pain to Con and Augusta. Family tradition infers that this is so. The only major response to the death in the family that is known for certain is that shortly after William's death, Con, John, and Augusta initiated the construction of the "Wm. K. Kohrs Memorial Library" in Deer Lodge. The building survives today unaltered on the exterior. The stained glass window, donated by John Bielenberg, and the neoclassic lines of the structure, along with the ranch itself, serve as reminders of the Kohrs family in Deer Lodge.

Probably Con, John, and Augusta would not have proceeded along the lines they took in the management and ultimately the disposal of the property they had accumulated if William had not died. Had he lived, he would have been the logical heir and business manager, and the formation of the three landholding companies would have been unnecessary. By about 1903 he would have been ready to begin whatever apprenticeship his father and uncle might have felt he needed. Yet this is speculation, not fact. Suffice it to say that the death of William endangered the continuity of family ownership of the ranch--this much is fact.

But some continuity did, indeed, prevail through the two sons-in-law, John Boardman and O. Y. Warren. Boardman began helping with the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle interests in the early 1890s. By the turn of the century he had progressed to even more active participation. In 1900 he took over management of the Pioneer Cattle Company (the DHS Ranch operations) and soon was managing the Redwater Land and Livestock Company, which controlled the Kohrs and Bielenberg eastern Montana cattle interests. Boardman and Warren took an active part in politics, as did Conrad Kohrs. It must have been a source of real satisfaction for Con Kohrs to see both his sons-in-law in the state legislature with him. He, Boardman, and Warren served in the state senate, and all pursued active avocational careers in state politics.

Dr. Warren died in 1907, and over the succeeding years the Warren children (Con, Robert, and Anna) and their grandparents and granduncle John Bielenberg became quite close, closer, in fact, than most children are to their grandparents. A photograph dated about 1917 shows Con Warren and his brother at a YMCA "Father-Son Banquet." Con's brother and John Boardman are together, while Conrad Kohrs and Conrad Kohrs Warren are sitting together at a table a few seats away with the other fathers and sons.

This close relationship of Con Warren to the Kohrses and to John Bielenberg may well account for the care and attention that Con Warren and his wife Nell later paid to preserving the materials, buildings, papers, and even many of the original furnishings and equipment at the ranch. Warren, in close and frequent contact with Con and Augusta, who had built up the ranch, felt a kinship to it that would have been denied him in a more routine relationship with his grandparents. In a way this was but a continuation of the close family ties that had bound them all together.

Con Warren carried on the tradition of Kohrs and Bielenberg in at least three areas: He bred fine stock, improving the quality of Montana herds in the process, as did they; he ran the home ranch; and he took time, as did Kohrs, to participate actively in State cattle-growing organizations. He served as President of the Montana Stockgrowers Association in 1950 and 1951 and served on the State Livestock Commission for twelve years, beginning in 1949. Although he was a third generation grandson, he served as the immediate heir of the Conrad Kohrs family in the cattle business.  

D. Vignettes of Daily Life at the Ranch

At a whist party one Saturday early in the spring of 1885, the guests enjoyed cards and conversation. During the evening someone calculated the time spent in Montana by the group of twelve, and came up with the impressive total of 239 years. The most senior pioneer present was none other than Conrad Kohrs— who had arrived on 2 August 1862. This prompted the anonymous reporter to enquire of Mr. Kohrs what his age might be. Con replied "There are no spring chickens here! and the games went on."  

In the years prior to the more sedate whist party era at the home ranch, dances lasting all night had brightened the place more than once. Young Con Kohrs continued Johnny Grant's practice of hosting dances with real gusto.


But work formed the main routine of the ranch, dominating the life there. The pattern, stemming from the earliest days of the ranch's history, was a set one: haying, herding cattle, mending fences, hanging gates at corrals, feeding animals, and slaughtering an occasional beef for the house or the bunkhouse crew. Wagons needed repair, buildings needed paint or whitewash, and calves and colts needed caring for from time to time. The crew at the ranch put in a busy day. But they enjoyed compensations. The tradition of the range—hard work expected and good food provided—manifested itself at the ranchhands' dinner table in the bunkhouse.

Chinese made their name there as cooks. Possibly the best known, who returned to China and died early in the 20th century, carried the alliterative name "Ham Sam the Chinaman." Tom Sing succeeded Ham Sam, and Tom Wing succeeded Tom Sing. They all featured that rich and fulsome cattle country cuisine, the legendary reports of which in pulp westerns and movies are probably closer to fact than fiction. Sourdough biscuits and bread, beef, and beans furnished much of the core of the menu at the bunkhouse, but other items appeared on the table as well. One ranch hand, looking back in the late winter of 1975 to his summers as a teenager working at the ranch about 1917 to 1920, recalled the typical breakfast for the hands at about 6:00 A.M. It consisted of bacon and eggs, hotcakes, oatmeal biscuits, coffee, and milk. He added that the hands sat down to eat only after the horses had been fed. At noon the hot meal featured beef, beans, one or two vegetables, and for dessert, pies and cakes. The noon meal was the major one of the day, but the evening meal usually featured almost as much as that at midday.

A particular feature at the bunkhouse table during the Warren era, reputedly always welcomed on the earlier roundups, and probably a staple of the northwest ranching diet, was the "bannock." Con Warren described it. Squares of a mixture of lard, flour, milk, baking powder, and sugar blended into a sweet biscuit dough were cooked in deep grease and came out as hot, semisweet fried bread, with no syrup needed. On the roundups, beans (buried in the iron pot under the coals of the fire in a lard can) and bannocks at breakfast, served with hot coffee, made a popular and simple breakfast. Warren recalled that one old white mule, up in the high pastures east of the ranch house, would "nuzzle up really friendly when he smelled a bannock being fried." Con always remembered to present the equine gourmet with the first fruit of the pan.

The copious meals that graced the table at the bunkhouse began after the dinner gong sounded. Located just outside the door of the kitchen, its peals, awaited with sincere anticipation, brought the crew from the sheds and barns in the vicinity.

28. Interview, Howard Mayo with John Albright, 3 Mar. 1975, notes on file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.
At the ranch house the quantity of food featured about equalled that of the bunkhouse, but the variety was larger. Dinners often featured beef, lamb, or veal, and often lots of roast turkey. Stew and heavy soups began most meals, and pie almost always closed them. Coffee appeared at every meal, in large amounts, and at other times as well. Conrad and Augusta and their guests, Con Warren recalled, would sit on the porch for morning and afternoon coffee. The afternoon coffee featured cake, chocolates, and cookies as well, and young Con Warren especially relished an invitation to join the adults for "afternoon coffee."  

The reminiscences of those such as Con Warren and J. H. Gehrmann, recalling their days at the ranch as young boys, help round out the story of the daily routine, and seem to bring it into balance with the accounts of cattle raising, transportation, and marketing. They show that ingenuity and fun blended with the daily routine of the business. Coyote control, as practiced in 1904, serves as an example.

The home ranch maintained its own flock of turkeys for the table at the main house and at the bunkhouse. The turkey house sheltered the birds usually, but in the summer they would roost in a big tree near the stallion barn. Coyotes often circled underneath at night to attack any bird that lost its balance. When the coyote population reached uncomfortable proportions, the ranch hands killed a lamb and slivered its carcass, injecting it with arsenic. The hands then hung it on a gate arch near the turkey roost, high enough that the coyotes would have to jump to get to the meat. This they would do, and tearing off a chuck, have the meat ingested before they realized the danger—if they ever had time to think about it. The carcasses often lasted less than a week when the coyote population was particularly heavy.  

Birthdays and Christmas sparkled at the home ranch. Relatives and invited friends came for dinner, and Augusta's cook served fancy meals.

On those special days particularly, but every other day as well, flowers formed much of the scene in and about the house. The lilac bushes on the south, irrigated by the running water coming through the yard, created a tunnel through which children would run. A large flower garden lay just south of the house and down the bluff, but within the fenced house yard, and added its profusion of colors to the scene. Round plots of flowers in the front yard stood on each side of the entrance, and in the house sprays of roses stood in vases—especially in the dining room.

30. Gehrmann Interview, 7 July 1975, p. 2.
31. Warren conversation, 11 Sept. 1975, p. 6. The dates for this fall within the 1912-20 period, since Warren was born in 1907. However, it is likely that the morning and afternoon coffee at that time carried over from the days before the Kohrs moved to Helena.
32. Gehrmann Interview, 7 July 1975, p. 2.
34. Gehrmann Interview, 7 July 1975, p. 2.
The ranch house served as a colorful center for the ranch and its myriad activities. The bright green yard and cottonwood trees, the white house and green shutters, and the flowers, set the ranch house apart from the rest of the complex, its particular mix of colors and brightness in sharp contrast to the raw dirt of the corrals. The focus of the social scene at the ranch, and separated in distance by about forty feet (but in social status by a wide gulf) from the bunkhouse, the ranch house, its visitors, guests, and occupants enjoyed the benefits resulting from the long period of success that had crowned the life of Con and Augusta Kohrs and John Bielenberg.

E. Conrad Kohrs (Born 5 August 1835, Wewelfleth, Denmark; Died 23 July 1920, Helena, Montana)

Stories about Conrad Kohrs abound in Montana literature. No doubt many are apocryphal. Yet one of them neatly illustrates why Con Kohrs succeeded in his myriad business ventures. Kohrs had a rival in the butcher business in Virginia City in the early 1860s, the story goes, who had a big advantage over him because he had a horse to use in making deliveries, while Kohrs had none. But an assistant in Kohrs's shop had $500 in savings. Con borrowed it, bought a horse, and soon outstripped the competition, repaid the money, and soared on to big profits. Kohrs was paying him out of his own money, the assistant would occasionally joke. But the lesson in the episode was that the assistant made a small profit on the money by investing it, and Con Kohrs used it to bring thousands of dollars into the business, amply demonstrating his legendary money-making abilities.

And above anything else, Con Kohrs did prove his ability to make money. He made it in mining and in cattle. He invested profits from his stock and mineral enterprises in real estate, in other businesses, and back into cattle and mining. He blended an ability to work exceptionally hard with a sense of business timing little short of miraculous. The result was usually success in whatever activity he entered. In short, he was a classic nineteenth-century entrepreneur, except that he proved himself more successful than most.

He earned the respect of his fellows in the cow business. Of the many who wrote about Kohrs in 1920 when he died, few perceived him as sympathetically, yet as accurately, as John Clay, who penned "The Passing of Conrad Kohrs" for the *Breeder's Gazette.* Clay had participated in the grandest period of the cattleman's era and had reported it as well. He had watched Conrad Kohrs, worked with him, and shared in the bad and good times of those early days. John Clay recalled that Kohrs "threw his whole soul into his work." While surely not the most original thing that Clay ever wrote, it precisely illustrated Kohrs's approach to life and to business. Clay discussed the Kohrs "presence": "Like imperial Caeser, he came, he saw, he conquered. No man could withstand the magnetism, the fascination, the human side of Kohrs' character."


36. 2 Dec. 1920.
Clay, Conrad Kohrs, and a few other old cattlemen spent a pleasant afternoon in the Montana Club one day in 1918, just two years before Con died. That afternoon Clay recalled that Con's words fell somewhat slowly, but surely, a mellow unflection on them that seemed to cover sentences. Kohrs had "a soft voice with a touch of firmness in it, a faint accent of his Danish home still remaining after years of absence."37

An old colleague from the 1880s and the early days of the stockmen's associations, Theodore Roosevelt, always remembered his friend Con Kohrs. Once a person met Kohrs, he did not easily forget him.

Another who knew Kohrs described him graphically but somewhat less than poetically. Kohrs was "a fine, big Dutchman and a likeable man."38 Like those who knew him, those who studied the cattle empire many years after his death were impressed by his accomplishments and personality. "Of all the cattlemen one of the greatest was Conrad Kohrs," one book notes. The study continues:

As a cattleman Kohrs had his ups and downs, but in the opinion of a contemporary he had a magnetic personality, a great wealth of common sense and splendid judgment, a kind heart, and a definite sense of fair play. He was a great figure, and the color of his personality lay in his vision and the quiet manner in which he worked toward his goals.39

Conrad Kohrs holds a high position both in the opinion of his contemporaries and in the writings of those who strive to re-create the era of the great cattlemen.

The key to Conrad Kohrs's success in life lay in his judgement. He had the ability, either native to him or a carefully developed virtue, to sense what action to take and when to take it. Displaying a strong, quiet, and firm demeanor to the world, Con Kohrs presented the image of a man who could be trusted to do the right thing. He displayed this quality of sound business judgement from the time he entered Montana. The elements always seemed to be the same, although as he grew more wealthy and powerful the stakes became bigger. The particular mix of prescience and hunch that caused him to drop the fruitless search for quick wealth in mining and pick up three cows to slaughter and sell for meat in 1862 is the early example of his exercise of business acumen. Later deals involving possibly half a million dollars in cattle interests and, perhaps as much in mining ventures resulted from this same shrewdness; only the magnitude was different.

37. Clay, "The Passing of Conrad Kohrs," p. 1163. All of Clay's words noted in the two paragraphs above came from this page.

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Certainly his contemporaries trusted his judgement, for even a cursory look at his account book reveals that he had no dearth of partners. And these co-investors—fellow entrepreneurs—showed their willingness to enter into deals with Kohrs in about as many and disparate business ventures as existed in Montana during Kohrs's lifetime. The offices in which they placed him in the counsels of the state government, county government, and in the cattlemen's associations also testified to their trust in him.

It seems, too, that Kohrs moved within and not ahead of the most workable and proven ideas of his day. This is not to say he could not innovate when the occasion demanded. He strongly bucked the tide in 1862 when he moved out of the mainstream of those seeking wealth in the mines and perceived that the money was to be made in selling to those who worked the ground. He chose to become a permanent resident in a transient community—a decision that proved profitable. After the disaster of 1887 he realized that more than recouping was possible in the cattle business, and he invested while others fled. But in the main he watched trends and moved when the probability of success looked high. Take his introduction of purebred cattle, for example.

No doubt Con Kohrs and John Bielenberg, like any other cattlemen, took real pleasure in working with blooded stock, beautiful animals representing the highest qualities of their respective breeds. In this they paralleled the joy that a bibliophile finds in a perfectly bound first edition of a rare book, or a hunter might feel in acquiring the best gun dog in the area. But for Conrad Kohrs the overriding factor in any deal remained utility. If a project had value and would probably be successful, it would be undertaken if the time was right. And with the introduction of purebred cattle, timing and planning did mean everything to Con. When he introduced Short Horns into Montana to upgrade the herds that were ranging in the valleys of the western part of the state and beginning to cross over to the eastern slope, he did so with the knowledge that the Short Horn had proven itself in the Mississippi Valley, in the East, and in Canada. Short Horn values were known, certain, and predictable. So in the introduction of the cattle to Montana he is a pioneer of sorts since he began the large-scale upgrading of the range herds. But the animal he chose was a well-established breed from back East, the standard one whose capabilities were known.

As with the Short Horns, Kohrs moved well ahead of his contemporaries in introducing Herefords to Montana. But again it was a firmly established breed, an animal that had demonstrated its value in Kansas and Missouri before Kohrs imported it.40

40. Some of the works already cited can be utilized to place Kohrs's introduction of blooded stock into Montana into perspective with cattle dealings in the rest of the country. Of these, Towne and Wentworth, Cattle and Men, should be among the first consulted. Other good sources include Allan Brogue, "The Progress of the Cattle Industry in Ontario During the Eighteen Eighties," Agricultural History 21, No. 3 (July 1947):163-69; Donald R. Ornduff, The Hereford In America: A History of the Breed's Progress (Kansas City, Mo.: Hereford History Press, 1957); J. Orin Oliphant, "The Cattle Herds and Ranches of the Oregon Country, 1860-1890," Agricultural History 21, No. 4 (October 1947):217-38; (continued)
But there is another side to Conrad Kohrs's "pioneering" efforts. In addition to his early endeavors in the development of good quality cattle, in land investments, and in business activities, he lived as a pioneer, a new citizen in a fresh new frontier community, who was interested in building that community he had helped found. Those institutions that permitted a stable business atmosphere should be supported, he felt, and those that tended to bring disorder should be quelled. When the mining camps began to suffer from the constant assaults by outlaws and brigands that seemed the way of life in the new territory, young Con Kohrs joined with the vigilantes who rooted out these undesirables and restored order. On Kohrs's part, it was an early and conscious decision favoring stability. He made many more such judgements. For example, he had not owned the ranch two years when he entered county politics and worked with others who were interested in creating a healthy and active local government in Deer Lodge. When the cattlemen and the cattle grew so numerous in Montana that some regulation was needed, Con Kohrs, along with many others, worked to bring stability and self-regulation to the movement. By this time he had begun to enter state politics as well.

None of these actions were accidental. In fact, little that Kohrs ever did was on the spur of the moment. He saw that the community needed to build, that schools, churches, businesses, and a government needed to be encouraged. He did his part as a businessman, as a cattlem an, and as an individual to see that these necessities developed. He began as a community builder and never ceased to be one.41

F. John Bielenberg (Born 1 May 1846, Hamburg, Germany; Died 16 June 1922, Helena, Montana)

John Bielenberg's fine penmanship frequently graces the letterbooks among the ranch documents, and in its controlled and measured form seems to illuminate a personality that otherwise eludes description. In the old family pictures John stares directly at the camera. He betrays no strong emotion, his calm and neutral


41. Both Conrad Kohrs and Granville Stuart share a rather unusual distinction--they are two cattlemen whose names were given to ships. The Liberty Ship S.S. Conrad Kohrs was completed on 30 June 1943 at Richmond, California, and was leased by its owners, the United States Maritime Commission, to the South Atlantic Lines. Following wartime service, it was returned to the government on 30 Apr. 1946. For the next eight months it was moored with the Hudson River Reserve Fleet; it was then sold to the Italian government on 7 Jan. 1947 and renamed the Aequipas. Leased by the Italian government not long afterward to S. A. Industria, it received the name Acquis II. It served for many years under that name before being broken up for scrap in 1964. Details on the ship named for Stuart are not known.
look effectively hiding the feelings of the inner man. His dress is always rough work clothes, somewhat carelessly fitted onto a considerable frame. Yet he is remembered today as a major presence in the life of the home ranch, and as the one brother most closely involved with its operations. (He was also a full brother in emotional ties to Con and Augusta.) Bielenberg managed the ranch while Con ranged far and wide in pursuit of profits for the partnership. He served as the home ranch portion of a symbiotic Kohrs-Bielenberg enterprise that spanned much of early Montana's economic life. Con Warren spent many years with his Uncle John and remembers the way Conrad Kohrs and John Bielenberg worked together:

They were very devoted, and apparently they had considerable mutual admiration. And grandfather needed a man like John, because John was the one who stayed home and looked after the business, particularly the range cattle part of it. But whenever they needed a man real bad, like when the DHS sold those cattle to the Army and agreed to deliver them to Dickinson, North Dakota, grandfather sent John and Nick down to see that the cattle got there safely. And John trouble-shot for him, time and time again.42

John is remembered today as a pleasant enough man, but a taciturn one who never spoke an unnecessary word. When the occasion required he would employ a quiet and noncommittal "Oh, my God," or "me too."43 The longest sentence most can recall from Bielenberg was the laconic one that has been heard before in the American West: "Anything you can't do on a horse isn't worth doing."44

From the earliest days in Montana, John and Con worked together as partners. The mutual trust in each other that they felt is verified time and time again in the legal documents on file at the county courthouse. In one deal John buys the land, in another Con does. But they use it jointly. When John remains at the ranch while Con and Augusta go to Germany for a visit, he receives the full power of attorney.

John's closeness to the family included the children as well. Apparently they wrote to Uncle Johnny as faithfully as they did to their father in 1881 when both Con and John remained in Montana while the girls, Willy, and their mother lived in Hamburg. One of Con's letters to Anna notes that "Onkle Johnney got letters from all of you, I had forgotten about his birthday and Onkel Johnney says he had not thought of it himself."45 John and Con and Augusta were the adults in the family, and as the girls grew older and married they retained their closeness to John as well as to their parents.

42. Warren Interview, 12 May 1975, p. 1.


44. Interview, Conrad K. Warren with John Albright, 6 May 1975, copy on file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS. It is wise to remember that Bielenberg predated John Wayne by a considerable number of years.

45. The letter is dated 4 May 1881. See Appendix 10.
Yet John remains little known outside the ranch area, except as the Bielenberg of "Kohrs and Bielenberg." But around Deer Lodge the memory of John Bielenberg is still strong. Stories of his ranch management are legion. Of the many, two will suffice.

One involves John's approach to breaking the yearling colts at the ranch to the harness. John's considerable size, about 6 feet in height and perhaps 240 pounds in weight, was an asset in the process. On the more recalcitrant animals Bielenberg would grab one out, [and] pull it out of the corral. If it gave [him] too much trouble he would grab an ear and lip and twist it to the ground. It would kick and thrash and John would sit on its head, pull out a cigar, bite off the end and light up for as long as it took to get them settled down. Usually [he] had them mowing in a field the first day. [The] best way to break them is [to] team them up and work them.  

Con Warren recalled an incident in 1918 when Uncle John enquired if young Warren had ever butchered beef. No, Con replied, he had not. Bielenberg's exact reply is now lost in mists of the past. But the resulting event began within minutes, as young Warren found himself facing a freshly slaughtered bovine hanging on the Beef Hoist (Historic Structure 40) with a sharpened butcher's knife in his hand. Uncle John pulled the everpresent cigar from his pocket. As he bit off the end, he mounted a nearby fence and settled down for a prolonged stay. Step by step he directed the young man's first experience in cleaning, skinning, and butchering a cow. Con Warren has not forgotten that day.  

John remained at the ranch after Con and Augusta moved to Helena, but Augusta continued to look after her bachelor brother-in-law. Not the kind to remember to pick up new clothes when he needed them, he was the recipient of Augusta Kohrs's watchful care in such matters. She would come over and sort through the clothes, deciding what should be discarded, what repaired, and what replaced. She did it until he died in 1922.

As he sickened in the late spring of 1922, the family gathered, and when he died, Augusta Kohrs and the surviving Kohrs children, Anna Boardman and Katherine Warren, were with him. His closeness to them then was as apparent as it had been soon after he came to Montana to join Conrad Kohrs in 1865.  

47. Conversation with Conrad K. Warren, 6 May 1975. Copy on file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.
G. Augusta Kruse Kohrs (Born 20 June 1849, Wewelfleth, Prussia; Died 29 October 1945, Helena, Montana)

"We adored her, and were grief-stricken when she died." This straightforward tribute from a great granddaughter of Augusta Kruse Kohrs sums up the striking impact she made on family and friends. Augusta's long life bridged almost the entire existence of the Kohrs and Bielenberg home ranch. Her husband had owned the ranch for only two and a half years before she came on the scene, and she saw it grow to its fullest size, be almost all sold off, begin its renaissance under Con Warren's leadership, and be purchased by Warren in 1940. She remained always the grand lady of the ranch and had a dominant part in the collection and arrangement of the home furnishings. Although she married a man whose presence on the Montana scene was great, he never eclipsed her, never relegated her to a second class role in the family. She possessed too much individuality to be overshadowed by anyone.

Augusta first entered Montana as a bride at the age of nineteen. She had been courted in Ohio for no more than two, at the most perhaps three, weeks. Married in Iowa, she soon found herself aboard a river steamer going upstream against the considerable efforts of the Missouri River to push the boat back to Omaha. Thus her first introduction to the rigors of the West came in the form of the dubious pleasure of river boating in the early spring across the high plains. Six weeks on the craft as it inched its way upstream should have been hardship enough. But the next trial came soon afterwards, specifically, her five-day trip in the cold and rain of a Montana spring overland in a wagon to Deer Lodge in the far west of the young Montana Territory. Family legend has it that had she been able to go back East she would have. She could not, of course, and from that time on she served as the home manager for the ranch house and as hostess to its many visitors, involved with an active family and in the comings and goings of her husband and brother-in-law.

Her pictures seem to confirm what the family remembers of her. The earliest known photograph of her, in 1868, shows a lovely young woman of nineteen: proud, erect, and direct in look and bearing. This is the young woman who came to Deer Lodge and immediately imposed her personality on the rather informal bachelor's paradise then thriving at the Con Kohrs place. She was, as her husband accurately described her in his autobiography, a young wife with "the German pride in taking care of her own household." 49

In the next known photograph she was twenty-five years old and the mother of two children, a veteran of six years of dynamic existence in Deer Lodge. By this time, 1874, she had become a major figure in Deer Lodge society, serving


on several committees and acting as a hostess to some of the new settlers in the community. She was an uncommonly lovely young woman, sophisticated and beautiful in an equally striking but far less polished land.

Blessed with that rare quality that exists in but a chosen few, she became more attractive as she grew older, as evidenced by her later photographs. And it is the older Augusta Kohrs that we know the most about.

Her tastes and decorative bents are obvious at the home ranch. The collection and arrangement of the furniture, the placement of the pictures, the rugs, and the sofas, all tend to reveal much about the lady during the height of the grand days of Kohrs and Bielenberg at Deer Lodge. Augusta Kohrs chose furnishings directly in tune with the styles dominant in Europe and in the design and style centers of America. She and the family made almost yearly visits East, and there Augusta absorbed many of the main themes of fashion as they were developing. She considered these ideas, and transported her perception of them to her spacious home in Deer Lodge, making it an outpost of fashion. A contemporary described both Con and Augusta and their home as he experienced it in his visits there: "In his house he was at his best. He had the faculty of making you at home. In this he was doubly assisted by his wife. There was no show or display, but everything was solid, substantial, in good taste."

Yet the gracious lady's life as the hostess of the home ranch is known only through knowledge of her life in the 20th century (primarily after Con and John died between 1920 and 1922), of which we know a great deal. Surely the dominant and strong, yet gracious, presence of Augusta Kohrs in the later years of her life mirrored that of the earlier period.

Perhaps one of the most well-established qualities of Augusta's personality was that of loyalty to family and friends. She demonstrated it frequently. In the early weeks of the hard winter of 1887, Augusta showed her concern for a sister-in-law. Con Kohrs reported that "my brother's wife was dying of consumption and my wife was with her during her last days. After her burial we made preparations to return to Hot Springs, and left on January 22nd." Augusta

51. The New Northwest notes her community activities, for example, in January 1870, and on 20 Dec. 1873, and 14 Nov. 1874.

52. Clay, "The Passing of Conrad Kohrs," p. 1163. Mrs. Kohrs's tastes in decorating and what the style she chose represented is discussed in greater detail in Appendix 17. Was Clay, the sophisticated Englishman, damning with faint praise? Instead of "stylish," "refined," and "elegant," he chose "solid," "substantial," and "in good taste." The chances are that Clay, while not offended by Augusta's decorative scheme, was not exactly enchanted with it.

travelled to Iowa to be with many of the women in the family at the birth of their children.\textsuperscript{54} Friends, too, came to be close to Mrs. Kohrs, and she often helped at the birth of their children as well.\textsuperscript{55}

The ties of loyalty to family remained strong for as long as Mrs. Kohrs lived. After 1900 she spent the winters in Helena, but about six weeks of every summer she stayed at her "home" as she called it, in Deer Lodge, living at the ranch house. But that visit began in June, usually, so that her annual trip down to Deer Lodge on Decoration Day in May was a special one. She would be chauffeured down from Helena, first picking up flowers at the State nursery on the south edge of town. All the family graves--except that of one of Con's half brothers whom she never liked--were decorated. Augusta remembered all the anniversaries and birthdays, too, and decorated the graves appropriately.\textsuperscript{56}

Loyalty to family and friends blended with other qualities. Among them was bluntness, for Mrs. Kohrs was direct and plainspoken. In fact, her ability to mix graciousness and loyalty with a directness and forcefulness of speech was remarkable. A young bride once experienced that aspect of the Augusta Kohrs manner.

The young woman had always known Mrs. Kohrs as a dear friend of her mother. Augusta had assisted at the young lady's birth and at her sister's as well. When the women grew older, she spent many pleasant hours at the Kohrs Ranch and with Mrs. Kohrs and Con at their Helena home. Later she and her husband often visited the ranch during the summers when Mrs. Kohrs visited at Deer Lodge where the young couple lived. One such day Augusta Kohrs and the young couple were sitting down to Sunday dinner in the ranch house dining room. The table, as usual, was formally set, with china, crystal, silver, and a damask cloth and napkins. The maid served everything but the meat portion, a duty Augusta always reserved for herself. Such was the case at this meal, at which chicken was the main dish. Augusta, serving, asked the young husband what piece of chicken he preferred. "Just anything," came the reply. "Just anything doesn't grow on a chicken," Augusta retorted.

This quality tended to overawe some who knew Mrs. Kohrs. Her somewhat imperious, almost regal bearing, in conjunction with the dark colors in which she invariably dressed, could create a considerable distance between her and others. Yet this facade hid another side of her character--a warmly sentimental one.

\textsuperscript{54} 19 Nov. 1974, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{55} Interview, Mrs. J. Maurice Dietrich with John Albright and Paul Gordon, 6 May 1975, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{56} Interview, Conrad K. Warren with John Albright and Grant-Kohrs Ranch Park Staff, 3 May 1975, p. 2.
By the time grandchildren arrived to enliven Con and Augusta's life, she bore the affectionate family title "Ohma," meaning grandmother in German, by which she was known for much of the twentieth century. And Ohma took extra pains to be kind to friends. A special pattern of china would be matched when Christmas or a birthday occasioned the sending of a gift to a friend. Once her son-in-law John Boardman and a young man fished in the Blackfoot River, north of Deer Lodge, for trout. The young man connected with a good one and proudly brought it in. Not long afterward the young man became engaged to the daughter of a close friend of Augusta. Mrs. Kohrs remembered the event, and commissioned one of Montana's best landscape artists to paint the site. She then presented the young couple with the artwork as a wedding gift.

Philanthropy, too, formed an important part of Augusta Kohrs's life. The private gifts probably outweighed the public ones, considerable though they were. These public donations included the Conrad Kohrs memorial, a $115,000 addition to St. Peter's Hospital in Helena. The extent of the private contributions remains unknown, although it is believed today to have been considerable.

Generally, the private and discreet help Augusta Kohrs provided went to educate the community's young men. One such student became a doctor and saved money to repay Augusta for her assistance to him. He had met the only requirement she placed on the recipients of her largesse, that they write her of their progress and visit when they were home from school. But he wanted to repay the money as well, so he brought it with him when he visited Mrs. Kohrs. Augusta heard the young doctor out and answered: "I never expected the money back. Keep it and get a wife and buy her a house." Reportedly, he did.

