

Geraldine Lucas Homestead
(Harold Fabian Vacation Home)
On west bank of Cottonwood Creek approximately
2 1/2 miles downstream of Jenny Lake
Moose Vicinity
Teton County
Wyoming

HABS No. WY-113

HABS
WYO
20-MOOS.V,
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Building Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
GERALDINE LUCAS HOMESTEAD (HAROLD FABIAN VACATION HOME)

HABS No. WY-113

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I. INTRODUCTION

Location: On the west bank of Cottonwood Creek approximately 2 1/2 miles downstream from and south of Jenny Lake, in Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming. Section 2, T43N, R116W.

Quad: Moose

UTM: Geraldine Lucas Cabin:
12/521620/4840320

Dates of Construction: Geraldine Lucas' cabin - 1913
Lucas outbuildings - between 1913 and the mid-1920s
Naomi Colwell's cabin - 1919
Russell Lucas' cabin - between 1925 and the early-1930s
Pump shed and powerhouse - 1946

Present Owner: National Park Service

Present Use: None

Significance: Although architecturally undistinguished from hundreds of log structures that were constructed in Jackson Hole, Wyoming at the turn-of the-century, the Geraldine Lucas Homestead is unusual as the home of a pioneering single woman. In subsequent years, the cabin served as the summer home of Harold Fabian, who spearheaded John D. Rockefeller's successful effort to expand the boundaries of Grand Teton National Park to include the valley floor.

Historian: Richard Young
Architect: Ramona Ruhl

Project Information: The project was undertaken under the direction of Christine Whitacre, Historian, Branch of History, Division of National Preservation Programs, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service.

II. HISTORY

Geraldine Lucas Homestead

In June of 1913 Geraldine Lucas took up residence in her newly-constructed log cabin along the banks of Cottonwood Creek. After arriving in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the previous year, Mrs. Lucas had looked throughout the valley in search of a homestead site before settling on this particular location along the western edge of the "Hole" and at the foot of the Grand Teton Mountain Range. The tract which she applied for on August 16, 1913 was bisected by Cottonwood Creek and consisted of nearly 160 acres of sage brush-dotted meadows and stands of lodgepole pine.¹

Flowing swiftly and within several feet of the Lucas cabin, Cottonwood is a fair-sized stream that drains the rugged eastern slope of the Teton Range, channelling its run-off on a southward course toward a rendezvous with the Snake River. Despite this apparent abundance of water, Geraldine's land was generally characterized by dry, sandy soil, which, in combination with the area's severe climate and rather short growing season, resulted in a homestead that possessed only limited agricultural potential. But, located as it was beneath the towering pinnacle of the Grand Teton, the site was noteworthy for its beauty--and its isolation. This evidently suited Geraldine as she chose to remain here for the rest of her life.

Geraldine Lucas filed papers for her homestead 23 years after the frontier, according to the United States Census Bureau and historians such as Frederick Jackson Turner, had disappeared from the American West. Early twentieth-century residents of Jackson Hole might have disputed this assessment. Situated in the lonely reaches of northwest Wyoming, Jackson Hole was isolated by virtue of its geography: the surrounding ring of mountains formed a substantial barrier to would-be settlers, and in front of them to the east lay endless stretches of dry and windswept high plains. As a result, settlement of the Hole was still in its infancy at the time of the 1890 U.S. census. The first homestead in the valley was not established until 1884, and at the turn of the century Jackson Hole had a total population of only 638 people.² National Park Service historian John Dougherty has observed that homesteading activity in the area actually increased after 1900, reaching its peak during the period between 1908 and 1919, and it did not come to an end until 1927.³ Thus Geraldine Lucas was part of Jackson Hole's largest influx of homesteaders.

Dougherty has also detected a change over time in the interests

that motivated homesteaders. Whereas early homesteaders in the valley usually sought to establish farms or ranches, this was not always the case after 1910. Many of these later settlers homesteaded on land that was poorly suited for agriculture. These claimants often sought to obtain land for the purpose of establishing residences, dude ranches, or tourist facilities; many were also involved in real estate speculation.⁴ Geraldine Lucas, with her distinctly limited agricultural ambitions, clearly exemplifies this pattern of post-1900 homesteading in the Hole.