Yet the overriding trait in the remarkable character of Augusta Kruse Kohrs seems to have been a vitality of the mind, an awareness of exactly what she was doing when she did it. Actions were not executed on a hunch or without good reason. Her understanding of the arts is an example of this. She had been trained as a pianist, tradition has it, and played acceptably well. Music remained a vital part of her life, and she seldom missed a chance to go to New York for the music season to hear operas, concerts, and the symphony. Yet she did not simply listen, she understood what she heard. She also read about music and the arts,

57. "Ohma's" name is much a part of family tradition. One source is the Tarnawsky letter, 25 Mar. 1969, which notes: "Anyway, 'Ohma' was really Augusta Kohrs, wife of Conrad Kohrs. ... My father [Con Warren] always called 'Ohma' that because it is German for grandmother. ... "So we kids called her 'Ohma' too."

58. Dietrich Interview, 6 May 1975, p. 3.

59. Ibid., p. 4.

60. Warren Interview, 6 May 1975, pp. 4-5.
and would present her outspoken views, firmly founded in knowledge, with clarity. It is no accident that she decorated her home as she did. Although as yet we have no documentary evidence, letters or a diary, to prove it, her decorative scheme in the ranch house seems to have been a clear and precise approach utilizing the elements of furnishings style and design that were a product of her age, her German background, and of her visits to Germany in the early 1880s. All these influences were distilled through her own tastes and produced the comfortable parlor, living room, and dining room in which she entertained her guests and discussed current events, politics, art, and music.

One evening she and friends listened to a community concert in Helena. Augusta focused attentively on the well-known pianist and listened to the playing with care. At the conclusion of the work this ranch wife turned to a companion and commented that the artist did not know his Debussy very well.

This lady almost defined the word. She had adapted to a rough pine floor house—the largest in Montana territory, but still an informal dwelling—and quickly made her cultural mark on it. She had developed a sharp and incisive sensitivity to the tastes of her time and their cultural manifestations. Her knowledge of music showed it as did her carefully decorated home. She took her place in the community as the wife of a prominent rancher, legislator, and investor, and moved within that community with both grace and a nonpatronizing noblesse oblige. She managed to present an image almost patrician, yet not snobbish. In all ways, she was the grand mistress of the home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg.
CULTURAL RESOURCES STATEMENT
CULTURAL RESOURCES STATEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A. Establishment and Development Limits

Congress authorized the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site on 25 August 1972, in Public Law 92-406, in order "to provide an understanding of the frontier cattle era of the Nation's history, to preserve the Grant-Kohrs Ranch, and to interpret the nationally significant values thereof for the benefit and inspiration of future generations." A total development ceiling of $1,800,000 was established as well as a total ceiling of $350,000 for land acquisition, to encompass not more than 2,000 acres in the Deer Lodge Valley, Powell County, Montana, where the park is located.

1. General Site Description

The site consists of 214 acres held in fee simple and 1,394 acres in scenic easements limiting utilization of surrounding lands to the traditional uses of haying and livestock grazing. The site is located just on the north edge of the town of Deer Lodge, Montana, and is roughly rectangular, with small irregular southern and eastern portions. The eastern edge of the bulk of the property is flanked by a double railroad line, running north-south, which separates the historic ranch from the modern facilities of the Con Warren Ranch, part of the scenic easement. The scenic easement also covers lands adjoining the park boundaries on the north and west. The land on the south is city owned. One parcel of fee simple land to the east of the tracks is owned, and is used for a visitor contact station, restrooms, and parking.

B. Historical Structures

The historical site consists of thirty-four buildings and twenty-one other structures, which are dominated by the ranch house, built in 1862 and added to in 1890. Close to the ranch house on the north is a bunkhouse, with small barns situated close to it. West of the ranch house lay the west feedlot and corral. North of the bunkhouse and the other nearby buildings are two fenced fields, the northermost of which is dominated by a cow shed. The total number of existing structures, including feed bunkers, squeeze chutes, and buildings, is fifty-five. At least twelve ranch structures are either no longer extant or have been moved from their original locations. Most of the buildings are clustered close to the ranch house, the front of which is on a generally equal level with the twin railroad tracks. The rear of the ranch house, which is the 1890 addition and is attached at right angles to the original 1862 dwelling, rests on lower land, often poorly drained. Many of the barns and other structures sit on this lower elevation as well.
1. Site Evaluation

The ranch is unique as a park for a number of reasons. It is the first historical site set aside by Congress to commemorate the cattle industry and its history in America. Too, it is unusually complete, with many of its original furnishings in place: the ranch house still contains much of its original furniture and other furnishings, and much of the horse equipment and many ranch vehicles are still stored in the barns. The documentary story, too, is intact because the last owner of the ranch, Conrad Kohrs Warren, a grandson of Conrad Kohrs, permitted the papers--most of which are still in his private custody--to be microfilmed for use by researchers at the park. Because of this integrity, the ranch presents an almost unparalleled opportunity for thorough research and interpretation.

C. Terrain

The terrain of the park varies only slightly, but even the relatively small differences in elevation make a profound difference in the ground. The small parcel of land across the tracks--east of the ranch house--on which the visitor service development is located, is relatively well drained and open grassy land. Across the railroad tracks to the west, and on a generally similar elevation, are the older part of the ranch house, the bunkhouse, and a few other ranch buildings. But the rear of the ranch house, as has been noted earlier, rests on a lower elevation, as do many of the ranch service buildings, corrals, and sheds. This lower ground is poorly drained, and presents serious problems in structural care and preservation, which will be discussed in detail later in this report (Architectural Data section of the Historic Structure Report). A small but generally active stream named Johnson Creek runs through the lower level of the park, as does another, closer to the ranch house, called Fred Burr Creek. They join and flow into Deer Lodge River, the west boundary of the park, through the west corral and feedlot.

The grounds adjacent to the streams are often soggy and waterlogged, and throughout the lower elevations in the park the groundwater always remains close to the surface. An irrigation ditch, the Kohrs-Manning Ditch, runs through the park on an irregular north-south line and carries water during the summer months.

D. Visitor Services

Visitor services are presently located on the eastern parcel of land across the railroad tracks. They are housed in two refurbished log structures removed from the "upper ranch" and now in different hands. One is a small visitor contact station, the other a restroom building. A parking lot has recently been paved on the eastern side of the open field in which the two log structures sit. A walkway begins at the visitor contact station and ends near the front of the ranch house. This is intended for visitor entry. However, the two railroads--the Burlington Northern and the Milwaukee Road--who own the twin tracks separating the ranch buildings from the visitor contact area have not yet constructed the underpasses, and until this is done, the visitor pathway cannot be used.
(The overpasses are to be installed by May 1977.) The visitor contact area also possesses some foundation and rubble remains of a few structures associated with the ranch history. These remains comprise the Tom Stuart Cabin site. These have been avoided in emplacing the two log structures and the walkway.

E. Historical Summary

The history of the ranch spans the period 1862 to 1972, embracing the range cattle era from its beginning to the current stock-raising and marketing system in America. A fur trapper turned cattle buyer named John Francis Grant--"Johnnie" Grant--had the main ranch house and the bunkhouse built in 1862. An entrepreneur named Carsten Conrad Kohrs--"Con" Kohrs--purchased Grant's ranch in 1866, including buildings, improvements, and stock. This ushered in the dynamic era of the ranch, and Grant's brief tenure there pales in comparison to it.

Con Kohrs had entered Montana in 1862, the year Grant built the ranch. Kohrs became a butcher employed by a local businessman, but soon owned the operation, and within three years operated as the owner of numerous small cattle and sheep herds and four butcher shops. He purchased the Grant Ranch to centralize and graze his herds more efficiently. Kohrs continued to develop parallel business ventures, concentrating on mining and stock raising. By 1871 Kohrs and his half brother John Bielenberg had increased their range cattle herds to a considerable size, and that year began to introduce high quality registered stock--Short Horn cattle--into Montana to improve the quality of the herds. They directed the growth of the herds as the range cattle industry grew following the Civil War, and were among the very first to graze cows east of the divide on the rich grasses of the Montana plains and river valleys, as well as being among the initial breeders to introduce Hereford cattle into Montana late in the 1870s.

In 1883 Kohrs and Bielenberg purchased a large part of the growing DHS ranch in what was then the largest single cattle purchase in Montana history. The disastrous winter of 1886-87 followed, hurting the Kohrs-Bielenberg herds as badly as those of other Montana ranchers. But the partners, using credit readily advanced to the well-known and successful business duo, managed to recover from the large cattle kill of the bad winter and soon reaped good profits in the Chicago cattle markets.

In the 1890s Kohrs and Bielenberg grazed ever growing numbers of cattle, while in Deer Lodge the home ranch of the wide-flung cattle domain grew larger as well. By the turn of the century the ranchlands, both those purchased and those leased, totalled about 27,000 acres. By that time Conrad Kohrs had become one of the best-known men in Montana, serving in the state legislature, helping to form the Montana Stockgrower's Association, and acting in numerous other ways as an "elder statesman" in the eyes of his business and political peers.

In 1900 Con and his wife Augusta moved to Helena, leaving John Bielenberg at the Deer Lodge home ranch. Then in 1915 Kohrs and Bielenberg began selling off their huge holdings: the DHS in central Montana, acreage they had purchased about 1900 in Dawson County in eastern Montana, and finally, most of the home ranch. By the early 1920s only about 1,000 acres remained, that part of the
home ranch containing the ranch house and ancillary buildings. Kohrs died in 1920 and John Bielenberg in 1922. The Kohrs-Bielenberg interests then came under the capable guidance of Augusta Kohrs, Con's widow, with immediate control and operations conducted by the directors of the Conrad Kohrs Company, which by this time owned all of the Kohrs interests.

Beginning in the spring of 1932, Con and Augusta Kohrs's grandson, Conrad Kohrs Warren, took over the management of the ranch, which had shrunk to no more than 1,000 acres. Rejuvenating the old place and adding to its boundaries, Con Warren soon had nationally famous herds of Hereford cattle and Belgian horses, which he sold to much of the northwest United States. Warren continued this activity until 1958 when he dispersed the registered Herefords. He had sold the Belgian horses in 1940. The old home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg, now the Warren Ranch, then produced commercial cattle until Con Warren sold the historic portions of the ranch to the National Park Foundation, and they, in turn, sold it to the National Park Service after Congress established Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in 1972.

F. Historical and Cultural Themes

1. Historical

The major historical theme concerns the range cattle industry in western America. This is the focus of the entire site, and the reason for its inclusion among National Park Service-managed areas.

Subordinate themes within the range cattle industry include the cattle trails; the grazing, roundup, transportation, and marketing of the animals; breeding to improve the quality of the cattle; the effect of the winter of 1886-87 on the range cattle industry; the closing of the range in the early 20th century; and old (19th century) ranching and stock-growing practices as opposed to modern techniques. Subordinate themes within the general history of the site include the daily life and use of the furnishings at the various structures; family life at the ranch; and the cowboy culture associated with it.

2. Architectural

The architectural theme is unified only in that all of the structures—some are buildings, some are cattle feeding and handling devices—are tied to the ranch operations in one way or another. The site contains three architectural themes: a utilitarian and vernacular design theme in most of the working buildings; sophisticated log construction in the older part of the ranch house traceable to techniques used in eastern Canada; and mid-Victorian design elements in the brick addition to the ranch house. The mechanization of farming as it influenced farm structure design is reflected in the structures erected in the 1930s. The overall theme is one of continuity according to the operational needs of a western Montana ranch.
3. Archeological and Anthropological

Cultural remains of the American Indian are present at the park, but are removed from the public eye because of their size and location. They appear to be less than important, and only one archeological site is on National Park Service-controlled land; the others are in the scenic easement areas. There were virtually no subsurface remains at the one location tested archeologically in 1975, and none of the sites present any unified cultural or historical theme.
II. CULTURAL RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

A. Significance

Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, as an historical park administered by the National Park Service, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, as seen in the Federal Register 40, No. 24, Tuesday, 4 February 1975. An examination of the buildings and sites in relation to the National Register criteria can bring the merits of the assemblage of buildings and other structures into clearer focus.

The ranch, because it is intact, possesses certain rarely found qualities, creating a site with considerable integrity. First, most of the buildings from the 19th century remain intact, and with two exceptions, in their original location. And even the two exceptions, the buggy shed and a machine shed, were moved in response to one of the major historical events in the life of the ranch, the construction of the railroad tracks of the Milwaukee Road in 1907. So the quantity of buildings is quite close to being historically accurate, and site integrity is present as well. The nature of the buildings—utilitarian ranch structures built of local materials and displaying vernacular workmanship and design—seems practically to define the criteria on pages I-5 and I-6 of the National Park Service Management Policies (1975). The site is also listed in Prospector, Cowhand, and Sodbuster (National Park Service, 1967) as a historic place "eligible for the registry of national historic landmarks."

The ranch is representative of a major development in American history, the range cattle industry, and thus meets the criteria calling for associations which "outstandingly represent, the broad cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the Nation . . . ." Thus the national significance level automatically gained by the site when it was deemed eligible for national landmark status is deserved.

B. Resources

The following is a list of the structures, sites, and other resources within the park. Detailed information such as exact dimensions, construction materials, and immediate preservation needs of individual structures forms part of the Historical Data section of the Historic Structure Report for the ranch, found later in this report, and will also be reflected in the Architectural Data section of the same report, currently being prepared.

The entire site, while already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has received the attention required to complete the National Register forms, which are on file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.

The structures can be located by number on the Historic Base Map (Map 1).
HISTORIC STRUCTURES

Historic Structure 1 - Ranch House
2 - Bunkhouse Row
3 - Garage/Blacksmith Shop
4 - Coal Shed
5 - Ice House
6 - Granary
7 - Draft Horse Barn
8 - Privy
9 - Dairy
10 - Oxen Barn
11 - Horse Barn
12 - Machine Shed
13 - Cow Shed
14 - Stallion Barn
15 - Cow Barn
16 - Stallion Barn, Leeds-Lion
17 - Buggy Shed
18 - Granary
19 - Stallion Barn
20 - Privy
21 - Brooder House
22 - Chicken House
23 - Granary
24 - Feeding Shed
25 - Stock Shelter
Historic Structure 26 - Calf Shed

27 - Stock Shelter
28 - Feed Storage House
29 - Open Stock Shelter
30 - Stallion Barn
31 - Feed Storage House
32 - Stock Shelter
33 - Stock Shelter
34 - Storage Shed
35 - Cattle Scale
36 - Feed Rack
37 - Feed Rack
38 - Feed Rack
39 - Manure Pit
40 - Beef Hoist
41 - Squeeze Chute
42 - Feed Rack
43 - Feed Racks
44 - Feed Bunkers
45 - Squeeze Chute
46 - Feed Bunkers
47 - Feed Bunkers
48 - Flume, Active
49 - Flume, Inactive
50 - Feed Bunker
51 - Squeeze Chute
52 - Bridge
53 - Bridge
54 - Bridge
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C. Historical Objects

Historic objects associated with the ranch number in the hundreds, and are currently being cataloged under contract with the Department of Art, University of Montana. These are, for the most part, furnishings inside the various buildings. There are, however, a few large objects that are outside, in immediate and direct association with the historic structures. These objects merit attention along with the structures themselves. Among such objects are the hoof trimmer, the steam thresher, and feeders.

1. Steam Thresher

Purchased by Con Warren ca. 1950, this object is a large, wheeled, steam-operated International Harvester grain thresher dating from the mid-1950s. It has been in its present location on the west side of Historic Structure 18 since the early 1960s.

2. Hoof Trimmer

This wood frame structure, built of large timbers, was ordered by Con Warren ca. 1950. It consists of a hoist to elevate the bulls to be shown or sold, and clamps to fasten their feet so that the hoofs could be trimmed. Located in the open area just north of the barn (Historic Structure 15) in which the Hereford bulls were housed in the 1940s and 1950s, it has apparently always been in its present location.

3. Self Feeders

Known in other parts of the West as "Creep Feeders," these wooden objects, averaging six feet in length and three and a half feet in height, are filled at the top, and, by gravity, the food falls into trays near the bottom for the cattle to feed from. An unknown number of self feeders were in the ranch's inventory, but at least two are in the pastures at this time.

4. Feed Troughs

At least five small wooden feed trays, or feed boxes, are in the pasture just west of the Kohrs-Manning Ditch. They are wooden, possibly five feet by eighteen inches, are four to six inches deep, and were designed to hold feed for the calves and heifers grazing in the pastures.

5. Farm Machinery

The farm machinery at the ranch is as yet uncataloged, but it soon will be. At that time the material will have to be evaluated.

D. Unnumbered Historical Structures

Some of the historical structures at Grant-Kohrs Ranch defy formal numbering and full identification. Among these structures are the miles of fence lines, the myriad of small irrigation ditches and their attendant diversion dams, and the deteriorated but elaborate drainage systems for the groundwater.
1. Fences

As a working ranch raising a number of different kinds of animals (at least two separate breeds of cattle and three types of horses at any given time), the ranch had many small enclosures, corrals, or feedlots delineated by fences. These fences fall into various categories. The most common is the "Jack-Leg Fence," shown in Illustrations 1, 3, 8, 18, and 20. Essentially this is composed of two vertical notched members crossing at an \( X \). The fence members are then attached to these \( X \)’s. The advantages of this kind of fence in an area rich in wood supplies, as is southwestern Montana, are many. The fence follows the lay of the land with ease, and even rots in such a manner that it only needs to be replaced every thirty years. It is easily repaired when necessary. The Jack-Leg is an excellent fence for crossing boggy or wet ground, such as is found in the bottomlands at the ranch and elsewhere in Montana. A variation of this is the "Post and Rider" Jack-Leg fence. This consists of one large vertical member into which a hole is bored about halfway up for a smaller post to fit in at a diagonal. Thus the \( X \) almost remains, but is composed of a shape more resembling an \( X \) without one of the upper quarters (or an inverted letter \( Y \)). The Jack-Leg fence types are often interchanged, and there appears to be no particular benefit except in manufacture; the Post and Rider is easier and cheaper to build and erect.

Other fences at the ranch include the picket fence, of a standard design and painted white, that surrounds the ranch house. Less frequently seen are wire fences. There are a very small number of standard barbed wire fences with wooden fence posts on the ranch. Standard "Post and Pole" fences, such as those delineating the working areas on the north side of the cattle scale (Historic Structure 35), are used at corrals. These fences consist of vertical poles sunk into the ground with horizontal members nailed on them. They usually define working areas or corrals, not large areas like pastures, which are generally Jack-Leg fenced. A final type of fence still extant at the ranch, mostly on the western fringes close to the Deer Lodge River (currently called the Clark Fork of the Columbia River), is the sheep wire fence, a smooth wire fence composed of gradually larger rectangles beginning at the bottom at about three by five inches and proceeding to about five by eight inches at the top.

The fence lines as they lay in 1972, when the National Park Service acquired the land, are close to those shown on the 1907 map (Map No. 1). Until a thorough ground cover study is made, however, the fence lines as they exist now will have to be considered historical. As they now stand, they represent the Warren Era, 1935-72.

2. Irrigation Ditches

Most of the fields and a few portions of the west feedlots contain irrigation ditches along with diversion dams. The ditches, now grassed over, are about eighteen inches wide and ten to twenty feet deep. They have diversion dams every few hundred feet along the way. These dams are composed of rubber impregnated canvas (or a heavy rubber sheet in some cases) attached, as a manuscript is attached on a scroll, to sturdy poles, usually three to four inches in diameter. When flooding is desired in a given area the pole is placed across the ditch and the fabric dropped into the hole, the bottom held by any available nearby stones.
The water then rises and spills over the edge or out of vents in the low berm along the ditch cut with a shovel. When not in use, the portable diversion dams are thrown alongside the ditch.

3. Underground Water Systems

There were numerous attempts to drain off excess groundwater from the lower elevations of the ranch during the active years of its operations. Remnants of these attempts remain in the form of buried wooden pipes, or boxes, roughly square, with access points spaced along them. One such system, just one of perhaps fifteen or twenty, is described in some detail in the Historic Structure Report portion of this study. In addition, pipes fed water to various barns and to the ranch and bunkhouses. The system to the ranch house included a hydraulic ram that brought water in from the Kohrs-Manning Ditch.

Until the ground water level is reduced, it will not be possible to test the ground archeologically in order to determine the exact trace of the subterranean water systems. They are a recognizable part of the historical resources, however, and, once determined, should be given a historic structure number. Any ground disturbance is likely to intercept some of these drain systems, and considerable care should be taken during any excavations.

4. The Historical Scene

A vital resource at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS is the historical scene as it exists today. The relationships of the fence lines to the ranch activities and of buildings to feedlots, pastures, corrals, squeeze chutes, irrigation ditches, the cattle scale, and the beef hoist are, in themselves, a vital resource of the park. The arrangement of the fence lines is no accident. The placement of the various feed sheds within the lots, and of the feed racks on the fences, reflects the exact purpose of that portion of the ranch. The lanes delineated by the fences were placed thusly to facilitate the moving and separation of cattle—the "working" of the stock. The relationships of building to pasture, building and structure to fence line, and the juxtaposition of the buildings themselves are possibly the vital resource at the park.
III. CURRENT AND PROJECTED CULTURAL RESOURCE NEEDS

Because this newly established area contains fifty-three historic structures, an as yet unnumbered quantity of original furnishings, and literally miles of fences and irrigation ditches, the immediate and potential cultural resource needs are unbounded. Some of them are already being met. Since February 1975 a historical architect has been working actively with the maintenance crew at the park, and such projects as roof replacement where needed and the installation of intrusion alarm systems in the ranch house have begun. All the structures have been inspected by the historical architect and the maintenance crew, and emergency measures have been taken on those structures needing them. There is no prospect of a structure collapsing within the immediate future if repairs are not made.

In addition, the current planning underway, which includes a Statement for Management and an Outline of Planning Requirements, recognizes the need for careful site and structure inspection, evaluation, and maintenance. There appears to be no immediate prospect of neglect of the cultural resources at the park.

Nevertheless, Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS does present numerous current and future cultural resource needs (or demands). The most apparent of these are discussed below.

A. Furnishings

The furnishings at the ranch include items in the home, ranging from furniture to art pieces, and numerous pieces of equipment, both large and small, used at the ranch and located in the various ranch utility buildings. While the collection is currently being cataloged, it presents other demands on the Service. Technical care and routine curatorial management needs of the collection are great, and should be addressed as soon as possible. The atmosphere of the first and second floors of the ranch house, for example, is rather dry and stable compared to that within the drafty barns and outbuildings and the ranch house basement. The goals and techniques of caring for the furnishings associated with these divergent situations need to be carefully considered and, once determined, passed on to the park staff for action. This need was recognized when composing the team assigned to prepare the General Management Plan, and a curator was assigned to it. It is unlikely, however, that all the curatorial needs will be met during the writing of the General Management Plan. Following the cataloging, and during the preparation of the General Management Plan, the custodial needs of the extensive collection at Grant-Kohrs Ranch should be considered.

B. Structures

The structural needs of the fifty-three historic structures at the ranch will be discussed in the Architectural Data section of this report.
C. Development

At this time (February 1976) the initial development of the ranch is basically complete. Two old wooden ranch structures, typical of the area and of the active years of the Kohrs and Bielenberg ranching enterprise, have been moved from their original locations on the "Upper Ranch" south of Deer Lodge and put into the open field in the southwest corner of the fee simple land. One serves as a visitor contact station, the other houses toilet facilities. A graveled walkway leads toward the ranch house. It is complete except for the two culverts under the railroad tracks that will be necessary for passage and that have not yet been constructed. A twenty-six-car parking lot completes the visitor facilities in the field, called the "Tom Stuart Field" after the family who lived there late in the 19th century.

The ownership in fee simple of the "Tom Stuart Field" is fortunate in relation to the development of the park. The area is generally flat, although it has some uneven surface, especially toward the railroad tracks. But it is across the tracks and, because the tracks are raised somewhat at that point, almost hidden from the historical structures of the ranch on the other side. Thus there is a convenient space separating the development area and the historical area that existed long before the park was created and that contains enough natural vegetation that there is no visual intrusion either way, except in the winter. During that season the rooftops of the two development area structures can be seen from the front yard of the ranch house, and the front of the ranch house can be seen from the development area. There is, then, some limited visual intrusion. This can easily be corrected by the judicious placement of perhaps four medium-sized evergreen trees native to the area.

Future visitor services expansion, should it ever be undertaken, should be confined to the Tom Stuart Field if at all possible. This would preclude visual intrusion onto the ranch site while retaining proximity to it. It is a built-in solution to avoid any visual or physical intrusion onto the historical scene.

D. Scenic Easements

The scenic easements on the lands immediately adjacent to the historical areas (the fee simple lands owned by the National Park Service) protect the integrity of the historical scene. Indeed, since the easement restricts uses of the land to traditional agricultural enterprises, it enhances the scene while simultaneously affording the visitor a look at ranching and farming as it is conducted today in contrast to the Kohrs-Bielenberg era. However, the scenic easement lands provide only a limited buffer against two separate developments in the area. One potential intrusion is the northward movement of the homes of Deer Lodge residents. The area north of the ranch and generally east of the tracks is becoming filled with houses. Should the southern edge of this development move further in that direction, visual intrusion onto the historical scene will be unavoidable.

In addition, directly east of the fee simple lands, at a distance of about one-quarter mile, lies Interstate Highway 90, and to the east-northeast is an
interchange, presently the scene of two gas stations and two restaurants. Their potential visual intrusion onto the historical scene is obvious. Whether strengthening of the present scenic easements is worthwhile or even necessary, and whether additional fee simple lands need to be acquired, should be considered at as early a date as possible. It is unlikely that the costs of acquiring fee simple land or additional scenic easements will lessen in the future. Recent history indicates just the opposite. In addition, it is ironic to contemplate the probable sequence of events causing intrusions onto the historical scene: once open, the park will bring large numbers of visitors to Deer Lodge, and this will warrant the construction by commercial investors of additional service facilities.

The benchlands and pastures west of the scenic easement zone are not under any development restrictions. Yet the natural character of the scene immeasurably enhances the overall historical environment. Consideration should be given to adding these lands, if possible, to those currently protecting the park.

E. Status of Research

Despite the importance of the ranch to local, regional, and national history of the range cattle industry, surprisingly few formal works have been written on the site. Yet it is mentioned, as is Conrad Kohrs, in virtually every major work on the range cattle industry. So its importance is recognized, but little formal work has been done on it. This might be due to the fact that the papers concerning the park have remained in private hands, a situation that exists today. This is discussed in more detail below.

1. National Park Service Research

The Historic Resource Study of the site is currently in preparation and this report forms a portion of that study. Accompanying the resource study is a Historic Structure Report, containing both Architectural and Historical Data sections. These studies, which will include maps, an Initial Historic Base Map, illustrations, appendices, and some HABS quality structural drawings, should be available for general use by mid-Summer 1977.

The prime historical asset of the site, however, has not yet been tapped. This is the historical collection of documents and photographs at the park office in Deer Lodge. A word of explanation is in order concerning these papers. They had been photographed once before, in 1972, by National Park Service personnel unfamiliar with archival quality microfilming procedures, and thus, while the owner of the papers, Conrad K. Warren, had permitted Service researchers to use them, the films were of such condition that active use of them was not practical. Accordingly, as part of the Historic Resource Study, attempts were made to gain permission to refilm the entire collection, this time to meet archival standards. The filming was done, resulting in a well organized and comprehensive set of seven rolls of microfilms and almost 300 historical photographs to be put in the park files. They are there and available for future research. Yet scheduling of current research prohibited their use in this research study. The original papers remain the property of Conrad Warren, and although the films are in the park's files, the only persons allowed to use them are Service personnel. Thus they are not completely open for use by any except Service researchers.

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It is probable that the papers will eventually be donated to the Montana Historical Society. Should this happen, the rather small collection of Service-owned papers at the park could be transferred to the Society also on a long-term loan basis, thus putting most of the known Conrad Kohrs material in one location, accessible to all.

2. Other Research

As noted above, there is limited formal material on the Kohrs Ranch. One of the best sources on Kohrs and Bielenberg and their influence is Robert Fletcher, *Free Grass to Fences*. Another Montana cattle history that puts some emphasis on Kohrs and Bielenberg is Mark Brown and W. R. Felton, *Before Barbed Wire*. A work frequently cited, but which requires careful, critical scrutiny is Larry Gill, "From Butcher Boy to Beef King: The Gold Camp Days of Conrad Kohrs," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 8, No. 2. A major source of Kohrs and Bielenberg data, and of Montana history in general, of course, is the Montana Historical Society collection at Helena, about a 1 1/2-hour drive from the park.
IV. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The park has recently begun and has virtually completed the visitor services development required for its opening, planned for the late summer of 1976. Current planning (February 1976) has resulted in the formation of a General Management Plan team that is preparing this document. Prior to this, the Outline of Planning Requirements and Statement for Management were both prepared. In all phases of their preparation, cultural resource specialists (a historian, an archeologist, and a historical architect) were consulted. The planning team assembled to write the General Management Plan includes a historian, a historical architect, and at the insistence of those two, a curator. It is unlikely that the General Management Plan will be prepared in isolation from cultural resource considerations.

While the Outline of Planning Requirements and the Statement for Management are currently the two active planning and development documents, it is of some value to consider what the planning and development considerations have been to date in order to better understand current and probable future development at the park. Accordingly, the following list, noting the documents involved and containing a brief synopsis of their content, is provided. All are on file at the Denver Service Center, Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team or Historic Preservation Division, Denver Service Center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>SYNOPSIS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Alternatives Study Report, Grant-Kohrs Ranch,&quot; Office of Resource Planning, San Francisco Service Center, February 1968 (Merrill J. Mattes and John Calef).</td>
<td>This study contains excellent aerial photographs of the site and a concise narrative description of the area and its resources. It explored two alternatives: (1) a historic house museum, and (2) incorporating the entire ranch headquarters complex and operating it as a contemporary ranch, with a resident rancher as concessionaire. The study indicated that cattle ranching was overlooked in the National Park Service-managed areas as of early 1968.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Supplementary Report to Alternative Study,&quot; dated 2/68, Office of Environmental Planning and Design, SSC-24 October 1969.</td>
<td>This supplementary report restated the earlier alternatives and formally recommended acquisition of the entire ranch headquarters site.</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement: Grant-Kohrs Ranch</td>
<td>This preliminary statement discusses alternatives and impacts, adverse effects of proposed use as a park, and mitigating measures. This document appears to be based on the assumption that retention of the contemporary agricultural scene should be a prime goal of any future National Park Service Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Historic Site,&quot; San Francisco Field Office, Office of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Planning and Design, 14 December 1971.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Master Plan--Proposed Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site,</td>
<td>This is the initial master plan, containing most of the standard alternatives to visitor use and development, statements of management objectives, as well as an excellent historical narrative in the &quot;Resource Description and Evaluation&quot; portion. This is the first lengthy and probing planning document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Conceptual Development Working Paper for Properties Adjacent to</td>
<td>This study evaluates the lands surrounding the park and the commercial influences on those areas. It appears to have been designed to serve as an appendix of the master plan. It is a clear statement of the general conditions facing the lands adjacent to the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Appendix A,&quot; Denver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Center, (1973?).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;An Archeological Survey of the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic</td>
<td>This is a narrative report of an archeological survey. It contains a map showing site locations and presents artifact descriptions as well as recommendations for archeological investigations needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Interpretive Input for Master Plan,&quot; Denver Service Center,</td>
<td>This brief paper outlines the main interpretive themes of the site (three periods: Grant, 1859-1866; Kohrs, 1866-1900; Kohrs-Warren, 1900-1940) and presents an approach of utilizing contemporary ranching techniques as a &quot;living ranch.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 December 1974.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TITLE</td>
<td>SYNOPSIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Planning Directive, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site,&quot; draft, 19 August 1974.</td>
<td>This is an excellent summing up of the need for master plan revisions as of mid-1974, and of the site access problems that at the time were a dominant planning feature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Interim Interpretive Prospectus, Grant-Kohrs Ranch,&quot; James L. Massey, Denver Service Center, 7 January 1975.</td>
<td>This is an expanded version of the &quot;Interpretive Input for Master Plan&quot; cited immediately above, and conforms generally to it. It was to be used for the park pending a more formal interpretive prospectus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Interpretive Objectives,&quot; Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS staff, ca. May-June 1975.</td>
<td>This two-page outline sets a timetable for development of visitor services in the first three years of park operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Management Objectives,&quot; Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS staff, ca. May-June 1975.</td>
<td>This outline document establishes general management objectives and site-operating objectives. It calls for stabilization and restoration of the site to represent an 1880-1900 date, but without major alteration of buildings erected after that period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Environmental Assessment, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Montana,&quot; Denver Service Center, March 1975.</td>
<td>This major study contains the currently used environmental assessment sections, including a lengthy &quot;Description of the Environment&quot; and &quot;Description and Impact of Analysis of the Alternatives.&quot; (Development Alternative D.3 represents the chosen alternative, which was arrived at following public meetings conducted in March of 1975 when this document was still in draft form.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum, 10 March 1975, Stell Newman to Fred Babb, Denver Service Center.</td>
<td>Outlines the legislative compliance steps necessary before development alternatives can be chosen and announced to the public or construction contracts let.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Memorandum, 13 March 1975,
John Albright to Ben Brandt,
Denver Service Center.

Memorandum, 13 March 1975,
Peter Snell to Manager,
Rocky Mountain Team, Denver
Service Center.

Memorandum to Superintendent,
Grant-Kohrs Ranch National
Historic Site, from Rocky
Mountain Region, 8 April 1975.

Memorandum, Winnie Brown to
Wilfred Logan, Denver Service
Center, 18 July 1975.

Memorandum, Team Manager,
Midwest/Rocky Mountain Team,
from Director, Rocky Mountain
Region, 18 July 1975.

Draft text, exhibit at
Grant-Kohrs Ranch, by

"Statement for Management,
Grant-Kohrs Ranch National
Historic Site," 5 November 1975.

"Task Directive--Package 113,
Grant-Kohrs Ranch, Historic
Structure Report, Ranch House
and Principal Structures,"
Peter Snell, Denver Service
Center, 4 December 1975.

"General Management Planning
Program for Grant-Kohrs Ranch
National Historic Site,"
13 January 1976.

Recommends choice of Development
D.3 for implementation as having
the least adverse effect and most
beneficial mitigating measures.

Recommends choice of Development
Alternative D.3 for implementation
as having the least adverse effect
and most beneficial mitigating
measures.

Called for archeological survey of
proposed development area, and
comments at public meeting in
March 1975.

Reported on archeological survey
of proposed development site.

Confirms the selection of alter­
 natives in the environmental
assessment and asks for prepara­
tion of the General Management
Plan for the park.

Text for visitor information signs
and exhibits. (This document was
greatly modified by October 1975.)

Follows current format and outlines
management and development objec­
tives currently held.

Follows current format for task
directives, outlining funds and
programs needed at the present
time to complete the requirements
of Package 113.

This is the current planning
document, which will be followed
by the compilation of the General
Management Plan.
A. Planning Studies and Reports Needed

The Task Directive for Package 113 and the "Recommendations" section of the Historic Resource Study denote those studies still required by law and by National Park Service policy in order to compile the necessary data for any projected development at the park.

B. Recommendations or Special Considerations

1. Park Staff

There is little doubt that the park requires the services of a formally trained curator in residence to direct the maintenance of the rich collection of furnishings and ranching and farming equipment at the site. Consideration should be given to this obvious need as soon as possible. Proper care and maintenance of the extensive and fragile collection of artifacts and documents at the ranch is as imperative as is the immediate structural preservation of the buildings. The collections as well as the artifacts come under the protection of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966; Executive Order 11593, and of National Park Service historic preservation policy.

2. Restoration

While the General Management Plan is yet to be written, some documents outlining various interpretive alternatives suggest an emphasis be put on operating the park as an 1880-1900-period ranch. While these are only alternatives and do recommend that later buildings be retained, the concept of returning the ranch or any of its components to a certain period will always carry with it the threat of demolishing buildings equally historic but more modern. The question of setting an interpretive date, therefore, should be answered only after carefully considering the best method of protecting the integrity of the entire site and the most imaginative approach to interpreting the resource and its history. It should be realized that the site represents a unique opportunity to introduce the visitor to ranching history from 1862 to 1972.

3. Scenic Easements

The scenic easements on the land immediately adjacent to the fee simple lands, on which the prime historical properties stand, afford adequate protection for the historical integrity of the scene. Indeed, inasmuch as they permit current livestock management practices, it may be hoped that the ranchers using the scenic easement lands will follow normal stock-growing trends in the future, which will afford visitors a look at current practices in the cattle business while the park shows how it was carried on from 1862 to the present.

Yet there is another consideration regarding scenic easements, and that concerns the lands further removed from the park but in direct visual relationship to it. Specifically, these include the hills and benchlands north and west of the fee simple lands. A careful determination of the lands involved will be needed, since the amount of acreage will probably be considerable. At current
land prices in Powell County, Montana, the cost of securing such easements will be great enough to necessitate securing additional funds from Congress. The merits and liabilities of such a course should be considered as soon as possible, and should be addressed in the General Management Plan.

4. Interpretation

Among the aspects of historic preservation involved with the area is the accurate presentation of the significance of the site and its history to the public. This will require considerable research in the near future. The required research is discussed in the "Recommendations" section of the Historic Resource Study.
HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
CHAPTER I: THE HOME RANCH AS ILLUSTRATED FROM 1865 TO 1907

Four illustrations of the home ranch graphically portray its development and changes from 1865, when John Grant owned it, to 1907, when the ranch was at its highest level of development under Kohrs's ownership. The first picture is one drawn by Granville Stuart and dated 6 August 1865. The second is the 1883 Stoner "Bird's-Eye View" of Deer Lodge. Many American communities in the 1880s subscribed to this kind of service that resulted in a lithographic view of their town from a low oblique aerial perspective. The one of Deer Lodge includes an inset of the Kohrs and Bielenberg Ranch, although it is not so labeled. The third picture is dated ca. 1884, being no later than 1885, and came from M. A. Leeson's History of Montana. It shows a view of the home ranch in close detail, including stock. The final graphic document is a 1907 map, drawn by the Milwaukee Road as they planned their tracks to parallel those of the Northern Pacific running alongside the ranch. The four documents, when examined in sequence, show an increasing sophistication at the site, reflecting the growing numbers and types of animals there and the affluence of its second owners. A discussion of the four documents follows.

A. The Stuart Drawing, 6 August 1865

Granville Stuart is considered to be the first serious chronicler of Montana's history. His drawings of the areas he visited, such as Fort Union Trading Post on the Missouri and the Grant Ranch, alone would qualify him for the honor as Montana's first graphic historian, since he dated and titled his detailed sketches. But he also left his narratives to the state, and assisted in founding its historical society. Those interested in Grant-Kohrs Ranch, therefore, are but some among the many already indebted to him for his work. His 1865 drawing of the Grant Ranch, like many of his other sketches, shows a great deal.

Paramount is the ranch house, now Historic Structure 1 at the park. It is shown presumably as John Grant built it, without landscaping or additions. The clapboard veneer shows clearly, along with the wood shingle roof and chimneys at either end. The green shutters mentioned in an 1865 newspaper article (see Appendix 1) do not, however, appear in this illustration.

To the right of the ranch house (to the north) are a series of long, low log buildings where today's Historic Structure 2 now stands. Presumably some of those structures or all of them are now part of Historic Structure 2, the bunkhouse. Tradition has it that the older portions of the bunkhouse were built prior to the ranch house, and that the Grant family lived there until the ranch house was completed. The illustration confirms at least one structure similar

1. Copies of all the documents are in the files at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS. The original of the Stuart drawing is at the Montana Historical Society. The Milwaukee Road offices in Deer Lodge retain the original linen map showing the 1907 ranch. The Leeson drawing is on page 556, and the work is dated 1885.
Illustration 1.

The Granville Stuart drawing, 6 August 1865.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Residence of John Grant, near Deer Lodge City, M.T. August 6, 1865. Looking Northwest.
to Historic Structure 2 north of the ranch house as of August 1865. This probably became known as the bunkhouse in later years.

Also shown in the picture are two types of fences. In the foreground is the traditional Montana jack-leg fence, erected in a zigzag manner. But to the left and rear of the house (southwest of the house) is a more standard post-and-pole fence. A close examination of the area just to the left of (south and west of) the house shows what might be a garden, or orchard. Possibly the fence is in some way associated with these even rows of vegetation, whatever they are.

In what would eventually become the front yard of the house sit two skin lodges and a set of tent poles for a third. This, too, is consistent with the oral tradition associated with the structure. Near the tepees are three wagons, confirming the inclusion of wagons in the instrument of sale from Grant to Conrad Kohrs a year later (August 1866).²

To the left of the house, and in the foreground (southeast of the house), are two structures, both built low to the ground. One appears to be a water trough or possibly a feed trough for cattle and horses. The other, a square, flat, floor-like item, defies easy description. Possibly it was a rack for drying skins or even fish from the nearby Deer Lodge River. Since it rests on the edge of a bluff on one end and on poles on the other, there is space underneath. It is not impossible that this was some sort of stock shelter, although, if it was, it was drawn in poor perspective. Possibly, associated as it is with the trough, it functioned as a floor or base for one of the "hay racks" mentioned by Grant in the 1866 deed.³

B. 1885 Bird's-Eye View of Deer Lodge City: "The Stoner Picture" ⁴

Many of America's communities appeared in the Stoner "Bird's-eye view" sheets in the 1880s, and Deer Lodge, Montana was one of them. The pictures displayed the communities as a unit, providing both a pleasant picture of their hometown for the residents of the 1880s and an invaluable historical document for those who would be studying the town in the 1970s. The view is a low oblique one, showing the town and its structures and their general outline. Usually even the detailing of each building is fairly accurate.

The whole project probably involved an advance man selling subscriptions, followed by the preparation of the bird's-eye view once enough funds had been collected. Customarily, those who wished to pay an extra fee could ensure a

². Powell County Transcribed Deed Book 1, p. 161, which contains the phrase "all of my farming implements Wagons yokes & chains . . . ."

³. Ibid.

Illustration 2.

Detail, "1883 Bird's Eye View of Deer Lodge City, County Seat of Deer Lodge Co., Montana."
prominent position for their home, usually with an inset around the border. Presumably this accounts for the Kohrs and Bielenberg Ranch inset in the left margin of the 1883 Deer Lodge drawing.

Almost as if it were done for the benefit of future researchers, the detail in the drawing is quite complete. As with all of these bird's-eye views, the vertical perspective is stretched and generally all of the buildings are made to appear somewhat more imposing than they actually were. Nevertheless, the positioning of the structures is accurate, and their detailing is good.

By the time the 1883 scene was drawn, the ranch house had undergone some changes. The front and sides had been landscaped with what appear to be poplars or cottonwoods. The trees seem mature in the picture, indicating they were planted at least in the mid-1870s. Because of the perspective (from the southeast), a third chimney to the rear of the house shows in this drawing. It did not show in the earlier 1865 Stuart sketch, but perhaps this was due to the angle from which Stuart chose to present the structure.

A front porch had been added by 1883. It shows prominently in the sketch, and the porch roof appears to be supported by at least four pillars.

The bunkhouse, Historic Structure 2, appears in about the same position as the log buildings at the Grant Ranch drawn by Stuart. It has a new peaked roof, however, replacing the sloping flat roof it had in the 1865 drawing.

Immediately to the east of the bunkhouse, and in line with it, is a sloped-roof structure higher than the bunkhouse with five large doors. This is obviously the buggy shed, today the easternmost part of Historic Structure 2. It was then a separate building.

Generally parallel to the bunkhouse and buggy shed, but behind them (to the north of them), a large barn shows quite clearly. This might be today's Historic Structure 7, a draft horse barn, or Non-Extant Structure E, a cow barn. Whatever its exact number or title, the barn is a large one with a peaked roof and what appears to be board and batten construction. A hayloft door is shown on the east side as well.

There is a corral, with a double-hung gate at the east end, between the back of the buggy shed and the bunkhouse on one side, and the face of the barn just described on the other, with the other two sides completed by a fence. This is about where a corral is today, and could well be one used in working the cattle in the immediate area.

Three other buildings appear as well, somewhat more easily identified. They are long and tall sheds generally north-south in orientation and parallel to the railroad tracks. The easternmost building is Non-Extant Structure D, labeled "Cow Stable" on a later map. On the east side of this cow stable sits what is apparently an open-sided stock shelter, the closest of all the buildings to the railroad track. It appears to be constructed of logs, with a straw or
board sloping and flat roof. To the west of Non-Extant Structure D is a third building, probably what is currently called Historic Structure 11, horse barn.

Shown, then, in sum, are the ranch house and five ancillary buildings: the bunkhouse, the buggy shed, a cow stable, a horse barn, and an open stock shelter. It is significant to note that the thoroughbred barn, one of the most important utility buildings at the ranch, is not shown. This argues strongly that it did not exist at the time. If it had it surely would have been included (if the argument that Con Kohrs helped subsidize the drawing is accepted). Neither Con nor John Bielenberg would have allowed such an imposing structure to be neglected in the drawing.

The salient feature of the drawing, when considered as a whole, is that the ranch had become somewhat pretentious by this time, with wagons and buggies enough to warrant a buggy shed. The bunkhouse had been reroofed and possibly refurbished in other ways, and three other major structures had been built, plus at least one corral.

There was, by this time, possibly more to the ranch as well. Four buildings show on the drawing just above the inset illustrating the Kohrs and Bielenberg Ranch. Their exact relation to the ranch is not clear, but they appear to be just across the railroad track from the ranch complex and a bit further south, toward the outskirts of town. If this is so, these are probably the buildings in what is today the Tom Stuart Field, where the park's visitor service facilities are located. The grouping consists of a major dwelling, one outbuilding to the southwest, probably a privy, and what seem to be two other smaller dwellings to the north and west. The major dwelling might be what has come to be called (incorrectly) the Tom Stuart Cabin. The grouping contained much more than a cabin.  

C. Residence of Conrad Kohrs: The Leeson Drawing

The Leeson volume, too, was a subscription-supported product, much as was the Stoner drawing, and presumably Con Kohrs paid an extra fee to have his ranch illustrated. For the benefit of those who would study the ranch in the years following Kohrs's death, it was a most worthy act. The book was published in 1885, so assuming it took about a year to publish the work, a date of 1885 could be assigned to the drawing. Thus the detailed illustration can corroborate or dispute the 1883 Stoner perspective.

The ranch house is viewed straight on, from a position near the railroad tracks. The porch shown in the Stoner drawing appears, and vertical lattice-work on the porch can be seen through the foliage. The windows are shuttered, and have curtains. The two chimneys seen in both the 1865 Stuart sketch and in

Illustration 3.


Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
the 1883 Stoner drawing also appear. There is an addition at the north end of
the house, however, the first addition appearing in any of the drawings. Pop­
lars (possibly lombardy poplars) or cottonwoods outline the house in the front
yard, and the close-up view allows us to see small round flower beds on each
side of the front porch. A wall had been added to the front yard, coming direct­
ly out from the porch and front door. The yard is outlined by a picket fence,probably white. Two hitching posts and a mounting box are at the front gate.
Con Kohrs strolls on the south side of the yard, while Augusta stands on a walk
going north around the side of the house to a gate on the northwest side of the
picket fence.

To the right is the bunkhouse with the peaked roof as in the 1883 Stoner
drawing. Close detailing reveals a scallop-like effect on the bunkhouse eaves.
This might have been a decorative item, but they are probably just the ends of
logs. The bunkhouse has a main door, with two windows east of it and one west
of it. The walls are obviously of log.

The bunkhouse is still separated from the buggy shed, which is also part
of Historic Structure 2 in today's park. The buggy shed appears much as it
does in the Stoner drawing. The number of doors is shown somewhat more clearly,
seven appearing in this 1884 view. As in the earlier illustration, the roof is
flat and sloping.

Between the two buildings, sitting on a high pole, is a birdhouse. It
might have been a purple martin house, or one designed to accommodate any mem­
er of the swift family. Swifts and martins are famous for their ability to
catch mosquitos on the wing, and the presence of the birdhouse might demonstrate
a nineteenth-century mosquito control program. Presumably, the mosquitos
swarmed at Deer Lodge then as much as they do now.

To the north of the bunkhouse and buggy shed the corral, partially seen in
the 1883 view, is much more clearly delineated, along with the double-hung gate.
The fence here is post-and-pole, not jack-leg. This is consistent with fence
design for corrals at the site up to 1972 when the park was established.

The two buildings shown to the right (north) of the bunkhouse and buggy
shed are somewhat less easy to place. Since the angle of view in this picture
is radically different from the one a year earlier, the comparison of the two
helps out little. They are in the proper juxtaposition to be possibly Non-
Extant Structure E and Historic Structure 7. Historic Structure 7 is a log
structure, as shown here, and the cow barn might have been a frame building,
as suggested in the drawing. Yet the identification of these two buildings is
somewhat speculative. If they are Non-Extant Structure E and Historic Struc­
ture 7, then the former is the building to the right, the latter the one on its
left.

The fences and pastures are somewhat easier to interpret. The jack-leg
fence on the right (north) side of the picture shows most clearly. It is in
the same form as that illustrated in the 1865 drawing: vertical "Xs" joined by
Map 1.

"Deer Lodge Townsite," 1907.

Courtesy of Milwaukee Road Offices, Deer Lodge, Montana.
C.M. & S.P.R.Y. of MONT.

MADE BY
MAKED
AT MISSOULA
FILE NO.
CORRECT
INDEX NO.

SCALE: 1" = 100'

[A PARTIAL MAP OF]
DEER LODGE TOWNSITE,
N.P.R.Y. STATION GROUNDS,
Powell County.

Copied from M. & P. Map,
Office of Engr.
MISSO.
Feb 25--July 9, 07.
horizontal poles at zigzags, similar to contemporary eastern snake-rail fences. (Both the Stuart drawing and this one show the zigzag quality. The reason for this is unknown.) A jack-leg fence of the same type surrounds a haystack in the adjoining pasture that is bordered on the west by the Deer Lodge River. The size and most especially the elevation of the haystack imply that some sort of stacker was in operation at the ranch at the time. Unfortunately, no farm equipment is shown.

A final note, while not directly involved with the structures, is worthy of mention. The figure on the thoroughbred, "Regent," can be none other than John Bielenberg. His carriage and bearing, as well as the cap he wears, makes identification simple. The two standing men might be ranch hands, or they might be the other Bielenbergs, Nick and Charles.

The ranch in 1884 had evolved dramatically from that shown in the 1865 Stuart drawing. It had reached a level of sophistication that it maintained for the rest of its active life. The 1884 Leeson drawing shows the dynamic Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle enterprise boasting two breeds of high quality cattle and four kinds of thoroughbred horses, and evincing considerable affluence overall.

D. A Partial Map of Deer Lodge Townsite

This 1907 map is the fourth and final document illustrating the first forty-five years of the ranch. Complete and detailed as it is, it only covers the grounds and buildings immediately surrounding the ranch house. Yet for the first time the relative location of buildings and pastures, corrals, and lanes are known, and thus this map serves as a most important document for a study of the stock growing activities there.

The data on the map came from the files of the Northern Pacific Railroad and was printed on Milwaukee Road maps as the Milwaukee was preparing to lay tracks parallel to the ones already there. The solid line cutting through four of the buildings, which runs parallel to the Northern Pacific tracks (double lines), is the line on which the Milwaukee laid its rails.

A total of twelve buildings are shown, along with over ten clearly defined corrals, pastures, or lanes. (In some cases it is difficult to determine the exact bounds of some of the pastures.) The relationship of the buildings to the stock corrals and pastures is revealed clearly.

The "DW'g" (dwelling) is shown in its contemporary configuration, with the 1890 brick addition attached to the rear of the 1862 John Grant house. The addition on the north, which first appeared in the Leeson drawing, is outlined, as is an addition on the south, the solarium. Historic Structure 1, the ranch house, then, has changed markedly since the 1884 drawing.

6. A portion of a map prepared by the office of the Division Engineer, Northern Pacific Railroad, 25 February and 6 July 1907.
Immediately to the north, the bunkhouse has also changed greatly in the years since 1884. In the 1883 and 1884 drawings it had appeared in two parts, but in the intervening twenty-three years the buggy house and bunkhouse had been joined by a stable with a hayloft, and the building now has its modern external form.

Between Historic Structure 1 and 2 sits a small, almost square building entitled "Ice House." It is Historic Structure 5 today.

Behind the bunkhouse (north) is a "Chicken House," Non-Extant Structure G. In 1907 it sat on the ground now occupied by Historic Structure 6.

North of the chicken house is a cluster of other buildings, barns or stables, three of them sharing common walls. The largest of the three is a "Cow Barn," and its west wall is the east wall of a "Horse Stable," Historic Structure 7, today's draft horse barn. The north wall of Historic Structure 7, in turn, is the south wall of one of two "Cow Stables" shown on this 1907 map (in actuality a lean-to), considered today as part of Historic Structure 7. A second "Cow Stable" stands alone to the north. The "Cow Stable" that sits north of Historic Structure 7 is today's Historic Structure 10.

Further north is another long, narrow cluster of four buildings. The westernmost is today's Historic Structure 11, a horse barn, called a "Horse Stable" on the map. It touches the corner of another building, Non-Extant Structure C, labeled "Open Cow Shed." The open cow shed has a smaller building touching it on the diagonal, called a "Machine Shed" and numbered Non-Extant Structure B. In the west the "Open Cow Shed" joins a long building, "Cow Stable," almost 200 feet long. This is Non-Extant Structure D.

Far to the north of the buildings near the ranch house is another long and narrow building, another machine shed, today's Historic Structure 12. (It has been moved from its 1907 site.)

One building stands alone, west of the others. In bulk, it is the largest on the map, and is entitled "Cow Barn." It is today's Historic Structure 15, the thoroughbred barn.

A total of twelve buildings appear on the 1907 railroad map. The impression conveyed by it is that the ranch is a large operation by that date, a historically correct indication. The buildings are large and numerous; obviously this is no minor subsistence ranching site.

Pastures and corrals are delineated on the map as well, among the three groups of buildings just north of the ranch house. The sides of some of these structures and various fence lines outline five separate corrals where cattle could be worked. West of the "Cow Barn" is part of a pasture, with two others north of it. One lane going west from the utility buildings near the bunkhouse is outlined, and a road is shown passing in front of the bunkhouse. The ranch house fenced area appears in its entirety, as does the pasture just south of the house and a small corral joining the southeast corner of the yard.
Fence lines and fence types appear also. A different fence type, delineated by strength lines with regularly spaced dots, is shown around the house. This is no doubt the picket fence. The bulk of the rest of the fences are shown with X's, probably denoting jack-leg fences.

This 1907 map confirms the location of many of the buildings shown in the 1883 and 1884 drawings and their relationships to one another and to the various corrals and pastures. The corral shown on both, which included the north wall of the bunkhouse and buggy shed, is drawn exactly, as are such features as the line of the picket fence in the front yard and the pastures on the south side of the ranch house. It is important as well for what it shows that the 1883 and 1884 drawings do not. This is particularly true for the northern "Machine Shed" (Historic Structure 12) and the "Cow Barn" (Historic Structure 15). The appearance of this imposing structure on a 1907 map and its absence on the 1883 and 1884 drawings is instructive. No building of such proportions would have been omitted in either the Leeson illustration or the Stoner bird's-eye view. It is safe to assign this structure a construction date of between 1884 and 1907, thereby supporting somewhat the traditional building date of 1890.

E. The Four Illustrations: An Evaluation

Much of what can be learned by considering these four illustrations of the ranch in sequence is so readily apparent that it merits but little additional discussion. The main house, for example, is seen to have remained about the same in its overall configurations in all of these drawings until the 1907 map, which is the first document showing the 1890 addition. The appearance of minor exterior modifications and landscaping also is easily determined. The consistent use of the jack-leg fence on all four documents, too, is strikingly clear. But taken as a whole, the four pictures show a little more general, yet substantive, data about the site.

First of all, it appears that the nature of the scene changed a great deal with the change in ownership. The Grant ranch that Granville Stuart pictured is a rougher kind of place than that illustrated in the earliest of the Kohrs period drawings, produced eighteen years later. The yard is full of trees already full grown and mature. The area in front of the house during the last full year of Grant's ownership accommodated two tepees, some kind of utilitarian rack, and a trough, and served as some sort of pasture or corral, its borders graced by the rough-cut jack-leg fence. Conrad, Augusta, and John lived in the same house, which by that time was a physically imposing structure sporting a more formal front yard, with flower beds, a picket fence, and walkways, and which, probably because of the addition of soil and grass, even seemed to sit on a slightly higher grade. So a big change in veneer and a formalization of the ranch house that now served as the home of a family accustomed to some refinements characterized the Kohrs era as compared with the Grant period.

Another difference is degree of sophistication of the entire cattle raising operation. Grant's ranch is hardly representative of a serious cattle growing business. Yet by 1883 and 1884 the Kohrs and Bielenberg ranch is proudly acclaiming that it is the home of "Clyde of Brant . . . Strideway, Miss Ella &
Colt . . . Regent . . . Figaro," and the "Residence of Conrad Kohrs, Deer Lodge, Mont., Kohrs & Bielenberg, Breeders of Short-Horn & Hereford Cattle, Thoroughbred, Clydesdale, Percheron-Norman and Coach Horses." So, during the eighteen intervening years the entire site had become quite complex compared to the large house in the wilderness that John Grant owned near Deer Lodge City in 1865. The level of sophistication really did not change very much after that, although the ranch acquired more buildings, of course, such as the large barn--Historic Structure 15. But this is a matter of degree, and the essential change had already occurred. The 1907 map confirms a few of the details hinted at in the 1883 and 1884 views. The road in front of the bunkhouse is shown a bit more clearly, and the land determined by the jack-leg fence to the rear of the birdhouse in the 1884 drawing is also shown, as are the pastures adjacent to it. The 1883 and 1884 views picture a family proud of its accomplishments, aware of the imposing nature of its ranch headquarters. In that sense, the addition of lands and buildings in the decade of the 1890s was not very important. The essential quality of the Kohrs family, as an important unit in Montana ready to display their material gains, was already established.

The change from the simple to the elaborate, from the merely functional to the heavily landscaped, was dramatic. The difference in the use of the home and in the kind of family that occupied the dwelling house during the two different periods of ownership was most apparent as well.
CHAPTER II: THE RANCH HOUSE

With all of the Deer Lodge Valley before him, John Francis Grant chose to construct his large home on a slight rise in the bottomlands along the Deer Lodge River. No doubt the good grazing there for his cattle helped him arrive at that decision. Possibly the presence of a nearby spring (now covered by Historic Structure 35) was also a factor in his choice. As a trader, Grant must have appreciated the closeness of the little settlement of Cottonwood, later named Deer Lodge. Whatever the reasons,

In the fall of 1862, I built a house in Cottonwood afterwards called Deer Lodge. It cost me a pretty penny, I hauled my lumber from the Flathead Reserve which was one hundred fifty miles away. The square of the house was made of hewed logs with posts in the corners. It was sixty four feet long, thirty feet wide and sixteen feet high. I paid five dollars a day to McLeod the hewer and to the carpenter Alexander Pambrun, I paid nine dollars per day. Now came the plastering. There was no lime to be had. I did not know lime when I saw it. Some people said it was one color and some said it was another. So I went up on the mountain and picked up stones of different colors and put them in the stove to burn. The one that slacked I knew to be limestone. I then went with a wagon and hauled plenty more of this kind and burnt it. Now that I had lime a plasterer was needed. I got one and he charged me one hundred and fifty dollars to plaster the first story but it was very well done. I went back to the house twenty years after and the plaster was still sound as ever. At first I had only home made furniture but about four or five years after I bought Capt. Lebarge's freight and among the lot there were some parlor chairs. I paid twenty dollars each for these chairs and ten dollars each for four other chairs. I also bought ten thousand dollars worth of flour and grocer[ies] from him. My house was not finished until 1863 but we lived in it before it was completed and Quarra, my little wife, showed a wonderful skill in taking care of it. She was a good cook and could make very nice butter and sew as well as any tailor.²

And with that straightforward account, the earliest data on the house is presented. Grant did not explain why he built where he did or from whence came the plan, the design, or the reason for so large a structure. It is probable that the French-Canadian quality of the house resulted from the experience of Alexander Pambrun, the builder. But the imposing log house, clapboarded when

1. Interview, C. K. Warren with John Albright, 23 Feb. 1975, copy on file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS.


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constructed, rated mention more than once in the years to come as a substantial dwelling. The earliest account calls it "by long odds, the finest in Montana." This 1865 report noted that it was "large and two-storied," and that it appeared "as if it had been lifted by the chimneys from the bank of the St. Lawrence and dropped down in Deer Lodge Valley. It has twenty-eight windows, with green-painted shutters, and looks very pretty."3

This was the house that Conrad Kohrs purchased in 1866, along with "Household furniture Stables Corrals Ricks of hay and all of my farming implements Wagons yokes & chains, with all improvements on said ranch."4 During the long ownership by Con and Augusta Kohrs, the house changed considerably.

Among the Kohrs family members, Augusta's mark on the home came first, as she cleaned and scrubbed and generally made it more orderly than she had found it.5 Judging from the mature trees shown in the yard in the 1883 Stoner drawing of the place, Con and Augusta must have begun planting trees and laying the ground for a lawn almost as soon as they arrived. Presumably the interiors came under some consideration at the same time, since the 1884 Leeson view shows curtained windows at the front of the house.6 The same picture features a picket fence surrounding the house and protecting the yard from the depredations of the cattle. These and many other modifications became routine almost from the first day Con and Augusta set up housekeeping at Deer Lodge. But only the major modifications, the external ones at that, are easily dated.

The first major work must have been the addition of the small room on the north side of the house. It certainly did not appear on the 1865 Stuart drawing, although it should have, considering the angle from which Stuart chose to show the house. So the addition postdates 1865 and predates 1884, the date of the Leeson drawing. This is the first modification. The front porch as it is seen today also was added between these dates.

The next major change to the house came in 1890, when a large brick addition was added to the rear of the house. This was the major alteration to the Johnnie Grant house,7 which became a profoundly different place than it had been before.

3. The Montana Post, 16 Dec. 1865. The article from this Virginia City newspaper is reproduced as Appendix 1.

4. Deed Book E, Deer Lodge Co., p. 342. (This is the original citation in the deed book now at Anaconda in Deer Lodge County. The Powell County transcribed Deed Book citation is Book 1, p. 161.)

5. Described in more detail in Chapter II of the Historic Resource Study.

6. Furnishings remain to be studied, but will be considered in an appendix and will be discussed in some detail in the Architectural Data section to follow.

7. A word on names is in order. John Francis Grant is also referred to as "Johnnie Grant" and as "Johnny Grant." Likewise, John N. W. (Nicholas Wilhelm) (continued)
In the summer [of 1890] we began remodeling and putting an addition to our house, which was not completed until after the holidays... The new addition to the house proved a great comfort. The furnace, water works and gas plant gave us all the conveniences of the city and lightened the burdens of the housekeeper perceptibly—no carrying of wood for six or seven stoves and the filling of lamps.\(^7\)

The addition brought far more than the convenience of lighting and running water, although those two luxuries added immeasurably to the quality of life at the ranch house. The main floor of the new part of the house contained a dining room, living room, and a large kitchen connecting to a shelved pantry. The addition, which was attached to the rear of the house, thus making the structure a T-shaped one, required a basement as well. This housed the furnace and various utility rooms and had two rear entrances.

The upstairs had five bedrooms and a bath. Added to the bedrooms on the upper floor of the Johnnie Grant portion of the structure, this allowed plenty of room for guests, family, and drop-in visitors as well.

When the original house was built in 1862, it was the largest house in the territory, and contemporary references indicate that it remained so for many years. By the time the 1890 addition was built onto the Grant structure, many other imposing homes had been built, and even with the addition the Kohrs home would never again be the largest residence in Montana. But it was a large home, even among affluent members of Montana society. For the Conrad Kohrs family, it proved to be more than merely commodious; it became almost the last word in comfort.

The "water works" that Kohrs referred to in his autobiography consisted of a hydraulic ram located out in the pastures northwest of the house about 400 hundred yards. There the ram, housed in a sunken wooden box about four by eight feet and about four feet in depth, constantly fed by a spring at the site of the mechanism as well as by a tap off the Kohrs-Manning Ditch, propelled water through wooden pipes sunk in the pasture to the house. Once in the house, pipes (cast iron) carried the water to the attic of the addition, at the west end of the house, and to a square, lead-lined wooden storage tank extant. From there the water flowed to the various spigots and water heaters in the house. Since a hydraulic ram runs at all times, and \textit{must} in order to operate effectively, the...

\(^7\) (continued) Bielenberg appears as John Bielenberg, as "Johnnie Bielenberg," and as "Johnny Bielenberg". Conrad Kohrs is more often than not "Con Kohrs," and even appears in \textit{The New Northwest} as "Con Kohrs, Esq." from time to time. Both the more formal and less formal names appear in contemporary documents regularly. Readers are free to take their pick.

gentle thump of the water being propelled through the lengthy pipe reverberated through the house at regular intervals day and night. An overflow pipe carried the excess to the basement and out to a drainage system into Johnson Creek. The system dates to the 1890 addition.

A carbide gas generator for the lights stood outside the house on the south side of the brick addition. It provided light for the entire house, including gaslights put into the John Grant portion of the newly enlarged Kohrs home.

On the south side of the brick addition a small solarium was added for the copious number of houseplants Augusta Kohrs enjoyed tending. A large covered porch was added to the south side of the west end of the brick addition. By 1890 the house contained the essential elements remaining today. Only interior changes were made after that date.

Despite the addition to the house, the family continued to live there only ten more years. In 1900 Augusta and Con moved to Helena, leaving John Bielenberg at the large home. By this time the children had all left. The girls had married, and William was at college. No major changes were made to the structure during the next two decades while John Bielenberg lived there alone, nor for years after that. A coal-burning furnace was added around 1915, with an automatic feeder added later. Con Warren lived in the house in 1930 when he returned to work first as a ranch hand and then as manager. He remained there until 1934 when he married and built the house across the railroad tracks in which he and his wife still reside.

9. The water supply and drainage systems consist of an unknown number of pipes, entry boxes, and diversions at the park and will have to be the subject of intensive future study. This need is discussed in the "Recommendations" section of the combined report. However, one of the water systems is discussed as an example of the complexity and function of the various others, and as it happens, it is the system that carried off the water from the hydraulic ram tank in the attic. Its description is presented later on in this section of the study. The hydraulic ram pipes still exist, neatly stacked in Historic Structure 12.

10. General furnishings data is briefly considered in a later portion of this report. The Architectural Data section contains a collections statement and discussion of the furnishings in somewhat greater detail. A thorough furnishings study is in order, however, and this need is discussed in the "Recommendations" section. Uses of the many rooms in this structure are only lightly touched upon in this portion of the study since the subject is addressed in the Architectural Data section.

Augusta would come to visit the house during the summer and it would be opened and made ready for her by a local housekeeper and cook. But after John's death in 1922 no one lived in the house regularly during the cold months of the year. Throughout the years that Con Warren first managed and then owned the ranch (1932-72) he protected it with care and attention. Furnishings, papers, and items of ranch life and work remained there. And, for the most part, the house too remained unaltered. The home that "Ohma" Kohrs returned to every summer until just a few years before her death in 1946 remained virtually as she had left it in 1900.

Con Warren did modify three of the rooms at the head of the stairs in the 1890 brick addition into a small apartment, complete with bath and kitchen, in 1950. It is this apartment, remodeled and improved somewhat, that will serve to house a park family living at the site for protection purposes.

Restoration of various parts of the home is discussed in the Architectural Data section of this report.
A. The Bunkhouse (Historic Structure 2, including Historic Structure 17 and Non-Extant Structure F)

The key question involving Historic Structure 2, the bunkhouse, concerns its age. Local tradition states that the structure predates the John Grant house, Historic Structure 1, by a year or so, and that Grant and his family lived in the bunkhouse prior to occupying the home. Quite likely this is true, but there is no definitive answer to the question.

The deed describing the sale of the property from Grant to Kohrs does not define the buildings. Later documents, such as the homestead grant that Conrad Kohrs received for the land (discussed in Chapter II of the Historic Resource Study), also fail to describe any structures. Evidence for the existence of the building is somewhat sketchy until it appears in pictures.

Presumably, the structure shown to the north of the main house in the 1865 Granville Stuart drawing (discussed in Chapter I of this study) is an early form of what is now Historic Structure 2. That dates it to 1865. The only link to an earlier date would be based on the recollections of John Bielenberg. Bielenberg, Conrad Kohrs, and John Grant all lived in Deer Lodge at the same time, and there is no doubt that Bielenberg and Grant at least knew each other and that Bielenberg saw the ranch before Kohrs purchased it in 1866. Bielenberg did recall that Grant had built the structure before the large house was built and housed his family in it during construction of the home. And, in the course of normal conversation, he passed that information on to young Con Warren when he visited Uncle John at the ranch. Warren's belief that the building dates to 1862, then, is based on conversations with a contemporary of John Grant. Since the ranch house dates from 1862, with a completion date of 1863, this evidence tends to corroborate local tradition. So until such time as documentary evidence to the contrary surfaces, a date of 1862 for construction of the bunkhouse should be used, based primarily on Con Warren's recollections of John Bielenberg's comments.

Once the illustrations of the Kohrs-Bielenberg ranch begin to appear, the existence of the structure is a proven fact. The 1883 Stoner and 1884 Leeson drawings show the bunkhouse, and the 1907 map places it precisely. The series of illustrations shows the sequence of development of the structure as well. From its construction in 1862 until 1883, little is known about the building. But the 1883 illustration shows what appears to be the same structure as seen in the 1865 Stuart drawing: a log house, low, with a flat, sloping roof. The 1884 Leeson drawing confirms this. But both the 1883 and 1884 illustrations also

1. Interview, John Albright and Grant-Kohrs Staff with Conrad K. Warren, 2 May 1975.
depict a large structure to the east of the bunkhouse and with its front facade on a line with it. This is a buggy house, a separate building, but tied in with the bunkhouse.

The buggy shed, now Historic Structure 17 (in part, at least), first appears in 1883 in the Stoner lithograph. It might possibly date from the late 1870s, but the exact date of construction is unknown. When it appears in the 1883 Stoner drawing and again in the 1884 Leeson illustration, it is a board and batten, flat-sloped, roofed building just east of the bunkhouse. But on the 1907 Milwaukee Road map of the ranch, it has become part of the bunkhouse complex, which in 1907 was over 200 feet long. So in the intervening years from 1884 to 1907 the bunkhouse was extended east and more rooms were added; by 1907 the bunkhouse and buggy shed were connected as one building, but had different rooflines.

The next step came in 1907 or 1908, prior to the laying of tracks for the Milwaukee Road. About three fifths of the eastern end of the buggy shed was cut off from the remainder of the building and moved down into the complex of structures west of, and on a lower elevation than, the ranch house, near the west corrals.

Thus Historic Structure 2 as it stands today comprises what were once two separate buildings. The easternmost part of the structure has been removed and moved to another part of the ranch. (On the historic base map, the area once occupied by the easternmost portion of the buggy shed is labeled Non-Extant Structure F.)

The 1907 map shows the uses of the various sections of the long and narrow building. The western two thirds is labeled "Bunkhouse," the next section "Shop," and the easternmost "Boggy Ho." J. H. Gehrmann's recollections generally support this, but add greater detail on the uses of rooms in the bunkhouse. Gehrmann's descriptions of the rooms, again from west to east, are "Store Room," "Cowboy's Kitchen," "Cowboy's Dining," "Cowboy's Bunkhouse" (sleeping room), and "Home Stable" (buggy house).\(^2\)

The bunkhouse continued to serve that function during the Warren era, with one of the rooms converted for use as Con Warren's office following improvements made in 1935. Running water was added during the Warren period, and subsequently a shower room on the eastern end of the long structure.\(^3\) Warren moved his office across the tracks to the low building sitting next to his home on the west. Thereafter the bunkhouse served only to store ranch equipment.

\(^2\) Gehrmann letter, 19 Nov. 1974, handdrawn map. More detailed descriptions of room uses are included in the Architectural Data section.

\(^3\) Interview, Conrad K. Warren with Peter Snell, 11 Sept. 1975, p. 3.
B. **The Garage/Blacksmith Shop** (Historic Structure 3)

This white wooden frame structure is the most modern in appearance at the site. Its construction dates from 1935, when Con Warren began introducing automotive equipment to the ranch. It housed a truck and miscellaneous ranch equipment, and also provided a needed area for shoeing horses. Until 1975 it had undergone no major modifications, but at that time the garage portion was insulated and heated to allow adaptive use as a stall for the park's fire truck.

C. **The Coal Shed** (Historic Structure 4)

The date of construction of the coal shed is not known exactly. Presumably it was erected about 1915, a date generally accepted for the introduction of the coal furnace to the house. It does not appear on the 1907 Milwaukee Road map. The small white frame building is still in use as a coal shed.

D. **The Ice House** (Historic Structure 5)

The 1883 Stoner illustration and the 1884 Leeson drawing do not show this structure because of their angle of view. Local tradition gives it a construction date of ca. 1880. The log construction of this two-floored structure and the need for ice in the house tend to confirm an early construction date. The building is depicted on the 1907 map as an "Ice House," with dimensions of twenty-six by twenty-two feet. The Gehrmann letter shows the ice house and labels it as such, confirming its existence in 1904. Following the introduction of other means of obtaining ice, and after repairs under Con Warren's direction in 1935, the ice house began to function as a tack room. The lean-to on the south, added in 1912, served as the Chinese cook's summer sleeping room.

E. **The Granary** (Historic Structure 6)

The granary, one of three at the ranch and the most modern, is located where the Chicken House (Non-Extant Structure G) stood on the 1907 map. Erected in 1935 of wooden frame materials and painted white, it served the Warren Ranch as a feed storage facility and as a feed mixing location. The feed mixing equipment is still intact inside the structure.

F. **The Draft Horse Barn** (Historic Structure 7)

The draft horse barn dates from the 1870s. Constructed of log and frame materials, it is a typical example of the utilitarian design of the ranch service buildings. It has outlasted many of its contemporaries and remains virtually unaltered today. The construction date of 1870 is a traditional one, but the

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5. The bulk of the data on construction dates and uses of the buildings at the ranch has come from conversations between Conrad K. Warren and researchers and park staff, using building lists and maps. More specific details are covered in interviews on file at the park. These will be cited when the structures are discussed in detail in the Architectural Data section.
log construction and building techniques evident in the barn tend to corroborate it. The building appears on the 1907 map and measures thirty-six by thirty-one feet.

G. The Privy (Historic Structure 8)

This is one of two privies still at the site. It was constructed as a Works Progress Administration project (WPA) in 1934 in payment for Warren's housing several WPA workers at the ranch. For this reason this "one-holer" is known irreverently as the "Roosevelt Building." It sits on a site previously occupied by Non-Extant Structure E, "Cow Barn."

H. The Dairy Building (Historic Structure 9)

Painted white, this frame structure was begun in 1932. During the decade of the 1930s Con Warren provided milk to the Deer Lodge Creamery, and this building served as the processing center. The structure appears externally as it did during its active years, but the interior was modified somewhat in 1975 to permit adaptive use as a park maintenance building.

I. The Oxen Barn (Historic Structure 10)

This log barn sits just to the north of Historic Structure 7, the draft horse barn, and apparently dates from the 1870s as well. It appears on the 1907 map with dimensions of eighteen by twelve feet. It is currently in disrepair, leaning toward Historic Structure 7, with its south end touching Historic Structure 7 at the roofline. Whether the overall condition of the building is as severe as it seems visually is not known, but it requires considerable cosmetic repair at the least as soon as possible.

J. Horse Barn (Historic Structure 11)

This long and low frame building, currently painted white, was reputedly erected on the orders of John Bielenberg about 1880. This date coincides with some of the early large-scale horse raising activities on the ranch. It appears on the 1907 map as a "Horse Stable," measuring 110 by 15 feet. Con Warren resided the unpainted building with white boards early in his tenure as manager, about 1933 or 1934. Because of its traditional name, "The Bielenberg Barn," it is locally believed that the structure may have housed John's racehorses.

K. Machine Shed (Historic Structure 12)

This structure stood directly in the path of the proposed railroad on the 1907 Milwaukee Road map. Labeled as a machine shed on that map, it was moved directly west about 1907 or 1908. It sits parallel to its original position and remains on the bluff area overlooking the lower river bottomland of the western pastures. It has been primarily used throughout its history to store farm equipment and supplies. The date of construction is traditionally set at 1890.

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L. Cow Shed (Historic Structure 13)

This \$-shaped cow shed was constructed after the 1907-8 dislocations brought about by the construction of the Milwaukee Road, so it probably dates from about 1908-9. In the early 1930s Con Warren had a tin roof put on it. It housed feed, equipment, and cattle, and on the south and east faced into a corral containing Historic Structure 41, a squeeze chute. The building has a wood frame with log vertical supports.

M. Stallion Barn (Historic Structure 14)

This stallion barn, like others at the ranch, housed only one animal. Primarily of log construction, it dates from the 1870s, according to tradition. It does not show on the 1907 map, however, but this may well be due to the limited area that the map portrays.

N. The Cow Barn (Historic Structure 15)

The thoroughbred barn is one of the most imposing structures on the ranch. It has had an active history since its construction ca. 1883. In 1941 the building underwent considerable modifications, and it was changed again in 1954. During its long life, the barn, which is shown on the 1907 map as measuring 130 by 48 feet in dimension, had many uses. Initially, as its name implied, it served to house a large number of thoroughbred horses. One of the stalls was used for foaling mares. Draft horses as well were kept there during the Warren years. In 1941 the barn underwent considerable renovation when a concrete post foundation was installed and a new floor emplaced over the dirt one. Work in 1954, again directed by Con Warren, added electricity and improvements for the Hereford bulls he kept in the barn. During this period tent sales pavilions were erected on the south side of the building, and animals were taken out there one by one for show. This structure now houses many of the wheeled vehicles in the park's collection and many large pieces of ranch equipment as well. During the 1941 remodeling, the building, which had always been red, was painted white. When Con Warren constructed his large barn in 1954 to the east of the historic complex, just on the east side of the railroad tracks, (this is still his ranch today), he converted the large building into an implement shed, and it is used as such today. (This much modified building is discussed in greater detail in the Architectural Data section.)

O. Leeds-Lion Stallion Barn (Historic Structure 16)

This barn is named for one of the prized Shire draft horses at the Kohrs-Bielenberg Ranch early in the 20th century. Its original construction dates from the 1870s, however. Presumably it housed other stallions before Leeds-Lion. It is of log construction and unaltered.

P. The Buggy Shed (Historic Structure 17)

This structure is that part of Historic Structure 2 that was cut off about 1907 or 1908 and moved down to house wheeled vehicles for the ranch. Its former location is now labeled Non-Extant Structure F.
Q. The Granary (Historic Structure 18)

This wooden structure is one of the older ones on the ranch and dates from ca. 1890. It rests on skids and can be moved when necessary. Constructed of thick board and batten, it features external studs and smooth internal walls for greater efficiency in grain storage. While it is a unique building upon casual examination, it is typical of older style granaries in the Yellowstone and Gallatin valleys to the south and east, as well as in the Deer Lodge Valley.

R. Stallion Barn (Historic Structure 19)

This log and frame building dates from the 1870s, traditionally, and housed a single stallion. Modified greatly in the 1920s with a wall dividing it in half, it served as the initial garage and as a blacksmith shop (with a portable forge) until 1935 when the present garage/blacksmith shop was built.

S. Privy (Historic Structure 20)

This moveable frame privy formerly stood at the west end of the ranch house, but was moved next to the stallion barn (Historic Structure 20) early in the 20th century. The date of construction is traditionally given as about 1900 or possibly slightly earlier.

T. The Brooder House (Historic Structure 21)

Used to electrically incubate eggs for hatching, this was one of the improvements Con Warren added during the 1930s. This particular facility, a white frame structure, was built in 1935.

U. The Chicken House (Historic Structure 22)

The chicken house was constructed at the same time as the brooder house, when Con Warren was upgrading the facilities at the Kohrs-Bielenberg Ranch. This building housed the laying hens, and, like the brooder house, is a white frame structure. It is surrounded by a coyote-proof fence.

V. The Granary (Historic Structure 23)

Originally believed to date from the mid-1930s, this structure actually is much older, having been purchased and installed at the ranch around 1910, making it the only metal building dating from the Kohrs-Bielenberg period. It is round, pre-manufactured, and designed to be assembled on the site chosen by the buyer. The name of the manufacturer is marked on the inside of the structure.

W. The West Corral Buildings (Historic Structures 24-31, 43-47)

All of these structures are utilitarian, and were constructed to house or provide feeding and working facilities for the commercial cattle raised during the Warren years at the ranch. While each is discussed separately as to construction date and materials, each must be considered as part of the whole cattle
raising operation at the Warren ranch. The west corrals lie in the lowlands west of Historic Structure 15 and a few hundred feet north and south of that building. They are a series of small corrals where different types of cattle or different sexes of the same breed could be fed and controlled.

X. The Stock Shelter (Historic Structure 24)

Of log and frame construction, this open-fronted shelter was built in 1933 for cows and calves feeding in the west corral associated with this structure. The south side is open, while the north, west, and east sides were closed to provide winter shelter.

Y. The Stock Shelter (Historic Structure 25)

Quite similar to Historic Structure 24, this too is open sided to the south and provided shelter for the stock in the feeding corral adjoining its open side. Presumably this shelter was erected in 1933 or 1934, as were Historic Structure 24 and most of the other shelters in the west corrals.

Z. The Hay Roof Barn (Historic Structure 26)

This hay roof barn, originally constructed in 1933, has fallen in. Some of the walls remain to show its dimensions. Like the stock shelters and feed racks and all of the buildings and structures associated with the corrals, it is of frame and peeled log construction, and was built as the need arose. The buildings in the corrals and in the west feedlot as well are of informal design and local materials, the "ranch-vernacular" style.

AA. The Stock Shelter (Historic Structure 27)

Built in 1933, this is another of the frame stock shelters open to the south associated with a portion of the west corrals.

BB. The Feed Storage House (Historic Structure 28)

This frame structure was erected in the fall of 1933 as part of Con Warren's modernization of the ranch. It was used to store feed grains.

CC. The Stock Shelter (Historic Structure 29)

As with many of the other shelters in the west corrals, this stock shelter, open to the south, was constructed in the fall of 1933.

DD. The Stallion Barn (Historic Structure 30)

This barn, while associated with the west corrals, predates the 1933 construction of that area by many years. It is believed to date from the 1870s, and was used to house one stallion. It is of frame construction, but is presently in poor condition. Whether or not it was put to a different use once it was surrounded by the west corrals is not known.

203
EE. The Feed Storage House (Historic Structure 31)

This feed storage facility dates from 1932 and sits between two of the long feed bunkers associated with the west corrals. Feed stored in it could be readily transferred to each of the bunkers. Due to its location along the fence line, it could easily receive feed grains being driven in by wagon or truck for storage there.

FF. The Feed Racks (Historic Structures 43 and 44)

Slightly different in overall dimensions, these two feed racks served the same purpose. Freestanding, like tables, these wood frame feed racks were constructed about 1942.

GG. The Feed Bunkers (Historic Structures 45-46)

These feed bunkers date from ca. 1932, the general date of construction of the west corrals under Con Warren's managership. They are attached to the south fence of the west corral and are flat, tablelike structures with wooden ground linings on which the hay for feeding stood.

HH. The Squeeze Chute (Historic Structure 47)

This squeeze chute of frame construction now stands alone near the south fence line of the west corrals. It once straddled a fence line dividing the largest of the west corrals in half. Cattle being fed and housed in the corral could be worked from either of the two divisions within the corral and channelled into the other if necessary. The fence it was once associated with was vital to its location, although it is a freestanding structure now.

II. The West Feedlots (Historic Structures 32-34, 52-53)

The west feedlots appear to be a continuation of the west corrals across (west of) the Kohrs-Manning Ditch. However, a more than casual examination reveals that the west feedlots are open and do not contain the various subdivisions that characterize the west corrals. The feedlots contain two divisions each, with appropriate feeding and cattle working facilities. There are, in addition, fewer structures associated with them.

JJ. The Stock Shelter (Historic Structure 32)

This frame shelter was built in 1934.

KK. The Stock Shelter (Historic Structure 33)

Built in 1934, this frame building is open to the south, but has walls on the north, west, and east sides.
LL. The Storage Shed (Historic Structure 34)

This storage shed, of wood frame materials, is a portable building, constructed ca. 1930. Presumably it was moved into the area when the west feedlots were constructed.

MM. The Feed Bunker (Historic Structure 52)

The feed rack is constructed of frame and steel piping, but is essentially the same building as Historic Structures 45 and 46. Like the other two feed bunkers, it lines the south fence where the feed could be dumped into the bunker from a wagon or truck on the road parallel to the fence line.

NN. The Squeeze Chute (Historic Structure 53)

This was built in 1934 of wood frame materials, and stands adjacent to Historic Structure 34, a feed storage building. Its location and that of the feed storage building next to it strongly suggest that a fence once was associated with the two structures. This would have allowed the cattle to be worked and transferred to another area within the feedlot. The feed could quite easily have been dumped into either lot if the fence had been there.

OO. The Feed Bunkers (Historic Structures 48 and 49)

These two feed racks, quite similar to Historic Structures 45 and 46, line the north fence of two of the corrals in the west corral complex on the north side of Johnson Creek. They are of frame construction and were built in 1933.

PP. The Cattle Scale (Historic Structure 35)

Con Warren ordered construction of this structure in 1935. It was made of concrete, wood, and structural steel. Cattle were weighed on it, passing from one corral to another behind the bunkhouse. The scale was also used as a dipping vat, the cattle being passed through the solution filling the concrete pit. Cattle were also doctored in the vat at times, although most such chores could best be performed in a squeeze chute.

QQ. The Feed Rack (Historic Structure 36)

The area north of the bunkhouse is divided into numerous small corrals, and this pole and frame feed rack for holding hay is attached to one of the fences in the easternmost of these small corrals. It was first constructed in 1930, replacing one of similar design at the same location dating from the Kohrs and Bielenberg period.

RR. The Feed Rack (Historic Structure 37)

This feed rack looks quite similar to Historic Structure 36 but is much older, dating from about 1907. Made of poles spaced roughly fifteen inches apart, it also is attached to the fence to hold hay.
SS. The Feed Rack (Historic Structure 38)

This feed rack dates from the same period as Historic Structure 38, but is somewhat longer. Both are attached to the fence running west of but parallel to the twin railroad tracks.

TT. The Manure Pit (Historic Structure 39)

The cement manure pit is about ten feet square. It was emplaced in order to meet the health requirements imposed on the dairy operation. It could be flushed out with running water, which carried the effluents downhill into the pastures as fertilizer.

UU. The Beef Hoist (Historic Structure 40)

Shaped like an inverted J and composed of poles, a chain, and a pulley, this structure was used to hoist the slaughtered beef and dress the carcass for consumption. Although it has undergone considerable routine repairs in its lifetime, it has not changed in form, and dates from ca. 1880.

VV. The Squeeze Chute (Historic Structure 41)

This squeeze chute made of wood frame materials is associated with the pasture and corral in front of Historic Structure 13, the cow shed on the north end of the ranch. Like the others, it was used to "work" cattle, that is, to immobilize them for branding, dehorning, or application of medication.

WW. The Feed Rack (Historic Structure 42)

This log and pole feed rack is one of the older ones at the ranch, dating from about 1900, and was used to hold hay for the horses in the field associated with Historic Structure 14, the stallion barn.

XX. The Flume, Active (Historic Structure 50)

This frame flume carries the waters of the Kohrs-Manning irrigation ditch over Johnson Creek, and was constructed in 1974 to replace Historic Structure 51.

YY. The Flume, Inactive (Historic Structure 51)

This frame flume, built in 1947 and discarded in 1974, is badly deteriorated, and is about eight feet west of the currently active flume.

ZZ. The Bridge (Historic Structure 55)

This bridge carries the roadway along the south fence line of the west corral and west feedlots, and crosses the Kohrs-Manning ditch. It was constructed of timbers, with a heavy frame planking bottom, in the late 1930s.
AAA. The Bridge (Historic Structure 54)

This bridge carries a roadway connecting some of the lots in the west corrals over a branch of Johnson Creek. It has partially fallen in. Constructed of wooden timbers and heavy wood planking, it was built about 1930.
CHAPTER IV: NON-EXTANT STRUCTURES

The ranch existed as an active entity from 1862 to 1972, during which time numerous utilitarian buildings and support structures of one kind or another were erected and torn down. To date, the existence of sixteen no longer extant buildings have been detected either as ruins, foundations, or in documents. Labeled "Non-Extant" Structures to differentiate them from Historic Structures, and given letter labels instead of numbers, they are discussed below, and are shown on the historic base map.

A. Non-Extant Structure A (Machine Shed)

This long building appears on the 1907 map skewered lengthwise by the proposed line of the Milwaukee Road. The building was moved to its present location ca. 1907 or 1908 and is referred to as Historic Structure 12.

B. Non-Extant Structure B (Machine Shed)

This shows on the 1907 map as do many of the non-existent structures. It appears at an odd, diagonal angle and intersects another non-extant building, Structure C. Its size appears to have been about fifty by twenty feet. Materials used in its construction and its construction date are not known. Its function, since it was labeled "Machine Shed," probably involved storage of farm machinery. It was removed about 1908.

C. Non-Extant Structure C (Open Cow Shed)

This, too, seems self-explanatory. Presumably this structure resembled the remaining "open cow sheds" such as Historic Structures 24, 25, and 29. Its size appears to have been about twenty by sixty-three feet. It was gone by 1908.

D. Non-Extant Structure D (Cow Stable)

The unusual phrase "Cow Stable" refers to a structure measuring 193 by 20 feet. This is probably the long shed shown in the M. A. Leeson illustration in 1884. Like Non-Extant Structures A and C, it was torn down about 1908 to make way for the Milwaukee Road. It was apparently a board and batten wood frame structure with a peaked roof.

E. Non-Extant Structure E (Cow Barn)

The difference between a cow "barn" and a cow "stable" is not clear, since both phrases are used on the 1907 map on which Non-Extant Structures A through G are shown. But this structure was entitled "Cow Barn," and it apparently stood between today's Historic Structures 7 and 9. It shared a common wall with Historic Structure 7, as appears to be the case on the 1907 map. The structure blew down in 1931. The eastern end of this non-extant structure is now the site of Historic Structure 9.
F. Non-Extant Structure F (Buggy House)

This non-extant structure is somewhat like Non-Extant Structure A. It still exists but has been moved. Apparently it was the easternmost section of the bunkhouse complex, and was cut off and moved down into the lower area next to the west corrals about 1908. It is now known as Historic Structure 17.

G. Non-Extant Structure G (Chicken House)

Now covered by Historic Structure 6, this was the site of a log and frame chicken house shown in Illustration 25. Next to it was a Turkey House, as yet unnumbered. It was torn down early in the Warren years, perhaps in 1933 or 1934.

H. Non-Extant Structure L (Cow Shed)

This was an open-sided shed to the south, with a thatched roof. Measuring about fifty by sixteen feet, it had fallen into disrepair by about 1930 and was torn down at that time. It represented a typical approach to such shelters, for it was put together with an eye to immediate need and not years of service, and was removed when it no longer had value.

I. Non-Extant Structures H, I, J, K (Feed Racks)

These four wooden feed racks (feed tables or feed trays), possibly twenty by four feet and standing in pairs, held feed for the cattle in the southernmost portion of the west corrals. One pair stood just behind (north of) Historic Structure 45 and another pair behind (north of) Historic Structure 46, the two feed racks attached to the fence in the area. They were removed in the early 1930s. A fence that is now gone separated the corral so that each of the pairs of feed racks was in a separate area.

J. Non-Extant Structure M (Unknown)

This wooden, boxlike structure has collapsed, is partially rotted, and has been discarded in bushes near the Kohrs-Manning ditch, hence its designation as a Non-Extant Structure. It appears to have been part of a box siphon or possibly a device to carry water over or under the Kohrs-Manning ditch.

K. Non-Extant Structure N (Foundations, unknown)

The concrete foundation of this structure appears to relate to veterinary or grooming work on the animals. Whatever structure was there was destroyed about 1930.

L. Non-Extant Structure O (Watering Trough)

This wooden watering trough was connected to a water supply system west of Historic Structure 7.
M. Non-Extant Structure P (Log Retaining Wall)

This \(|\)-shaped wall was once about four feet high, and was attached to Historic Structure 7, the draft horse barn. Some footings remain. The date of destruction is not known, but it had rotted away by 1935.
CHAPTER V: MISCELLANEOUS DATA

A. Introduction

Numerous aspects of the ranch defy clear classification. For the most part this is due to a lack of data. An example of this is the water drainage system that existed at the ranch. A little is known about it since many of the drainage lines have been cut at various places by excavations during the later active years of the ranch. But the complexity of the system in its entirety has not yet been determined. Another example is land use. The exact placement of animals by breeds or by use (registered breeding cattle vs. commercial cattle, for example) on the extensive lands of the ranch is not yet fully understood. The uses and extent of the many irrigation ditches are not totally apparent yet, although they may become more clear as more research is completed. This section will discuss these aspects of the ranch and others.

B. Fence Lines and Pastures

Miles of fences bounded the ranch. Many of them were barbed wire, enclosing lands not now included in the park. The barbed wire fences enclosed pastures northeast of the ranch house but separated from the lands immediately surrounding the buildings. The section that was so fenced closest to the ranch house was generally referred to as the "Humber Ranch," and included Section 23 and parts of adjacent Sections 23, 26, and 27 of Township 8 North 9 West. In the southwest corner of this area Kohrs and Bielenberg put up hay. These lands slope gently upward to the continental divide, visible from the ranch to the east. Somewhat further east is a large chunk of land including over nineteen full sections. Some of it was leased, most of it owned. The most southerly full section, Section 21 of Township 8 North 8 West, was the "Bull Pasture," fenced separately from the others and housing the bulls at the ranch.

Eighteen of the nineteen sections of land, which collectively bore the title "Dog Creek Pasture," were all enclosed by one single fence. The only section not included was 17, which for some unknown reason was fenced separately. The area supported perhaps 700 steers during the last decades of the home ranch under Kohrs and Bielenberg. In some of the pastures were jack-leg fences, usually closing off a corner or two where cattle could be controlled during roundups or prior to shipping. A few corrals stood out in the fields of the Dog Creek and the Humber Ranch areas. During World War I, much of the Humber Ranch area was plowed up and planted in wheat.

2. Ibid., pp. 21-22.
3. Ibid. J. H. Gehrmann also mentions growing wheat at the home ranch during World War I, although he is not as specific as Warren. Letter, 19 Nov. 1974.
For the most part the remainder of the fence lines were of the jack-leg type. This is particularly true of those surrounding the land in the immediate vicinity of the buildings, fences that are included in today's national historic site. Small corrals (like the ones north of the bunkhouse) were marked by post and pole fences, but lanes, pastures, the west feedlots, and the west corrals utilized jack-leg fences.

A picket fence about three feet high, painted white, surrounded the yard of the ranch house; this was the only such decorative fence at the site.

The "Upper Ranch," a separate piece of the home ranch south of Deer Lodge, had a complex of buildings at its center that were associated with small corrals. Like the fences at the ranch house north of town, these were post and pole for small corrals, jack-leg for most pastures, and barbed wire for a limited number of pastures. (See Map 3. The "Upper Ranch" is in Township 7 North 9 West at the bottom of the map.)

C. Water and the Home Ranch

Since water is the key to any agricultural enterprise, whether it is stock raising or farming, the uses of water at the ranch and the water systems played an important role in the daily activities of the operation. Remnants of the various water facilities in use throughout the 110 years of the ranch's active existence abound. Yet much of the various systems remains underground, in the wet, gravel-strewn ground adjacent to the Clark Fork River. The structural history of the ranch will not be complete until we fully understand the various water systems. But at this stage of research and knowledge, much remains to be learned. Accordingly, only an introduction to the various systems will be attempted here.

1. The Front Lawn Watering System

This system provided the front lawn with water, and no doubt served to keep the cottonwoods or poplars that shaded the front of the house watered as well. It began about eight hundred yards east of the ranch house, east of where the main street of Deer Lodge (U.S. Highway 10) crosses Fred Burr Creek, and just west of the berm supporting Interstate 90. There a ditch tapped Fred Burr Creek. This ditch generally ran along the edge of the higher ground just before it slopes down to the creek. It flowed behind Con Warren's present home, on the south edge of his backyard. It crossed under the Burlington Northern line in a culvert, emerged back into the open, and then passed under the Milwaukee line through a "siphon". This siphon was a large [-] shaped system comprising a hollow cement shaft on the upstream side of the track connected to a tunnel under the track through which the water ran, and a slightly shorter hollow shaft on the other side. The water would seek its own level on the downstream side of the shaft and overflow into the ditch heading toward the front yard. The siphon still exists. The direction from the Burlington Northern to the front yard prior to 1907 when the Milwaukee came through is not known. At the west end of the siphon the water flowed into a ditch along the south side of the east-west fence at that location today. It crossed under the white picket fence outlining
the front yard and connected with a wooden surface box about 8 inches wide and
5 inches deep with plugged holes about 2 inches in diameter spaced along its
west side. When watering the lawn, the plugs were removed, as was the brick
diverting the water from the junction of the ditch with the watering box. The
lawn sloped gently down toward the front of the house to a point about eight
feet in front, where it sloped sharply up to the brick walk in front of the
lower clapboards and the foundation. Thus the water flowing from the box was
prevented from wetting the foundations, lower logs, and clapboards. The ditch
continued from its junction with the watering box parallel to the south side of
the house, carrying water to two half barrels sunk into the ground between the
parallel rows of lilac bushes, which today have joined into one large mass. The
water caught there could be used for watering the flower garden, plants, and
vegetable garden.

The ditch then continued west, over the bluff and down into the lower
ground at the back (west) of the brick addition, where it joined the drainage
system heading west to the creek. The system was used until 1934. It was in
operation quite early, because the M. A. Leeson drawing (History of Montana,
1885) shows the thick grove of cottonwood trees in 1884. They would have re­
quired much water, and this system might have provided it. (So might the heavy
levels of groundwater just under the surface in the area.)

Between the tracks, and along the ditch filled by the siphon, a wheel for
sharpening scythes, etc., was run by a paddle wheel in the water. At one end
was a grindstone, at the other a flywheel acting as a counterbalance. The sys­
tem could be turned on and off by diverting water to run the wheel or by allow­
ing undiverted water to flow west in the ditch.4

2. The Drainage System and Some Aspects of the Water System

The extant data on the drainage system indicates that it was quite large
and complex, although this complexity did not arise by design. It stemmed from
the fact that new drains were often being installed, either because an existing
one became plugged or failed for some other reason, or because a new spring
popped out of the bluff parallel to the railroads. Con Warren has indicated
that once around 1934 when they were digging preparatory to laying pipe to the
horse barns area (Historic Structures 6, 7, 9), they ran into sixteen pipes or
wooden boxes--oriented east-west--once used for drainage purposes. Generally
the drainage was run through cedar boxes, measuring about eight by fourteen
inches, buried in the west soil.

One system began near the creek just south of the ranch house, just west
of the bluff carrying the railroad tracks. Here, in Fred Burr Creek, a diver­
sion dam could send water in a surface ditch to an open ditch that ran along
the edge of the garden. This ditch turned where the garden edge turned north,
and then turned quickly again in the vicinity of Historic Structure 3 and went
south toward Historic Structures 15 and 16 and the buildings west of it. This

4. This portion of the chapter was compiled from interviews with C. K.
Warren, 3 May and 30 June 1975, conducted by the Grant-Kohrs staff and John Al­
bright.
water could flush out the privies located in the general area of Historic Structure 3 and could furnish water for the stock and for the small patches of garden between the ranch house and those stock pens watered by the meanderings of Fred Burr Creek. This ditch eventually emptied into Fred Burr Creek west of Historic Structure 16, passing in a straight line from the row of cottonwoods to the creek. The data on this ditch is not yet complete.

Another system involved a spring just a few feet north of the diversion dam on Fred Burr Creek noted above. The spring was lined with stones (called a "French Drain"), then covered with timbers and buried. A cedar box, about eight by fourteen inches, carried its water. The box (buried about two to three feet deep) angled to the corner of the garden, and must have been just under the open ditch that turned there. Access to the drainage box was about two thirds of the way toward Historic Structure 3, and was provided by a wood-lined vertical shaft, visible today, that permitted dipping water out of the drainage box that can be seen connecting on the upstream and downstream side of the access box today. The system then headed north-northwest across the back of the house and into the field toward the hydraulic ram. The data on this is not yet complete, and will not be until the line is traced.

Another system, comprised of a six-inch pipe, drained the house. Both the spring on the bluff against which the brick addition is built and the water tank overflow in the attic were drained by it. This system came from the spring site, under the length of the basement of the brick addition, and went straight west towards the creek. Presumably the sewage and waste water from the brick addition also drained into this pipe. Today the city sewage system connects to it and the pipe can be seen in the access box located in the open area between Historic Structures 19 and 16.

The hydraulic ram furnished water to a tank located in the attic of the brick addition of the house. The ram was located about seven to eight feet below surface level in the field north of the ranch house, west of the bluff, and about ten feet from the Kohrs-Manning ditch, directly west of Historic Structure 12. It was fed by a cedar pipe, reinforced by wire wrapped around it and waterproofed by a tar coating. This pipe (stored now in sections in Historic Structure 12) went from the bluff near Historic Structure 12 to feed the hydraulic ram. The hydraulic ram was also fed by a six-inch steel pipe running from the same bluff to the ram, but starting further to the south--roughly at a point on the bluff midway between Historic Structures 11 and 12. This pipe had numerous feeder arms connected to it. The hydraulic ram supplied the tank in the attic of the brick addition with a 1 1/4-inch lead pipe. This pipe was buried from about eight feet at the ram to about four feet where it approached the house. The exact trace of it and where it attached to the water tank are unknown.

An arm went north from the open ditch that ran in front of Historic Structures 15 and 16 to water the field north of Historic Structure 23.  

5. This material was provided in various conversations between C. K. Warren and Richard Peterson, Grant-Kohrs Park Historian Paul Gordon, and John Albright at various times between 5 Apr. 1975 and 30 June 1975.
3. The Kohrs-Manning Ditch

The Kohrs-Manning ditch remains an active irrigation ditch today. It is not owned by the government but remains in the private holdings of the Kohrs-Manning Ditch Company. Begun about 1870 by a partnership of Conrad Kohrs and a Judge Manning of Deer Lodge, the long system tapped the waters of the Deer Lodge River south of the present boundaries of the park, and brought water into the pastures along the east side of the river. Intended for only home and agricultural uses, the water in the ditch was not used for mining purposes as was usual. The rights to the water, and the profits from the operation of the ditch, were sold in the early 20th century. Apparently, from 1870 until the present time the bulk of the water was sold north of the ranch and the current park boundary, and the flow of water that came through the ranch was not significant to the ranch's water needs, although the water was put to some use at the ranch and even further south.  

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL STUDIES
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL STUDIES
AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

I. ADDITIONAL STUDIES

The initial association with Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site can be somewhat overwhelming. The magnificence of the furnishings in the ranch house, the wealth of ranch artifacts in the barns, and the myriad documents carefully preserved by Con and Nell Warren impress the casual visitor as well as the researcher. This is inevitable, for the site is a rich one, and the demands it puts on those who will interpret and manage it, and on those who must act to physically preserve it, are equally weighty. For these reasons a relatively large number of studies will be required for the ranch in the near and distant future. No doubt they will be costly, but they are demanded by the resource, and are outlined below.

A. Historical Base Map and Ground Cover Study (Type 33)

The historical base map included in this study is based on research conducted to date, and can serve as a starting point for a more exhaustive and much more complete base map and ground cover study in the future. This report should include an examination of the native grasses, trees, and shrubs and how they have been altered by agricultural uses of the land. Changes in types of vegetation resulting from ranching should form much of this data. The outlines of pastures and attendant fence lines, and the purposes of the various irrigation ditches, diversion dams, and water and drainage systems should be included. The relationship of structures to one another, and to ancillary fences, lands, feedlots, and corrals should be examined in greater detail than has been possible in this report. The types of crops grown during the years the ranch operated, and the types of animals in each of the pastures would be included. This will require considerable research into daily ranch activities and methods. If necessary, archeological excavations might be recommended prior to the completion of this study. The uses of the land by the American Indians prior to its use by John Grant and Con Kohrs should also be included in this study.

B. Biographical Study: Conrad and Augusta Kohrs and John Bielenberg
(No National Park Service standards apply)

This study should be accomplished by a scholar familiar with Montana and Northwestern United States history. Obviously it is beyond the normal scope of the National Park Service’s historical research operations, and might have to be executed under contract with a non-Park Service scholar. An understanding of the daily lives and activities of the three people who determined so much of the history of the ranch is vitally needed for accurate interpretation. The study should include general data on all three individuals, and define the place of Conrad Kohrs in Montana politics, real estate, mining, and agriculture. It
should begin as soon as possible.

C. **Furnishings Study (Type 34)**

While the park is blessed with an abundance of original furnishings, a furnishings study is still very much in order. This study should undertake to determine the provenience of the furnishings throughout the ranch. By understanding the styles of furniture, not only is interpretation of the furnishings facilitated, but decisions concerning restoration and interpretative dating are eased. This study should be executed separately from, but in recognition of, any curatorial studies undertaken in regards to furnishings care and routine maintenance.

D. **Archeology (Types 31, 42, and 43 as required)**

Archeological survey work has been accomplished on a limited basis on two occasions at this park, but it is quite possible that additional work and excavations might be necessary. The drainage system cannot be known in its entirety without limited archeological investigations, and the wisdom of reactivating the drainage systems that once kept the grounds from being as boggy as they are now is an obvious choice facing management at the park. Accordingly, archeology should be considered when formulating procedures for planning, potential development, research, or custodial maintenance of the buildings and site. Formalization of archeological studies, however, must await determinations specific need.

E. **Ranch Operations (Type 33)**

This study is a most necessary one. The daily operations of the home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg should be focused on. Other topics should include: economic aspects of the home ranch in the 19th and 20th centuries, cattle trails to and from the ranch, cattle transportation and marketing and changes in the system over the years, daily ranch and range life, and horse and cattle breeding. Additionally, the daily operations of ranches in the Deer Lodge Valley at the present time should be examined and explained in detail. While the current park staff can benefit from a close association with Con Warren, who lives nearby, future staffs will not have that opportunity. Yet the park will continue to demand from its staff an understanding of ranching skills and stock growing. Without an understanding of why Warren ran things the way he did, and how to care for the animals, equipment, and structures in the daily operations of what might become a "living ranch," future park staffs will be severely handicapped.

While this study should be a history study in format and overall organization, it should contain detailed ranching instructions when appropriate. This study can best be accomplished by the park staff on a "time-available" basis. Furthermore it need not be cast into narrative form by any set date. The research can be conducted and filed in a useable manner, so that interpretive and operational guides can be written from the data base as required. Likewise, there need not be one single author. The park historian can conduct research.
and the seasonal staff and maintenance staff can add material in their particular areas of responsibility. The product can be a flexible one, and tuned to the specific needs of Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. But serious consideration should be given to initiating the program as soon as possible, with assistance as needed from the Historic Preservation Division, Denver Service Center, and Professional Services Branch, Rocky Mountain Regional Office.

F. Historic Resource Maintenance Guide - (No single National Park Service type description applies. Includes Types 32 and 35.)

This study needs to combine the daily maintenance instructions for the park staff expected in a furnishing plan, the preservation data expected in a historic structure preservation guide, and the day-to-day guidance available in a historic resource maintenance plan. The care of furnishings in the house and in the utility buildings should be addressed, as should security procedures, fire prevention and control, building maintenance, painting of structures, road maintenance, and operation of water drainage systems. Like the historic structure preservation guide and historic resource management plans, this guide should be so arranged that it can be added to and updated when necessary. It should be a general guide to the whole of the many-faceted historical resources at the park, however, and view them as a unit. Because of this, it might prove necessary for one individual to control the initial compilation of the data and its preparation into daily guidelines. This individual should be either a curator or a historical architect familiar with the technical demands of building and furnishings conservation.

G. Historical Data Compilation (No single National Park Service type description applies.)

With the Kohrs papers on file at the park, including many materials from the Montana Historical Society and all of the papers kept intact over the years by Con Warren, the park staff should begin systematic exploitation of the data contained therein. The creation of files of data available in the papers and photographs will facilitate research in the future and enrich the interpretation program at the park. The microfilmed series of *The New Northwest* available at the Montana Historical Society should also be purchased and added to the park's collections. On a "time available" basis, *The New Northwest* should be examined issue by issue for data concerning the ranch. (This work requires additional equipment, such as microfilm readers.)

II. INTERPRETATION

Consideration might be given at this time to a comprehensive interpretive historical approach to the numerous National Park Service areas in the West concerned either primarily or secondarily with cattle ranching. Grant-Kohrs Ranch represents both the day-to-day ranching business as well as the life-style of the cattle barons. Other such sites include Theodore Roosevelt National Monument, Lyndon Johnson Birthplace, Dinosaur, and Bighorn Canyon. Taken as a whole, the various sites seem to include virtually every level and every major era of
cattle ranching in the American West. A unified theme of interpretation, buttressed by accurate and dispassionate historical research, might be in order.

III. MICROFILM READERS

There is little escaping the fact that this park creates as strong demands for research as at any historical site managed by the National Park Service. It will be a real benefit, then, to prepare research facilities to exploit the rich collections gathered at the park in 1974 and 1975. A microfilm reader (preferably with a printer attached) and a worktable for researchers will repay the monetary investment time and time again and enrich the interpretive program at the park by facilitating the routine research executed by the park staff. Purchase of a microfilm reader should have a high priority at the park, ranking above additional library acquisitions, as necessary as they are.

IV. STAFF

The present park staff does not include a curator, and one is needed as soon as possible. The park collections include art and ceramics, furniture and rugs, guns and leather horse furniture, wagons and sleighs, wallpaper and linoleum, and dishes and silverware. These artifacts are scattered throughout the buildings and exist within vastly different environments. The ranch house is relatively dry, compared to the humidity in Historic Structure 15 where the wagons are kept. The problems are so varied and numerous that only a fully qualified curator, familiar with historic sites, could assess the needs adequately. This is the primary staff need at this time. It is not often that a park comes under the management of the National Park Service in as complete a condition in terms of furnishings, documents, site integrity, and building relationships, and all measures necessary to protect this unusually complete unit should be taken. Indeed, National Park Service policy seems to demand it.
APPENDICES
Appendix 1

This report, in *The Montana Post* of Virginia City, Montana, 16 December 1865, contains a description of the home ranch house at Deer Lodge and also gives a glimpse of the social life of Deer Lodge City and the Johnny Grant Ranch.

Microfilm, Montana Historical Society.
LETTER FROM BLACKFOOT

Blackfoot, December 2d, 1865.

"EDITORS POST - Gentlemen: In commencing my letter to you, on this occasion I feel like a fashionable lady whose rigid spouse persists in barbarously limiting her means of transportation to six trunks and half a dozen bandboxes- 'Where shall I pack my things,' but reflecting that I have already covered the bottom of one of my literary hand-boxes, with what even my own liberal criticism cannot call news, I commence where I left off, like a store clerk whose dinner has been interrupted by a customer.

COTTONWOOD ALIAS DEER LODGE-THE BALL.

"After thawing out-the first duty of a winter traveler-I found that I was snugly ensconced in Peter Martin & Co.'s Hotel, an institution creditable to the proprietor and satisfactory to its numerous and liberal supporters. A year ago six log cabins, some peacefully ruminating cows, a stray vaquero, and a lot of half-breed pappooses, engaged in making mud pies were the most startling features of the landscape. The most salient point of its history was the hanging of Bill Bunton by a scouting party of the Vigilantes. 'Mous avons change tout cela;' for the Cottonwood of yore is now a thriving town of perhaps one hundred and twenty-five houses, and doing a large business in the staples required by a population, professional, mechanical, agricultural, mining and miscellaneous, apparently well to do, and certainly, destined to do well-weather permitting. Surrounded by the 'Happy Valley' we have described, and being the natural metropolis of a district one hundred and thirty miles long by about twenty broad; and being the base of supply to the new mines of the Hell Gate country, comprising Big Bear, Elk Creek, Dave's, Deep, Rock and Douglas gulches-Deer Lodge cannot 'play out.' Its prospects are not as brilliant as those of a new mining city; but they are solid and satisfactory. When rats are the only tenants of many a now flourishing camp, Deer Lodge will be a CITY. As there are not more than seven dances a week in Cottonwood-I humbly crave pardon-in Deer Lodge City-the hospitable folks got one up for my special benefit, and as turn about is fair play, I write this for theirs. Johnny Grant-the great medicine man of the mixed French-Indian race who ranch round Deer Lodge-had opened a fine Hall for dancing, and, on entering, my ears were saluted by the familiar music of Bullard's band, which institution-the glory of Nevada-I found was starring it in the provinces. On the principle of a Methodist class-meeting, all the sisters (and the babies, not exceeding thirteen in number) were on the right; the lords of creation were on the left, with exception of one or two daring innovators, who had ensconced themselves among the ladies, white, brown and red. This startling proceeding was evidently considered as indicative of want of breeding. A small pappoose, with glittering black eyes, looked daggers at the principal intruder, and then shaking his head and his mouth, betook himself to the maternal fount of nourishment, with immense vigor and evident success. As an excellent friend of mine, from Sligo, once observed of a Roscommon assize ball, the ladies 'embraced' twenty individuals, twelve were either half-breeds or full blooded
squaws, and eight were white ladies. The demeanor of the aboriginal danseuses was as correct and becoming as could be seen in the most polished assembly; and as a rule, they danced very well, and most courteous in gesture, and one or two, who had partners, were so far advanced in the study of the mother tongue of Shakspeare as to be able to inform candidates for the honor of their hand for a dance, that they were 'Canaged.' The old rancheros-Canadian-French, principally-behaved as people of their race always do, in public assemblies; that is, with affability and courtesy. The white ladies and gentlemen were, of course, similar to those you are accustomed to meet in Virginia or Nevada. One specially fine dancer had been lately married to the sound of music and the beat of measured foot-falls. The quadrille was set; the bride and groom stepped forward-were married; and the chain being welded with the usual chaste salute, off they started, 'First four, right and left!'

"Near Deer Lodge City, on Cottonwood Creek, is Dance & Stuart's saw-mill. The fifty-four inch 'Circular' is driven by a forty-horse power portable engine, and has a capacity of fifteen thousand feet of lumber per diem.

"Johnny Grant has the machinery for a grist-mill, and his threshing machine works well. The dwelling house, which is large and two storied, is by long odds the finest in Montana. It appears as if it had been lifted by the chimneys from the bank of the St. Lawrence, and dropped down in Deer Lodge Valley. It has twenty-eight windows, with green-painted shutters, and looks very pretty. Here I saw some fine barley threshed out. Mounted on the top rail of a log corral, I also witnessed the skillful use of the lasso, by the vaqueros, who were branding a lot of wild Spanish cattle. Over the horns and the hind-legs flew the nooses, and the bellowing beeve was thrown and branded 'G' by Johnny himself. The agility with which the operators cleared the fence, or jumped on to the low roof of a shed, when the 'Toro' charged, was highly amusing. I performed a little in the acrobatic line, myself, after declining a 'horn.'"
Appendix 2


Montana Historical Society.
"Funeral Services Conducted for Mrs. Augusta Kohrs; Interment is in Deer Lodge

"Philanthropic Pioneer Woman Died Oct. 29 at 96 years of age after long and colorful career.

"Funeral Services for Mrs. Augusta Kohrs, 96, widow of the late Montana cattle king, vigilante, pioneer, stockman, banker and philanthropist, Conrad Kohrs, who died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. J. M. Anna Boardman, 702 Madison were conducted at the Boardman residence yesterday afternoon at 3 o'clock. The Rev. Emil Ziegler officiated.

"Pallbearers were A. T. Hibbard, Howard Schuyler, E. G. Toomey, George Grossberg, Earl Murphy and Eddie Phillips. Burial was in the Deer Lodge cemetery beside her husband.

"Although her senses had begun to fail her in the last few years, Mrs. Kohrs' keen mind and indomitable spirit remained with her to the end of her long and useful life. A philanthropist in her own right, she made possible in 1933 the $115,000 addition to St. Peter's hospital, known as the Conrad Kohrs memorial.

"Since the death of her pioneer husband in 1920, Mrs. Kohrs had made Helena her home except for occasional trips to New York City and summer months spent on the extensive Kohrs ranch near Deer Lodge.

"Her death brought the end to a life that in later years had been devoted to civic, fraternal and church charities. Although many were little known of except by the receivers, Mrs. Kohrs gave liberally of the fortune she had helped her husband accumulate to innumerable individuals and organizations in Helena and in Montana.

"For many years following the death of her noted husband, Mrs. Kohrs was active in the management of the Conrad Kohrs company, incorporated as a holding company, to administer the vast real estate, livestock, mining claims, bonds, mortgages and stocks owned by the estates for heirs.

"Born Jan. 26, 1849, in Hamburg, Germany, Mrs. Kohrs attended private school and came to the U. S. as a teacher in 1866, settling first in the German community at Davenport, Iowa where Kohrs still operated meat packing houses.

"She was united in marriage with Conrad Kohrs at Davenport Feb. 23, 1868. As a bride of 19, Mrs. Kohrs came up the Missouri river by steamboat from Omaha to Fort Benton in the same year. The trip took 48 days.

"The bridal couple was met at Fort Benton by a Kohrs conveyance which took them to the 30,000-acre home ranch at Deer Lodge, where they lived until coming to Helena in 1899.

"While at Deer Lodge both fortune and adversity met the pioneer couple. A severe winter all but wiped out the vast Kohrs herds but it was not the first time the hardy stockman had tasted ill luck. He stood the loss and came back
to gain the title of 'The Cattle King of Montana.' At one time he purchased 12,000 head of cattle for $400,000.

"Conrad Kohrs had come to this country from Germany when a boy of 15, went to sea out of New York, rafted and steamboated on the Mississippi, joined the gold rush to California via the Panama isthmus in 1856, farmed, made a fortune in the gold mines of the Fraser river and lost it. He came to Montana, arriving at Deer Lodge in July, 1862: prospected and butchered at Bannock. In 1863, he went to the gold rush at Alder gulch, where he operated a retail meat business until 1865.

"During that time he was associated with the Vigilantes and law and order. At one time he was pursued for six hours by bandits who wished to rob him of $5,000 in gold he was carrying. In 1866 he purchased the ranch and livestock of John H. Grant near Deer Lodge and it was to that home he brought his bride.

"The Kohrs were pioneers in the introduction of Shorthorn cattle in Montana, bringing a herd from Illinois in 1871. In 1890, the Kohrs brought Herefords to the state. Conrad Kohrs was a member of the Pioneer Cattle company, organized in 1885, which brought herds to the lush Montana ranges south of the Missouri river.

"Although not politically minded, Conrad Kohrs served as a member of the fourteenth Montana territorial legislature, as a member of the Montana constitutional convention in 1889 and a commissioner of old Deer Lodge county.

"Even in the days before the turn of the century, the Kohrs were known for their kind-hearted and philanthropic deeds. Many a pioneer was grubstaked by them. Many were given loans when in need of help.

"Mr. and Mrs. Kohrs came to Helena in 1899 when many of the major cattlemen of Montana made their headquarters here.

"Although not a member of many organizations, Mrs. Kohrs home was the scene of hospitable entertainment. Oldtimers recall that President Theodore Roosevelt was an intimate of the Kohrs. At one dinner in his honor, Senator Thomas H. Carter was present. The song 'The Irish and the Dutch, They Don't Amount to Much' was sung for their amusement.

"Mrs. Kohrs was an ardent follower of the opera. She went to New York city for the Metropolitan season each year, not missing until 1943. She was a critic of the leading stars of the day.

"She was a member of the First Presbyterian church and gave liberally to it and aided in the erection of the Helena YMCA.

"In her earlier years she traveled to Germany to visit her old home and had made trips to the West Indies and the Hawaiian islands.

"Although the livestock holdings of the Kohrs estate have been liquidated, the properties are still vast. Among the real estate holdings are the Beveridge, Kohrs, Tracy and Brazier blocks in Helena, the Higgins block in Missoula and the Kohrs (CK) ranch at Deer Lodge, now operated by a grandson, Conrad Warren.
The Kohrs company also holds a sizeable interest in the Northwest Bancorporation, acquired during the time Conrad Kohrs was a director of the Union Bank and Trust company, of which he was once president.

"Preceded in death by her husband and one son, William, Mrs. Kohrs is survived by her daughters, Mrs. Anna Boardman of 702 Madison avenue and Mrs. Katherine Bogart of 712 Monroe avenue; two grandsons, Conrad Warren of Deer Lodge and Lt. Col. Robert Warren of the U. S. army medical corps now in Italy; a granddaughter, Mrs. Anna Bache, with her husband, an army major in Georgia, and four great grandsons and three great granddaughters.

"At the time of her liberal donation which made possible the erection, furnishing and equipping of the Conrad Kohrs Memorial, the Lewis and Clark County Medical association paid partial tribute to the works [o]f the pioneer woman with the words, 'By the application of so large a part of the fortune which she helped her distinguished husband acquire, to such useful purposes as the erection of the Conrad Kohrs Memorial unit ---She is a woman who will be remembered and revered in future years for the many ways in which she has made possible better hospital facilities for the entire state.'"
Appendix 3

This description of the wedding of Anna Kohrs and John Boardman, 28 April 1891, appeared in The New Northwest of Deer Lodge, Montana, 1 May 1891.

"HAPPLY MARRIED"

Hon. J. M. Boardman and Miss Anna Kohrs Join Hands and Hearts

"One of the most brilliant weddings ever celebrated in Montana was that of last Tuesday evening, April 28, 1891, when Miss Anna Kohrs, was married to Mr. J. R. Boardman, of Choteau County. The Presbyterian Church was decorated as it was never decorated before from aisle to ceiling. The pulpit was decked in flowers and floral designs. An arch of green, dotted with roses, spanned the altar, and from the centre was suspended a horseshoe; and on the sides a harp and lyre, though silent instruments they were in tune with the beauty of the occasion. Messrs. Alf Whitworth and Fred Gullette ushered the guests to seats, as many of the five hundred who received invitations were able to attend. An expectant gathering of friends was waiting when the bridal party arrived and as they fled down the aisle there was a hush and a murmur of admiration. The bride decked in a heavy white faille silk en trains without trimmings wearing a wreath of myrtle and carrying white roses was in truth loveliness, and Miss Katie Kohrs as bridesmaid was a companion picture in a dress of crepe de chine and carrying pink roses of Catherine Mermit variety. Mrs. Kohrs was attired in black silk velvet and wore diamond ornaments. The gentlemen, the happy bridegroom, J. R. Boardman, and his friend, D. A. Cory, of Helena, as Groomsmen, were in full dress.

"The ceremony was not that brief, a short service which is so short as to lose its solemnity, but the impressive and beautiful exchange of vows, bonded by the golden circlet. Rev. Ried officiated and the father of the bride, Conrad Kohrs, followed the good old custom of giving the bride away.

"Carriages were taken at a quarter past eight and guests invited to the reception followed the wedding party to the paternal home. Here again the florists had been heavily drawn upon and festoons of evergreen and smilax hung from doors and chandeliers, and cut flowers in profusion were in vases and jars, shedding fragrant perfume everywhere. The reception was informal, congratulations and the joyfulness of the occasion were unconfined. A cablegram from Dr. Mussibrod, dated Berlin, 'Best congratulations,' and from Senator W. F. Sanders, dated at Washington, D.C. 'We send you and Miss Kohrs our cordial congratulations with good wishes. Consider Rip Van Winkel's kindly toast our own,' and a score of more of other messages were received that gave proof to the wide-spread popularity of Mr. Boardman and his bonny bride. The wedding dinner was served in the large dining room, brilliantly lighted, and the tables were trimmed in smilax and flowers.

"Tokens of friendship and good will were showered upon them from all quarters of the globe, and a handsomer collection of wedding presents is seldom seen, and never before in this city.

"The guests were Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Mitchell, Capt. and Mrs. James H. Mills, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Valiton, Mr. and Mrs. W. Gehrmann, Miss Wiles, Miss Williams,
Miss Calvin, Miss Dickinson, of Helena, Miss Grove, Rev. Reid, Messrs. Eric Musibrod, D. A. Cory, N. J. John Bielenberg, Alf Withworth, and Fred Gullette.

"Mr. and Mrs. Boardman left for the west Wednesday morning, and will visit Portland and cities on the sound probably until the middle of May, and when they return will take up their home in the New Presbyterian parsonage."
Appendix 4

This letter is one of two from Theodore Roosevelt to Conrad Kohrs found in the Warren Papers.
OYSTER BAY  
LONG ISLAND, N.Y.  

Sept 1st 1915

Dear Con,

In a recent speech at the Plattling camp, I said that we could in this crisis make a first-rate administration, for the President down, without one man in it who was not of German blood or German birth. I had you especially in mind; I wish to bheaven you new President!

I think of you much; I hope that all goes well with you and yours.

Faithfully your friend

Theodore Roosevelt
Appendix 5

The following list is a compilation of entries from the transcribed Powell County Deed Books (up to 1901) and the Powell County Deed Books (those entries following 1901) involving Conrad Kohrs, John Bielenberg, and Conrad Warren. It is provided for use by researchers in studying land acquisition for the home ranch as well as some other real estate transactions by Kohrs and Bielenberg. The list can also facilitate any title searches concerning the park.

A few of the more significant entries in the Miscellaneous Records Book for Powell County are also noted.

The list was prepared during the research conducted for this project and follows the citations in the various county record book indexes. One section taken from Index Book No. 1, "Grantee," follows a list from Index Book No. 1, "Grantor," for example. This appendix, while close to being a complete listing of Kohrs and Bielenberg real estate and business transactions, was prepared as an incidental result of the research conducted for this historic resource study and historic structure report, and it carries no guarantee of representing every single Kohrs and Bielenberg transaction.
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(Articles of Incorporation, Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company)

(Notes seven deed book entries)

**Grantee - Kohrs** *(Not transcribed: All entries from this point forward are Powell County Deed Books, not transcribed.)*

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Grantor - Kohrs

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Book 9 Page 474 (Sale of ranch to Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company)

Grantee - Kohrs

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Grantor - Kohrs

Book 9 Page 60 (Milwaukee Road right-of-way)

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(All entries date from 16 April 1921 and forward—after Con Kohrs death in 1920.)

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Appendix 6

This is the index of the 1893 Kohrs and Bielenberg Stock Farm Catalog, showing one facet of the home ranch enterprise, that of raising and selling registered thoroughbred horses.

Montana Historical Society.
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* Imported.
This interesting document, from *The New Northwest* of Deer Lodge, Montana, 10 September 1886, revealing a conversation with Con Kohrs on the eve of the hard winter of 1886-1887, merits careful consideration. Kohrs was quite optimistic, in this report at least, on the chances for a mild winter and pushed the point strongly. Yet his autobiography infers that he and John were quite worried about the range condition by the fall of 1886. Possibly Con's public statements in this article were those of a business and community leader trying to maintain public confidence in the cattle business. Another possibility is that he was, indeed, as confident as this article indicates he was, but by 1913, when he wrote his autobiography, he had only a somewhat blurred memory of the event to rely on.

From a different perspective, too, the article is valuable, showing one cattleman's approach to the overall market and financing system of the booming cattle business.

Montana Historical Society.
"CATTLE TALK

"Points Picked Up in a Casual Conversation With A Well-Informed Grower

The Northwest Territory Leases and Facilities

"I see it stated that D.A.G. Floweree says he would give $250,000 to have his cattle insured over the coming winter; what do you think of it?"

The above question was put to our friend Conrad Kohrs Monday afternoon as he sat happily smoking his first cigar in three days - his physicians counseling abstinence therefrom on account of bronchial troubles.

"I think he is too apprehensive. Floweree & Lowery have probably 24,000 or 25,000 head of cattle on the range. At an estimate of $35 per head they would aggregate nearly $900,000. Floweree thinks it likely he will lose 25 per cent., if we have a hard winter, and the idea seems to be out that it will be a hard one. I don't know just why it is - probably because I never borrow much trouble out of the future - but I do not apprehend a hard winter on cattle. It may be cold, but it is the heavy snow storms we have to fear, and I don't think we will have them. Beside, despite the dry season, our cattle are fat and strong - in better condition than they were last year."

"I understand you have leased areas of land in the Northwest Territory during your recent visit there. Is this so; if so, what is the object?"

"I did lease 237,000 acres for the Pioneer Cattle Co. and Kohrs & Bielenberg. I also leased 200,000 acres for Mr. Floweree. The leases run 21 years; the rate is two cents per acre per annum. The import duty on cattle to Canada is 20 per cent, but the government to encourage importation from the United States has issued an order waiving the duty until September 15th and admitting them free. I think an order will be issued extending the time until next year. The Northwest Territory is in the peculiar condition of having more marketable cattle than is needed for home use and not enough to warrant export. Its surplus this year is 2,000 or 2,500 head. Canada ships about 80,000 head of live cattle annually to England, but if the Northwest Territory should ship its cattle on the hoof across the continent and ocean as Canadians do, the transportation there by car and vessel would bruise the cattle so they would not be marketable. It cannot ship to Chicago because of the 20 per cent duty of the United States. Therefore its only market for its surplus is England, and to reach this profitably great slaughtering establishments will have to be built at home and lines of refrigerating cars established to convey it dressed to the sea board. The surplus of cattle is not yet sufficient to warrant this so the government is, doubtless at the instance of the graziers, offering inducements that will bring in cattle sufficient to create a great enough surplus to warrant facilities for marketing it."
'Are many cattle being taken over the line this year?'

'I do not think over 20,000 head will be sent over. We are sending only female cattle. They are probably on the new range by this time. By the time their calves are ready to market the facilities for the shipment of dressed beef will be established.'

'Why do you send them at all?'

'Our range is very dry this year and the ranges are getting crowded. There is a large calf crop this year, probably 300,000 and 200,000 head of imported cattle have come in while only about 110,000 head will be marketed. The consumption of the Territory does not exceed 35,000 or 40,000 head annually, so our increase this year will approximate 350,000 head. There are now about 1,600,000 head of cattle in Montana and 1,500,000 head of them are grazed east of a line drawn north and south through Helena. We must therefore look a little ahead. Our Northwest leases give us a right against all except homesteaders and pre-emptors for 21 years. We have one lease within 12 miles of the line, which is a quarantine belt, and another within 50 miles. Mich Oxerart rode them for me, and reports they are well watered, with deep coulies for shelter and that they are new and well grassed where not burnt off. It is colder then here but the snow fall is about the same.'

'How about the round ups and taxes?'

'There have never been any taxes levied on cattle there, but probably there will be hereafter. The Mounted Police have been the government there and levied no taxes on cattle. Their range rules are very good, something similar to the round up rules of Montana. Fences cannot be built lest cattle drift against them and perish. But at the annual round up each owner takes his cattle to his own range, brands them and keeps them there as much as possible.'

'You say about 110,000 head of cattle will be marketed from Montana this year. How many of them will be shipped by you and the Pioneer Company?'

'Probably not exceeding 2,000 head. While the average condition of cattle is good, there are not so many well fatted cattle as usual, and we ship only in that condition. Ordinarily, we would have had 4,000 of prime marketable cattle. Last year nearly all the cattle sold by us, John T. Murphy and Flowerree were slaughtered in Chicago, and shipped to England, which gets all the best beef of the Chicago market.'

'Do you expect to remain here this winter?'

'I will try it. I have been feeling better recently than for a year past. If I continue so I will remain here; if not, I will try the California climate awhile.'

'About this time, Dr. Mitchell, who was sitting by, said 'I think, Con., if I were you I would throw away the remaining half of that cigar.' Knowing that only the solace of the fragrant weed had alleviated the irritation of this volley of questions at even as good a natured and companionable a semi-invalid as Mr. Kohrs, the reporter said 'Thank you' and departed.'
Appendix 8

These articles all appeared in The New Northwest of Deer Lodge, Montana, over the winter of 1886-1887. In addition to describing the winter most graphically, they reveal a boosterism and an unwillingness to admit to economic disaster, as evidenced by the use of phrases such as: "From all we can learn the stock situation on the great ranges is not so bad as was apprehended by owners a couple of weeks ago, and not nearly so bad as reported to the Eastern press." The situation, it turned out, was every bit as bad as feared.

The date of publication appears with each article.
"FREAKS OF THE WIND.

Eighty Miles an Hour at Fort Maginnis.

Special to the Independent.

"FT. MAGINNIS, Feb. 14.--The most severe wind storm ever known in this vicinity struck here about 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and raged with increasing violence till 9 o'clock last night, reaching a velocity of eighty-four miles per hour. Up to noon there was a warm westerly wind, which melted the snow rapidly. At 1 o'clock the mercury stood at 40 degrees above, and at 3 o'clock it marked 2 below, with a sixty-mile-an-hour wind from the northwest. In conversation with several cattle men this morning, it was learned that the loss last night was very heavy, as many of the cattle that had so far withstood the severity of this winter were in a poor condition to battle with such a storm as this. During the storm the atmosphere seemed thoroughly charged with electricity, and many persons received moderate shocks by touching any metallic substances. The minimum temperature last night was eight below zero. To-day there are much warmer and light winds from the west and southwest.

"There is a big country full of snow between St. Paul and Deer Lodge--less in the Gallatin valley than anywhere else we saw. With the enormous snowfall of this winter on this parallel, it is not the cause of wonder that trains are blockaded, but that they get through at all. The Northern Pacific Company has used Herculean efforts to keep its trains moving. Two engines are attached to passenger trains nearly all the way, and in some cases four engines, with a double-headed snow plow running ahead. Freight trains were moving last week, but an engine could haul only a few cars, and the requisition on motive power to move the passenger trains was very heavy."
4 March 1887.

"THE STOCK SITUATION.

The Condition Not Nearly so Bad as Reported.

"Saturday evening last it began blowing great guns from the south, which eventuated in a chinook Sunday and Monday, and the snow went very rapidly. The weather has been spring-like since, and great areas in this valley are already bare of snow, although the late thaw has been so moderate that there has been no freshet. It seems the backbone of the winter is broken and there are hopes of an early spring. Many persons have discontinued feeding their animals, and stock can now get considerable grazing in the valley and hills.

"Advices from the east side are to the effect that the chinook has bared many of the ranges, it having started in on the northern ranges as early as Feb. 17th. From all we can learn the stock situation on the great ranges is not so bad as was apprehended by owners a couple of weeks ago, and not nearly so bad as reported to the Eastern press. Of course there will be a loss of cattle--heavier than usual--but the talk of 90, or 75, or 50 per cent, so freely sent East, is not within any reasonable probability. We know March and early April is generally a hard season on stock, and many weak ones will yet die, but the loss will be largely confined to 'immigrant' cattle. The old rangers stay on the range, where there is feed, but the 'immigrants' drift to the brush-lined streams for shelter, where there is no feed, and cannot be driven back to the ranges like the acclimated herds.

"In the settlements, or with small growers, who nearly all carry some feed, there will not be a crushing loss. There have been very pessimistic views entertained by many of those whose stock was in peril, and very grossly exaggerated reports have gone abroad, but with anything like favorable weather from now on, cattle will generally rustle through. The bunch grass is short, but there were no rains last fall or successive snows and thaws to leach it out this winter, and what grass there is now is more than ordinarily nutritious.

"Even in this valley greatly exaggerated stories have circulated as to losses. Bielenberg & Kohrs, the heaviest horse raisers in this valley, were reported to have lost large numbers by being drifted in, but it was erroneous. Mr. Bielenberg informs us their loss will not aggregate two per cent, to date. Five per cent, of sheep dying--principally old ewes--is a fair annual average in this county. This year it is not estimated to exceed 8 or 10 per cent, at the utmost. The winter has not been a severely cold one, and as nearly all stock (owing to the snow) has been fed since Christmas, it is in better average condition than stock usually is at this time.
"Altogether, we believe Montana stockowners have been more scared than hurt, and the Eastern press has been simply deluged with outrageous lines about the situation. Montana is all right."

"CATTLE IN NEVADA VALLEY."

The Snow Deep, but Cattle Doing Well.

"Ex-Commissioner J. H. Helm, who brought Mrs. Helm here for medical treatment last week, says there has been plenty of snow in Nevada valley, ranging from two feet about Helmville to three, four and five feet at Montour creek, but he knew of none but that had two or three weeks hay left, and nearly all had six or eight weeks of hay. He thought the Blackfoot Horse and Cattle Co. might lose some stock, but that generally there would be little loss. Of herds in the valley, he enumerated—McArrison, 600 head; Geary Bros., 700; John W. Blair, 800; O'Neill, 500; Blanchard, 400; Sturgeon Bros., 300; Ed. Smith, 170; Blackfoot Horse and Cattle Co., 225; Wm. Williams, 400; Keiley Bros., 300; Jack Brazil, 200; J. H. Helm, 150; Frank Gallagher, 150; Matt Peterson, 175; C. G. Birdseye, 125; P. Cahalen, 125; Chas. Smith, 100; Sam Thompson, 70 head; and others in small lots, aggregating at least 500 head, all of which are doing well.

"The deep snow has driven many of the elk and deer from the mountains into the valley and to the ranches, where doubtless some of them become confused and get lost. A variety quite rare here, known as the 'Caribou deer,' was seen among the intruders."
20 May 1887.

"THE CATTLE INDUSTRY.

The Early Reports of Cattle Losses Considerably Exaggerated.

"BOSTON,—The Commercial Bulletin publishes today a special report of the ranch and range cattle industry. The reports are furnished by special correspondents from thirteen states and territories, covering the whole field. The conclusion arrived at was that the early reports of winter losses have been considerably exaggerated. The only Territory where cattlemen suffered a severe loss was in Montana, where the mortality will be from 15 to 25 per cent on the average. The losses in Colorado, Western Kansas and North Kansas, were very light the past winter, running under 5 per cent on the average. Parts of Idaho and Wyoming suffered quite severely, particularly in the north-western parts, but the average losses in the territories were not excessive. Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona were particularly fortunate. The New Mexico correspondent writes that the loss will not exceed three per cent in either of the Territories named. Texas reports some suffering on account of the drouth, but the winter was much more favorable for stockmen than that of 1885-6. On the whole the conclusion was arrived at that the past winter was a favorable one for the cattle raising interests of the West, and that the hide and leather market will not feel the effect of what fallen hides will come upon the market. From every section come reports of encroachments of emigrants upon the grazing territory, and particularly from Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, where the cattlemen are being pushed steadily westward. It is the opinion of some of the correspondents that the cattle raising industry has reached its height. In several States it is reported that it is becoming necessary to raise alfalfa and grass for feed. The Inter-State Commerce law works to the disadvantage of most sections but reports vary on this point. Without exception as to a single State or Territory the spring season opened well with an abundance and a fine outlook for grass. Cattle raisers in Montana feel much encouraged over the outlook and think the favorable spring will go far to recuperate their losses and prevent further losses among weak cattle."
Appendix 9

These excerpts from the Kohrs and Bielenberg Shorthorn Breeding Journal, part of the Warren Papers, show the extent and use of the shorthorn herd from about 1872 to about 1884.
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<td>[Presume home ranch]</td>
<td>July 78</td>
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<td>Grand Island - Bull</td>
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<td>10 July 79</td>
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<td>15 August 78</td>
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<td>&quot;Red with little white, brush of tail red&quot;</td>
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Appendix 10

This affectionate and chatty letter from Con Kohrs to his eldest daughter Anna was written during the family's lengthy stay in Germany from 1880 to 1881. The letterhead reveals that Kohrs and Bielenberg dealt in "Thoroughbred," "Clydesdale," and "Coach Horses," as well as in "Short-Horn" cattle. They had not yet begun to import and market Herefords.
Dear little daughter,

Last evening I received your kind letter. I was very glad to hear from you and knew so that you are all well with the exception of a cold, hoping that you are over it now. I saw Anna Stewart yesterday. She is well and sends her love also Haale Wiley. Town is very still and our old ranch don't look like home without you all it is so still so quite. Have not been much at home, it makes one feel to have to stay here. Our trees have made all frozen last winter.indeed is digging them out now we are going to plant some new ones Tomorrow, the pears are all in bloom. Think we will have a good many flowers this summer. our yard looks nice and green, also the hills look green
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Dear Father:

I have just received word from E.G. Bailey telling me that the stock for his horse interest were all A.K. The cattle on the range are all looking very well; over one half of the cow herd is base. I understand more snow the loss will not be heavier than any ordinary year. Granville has just told me that he has received a telegram from you and you are coming up to Hilbrin and bring statement. He is very surprise. Can is going to make a change in the stock. He told me last fall that he was about the holiday. Granville himself is all right in his present position, but the location of the ranch is wrong, it is too near the Fort & Maidlin. I do say Granville is a good boy, but I cannot run a ranch to have to hire his half bred relatives or have them & their friends around. I do not economically. There is too many girls on this ranch, & I am satisfied now that Rico Anderson just lives off of the Or, one cannot hunt anything around. I have it long, the boys saying I think that everybody here, they are entitled to have. I am satisfied that I can run the outfit several thousand dollars cheaper a year than it has ever been run. I do what want to run Granville out of his position, if you want one to I step down, but the outfit will never be run very cheap as long as you have to support his boys. Rico Anderson's family, everything all right here I go down on the Missouri River in a day. Aces. The people here all seem sorry that you resigned. Love to all.

Your affect. Son

H.O. Kennett
Gov. S. T. Brayner.
Helena, Montana.

My Dear Father:

Sawmill started for Helena yesterday, I have just come from a 2 day ride around our range. Our horses are all fat & we must have no anxiety about them, but I cannot say as much for the cattle for they are now as poor as they are at the end of a hard winter & we do not know what is coming. I have no doubt but what last night killed several thousand head of cattle over in the Judith Basin, just think what can poor cattle do when it is 15 degrees below zero & a wind blowing at the rate of 60 miles per hour, still the cattle on our range will come out when the cattle on the other range will die. I do not think we can get out no matter how the weather clears away with less than a 15% loss any how & if the weather continues like last night & to day for a week it will be nearer 50 than 15. That is just how
The cattle on other ranges around here will die before ours. We look out for cattle near accounts. I am in hopes it will clear up before all two days hence. I suspect you will make some change in the running of this outfit. I do not know what it will be, but someone will have to be down here to look out for the affairs of this company. The foreman alone cannot do it, for a foreman only knows about cattle generally. It is important in other business matters. There will be considerable business connected with the affairs of this company the next year. We have got twice the number of cattle, and I have here, our expenses have not been twice as much. We have had to buy horses, and he has raised his. We have bought for less per head for counting horses we have bought than he has. We want to get the entire running of this outfit. I must say I do not agree with him in all of his ideas on how to run a cattle ranch. I think they are a little set. His handling of his own cattle down here this fall has been at a loss to him, and a big loss to the rest of the range. I will explain everything to you when I see you next.
as look out for him, or he will handle this outfit entirely, so that it will help his other outfit and not help ours. It has to a small extent alone as in the past. I think he expects too much. I am satisfied the outfit can be run much cheaper & I know that I can run it cheaper. Look out for the weather for the next few days & you will see how we will come out. T. D. Power will lose a large percent of the cattle he brought from Texas. I have seen dead one swol over the country of them, he will be lucky if he saves 25% of them. I have some boys out now gathering the feed & will send more out as soon as this storm about we will save quite a no. this way. Love to all.

Yours affec. son.

[Signature]

I will run you posted about the cattle.

[Signature]
Appendix 12

This is a compilation of entries from Conrad Kohrs's ledger for 1892-1906. The ledger book contains 480 pages and 591 separate entries. Up to page 420 each account is named, but after this only the number of entries per page is shown. The breadth of Con Kohrs's business activities from 1892 to 1906 is graphically portrayed in this ledger, and the diverse business investments he had are shown most graphically.

Montana Historical Society.
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Appendix 13

The following list is taken from the initial frames of Roll 1, the first of seven rolls of microfilm of the Kohrs-Bielenberg-Warren Papers photographed in the fall of 1975 by University of Montana Archivist Dale Johnson under contract to the National Park Service. It is provided for planning purposes by those utilizing this report prior to further Grant-Kohrs Ranch research.

The Conrad Kohrs Papers contain the correspondence and financial records of Conrad Kohrs and the Kohrs and Bielenberg partnership, and the records of various companies that Kohrs controlled. Kohrs and his half brother John Bielenberg operated the ranch and many of their other joint investments as a partnership until 1908, when they incorporated as the Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company. All unidentifiable records were filmed with the Conrad Kohrs segment of the collection. In researching into the various activities of Kohrs, one may be able to identify some of these records as belonging to one of the several subgroups.

The legibility of some of the records, in particular of the letter-press copybooks, is generally poor. This is due in part to water damage that occurred when the image was transferred from the original to the tissue lettercopy. It is due also to deterioration over the many years of storage. In most cases the original document is as illegible as the microfilm copy.
## REEL 1

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Appendix 14

Page 163 of the 1903 Brand Book for Montana (the title page of which is also shown here) carries the major Kohrs, Bielenberg, and Boardman cattle and horse brand designs.
Pioneer Cattle Company.
CONRAD KOHRS, President, J. M. BOARDMAN, Gen. Manager.
P. O. Address, Helena, Mont.
S. J. Scott, Foreman, Oswego, Mont.
Range, north from Yellowstone River to Missouri River, including Big Dry Creek and tributaries in Dawson county.

Earmark

Other brands

D-S left side cattle
left shoulder horses

left shoulder 5 left thigh 5 left thigh

left shoulder left thigh

left thigh or left side

Vent for horses,

over brand

left thigh

HELENA, MONTANA
INDEPENDENT PUBLISHING CO.
1903
Appendix 15

This essay examines ranching in the 1940s as the old men remembered it. The social side of the cattle business is portrayed by one who remembers living on a ranch as a boy and young man.
FOREWORD

In western literature there is little material to be found concerning the stature of various individuals on cattle ranches. I do not presume this short paper can be considered authoritative. I have merely written down some of my thoughts on an interesting and almost completely ignored subject.

Neither do I make any pretense that this is a scholarly paper. It is not footnoted, and much material has been gleaned from various writers, particularly Andy Adams, J. Frank Dobie, and "Teddy Blue" Abbott. Much of what I say I draw from my own background.

I grew up on the Victoria Land and Cattle Co. at Engle, New Mexico. There many things were done in the old way, because they were a huge outfit (1,200 square miles) and very conservative. They employed many old-time cowboys, who had come along in the closing years of the cattle frontier, and were old men near the end of the line in the 1940s and early 1950s. I listened to these old fellows lament the passing of the world they had known, and came to know, if not, at the time appreciate, their values.

They had been a part of the social structure that had grown with the cattle industry. Their day was already past thirty years ago. The country will never see their like again.

Paul R. Gordon
GRANT-KOHRS RANCH NAT'L. HISTORIC SITE
January 8, 1976
There have been tons of paper expended on the story of the cattle frontier, its closing, and the appearance of the modern cattle industry.

In the literature of the west, and in much that cannot be called literature, there is little that deals with the caste system that actually existed on the ranches and roundups of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Much has been written about the quality and democracy that existed, but little can be found about the individual's place in the system, and the fact that most found it very comfortable in their niche.

An employee that was not always present on ranches, but that when there was on the bottom of the heap, was the cook's helper. This generally was an old man or a boy. Occasionally this was some sort of derelict or hobo. At times he was a strong, capable young man on the bum or one who was new to the west.

The helper was known by various names, such as hoodlum, hooligan, or most commonly (especially in Texas and the southwest) flunky. His jobs were varied and his hours, like everyone else's on a ranch, were long. He chopped the wood for the cook fire, washed the dishes, peeled potatoes or did other menial tasks for the cook, and when the roundup was on the move he drove the bed or "hoodlum" wagon.

Often, if the flunky was a youngster or a man new to the west he was allowed to take part in the general roundup when there was time from his other work. He would probably not go on the drive when the roundup herd was being thrown together, or even help with holding the herd. He might help flank calves, or generally make himself useful, being careful to stay out of the way around the branding fire. If lucky, he might aim at becoming a cowboy. However, few cowpunchers started this way. Most started at a young age around the ranch where they were born or drifted to. Therefore, often the flunky's job was about as dead-end an occupation as can be imagined.

Often, if the flunky was a youngster, he was the butt of many a joke and to use the cowboy phrase, "hurrahing." He received ribald comments about his lack of experience with women, especially with those types that hung out in the saloons and inhabited the cathouses from the Rio to the Canadian border. Also, if there were any girls in the area, it was great sport to mention them when making fun of the flunky being careful, of course, to make sure that no male relatives of the women were about.

The flunky seemingly appeared rather late on the cow ranges. Prior to his coming his work fell to the cook, so in many ways he was a valuable employee, but the one person whom everyone else could look down upon.
On a level with the flunky in the scheme of things socially was the ranch Choreboy. This individual probably never went with the roundup and certainly never went on a trail drive. His kind was not numerous, and generally found only around the main ranch headquarters.

The Choreboy, who might be a boy of twelve or a man of sixty, probably had no experience as a cowboy, or if he did, he was too stove up to do a hand's work. The kind of work he did was totally beneath the dignity of a cowpuncher. His duties might include milking cows, feeding, watering, and herding stock, chopping wood, and harnessing the buggy or wagon for the manager, the owner, or his family. He might also saddle horses for family members (no one ever saddled a cowpuncher's horse but himself), and perform ten thousand other tasks.

Of those whom life treated badly on a ranch, probably none was treated worse than the choreboy.

Often, besides men too young, too old, or lacking experience, Choreboys were members of various minority groups or recent emigrants. Blacks, Mexicans, Indians, and people of every other hue and speaking all the tongues of the Tower of Babel, and then some, were Choreboys at one time or another.

Often the Choreboy might be retarded or otherwise handicapped, and since they were usually employed the year round, these jobs might fill a definite social need not otherwise filled in the west.

When the time came when the choreboy could no longer work, he was either allowed to remain on the ranch through the kindness of the owner, or was sent into town to end his days, often in misery and squalor.

The horse wrangler rated above the flunky and choreboy, but below a full-fledged cowboy.

Like the flunky, this job, one of utmost importance, was often held by an old, over-the-hill cowpuncher, or a youngster. He loose herded the horse herd, or remuda, during the day. Before the days of fenced horse pastures, he night herded or "night hawked" the horses to keep them from straying, catching what sleep he could, when he could. The average mount of any cowpuncher, whether on the trail or on the roundup, was about ten horses. However, there might be as few as six or as many as twelve or fifteen in a man's mount, so a wrangler generally had his hands full.

The average day saw a cowboy change horses three times, and on a long hard stretch four or five times or more. The wrangler had to have his remuda up to the wagon, or wherever the wagon boss designated, at a given time for each change of horses, and woe betide the wrangler who didn't deliver.

In the wagon were carried several iron pins about four feet long. Using the cook's (or flunky's) axe, the wrangler, drove two of these pins at an angle from the wagon to form a large triangle, using the wagon as the apex. Ropes were strung on the pins and wagon wheel. The horses were driven into this corral and held here until they were roped. Upon occasion the horses for the
riders were caught and ready for them when they came to the wagon. The horse
wrangler might be called upon at times to assist with the cattle herd, or at
the branding fire, but his chief duty was the remuda, because without the
horses in good shape, and wrangled on time, the outfit was afoot, and this
meant lost money for the outfit.

The wrangler, if a youngster, could hope to work his way into the cow-
puncher ranks. However, if he was an old man it was the end of the line. From
wrangler, there was possibly a flunky's job, choreboy around the ranch, or just
living out his remaining years as a hanger-on, existing on the sufferance of
the ranch manager or owner.

Although all ranches did not have a choreboy of flunky, most ranches had
a cook. The cooks led a varied and colorful existence. Although almost no
mention of the choreboy or flunky exists in western history, vast reams of
paper have been expanded on the cook. Also, he is a favorite character for
movie and TV writers, who generally mutilate his image as effectively as they
do that of the cowboy.

One of the best examples and descriptions of the life of a trail drive
cook is found in Andy Adams's *Log of a Cowboy*. This is the classic work on the
life of men who rode the long trails from Texas to the great buffalo plains
and left their mark on America. As J. Frank Dobie said, this book tells the
story of cows and cowboys, if none other had ever been written on the subject.

The life of Adams's Barney McCann is the prime example of both the social
role and the day-to-day existence of the cook. His day was as long or even
longer than anyone's, and his work often more physically exhausting. Before
the advent of the cook's helper, he did the work of both.

The cook occupied a unique place in the social structure of the West,
filling the roll of doctor, lawyer, and father confessor to the cowboys. This
of course depended to a great extent on the color of his skin. The darker he
was, the further down the scale, since cowpunchers were as prejudiced as the
general population, if not more so. Cooks came in every size, shape, and hue.
There were Blacks, Mexicans, Chinese, and every European breed known. Around
the ranches the cook was often Chinese, one of the menial jobs allowed them
in the West (Democracy didn't include the Chinese).

There are few, if any, records of Chinese cooks going up the trail with
the herds, or on the roundup. The Celestials were found mostly in the ranch
house or behind the bunkhouse cook stoves plying their trade. Most roundup
cooks had to know many skills other than mere cooking to get along out on the
ranges. They had to know how to handle the teams that pulled the wagon, and
on occasion double as a cowboy. Few Chinese ever had a chance to gain the
knowledge, and coupled with plan old American prejudice, this left the Chinese
out.

Most cooks worked only during the roundup, or were hired strictly for
one trail drive. On other ranches he was a year-round employee, feeding the
greatly diminished winter crew, or working the ranch house.

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A good cook was one of the major factors in morale maintenance for any crew. Good meals, on time and in quantity, were at times the only solace that awaited men who might spend twenty-four hours at a time in the saddle. Therefore, a smart operator paid his cook the second highest salary on the crew, exceeded only by the wagon boss. At a time when a top cowhand earned $45 per month, a first-class cook might earn $60 to $75.

Along with the higher salary, the cook was the recipient of certain other privileges. He slept in the wagon, or under it, out of the rain and snow. Before the introduction of canvas teepees and squad tents, the cowpunchers pulled a tarp over themselves and hoped for the best. (Long after Montana and Wyoming cowboys were under some sort of cover, New Mexico and Texas "Rawhides" still used the sky for a roof.) He was also allowed to gripe, complain, and generally indulge in behavior not tolerated in any other crew member.

The cook always had the groceries with him, and if he didn't eat, no one else did. A lost wagon was not unknown, and while hungry cowboys tightened their belts, the cook sat, somewhere, on the only groceries for a hundred miles. During a stampede, when a herd of semiwild longhorns fresh from the mesquite thickets of south Texas ran, they might cover fifteen miles in forty directions before daylight. When the sun rose, a cowboy who had stayed with them might have a general idea of where the Yellowstone and the Rio Grande were, but not much in between. A cook who could find the majority of the herd and feed the worn-out men on played-out horses was respected indeed.

A cook was often an old-time cowboy, or on occasion, a puncher in his prime who couldn't land a rider's job. The abilities of roundup cooks varied as widely as their skin colors. A man with the reputation of a good cook, who could get the job done, was hardly ever unemployed. In most parts of the country during the heyday of the cattle business, the demand far outdistanced the supply of good "cocineros." (Like many words in the ranch business, the nickname "cuci" for the cook was Spanish.)

The status of the cooks changed drastically once the roundup was finished, or the herd delivered at the end of the trail. On the wagon the cook had been king. At the end of the work, the boss might treat everyone at the nearest dispensary of hard goods, but their pets were the top cowboys. On the trail you couldn't get along without the cook, but at the end you did without them nicely. It was more fun to listen to tales of wild rides after the herd in a stampede, of mean horses ridden, or of bad rivers crossed, told by a good-looking cowboy, than to hear the cook.

All the tales the cook could tell were of getting up before everyone else, getting breakfast, loading his wagon, harnessing his team, and driving ten miles to get another meal at noon. Of course he swam every river, was in every storm, and experienced every hardship of the cowboys. But he was generally older, dirtier, and generally nastier looking and could drink more booze than the flashier-looking punchers. Why take the mess sergeant out on the town when you can have a commando?

Finally, if an army runs on its stomach, so did a cow outfit. It was slim pickings at times, but it was made better or worse by these men who were a little bit of everything in their chosen field.
The very epitome of the West, socially exceeded only by the wagon boss or rancher, and not always by them, were the cowboys. This character comes through bigger than life in the American legend. Many a man who never punched cows for a living has come to be accepted today as a cowpuncher, including many of the famous or infamous bad men of the West. This is unfair to as bold, loyal, and generous a set of men as ever lived. The real cowboys are generally lost to history with only a few exceptions, while much of the riffraff has been remembered, too often as heroes. It is sad the psychopaths like Billy the Kid and John Wesley Hardin are called cowboys. While they might have punched cows for a time, they did not consider themselves, nor were they considered by their contemporaries, as cowpunchers.

Also, many men who at best were marginal hands and who were held in contempt by real punchers have been accepted as cowboys. These were men who were farmers, railroaders, or others who might pawn themselves off as punchers. If they didn't give themselves away by the first half dozen words they said, they certainly did the first time they got on a horse.

In the modern day, some men still pass themselves off as "cowboys." These include rodeo riders who never worked on a ranch, farm boys who never got out of a barnyard, and real westerners who have worked their jaws and a bar stool far more than anything else.

When asked recently why he didn't dress in western clothes, a successful Montana rancher is reported to have said "Hell, I don't wear boots and a big hat, I don't want someone to think I'm a truck driver." So much for many of our modern cowpokes.

An 1890s cowboy, a man who had seen the heyday of the open range, was a proud man. He was the prisoner of the legend that was growing about him already. He was also the epitome of the Victorian picture of the virile male. Overly courteous to respectable women, he placed them on a social pedestal. By the same token he probably would not dare cross the social line and approach the daughter of a rich rancher, if he ever saw her. Rather, he paid gallant court to the local school marm or daughter of the homesteaders who were crowding in and spelling doom for his way of life.

However, there are instances when a puncher successfully courted and won the hand of the daughter of a wealthy rancher. This was most true in a case where the wealthy rancher had not always been so wealthy, and where his daughters might even be the offspring of an Indian or Mexican mother.

The cowboy might spring from any background, but following the Civil War, when the cowboy as we know him really came into being, he probably learned his trade in Texas, or from Texans. Texas was the great incubator of cattle to feed the insatiable American appetite for beef following the war. Even though a man may have come from somewhere else originally, Texas was where he started his cowboying.

An example of this is Andy Adams's chief character Quirk, who, although born in Georgia, learned his trade in south Texas, and then went up the long
trail to Montana. "Teddy Blue" Abbott was an Englishman but a Texan by adoption and left his story in We Pointed Them North.

However, many of the first cowboys were native Texans, and no greater accolade could be paid a man by his peers in 1900 than to say "He was a real old Texas cowboy."

By 1890 a second generation of cowpunchers had come along, born, as were the cattle they worked and the horses they rode, far from Texas. The ranches of New Mexico, Montana, and all points between could produce their own. Just as the early Texas cowboys had taken the Mexican methods of cattle handling and improved on them, so this new generation took the Texas methods and improved, adding to them methods first employed by Spanish vaqueros in California and adaptions for the cold country of the northern States.

Socially, there was a definite pecking order among a trail or roundup crew. A "top hand" might not only be paid more money than other members of the same crew, but he might also be paid in the respect and deferral he received from other men of the outfit.

An outfit might have several "top hands," and in seeking to maintain their status they might show their jealousy toward one another or they might band together and form a tight social unit, excluding all others. Along with their favorite subject of conversation, horses, and talk about the fire at night would deal with the doings of the day and with the top hands the men had known in the past.

Whenever the need might arise, a top hand might fill in as a straw boss or "segundo" if so appointed by the wagon boss. These jobs carried prestige in the eyes of everyone. If the rancher, manager, or wagon boss had a pet, he was generally to be found among this group. They might be men who treated everyone as equal, regardless, or they might be bullies and arrogant toward other members of the crew. They were often arrogant toward all Mexicans, Indians, Negroes, and "furriners." That was an accepted attitude--you didn't have to be a top hand to feel that way.

Beneath the top hands in importance were usually the rank and file of the cowpunchers. Good men generally, but not quite the bronc rider, roper, or as daring as the upper level. These men might be youngsters on their way up, older men on their way down, or men who just didn't measure up in all ways. The great myth of western equality didn't always extend to a roundup tent.

At the bottom of the cowboy social ladder were youngsters just starting, old men, and those who claimed to be cowboys. This latter group was the most disdained of all. If you weren't a cowboy, and admitted it, you could probably look for help from the rest of the crew. A different story was the man who said he was a puncher and gave himself away as soon as he opened his mouth or started to saddle his horse. An old puncher could tell immediately, and he placed such an individual beneath contempt.

Much has been written in good literature of the cowboys' vanity. Suffice to say that many of the most vain and proud often were the best cowboys. Those
who weren't top hand couldn't always afford vanity. A top hand might wear a white shirt, necktie, and gloves covering soft, white hands proclaiming to the world his status and get away with it. This might not always be the case with men who didn't share his abilities.

One vanity seemed to have been reflected throughout all groups of ranch people and cowboys. This was a vanity about the size of their feet. For some unknown cultural reason, the smaller the foot, the better. It could possibly be traced to a feeling, as articulated by Kohrs' old partner John Bielenberg, that "If it can't be done on a horse, it ain't worth doing." When your feet hurt, you couldn't walk, therefore, you couldn't work at menial tasks.

Old men from New Mexico to Montana limped about on pinched feet, looking down their weather-beaten noses at anyone who had a bigger boot. Perhaps 19th-century Chinese women with their bound and deformed feet could have sympathized with American cowpunchers in their tight boots.

Many an old cowhand's great boast was that he wore a size 5-1/2 or 6 boot. Some of those were rather large size sixes. Since a good cowboy wouldn't buy his boots ready-made (he called them "hand-me-downs"), he would order his foot gear custom-made. A boot maker who knew his cowboys would take their foot tracings and assure them they wore a size or so smaller then they actually did.

Another trick was to take your $40 boots (when a cowboy earned $35 a month) and stretch them when new. There were a number of ways of doing this. Happy was the cowboy who could get a size seven boot to where he could get a size nine foot into it.

As a last resort, and commonly done, take your boots to a shoe shop, split them on the instep, over your assorted corns, bunions, and other deformities, and have leather patches sewn over the cuts. Then you could limp out facing the world, proud of your small feet, point out a brogan clad farm boy and laugh at the huge size of his ridiculous feet. You knew you were a cut above mortal men when you punched cows.

At the top of the social heap in the eyes of most cowboys and many ranchers were the wagon and trail bosses. These were generally both good cowboys and men who could handle other men as well as horses and cows.

A trail boss was a man who was in his heyday from the mid 1860s through the 1880s. As the railroads pushed further and further west, trail drives grew shorter and shorter, and finally ceased because the herds had to be moved only short distances to shipping points.

A trail boss might be hired for only one trip, or he might be a trusted employee who worked full time for an outfit. A herd might be purchased on the range, counted, paid for, and then headed for distant markets or ranges sometimes 1,500 miles away, as in the case of Andy Adams's Circle Dot outfit.

The trail boss had to be a man whom the owner or owners of a herd could rely on. He was entrusted with a herd worth thousands of dollars, a remuda
of saddle horses, a wagon, and usually a good deal of cash money. With all of this and the crew under his control, he headed for his destination. Often he was totally out of contact with anyone other than his men for weeks at a time. The fortune of an owner rested on the judgement, skill, and honesty of this man.

A good trail boss whose reputation had been established was sought after by ranchers and speculators with herds to move. This man might even be seen on occasion in company with a rich rancher at the Montana club in Helena, the Saddle and Sirloin Room in Chicago, or the Paso Del Norte Hotel in El Paso. The old man might entertain all the boys at trails end with a liberal treat, but the trail boss was about the only one going up the trail to see the sanctums of true power of the cattle industry.

In the eyes of his men, a trail boss had to prove himself in a number of ways. First, he had to be a good cowboy. He had to go first in any jackpot the outfit found itself in. A puncher spent long, long hours in the saddle with the herd. The boss spent longer. He had to scout ahead for water, grass, and any stretch of trail that provided danger for the outfit. It fell to the boss to leave the camp long before daylight, and often the sun was long gone before he returned.

The boss had to prove from the start he was the boss. He had to know cows, horses, cooks, men, read the country like a book, and made hard decisions. These decisions might literally mean life and death, not only for the herd and the profit of the venture, but for himself and his men. How he acted under these conditions was his mark among men, and not something given or taken lightly.

The men who went up the trail might have the greatest contempt for the owner of the herd (if they even knew who he was), for each other, and the world in general. But if they did not have respect and some obedience and loyalty to the trail boss, a fortune could easily go down the drain. (The cowboys of the West made and lost many a fortune--for someone else).

Somewhat different in his role from the trail boss was the wagon boss, or in some cases, the roundup captain.

Many of the large outfits were run by a hired manager, especially those that were foreign owned. However, on the roundup, the running of things fell to the wagon boss who was constantly with the crew. At times when the beef roundup was over, it was the wagon boss who became the trail boss and took the herd to market.

In the days of the open range, cattle owners would form roundup pools. They would then hire a captain, and the wagon bosses of the various outfits and their crews were subordinate to him. Smaller outfits would send representatives to claim and brand calves in the spring roundup, and cut out beef on the fall roundup.

Large outfits would send a wagon and crew to work under the captains, and when they were fairly clear of their country would often recall everyone except
their representative. These reps were men of trust, and enjoyed an upper niche in the cowboy social hierarchy. On the roundup, the manager or owner gave general directions, but the wagon boss gave instructions to the men, and was the boss.

Roundup captains, wagon bosses, and trail bosses might be owners or part owners of ranches. However, they were generally hired men, and it was these men who made many of the entrepreneurs of the west into cattle kings. Without these front line managers, the story of the West would have been different. The ability to judge and choose these men was what made the names of men like Con Kohrs, Charlie Goodnight, and their kind come down in history as successes. While they were in Chicago and Washington pulling off big deals, they knew things were OK on the trail or on the roundup. They could sleep peacefully in the Palmer House, because the wagon boss slept lightly in his bedroll of the Big Dry, or where the Rock Arroyo runs into the Pecos.

The hired manager was generally a man more knowledgeable in the ways of money, markets, and finance than he was in the ways of horses and cows. The roundup he left to the wagon boss; the ledgers he must handle himself, and if there was not a profit margin at the end of the year, woe betide the manager. A trail boss and the cowboys might face blizzards, alkali, and the fierceness of Indians in Blackfoot or Comanche country. A manager had to face debentures, credits, and the fierceness of stockholders in Scotland and New York. You could get scalped in either situation.

Oftimes the hired manager was totally unfamiliar with the West when he took over the management of an operation. When the rush to get into the western cattle industry took place in the 1870s and 1880s, many companies formed to get into the business. Several were based in London and Edinburgh. They often chose as managers a canny Scotsman or Englishman wise in the ways of business.

When they arrived in the West, many of these men found a strange environment and even stranger people awaiting them. Socially, they were generally accepted by the business community they dealt with, and by ranch owners. Their acceptance by the sons of the open that inhabited the ranches was something else. The Scotsman and even more so his English brethren came from a closed society, and their first contact with the independent-minded cowpunchers of America often left both parties a little shaken.

There were managers who had come up through the ranks of the cowboys and had been trail bosses and roundup captains. You could learn horses, cows, men and yourself, and bring a herd of wild critters from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian line, and still not have learned the essentials it took to manage the dollar. Valuable indeed was the individual who could do both. That man could have the respect and admiration of everyone from the ranch cook to the Chicago Board of Trade. He truly was a man among men.

At the top of the heap was the rancher. That was the completion of the American dream for every man or woman who ever lived off of cows in the West.

The status of ranchers varied widely, both in the eyes of their contemporaries and in the eyes of their hired men on horseback. They may have been born into wealth, or they may have earned it. Many a land owner or user, who
owned vast herds of cattle, never saw them. They knew of them only from their
managers' reports, and cared only to the extent of a profit or loss statement
at the year's end.

There were ranchers who had been hired cowboys, good ones, and bad ones,
honest men, and thieves. They had gotten their start through the help of
ranchers friendly to them, or in spite of unfriendly ranchers. Some got their
start simply because they got there first.

These latter might push into a new country, fight Indians or the elements,
and start building their herds. They were then cautious about anyone else
arriving and wanting to go into the business. I got here first, you stay the
hell away, was their attitude to a great extent.

Some ranchers got their start by "swinging a long rope." In other words,
branding his neighbor's calves. If they got away with it, they were held in
great respect by all, except of course by those whose calves were stolen. If
they were caught, this really didn't lower them too much in the eyes of the
cowboys. It did in the eyes of other ranchers.

There was a definite status among cow thieves. A man who stole a beef to
eat, or stole a few head and sold them, was not held in much respect by anyone.
As a matter of fact, he might be shot by cowboys, ranchers, or lawmen with no
qualms. On the other hand, an enterprising cowboy or small rancher who stole
from others, particularly big outfits, to get a start was not looked down upon
by punchers, and often not by anyone else. His was part of the great dream,
and many a fortune was built this way. After he attained success was the time
for such a rancher to become a pillar of law and order.

By the 1890s and early 1900s things were changing. Big ranches still
existed, roundups still ran, and a top hand was still a man to be reckoned with.
But an insidious thing began to creep into being. Men began to have to get
off their horses to do certain jobs.

After the disastrous winter of 1886, northern ranchers began to feed their
cattle during the long cold winters. Also, farther to the south, Texas, New
Mexico, and Colorado ranchers saw this as a way to make it on their chronically
overstocked, perpetually drought-stricken ranges. This was to bring about a
dramatic change in the way a cowboy or rancher viewed his world, and his role
in it.

In the eyes of many an old-time cowboy, the lowest form of life was the
farmer, plodding behind a plow, stooped, and with horny hands. A farmer stood
for everything a cowboy prided himself on being above. The cowboy spoke a
different language from the farmer, had soft hands, and prided himself on being
unable to do common tasks. Now suddenly he was supposed to heave hay, cotton-
seed cake, and other cow feed! He, the man on the horse! But the worst was
yet to come. Many ranchers began to grow their own feed. Now, ranch hands
had to irrigate in summer and cut and haul hay in the fall. A new generation
came along, willing to do these chores, and dared call themselves cowboys. The
old-timers couldn't stand it. They began to live in the past, except on the
few big outfits where the past still predominated and where a man still figured
"If you can't do it on a horse, it ain't worth doing."

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Appendix 16

Letter from Conrad Kohrs to Frank Conelly, Mayor of Deer Lodge, 14 April 1916.

The text of this letter does not need any additional explanation.
April 14th 1916.

Mr. Frank Connelly, Mayor,
Deer Lodge, Montana.

Dear Frank:

I have a letter requesting my wife and myself to permit the Christian Science people to use the basement of the William K. Kohrs Memorial Library. I shall like to call your attention to the conditions under which I made this gift to the people of Deer Lodge, as possibly yourself and the Aldermen may have overlooked it.

The gift provides that there shall never be allowed any religious or political meeting held in this library, in order to avoid political cliques or any particular religion to run the library.

Now Frank I will not answer any of the letters I have from the Christian Science people, and I wish to call your attention to it that the Trustees have nothing to say about this matter, as it is entirely in the hands of the Mayor and Aldermen.

You will pardon me for calling your attention to this, but I am hoping that you will attend to it for me.

Your friend,

Conrad Kohrs.
Appendix 17

This essay, prepared by Rodd Wheaton, Historical Architect, Rocky Mountain Region, concerns the furnishings of the ranch house and the cultural influences they reflect. Illustrations 7, 15, and 16 illuminate much of this text.
In 1890 Augusta Kohrs undoubtedly oversaw the construction of the brick wing behind the original log structure, which, like its predecessor, is austere, belying the attention paid to interior detail. Completed with a furnace, a hydraulic ram for supplying running water, and a carbide gas generator "Gas Plant" for gas lighting, the wing was built by a troop of builders and finishers whose payments appear in the 1887-1892 Day Book. W. W. Reed was paid "for laying rock" December 4, 1889, and again in July 1890. In December "Robertson & Bonner" were paid for lumber. In September 1890 W. L. Law was paid for carpentry and Charles Forrest was paid "for 3977 brick." Hamile Christian laid 1,258 yards of plaster at forty cents per yard for a total cost of $503.20. In January 1891, Thomas Laughlin apparently finished the plastering. One Mr. Keiser was paid $50.00 for painting in October 1890, and a "Hardwood Carpenter" worked in the dining room in December. Finally, identified purpose cash outlays, which are rare, in January and February 1891 included the Bonner Mercantile Company, Butte, Montana, for carpets ($483.62) and moulding.

The wing forms a "T" at the rear of the clapboarded pieux en coullisse log structure erected for John Francis Grant by, as noted in his memoirs, "McLeod the hewer" and "carpenter Alexander Pambrun." Grant also noted that the interior walls were finished with local slaked lime plaster at the cost of $150.00 in 1862. (The ceilings, with exposed joists, were whitewashed.) Bearing some similarities to an article published in Deer Lodge City's New Northwest newspaper in 1887 entitled "Helping the Housewife, How Architects Should Plan the People's Homes," by Louis H. Gibson of Indianapolis, the wing contains a connecting "china pantry" between the dining room and kitchen; folding doors separating the dining room from the sitting room, the center of family activity at the ranch house; an easy flight of stairs descending to the basement; and several second floor bedrooms, each with a closet, interconnected en suite.

The trim of the wing is typical of stock millwork that could have come from a company such as the Rock Island (Illinois) Sash and Door Works, which was marketing several styles including the "head block and cap finish" corner block trim. Symmetrical in profile, this trim is set with a molded roundel within the corner blocks that extend beyond the head piece with a section of molding. Multipanel doors are hung below glazed transoms. The trim is painted in two tones, stained, or, as in the case of the dining room, varnished to match paneled oak wainscoting.

Oak is also the primary wood of the turned and paneled octagonal newel post, the molded railing, and the turned balusters of the stairway of the back hallway. Here the base coat of paint on the plaster walling is combed with circle motifs. Sprouting above the picture mold, within a frieze space, the combing reflects stylized flowers and foliage. (Considerably more elaborate, the "Copper King Mansion," built in Butte, has extensive combing work.)

The 1890 interiors contrast markedly with the earlier interiors, which are an expression of the vernacular craftsmanship utilizing local materials
in a manner recalling stylish details. The detailing complements the almost Greek Revival austerity of the exterior where attic "frieze windows," like those of the Kohrs' Upper Ranch House south of Deer Lodge, are enlarged into second floor windows.

The original interior partitions are constructed of vertical, beaded boarding, set with plain board trim and hung with four-panel doors, without panel mouldings, grained to imitate maple. Simple window trim with backband moulding and plain baseboarding contrast to later enriched picture moldings at ceiling height. Shallow closets, each with pairs of upper and lower hand-planed panel doors, open into the front master bedroom and the parlour. A chamfered newel post, with a molded cap, receives a molded handrail set on square-section balusters, two to a step. The stairway originally rose to a single large room that was partitioned sometime after 1871.

The interiors were unified with several decades of accumulated household furnishings, though provenance of most is vague. Day Book entries generally do not mention purpose, although 1882 memorandums are of significance. Historical references in Grant's memoirs and Kohrs's Autobiography are equally scant. However, a time frame acquisition is provided that is augmented by Deer Lodge's New Northwest newspaper's social brevities items.

Grant recalled that "At first I had only home made furniture but about four or five years after I bought Capt. Lebarge's freight and among the lot there were some parlor chairs. I paid twenty dollars each for these chairs and ten dollars each for four other chairs." Remaining in the house, and located in the front bedroom, are a pair of transitional side chairs that may have been part of this set. Similarly, a "Grecian Style" lyre pedestal, folding-top card table, and a utilitarian kitchen pie safe, complete with pierced tin panels, are thought to be part of the original Grant furnishings that were all presumably purchased by Kohrs in 1866.

While in Cincinnati in January 1868, Kohrs acquired a consignment of billiard tables, one of which may have been in the "large hall" of the second floor noted in the New Northwest in 1871. This article observed that "The residence of Mr. Kohrs is one of the largest in Montana, having seven finely furnished rooms on the first floor, besides a magnificently furnished parlor and a spacious dining room." At that date the house undoubtedly reflected the taste of Conrad Kohrs who, enroute to Iowa in December of 1868, bought a parcel of furnishings before meeting, courting, and marrying Augusta Kruse. The consignment was picked up on the return trip up the Missouri River and arrived at Fort Benton with the Kohrs who were met with an extra wagon for transporting the "furniture and other articles that I had purchased in St. Louis and brought up on the boat with us."

While noting the battle against bedbugs, Kohrs recalled that "We had an old home made bed; strings of rawhide stretched across in place of springs, a straw tick for a mattress," and continued, noting that "There were no carpets. The floors were all pine and were kept spotlessly white by scrubbing." Most likely the 1871 newspaper observation also reflected the expertise of Augusta Kohrs's needlework. In the fall of 1869 she won "1st premium" for a sofa cushion at the Territorial Fair of 1869 and for an "ottoman cover" in 1870, probably the Thracian horseman petitpoint located in the parlour. Any subsequent entries were less publicized.
The family spent the winter of 1871-72 in Germany, establishing a pattern of traveling to the homeland and retaining strong ties where it is apparent that Augusta's family still resided, though Kohrs's mother and stepfather had emigrated to Davenport, Iowa. What influence this first German trip, Kohrs's excursions to California in 1873 and 1874 to visit his sister, and the family trip to the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition may have had on the household furnishings is moot. Certainly Augusta Kohrs was exposed to stylish East Coast American and German interiors; and interest in the latter, at least, was perpetuated by a subscription to Der Bazar. Copies dating from the late 1870s remain at the ranch.

In October of 1880 the family departed for a twenty-month stay in Hamburg, Germany, where the children were enrolled in German schools. Kohrs recalled that during his first winter there they frequently attended the opera and concerts and noted that his second winter there "was even more enjoyable and delightful than the previous one." On the family's return, in the fall of 1882, Kohrs met them in New York where "We did some shopping, buying articles my wife wanted, among them some Rogers Silverware, the first we had." Traveling home through Chicago, furniture and carpets were purchased for shipment by railroad that, by 1882, extended nearly to Deer Lodge. The ease of transportation undoubtedly had much to do with the acquisition of the new furnishings, which, according to a September 26, 1882, entry in Kohrs's memo book, included a "Parler set," two bedroom suites, a bookcase, a mirror, "Dining Chairs," a "Music Stan," and springs and mattresses. Linoleum for the kitchen and dining room were also mentioned during this period.

Shortly after their return to Montana, Kohrs recalled that a fire in the floor of "the south room," presumably the parlour, caused little damage because the furniture had been carried out, but carpets, "lambrequins and curtains" had to be replaced and two rooms had to be replastered. No mention was made of wallpaper.

Undoubtedly much of the furnishings date from this period, for the next specific mention of furnishings in the Autobiography was not until 1900 when Kohrs wrote: "In the spring we went east to purchase some articles my wife wanted for the new home" in Helena. However, most certainly dining room and bedroom furniture was purchased for the wing, which is suggested in conjunction with noting that in the fall of 1890, while in Chicago, Augusta "overdid while shopping." At that time she was surely aware of current Eastern trends, having traveled to St. Louis, Hot Springs, Arkansas, and New Orleans in 1885, and having spent a month in New York City in 1888, and returned there in 1889 by way of Chicago.

Thus, following the April 1891 wedding of Anna Kohrs to John Boardman, "One of the most brilliant weddings ever celebrated in Montana," the recently completed house provided a suitable setting for the reception. According to the New Northwest the "wedding dinner was served in the large dining room" amid festoons of foliage and vases of flowers. In May of 1894 a party was given at the house and Kohrs recalled that "There were eighty present. The sitting room was large enough to accommodate four sets and dancing continued until half past five in the morning..."
Finally, concerning external influences, the family departed for Naples from New York in January 1898. Proceeding on to Port Said, a felucca was hired for a fifty-six day tour up the Nile River. Returning to Italy by way of Sorento, Pompeii, Rome, Florence, and Venice, the family traveled to Vienna. Augusta and daughter Katherine spent nearly seven weeks at Carlsbad before rejoining Kohrs and son William in Munich, after which Switzerland and Germany were visited before returning home in mid-July from Hamburg. Probably while in Egypt, a large Turkish flatwork wall hanging was acquired that was hung in the sitting room. This probably represented one of the last purchases for the house before the move to Helena.

Kohrs wrote that "Deer Lodge had changed so much . . . that there was little to hold us here, so in the fall of 1899, I concluded we would go to Helena for the winter and then if we liked it, take up our residence there." After renting the D'Acheul House for six months, Kohrs purchased it as a surprise wedding anniversary gift for Augusta. The Kohrses having left the ranch, the interiors retained an 1890-1900 appearance in style and arrangement. During this decade the parlour and dining room were formally photographed. The historical photograph of the parlour looks into the "Music Room," set with the Weber upright and ebonized "Renaissance Revival Style" piano draped with an embroidered red velvet piano scarf and complete with a purple velvet upholstered, ebonized swivel stool. Unseen is the ebonized music cabinet, undoubtedly purchased in 1882 to match the piano, in front of which lies a bear rug.

Though the larger room is set somewhat out of vogue with a rectangular center table of "Creative Revival Style" derived from Renaissance Revival sources, the photographed room essentially reflects a very stylish interior of 1890-1900. The theme is set by the red and gold floral Wilton-type carpet, typically laid in strips and bordered, the light ceiling, and the plain walls. (Earlier parlour carpeting, a bold scroll and floral pattern in reds, blues, and black on a light background, remains in a second floor bedroom.) Presently the walls are papered with a brown and gold Faux brocade floral-foliage print, but the photograph reflects the original dark green with black pinstriped wallpaper. An assortment of Fancy, or Quaint, chairs and small stand tables, some naturally finished and some gilded, suggesting Sheraton, French Louis, and Venetian Italian sources, define the stylish interior, nearly masking the older pieces of the two rooms. Dating from 1882 is a seven-piece carved walnut and burl parlour suite, in the Creative-Renaissance Revival Style, upholstered in red cut velvet. Two large closed and rolled arm easy chairs, one of which is seen to the left of the piano, and four smaller chairs match a divan. All with spring seats and backs, this basic set was augmented with a red velvet upholstered armchair and a blue velvet banquette chair of the "Turkish Style," which were quite avant-garde. These "exotic" chairs are ornamented with needlework insert panels and wool and silk tassels.

Completing the furnishings from the 1880s are several New Grecian-Creative Revival pieces of furniture, including a hanging walnut whatnot cabinet, or "mirror" etagere, with an extended curtain top, an ebonized picture display easel, and a walnut combination bookcase and writing desk. All typically have carvings, incised lineal designs, and applied panels, moldings, and jigsaw work commonly attributed to the influence of Charles Eastlake. An embroidered velvet
lambrequin hung from the whatnot cabinet and suggests window lambrequins that
once may have hung from the ebonized and brass finialed rods, undoubtedly over
lace curtains and roller shades. Opening the glass doors of the 1882 bookcase,
with its gold plated and bright-cut brasses, a sample of the Kohrs' conventional
literary taste is provided. Included are the Farmers Barn Book (1867), a set of
Waverly Novels (1900), The Works of Louise Muhlbaah in seventeen volumes trans­
lated from the German (1890), works of Sir Walter Scott and Washington Irving,
Rollins History (1936), Famous Women of the French Court (1900), History of
Illinois (1854), and twenty-four volumes of George Eliot's Works (1908).

Though somewhat old fashioned for the 1890s, the photographed room is
personalized with a variety of items, including the photograph album on the
center table with its battenberg lace runner. The glass banquette lamp is
no longer in the collection. Additionally, there is the photogravure portrait
of the Kohrs' daughters by L. C. Layton, one of a pair in flat goldleafed New
Grecian frames; assorted figurines, particularly of children; and assorted
framed engravings, such as "The Old Mill," printed by S. J. Parkhill and
Company, in a white enameled and gold gesso frame that hangs over the piano.
Elsewhere, vases such as the French St. Cloud item, signed "A. Valent," a
pair of Majolica vases, and a Rogers Group, received prominent display on the
bookcase as photographed circa 1900.

The room, heated with a nickel-plated Acorn stove, model number 252 in the
Floral Acorn pattern, was lighted with seven small electric ceiling fixtures
with cutglass globes and six symmetrically-placed bracketed wall gas fixtures
with brass arms and etched glass globes. Due to the solidness of the log walls
and the thinness of the board partitions, the brass piping of the wall fixtures
was exposed.

The second interior photograph, of the dining room, indicates an overall
quality of the exotic, though the oak furnishings reflect various late 19th-
century revival styles, including an "Elizabethan Style" extension dining
table with massive turned legs. All complement the "Colonial Revival Style"
multipanel wainscoting, capped with a cushion frieze, matching the door and
window openings with fluted jamb facings, and a roundel relief band. The most
notable feature of the room is the built-in "Queen Anne Style" corner sideboard
containing drawers, cupboards, and semicircular glazed display cabinets contain­
ing, among other items, several pieces of Rogers Triple (silver) Plate bright-
cut hollowware, and a Haviland pitcher and sugar bowl monogrammed "CK." The set
of twelve ladder-back chairs are an inspiration from the New Grecian-Colonial
Revival Style and have cobbler seats upholstered in brown leather. These
furnishings, as reflected in material and scale, were almost certainly purchased
for the room in 1890, which, judging from the photograph, was finished in the
high style of creating three distinct wall planes.

Above the wainscoting, dark, plain wall covering, now replaced by a light
beige foliate wallpaper, extends to a gilded picture molding set below a highly
ornamental cavetto cornice-frieze. The Adamesque-Colonial detailing in gilding
on a dark background contrasts with the light ceiling. At the canted bay window
with Adamesque pattern lace curtains, light filters over clay potted plants.
Here a ficus rubber plant, parlour palms, and a flowering maple, among geraniums,
are set on an oak library-type table and on low benches within the bay.
Floored with plain ancaustic octagonal tiles, the bay projection contrasts with finished wooden flooring, partially and most fashionably covered with a large twelve- by eighteen-foot Bakhtiari-type carpet. This carpet sets the exotic theme emphasized by the appliqué and embroidered table covering and by the three-panel, oak framed, hand-painted chinoiserie servant screen. Framed oil paintings and prints complete the room, which is centered with a magnificent Creative-Renaissance Revival chandelier. Brass arms support etched globes for gas lights and tulip-shaped globes for electric lights above a coal oil lamp with a dome shade. The room was heated by forced air through the floor grille.

The third important interior photograph, taken on the occasion of a 1904 legislative committee meeting, provides a glimpse of the sitting or living room. Unlike the dining room, which lost its cornice-frieze in the 1940s, the paper-mache cornice of this room has remained, albeit under paint, like the ceiling paper that contrasted to plain walls and painted woodwork. A Near Eastern pattern portiere, hung at the height of the transomed doorway, conceals the conservatory doorway and suggests similar coverings for the windows.

Centered in the room, and covered with a machine-woven "plush lap rug," is an oak library table, a Creative Revival piece with carved and turned legs. Around the table are an assortment of easy chairs. Conrad Kohrs sits in a spring seat armchair, which was destroyed but is similar to the parlour Turkish chairs. Elsewhere, there are straight-back, black leather upholstered spring seat walnut side chairs of the New Grecian Style dining room suite purchased in 1882. Like the 1890 dining room chairs, the crest rails are carved. Comfort and casualness permitted a walnut platform rocker; a "Golden Oak Style" rocker with carved or pressed work; a small, armless mahogany rocker seen in the foreground; and a tapestry upholstered chaise lounge, all protected with needlework antimacassars. The strip Wilton-type carpeting, which reflects the popularity of Japanese design, was removed at a later date and was partially reused in an upstairs hallway.

The room is centered with the electrified Colonial Revival gas chandelier and hung with assorted framed prints. Notable is the grouping of three pictures centered around the wall-mounted gas fixture. Here is a classic example of an arrangement of pictures, the informality of which survived well into the 20th century.

Unfortunately the other rooms of the house were not photographed. However, the collection of remaining furnishings is typical of the period, though the 1878 patented Moore Desk in the office is a unique survivor. With a walnut swivel chair, the Creative Revival walnut desk, with spindled galleries and burl panels, opens to provide a complete working office with a filing cabinet, writing surface, compartments, and drawers. Similar to so-called "Wells Fargo" or captain's desks, it is set within a "manly" room with plain, dark red wall-papered board partitions and a Japanese-style painted bamboo-edged ceiling. The room is hung with an assortment of equine and hunting prints and several naval views, one copyrighted in 1885. Of particular note is the red "velvet-type" carpeting with small beige floral motifs, which contrasts to the rich lime-green and pale blue floral pattern carpeting of the front bedroom. Also laid in strips, without any border, the bedroom carpeting reflects the work of English designer William Morris.
The bedroom, papered with a white print wallpaper, contains a typical matching bedstead, with "AK" monogrammed linens, and a mirrored dresser, in carved walnut in a Creative Revival Style with burled panels probably dating from 1882. The suite's washstand, or commode, which like the dresser has a grey fossil marble top, was originally relegated to the downstairs bath where a zinc-lined bathtub remains as well as evidence of a pull chain tank for the original water closet. A Colonial Revival walnut highboy with burled veneer and surmounted by a vitrine cabinet, along with a walnut wardrobe, complete the major standing furniture in the bedroom, which is heated by a Forest Acorn Stove, model number 20, manufactured by Rathbone Sard and Company.

Miscellaneous furnishings, probably remnants of the earlier set of furniture purchased in St. Louis, include the tapestry upholstered French Antique Style rocker, and a Renaissance Revival, marble topped center table. The intimate atmosphere is reflected in the small gravure souvenir framed print of the "Mona Lisa," and in a velvet framed arrangement of pressed flowers.

Along with several additional Creative Revival bedroom suites of oak, walnut, maple, and cherry, the 1885 John Bielenberg upright folding bed (which appears to be a mirrored wardrobe), the Monarch kitchen range, and the Creative Revival hall tree (noted separately in 1882 in the memo book) and Gothic-Elizabethan chair of the Persian pattern, velvet-type carpeted front hall, the Kohrs collection represents a time capsuled survival of late-19th-century domestic furnishings that are the accumulation of one family and the taste of probably one person--Augusta Kohrs. By 1900 Augusta Kohrs was thoroughly Americanized in taste as evidenced by the occasional evidence of Germanic culture and in comparison with photographs of similar contemporary rooms published in William Seale's *The Tasteful Interlude* (New York: Praeger, 1975). The inlaid tilt-top Swiss table, the beer steins, or the elaborate cuckoo clock, reportedly from the Helena house and now in the pantry, are exceptions and rank as novelties. More importantly, here are branding irons, Conrad Kohrs's leather chaps, a wolf skin robe, and the proverbial set of longhorns, commemorating the acculturation of the American West.
I. Primary Sources

1. Manuscript Materials

The bulk of the manuscript materials concerning Grant-Kohrs Ranch are in two locations: Deer Lodge, Montana and Helena, Montana. The materials in Deer Lodge have been collected into seven rolls of microfilm and about 385 photographs. These materials are on file at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site offices in Deer Lodge. The contents and organization of the microfilmed papers are shown in Appendix 13. The materials in Helena are those of the Montana Historical Society. That collection includes an extensive vertical file as well as a daybook and ledger. The daybook and ledger are also included in the microfilms at Deer Lodge. A more detailed description follows.

Deer Lodge

Manuscript materials at the offices of the park include some recent deeds, land descriptions, the Conrad Kohrs autobiography, and various historical materials such as the letter to Mons. Tiegen from Conrad K. Warren (8 February 1973). This is in addition to the microfilm reels and photographs there. Some of the materials at the park are open to the public, but the papers on microfilm are predominantly those still owned by Mr. Conrad K. Warren of Deer Lodge. Mr. Warren made the materials available for microfilming and has allowed researchers from the National Park Service to use them. However, they remain his possession and have not been opened to public use. Researchers wishing to utilize these materials should contact the Superintendent, Grant-Kohrs National Historic Site, Deer Lodge, Montana, for information concerning their use.

Helena

The materials in Helena are those of the Montana Historical Society. The collections there are well indexed, and the Kohrs and Bielenberg Papers comprise a separate entry. The holdings of Kohrs and Bielenberg materials are varied. The vertical file contains clippings, letters, notes, land ownership documents, and a handwritten 1885 vintage autobiography of Conrad Kohrs. A daybook and a ledger book are also in the collection. (These two books were added to the Conrad K. Warren papers when the total was microfilmed and thus appear there as well. Ancillary papers containing Kohrs and Bielenberg materials include the Samuel T. Hauser Papers, Collection 37. See Box 62, Folders 24 to 30. Other excellent materials can be found in publications of the society noted later in this bibliography.) Individual items worthy of consideration include the J. H. Gehrmann Papers, AC 74-41; the "Extract from Memoirs of Johnnie Grant"; Montana Stock Farm Catalog,

Denver, Colorado

There is an indexed collection of Conrad Kohrs data at the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library. The materials there also appear in either Deer Lodge or Helena, and thus are not cited in this study. The materials in the Western History Department, however, are significant and merit examination early in any research undertaking.

2. Books

These works are annotated as necessary and represent accounts by participants or miscellaneous books that were used during the Kohrs and Bielenberg era.


See Appendix 14.


Clay's work is one of the classics of the range cattle industry. It is the report of a participant turned chronicler, and provides a sympathetic yet complete view of the romance as well as of the economic aspects of the range cattle industry. Clay and Kohrs were friends; thus this book helps provide an insight into the thinking of Kohrs's contemporaries. It is an invaluable work in connection with any research on Grant-Kohrs Ranch.

Leeson, M. A. A History of Montana. 1885.

Leeson's book was of the genre called "County Histories." The research and publication was paid for out of locally garnered funds, and those willing to pay extra received comparable extra attention. The illustration of the Kohrs ranch alone makes this a valuable work, and the general history brings an understanding of contemporary attitudes as well.


Blue's recollections present a delightful view of cowboy life, drama, and humor. Blue's close association with the Granville Stuart family
and with the DHS Ranch brings this narrative into the immediate area of interest for those studying the Kohrs and Bielenberg range cattle operation.


Stuart was both a friend and partner of Kohrs and Bielenberg and his reminiscences are of unique value in studying the Kohrs and Bielenberg story.


Cookbooks

These works were included in the collections of the home ranch, and are presented as the cookbooks used at the ranch.


3. Articles


This reminiscence/obituary is a lengthy consideration of Con Kohrs by a colleague of long standing.


This is an excellent survey of the Kohrs years as Kohrs recalled them.


II. Secondary Sources

1. Books


Atherton's study of the cattle kings includes Kohrs. This is a well prepared book covering the field announced in the title as well as many other aspects of the range cattle industry.


This study covers life on the DHS ranch in some detail, including the establishment of the ranch.


While Billington's massive work is cited in virtually every western oriented study, its inclusion here is not mere formality. The chapter entitled "Cattleman's Frontier, 1865-1887" is a valuable and accurate overview of the cattle empire and the forces that both developed and changed it. Other chapters on the mining frontier, on farming, and on opening the Great Plains bear on the Grant-Kohrs Ranch story as well. Perusal of the bibliography should be an early step during any cattle industry research.


Brown and Felton's narrative blends with the photographs of eastern Montana roundups taken by L. A. Huffman around the turn of the century. The bibliography provides a good beginning for those studying Montana cattle history, and the maps and the inside cover are the best available on Montana large cattle industry sites. Kohrs and Bielenberg and their cattle operations are prominently mentioned here. This study ranks with Fletcher's *Free Grass to Fences* in importance to any work on Montana cattle history.


Carries data on Kohrs and his descendants.


Fletcher's work is the basic one for the Montana range cattle story. It should be the first consulted, and kept close at hand. Footnotes would have further strengthened this lively narrative, but the delightful prose, the use of the records of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the use of Charles M. Russell paintings as illustrations, and Fletcher's thorough knowledge of Montana history combine to form a most pleasing package.


This is one of the Time-Life series on the American West. The narrative, illustrations, and general tone place it among the very best efforts of a somewhat spotty series. The comprehensiveness of the work is quite good, and the illustrations carefully selected to illustrate the narrative. The unannotated bibliography is comprehensive enough, but not overly rich. In a field of far too many works, it should be considered one of the leaders.


In addition to good solid research throughout that cuts through the romance associated with the cowboy, the last two chapters of this work contain excellent essays on the literature in the field. The work also has a well constructed and lengthy bibliography.


This excellent work examines the economic aspects of the cattle business as no other does. It is among the most important works on the range cattle industry.


This is one of the less flashy, yet quite useful, studies involving the cattle kingdom.


In We Pointed Them North, Teddy Blue indicates that Charles M. Russell often used DHS cowboys as his subjects. Assuming that this was so, then any collection of Russell cowboy paintings has particular merit in relation to the Kohrs and Bielenberg story.


This work contains much useful data on the early development of the Hereford breed of cattle, a story in which Con Kohrs and John Bielenberg figure.


This study is one worthy of some consideration as a general history of the cattle industry. Although somewhat dated by contemporary research, it retains a great deal of useful information.


This encyclopedic three volume set contains much early cattle history as it related to the western trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company.


One of the newest books on cowboy equipment and dress, it is also one of the best.


Depending on the researcher's point of view, this can be considered either a primary or a secondary source. The work is something of a review of the cattle industry--names and characters, and events
associated with them that had, by 1915, made some impress at the Chicago Stock Yards. The attitudes that the business men associated with the cattle industry held about their position and that of their fellows is contained herein. In relating the anecdotes and triumphs of those id chronicles, this is certainly not unbiased history. As a revelation of the romance and mystique of the cattle business, it is an excellent source for its time--the late 1870s to 1915.


This is an excellent work, which in the introductory chapter covers the origins and later developments of the cattle industry. Carefully documented and lucidly written, it covers the breeding, marketing, and historical aspects of cattle raising.


This excellent evaluation of Montana history is so much fun to read that any researcher should find a need to consult it frequently.


This fine survey work covers the history of cattle from earliest times to the twentieth century.


See the comment for *At The Sign of the Stock Yard Inn.*

2. Articles


Brogue's article shows the extent of Short Horn and Hereford development in Ontario. This bears a close relationship to the Kohrs and Bielenberg herds, since Kohrs travelled to Ontario from time to time to buy animals.

This article, like the other one on Montana religious history, shows that Kohrs contributed to many churches, and consistently helped them function as active participants in the community.


Fletcher's work is an excellent reference.


Marred by an obvious overuse of speculation and purpose prose, Gill's work retains some marginal utility to those engaged in studying the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site.


Gordon's article is a general overview of the history of the site, including initial National Park Service efforts there.


This account, along with Wilson's "6000 Acres and a Microscope," provides the reader with a look at Con Warren's ranch operation. This article emphasizes Con's improvements at the ranch, while Wilson emphasizes breeding of the registered herds and comparisons with the old days of ranching.


This is one of a series of four articles Malone and Roeder wrote for Montana magazine. They are excellent surveys of life and culture in Montana in the Centennial Year 1876.
McDonald, J. J. "Conrad Kohrs, Montana Pioneer." *Americana Illustrated* 34, no. 3 (July 1940):482-93.


This delightful article is the best published work on the Warren Ranch. The photographs show the ranch just after many of the modern buildings had been erected and as Con Warren was sprucing the place up.

3. Other Materials

This portion of the bibliography concerns all the materials used that did not fall into one of the earlier categories.


Bearss was the first National Park Service historian to present a narrative history of the ranch, and his brief but inclusive study still merits attention. The organization of the ranch's historical structures still utilized was determined by this study.


This excellent study provides a view of an eastern Montana stock-growing operation and permits a comparison to the Kohrs and Bielenberg operation.


This work contains a narrative history of the range cattle story and reports on the various historical sites remaining from that era that were examined. The narrative and bibliography could be of real value to researchers.

Hakola's work on early Montana history is an excellent one. The data he presents in Chapter VII, "The DHS Ranch," is of unique value when studying the Kohrs and Bielenberg range cattle operation.

**Helena Gazette**

Available on microfilm at the Montana Historical Society.

Interview, Mrs. J. Maurice Dietrich with John Albright and Paul Gordon, 6 May 1975, Deer Lodge, Montana, copy of file at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS, Montana.

None of the interviews conducted in conjunction with this study have been released by the interviewer or interviewee for general use. Researchers wishing to utilize these interviews should contact the Superintendent, Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site, Deer Lodge, Montana.

Interview, J. H. Gehrmann with Peter Snell, 7 July 1975, Davenport, Iowa.


Interview, T. G. Mooney with Ralph W. Cumming, WPS Montana Writers Files, Montana State College, 11 June 1940.

This interview is on file at the Montana Historical Society.


**The New Northwest**

*The New Northwest* is the major newspaper source for Kohrs and Bielenberg data. Published weekly in Deer Lodge for the entire span of the partners' greatest activity there, hardly an issue does not contain some material on the ranch or the personalities associated with it. The newspaper is complete on microfilm at the Montana Historical Society. A few of the more recent volumes in the William K. Kohrs Memorial Library at Deer Lodge are missing. This paper was succeeded by the *Silver State Post*, which is still published weekly in Deer Lodge.
The deed books used in this study include the Miscellaneous Record books and other record books in the office of the County Clerk and Recorder, Powell County, Deer Lodge, Montana. The deed books at the courthouse in Deer Lodge were all transcribed after the original Deer Lodge County was broken up on 1 Jan. 1901. The original books are in Anaconda, Montana, now the seat of Deer Lodge County.

Register of Actions, District Court of Deer Lodge County, M. T., Case 1840-1841, Utah and Northern Railway v. Conrad Kohrs, Augusta Kohrs, and John N. W. Bielenberg.

These may be found in the Deer Lodge County Courthouse, Anaconda, Montana.

ILLUSTRATIONS
Illustrations 4 through 15 portray some of the people associated with the Kohrs and Bielenberg home ranch.
Illustration 4.

John F. Grant in 1866, the year he sold his ranch to Con Kohrs.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 5.

Conrad Kohrs, 1874.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 6.

Conrad Kohrs, 1882.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 7.

Montanans visit the home ranch of Kohrs and Bielenberg, ca. 1904. The seated figure at the far right is Con Kohrs. John Bielenberg, standing, leans against the door frame, while Otey Yancey Warren looks at a picture. Mr. Warren was Con Warren's father. The other individuals are unidentified. The setting is the living room of the brick addition.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 8.

Conrad Kohrs and John Bielenberg at the home ranch, ca. 1912.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 9.

Augusta Kohrs in 1868, age 19.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 10.
Augusta Kohrs in 1874, age 25.
Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 11.

Augusta Kohrs in 1882, age 33.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 12.

Augusta Kohrs, about 70 years of age.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 13.

Tom Hooban, ca. 1876.

 Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 14.
Mitch Oxarat, ca. 1876.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 15.

One of the Chinese cooks at the home ranch, possibly "Ham Sam, the Chinaman."

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustrations 16 through 24 are views of the home ranch.
Illustration 16.

Dining room of the home ranch, ca. 1900.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 17.

Parlor of the home ranch, ca. 1900.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 18.

The ranch house, Historic Structure 1, from the southeast. The exact date of this photograph is not known, but it is probably ca. 1905.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 19.

The ranch house, Historic Structure 1, from the southwest. The exact date of this photograph is not known, but it is probably ca. 1905. Part of the bunkhouse (Historic Structure 2) appears at the extreme left, as does the west gable of the stable, which is part of Historic Structure 2. The privy in the foreground was moved later. The man in the foreground is standing near the site of Historic Structure 3, the garage/blacksmith shop. The jack-leg fence delineates the lane along the north side of the thoroughbred barn, Historic Structure 15.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 20.

Bunkhouse row, Historic Structure 2, ca. 1900.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 21.
Looking west across Fred Burr Creek and the Stuart field. The southern portion of the ranch house yard, outlined by the white picket fence, appears on the right. The thoroughbred barn dominates the center of the picture, with the roof of the Leeds-Lion stallion barn (Historic Structure 16) visible at the north end of the thoroughbred barn.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 22.

The historic structures at the home ranch as they appeared in 1968. From left to right, TOP: Historic Structure 1 from the northeast; Historic Structure 1 from the southeast; Historic Structure 15. From left to right, BOTTOM: Historic Structure 2; part of the west corrals, showing Historic Structure 31; Historic Structures 5 and 2.
Illustration 23.

Some of the historic structures at the home ranch as they appeared in 1968. The complex in the lower two-thirds of the photograph is part of the present Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site. The buildings and lots above the railroad tracks are the present Warren Ranch.

Courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey.
Illustration 24.

Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in October 1974, view from the northeast.

Illustrations 25 through 30 depict daily ranch activities.
Illustration 25.

"Laugh Kills Lonesome," by Charles M. Russell. The cowboys shown are clustered around a DHS chuck wagon. They represent the range cattle portion of the Kohrs and Bielenberg stock raising business.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 26.

The home ranch Short Horn herd, ca. 1900.

Courtesy of C. K. Warren.
Illustration 27.

A squeeze chute in operation, ca. 1900. This photograph was not taken at the home ranch. The squeeze chute, however, appears to be an exact duplicate of the three at the ranch.

Courtesy of Montana Historical Society.
Illustration 28.

John Bielenberg and part of the home ranch crew brand a calf, ca. 1912.

Courtesy of C. K. Warren.
Illustration 29.

Cow camp somewhere in the Dog Creek Pasture of the home ranch, 1912.

Courtesy of C. K. Warren.
Illustration 30.

Conrad K. Warren looks over some of his Herefords, ca. 1940.

Courtesy of C. K. Warren.
"Kohrs & Bielenberg Grazing Areas & Cattle Trails, 1862-1924."

While many of the early grazing areas changed according to the availability of grass and water, this map shows the general extent of the Kohrs and Bielenberg cattle business. It was prepared by George Reinbold of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, NPS.

1. The home ranch and Deer Lodge Valley ranges
2. The Sun River range
3. The DHS range
4. N Bar N and associated ranges
5. Powder River range
6. The Milk River range
7. Cypress Hills range (Canada)
8. Fort Benton ranges
9. The Malta range
10. Snake River ranch
11. Fort Steele range
12. North Park
"Building the Home Ranch: Kohrs & Bielenberg, 1866-1908"

"DB" refers to Transcribed Powell County Deed Books, namely those deed books now at Powell County that were transcribed from the original Deer Lodge County Deed Books at the time a portion of the original Deer Lodge County became Powell County, January 1, 1901.

"PC-DB" refers to the Powell County Deed Books created after Powell County was organized.

All "DB" references, therefore, date from before January 1, 1901, and all "PC-DB" entries were made after that date.

NOTE: Areas marked LL are those that were part of the ranch on June 1, 1908 (PC-DB 9, pp. 476-77), but to which no earlier reference has yet been located in the county deed books.

Data based on "Kohrs-Grantee" in Transcribed Powell County Deed Books:
A. 10 Oct 71 DB 1, p. 492.
B. 10 Oct 71 DB 1, pp. 486-87.
C. 1 Jun 72 DB 2, pp. 286-88.
D. 7 Jan 73 DB 2, p. 339.
E. 28 Feb 78 DB 3, pp. 359-60.
G. 2 Jan 83 DB 4, pp. 563-65.
H. 5 Apr 84 DB 4, pp. 502-3.
I. 2 Jan 85 DB 4, p. 585.
J. 10 Jan 76 HOMESTEAD by Conrad Kohrs.
K. 13 May 90 DB 5, p. 66.
L. 29 May 90 DB 7, p. 182.
M. 22 Dec 90 DB 5, p. 74 (overlaps with C).
N. 2 Dec 91 DB 5, p. 431.
R. 30 Aug 99 DB 7, p. 578.
T. 14 Aug 00 DB 5, pp. 524-25.
U. 31 Oct 00 DB 10, p. 591.

Data based on "Bielenberg-Grantee" in Transcribed Powell County Deed Books:
V. 1 Aug 78 DB 3, pp. 398-99 (this is 1/4 interest for JNW Bielenberg, indicating it is already owned, but the exact date of purchase was not located).
W. 23 Sep 90 DB 5, p. 73.
X. 2 Dec 91 DB 5, p. 432.
AA. 21 Jan 95 DB 12, p. 112.
BB. 10 Oct 98 DB 12, pp. 595-96.

Data based on "Kohrs-Grantee" in post-1901 Powell County Deed Books:
DD. 15 Jun 01 PC DB 1, p. 135.
EE. 15 Jun 01 PC DB 1, p. 136.
FF. 15 Jun 01 PC DB 1, p. 137.
GG. 14 Feb 02 PC DB 1, p. 430.
HH. 14 Feb 02 PC DB 1, p. 431.
II. 5 Nov 02 PC DB 2, p. 63.
JJ. 7 Mar 03 PC DB 5, p. 161.
KK. 15 Oct 07 PC DB 9, p. 48. 434
Map 4.

"Building the Home Ranch: Kohrs & Bielenberg, 1866-1908-by Decades"

Decade and a half - the 1860s and 1870s (1866 to December 31, 1879)

Decade of the 1880s - (1 January 1880 to 31 December 1889)

Decade of the 1890s - (1 January 1890 to 31 December 1899)

1st Decade 20th Century - (1 January 1900 to 1 June 1908)
"Selling the Home Ranch: Kohrs & Bielenberg, 1919-1924"

2 June 1919 offer to sell by Rock Creek Ditch and Mining Company, along with various claims and water rights not shown ($50,000).

2 June 1919 offer to sell by Kohrs and Bielenberg Land and Livestock Company ($100,000).

18 September 1924. This agreement included leased land as well. Initial cost of $75,000, which, with 6 percent interest for full term of contract, became $91,020.
SELLING THE HOME RANCH:
KOHRS & BIELENBERG
1919-1924
DEER LODGE VALLEY, POWELL COUNTY MONTANA
MONTANA
Map 6.

Map marked "Cattle from Montana," by Con Kohrs, 1881.
Site Plan

(See Cultural Resources Statement and Historic Structure Report for description of buildings.)
GRANT - KOHRS RANCH

WHAT IS THE RANCH?

The ranch is 216 acres and over 100 years of history. It is the frontier cattle era with trapping, mining, vigilantes and politics thrown in. From Johnny Grant through Conrad Kohrs to Conrad K. Warren, it is nearly the sum of the development of Montana from wilderness to territory to state.

WHAT WILL YOU SEE?

On the surface, you will see more than 30 structures, some of them more than 100 years old. You will see a 23-room ranch house crowded with Victoriana. There’s a bunkhouse so well-preserved that the cowboys might have just stepped out of it. You’ll see the tack room, ice house, barns, blacksmith shop, wagon collection, chickens, cows and horses.

If you look a little deeper you will see history.

WHAT PROGRAMS WILL WE OFFER YOU?

1. We give free tours of the first floor of the 23-room ranch house. You need to be on a tour to see the house. Special groups must make tour reservations two weeks in advance. Because of the size of the rooms, tour groups are limited to twelve people. Larger groups may have to be divided.

2. Our blacksmith gives demonstrations of his craft. These are not regularly scheduled, as he does triple duty: as part-time rancher and guide too. If you have a group that is particularly interested in blacksmithing, we can usually schedule him to be available to you.

3. The rancher feeds and cares for the livestock. This isn’t a “demonstration;” this is a reality of ranch life. For example, Montana law requires that all cattle be branded, so one day each summer our new calves receive the brand. A casual visit to the ranch will probably expose you to some of the daily routine of ranching. If your interest goes deeper, the rancher will be happy to talk with you.

4. Other special programs may be given. This will depend upon the availability of qualified personnel.

5. Of course, all of us welcome questions beyond what is normally covered in our regular talks. In fact, that is one of the things that makes the park service so interesting to us: The opportunity to explore subjects with new people who give us new insights.

WHAT CAN YOU DO ON YOUR OWN?

1. You can lead yourself around the grounds. When you arrive at the ranch you will receive a brochure containing a self-guiding map.

2. You can take your time. You are free to stroll around at your own pace. The longer you stay, the more you will see.

3. You can come back again. You haven’t even been here once and we’re already telling you to come back! That is because you haven’t really seen the ranch until you’ve seen:

   A hot summer’s day with the horses standing head to tail to switch flies for each other

   A 40° below zero morning when the ranger goes out to feed the livestock because you can’t skip the chores just because it’s cold outside

   A ranch cat with a whole passel of tiny kittens

   A dozen wild ducks take off in fright when you walk down to the creek - and their sudden movement nearly makes you take off in fright

   And when you’ve seen all these things, you’ll come back again, because you’ll begin to understand that you’ve just begun to see the ranch.
Grant-Kohrs Ranch is located just north of Deer Lodge, Montana, off Interstate 90. It is about midway between Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, and also convenient to East-West travel through the southern portion of the state.

The site is open for day-use only, and is open every day except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years Day.

No fees are charged.

We have a wheelchair at our visitor center which may be loaned to people who are unable to undertake the ½ mile (.4 km) walk to the ranch.

There are picnic tables at the Deer Lodge City Park. Both commercial and forest service campgrounds are located nearby. There are neither campgrounds nor picnic tables on-site.

The City of Deer Lodge has a population of 5,000. Gas, food, lodging and medical care are available in the city. (Service stations are NOT open 24 hours a day.)

Rail and bus service are available to Deer Lodge. The closest commercial airports are in Butte (40 mi, 64 km), Helena (56 mi, 89 km), and Missoula (79 mi, 126 km).

The Deer Lodge Valley (elev. 4,500') is 15 miles (24 km) west of the continental divide. Winters can be severe, with frequent snow, and temperatures well below freezing. Summer days are often cooled by thundershowers. Don’t forget to bring your mosquito repellent if you visit in the early summer months.

For More information on travel in Montana, write:

MONTANA HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
TRAVEL PROMOTION UNIT
HELENA, MONTANA 59601
As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The Department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U. S. administration.