This is not to say, however, that Lucas was a typical homesteader, for such is hardly the case. Geraldine Adorna Lucas, the sixth of eleven children, was born on November 5, 1866 in Iowa City, Iowa.⁵ At the age of 19, Geraldine married thirty-year-old Michael O'Shea but the marriage did not go smoothly, and Geraldine left her husband after less than two years. At the time she was six-months pregnant with her son, Russell. The marriage did not officially end until 1897, and soon thereafter Geraldine changed her legal name--and that of her son--back to her maiden name.⁶ In the meantime, Geraldine had pursued her education at Oberlin College in Ohio. After her graduation in 1898, she moved to New York City where she taught art, music, and sewing in the public schools until her retirement in 1912.⁷

It was at this point that Geraldine decided to move west. Following the example of two brothers and a sister who had already made Jackson Hole their home, Geraldine came to the valley to claim a homestead on which she could build her retirement home.⁸ After her cabin on Cottonwood Creek was completed in the summer of 1913, Geraldine moved in and soon entered her claim with the U.S. Land Office in Evanston, Wyoming.⁹ Since the land in question lay within the Teton National Forest, she filed under the terms of the 1906 Forest Homestead Act, but the procedure was actually dictated by the 1862 Homestead act.¹⁰

In order to "make proof" or "prove up" on a claim, a homesteader must live on the land for five years, make improvements to the acreage, and also cultivate the land. By 1918 Geraldine had met all three requirements. In her final proof she testified that she had plowed and planted 20 acres, first planting wheat (her initial wheat crop in 1914 was totally destroyed by hail), then switching in later years to timothy and then alfalfa. She also reported a number of improvements to the property: a five-room log house, a log store house, a "grainary," a hen house, a rabbit house, buck pole and wire fencing, and two irrigation ditches.¹¹ Unfortunately, a series of procedural snags, among them the land office's assertion that Lucas had failed to provide evidence of posting her land and a second land survey which redrew the boundary line so that it passed through the middle of her yard, delayed the

final issuance of the homestead patent for four years.¹² Geraldine finally received a patent for 159.97 acres on June 19, 1922.¹³

Showing a talent for public land acquisition which was common among settlers of the frontier West, Geraldine Lucas did not content herself with this single acreage. In fact, even before selecting the Cottonwood Creek parcel as her new homesite she had applied to purchase 38.09 acres of land on Phelps Lake. She obtained this federal land under the 1878 Timber and Stone Act which allowed for the purchase of public land that was unfit for cultivation and was valued chiefly as a source of either timber or stone.¹⁴ After paying \$134.04 in 1912, Lucas received the patent to this land in 1914.¹⁵ There is no clear explanation for her purchase of this parcel of which she never made any use, so this may have been a case of land speculation.

Geraldine also added to her holdings through her dealings with Naomi Brewster Colwell, a twenty-three-year-old woman who was passing through the area in 1918. After inviting Naomi to stay with her, Geraldine persuaded her guest to file for a homestead on 160 acres immediately to the south of her own land.¹⁶ Naomi did so, made the necessary improvements, and on June 28, 1922 she was issued the patent. Within two months, Naomi sold her land to Geraldine and returned to her home in Michigan.¹⁷ Such hiring of homesteaders to augment one's own land holdings was a common practice at this time.¹⁸

Mrs. Lucas took advantage of one other piece of public land legislation to increase her acreage when she filed an application to obtain 80 acres adjoining her homestead to the east under the Desert Land Act of 1877. This law, designed to promote the agricultural development of arid lands, offered public land at \$1.25 per acre to farmers or ranchers who would be able to utilize irrigation.¹⁹ Geraldine applied for this property in June of 1923, specifying her occupation as "rancher" on the application.²⁰ Already owning the necessary water rights and a ditch passing through the parcel, Geraldine proceeded to have the ditch enlarged sufficiently to permit irrigation of 15 of the 80 acres involved. She cultivated 10 acres of this in 1925 and 1926.²¹ As with her original homestead claim, Geraldine was plagued by a series of bureaucratic snags, but eventually, on March 24, 1927, she was issued a patent for her desert land property, which had been reduced to a total of 70.03 acres.²² This increased her land holdings to slightly over 428 acres, of which all but the 38.09 acres at Phelps Lake were contiguous with her homesite.

Geraldine's Homestead cabin (WY-113-A) was constructed in 1913, possibly by Paul Imeson, but this is not certain.²³ It initially

consisted of two rooms, with the large west room and its wrap-around porch being added later. It is not clear when this addition was made. In her final proof testimony of November 1921, Geraldine claimed as one of her improvements a 32' by 32' log cabin with five rooms. This is puzzling since even with the west room--if, in fact, it had been added by this time--there would only have been a total of three rooms; although if she had counted a closet and pantry this would produce a total of five rooms. The stated dimensions are also a source of confusion, for neither with nor without the west-room addition do the overall dimensions come to 32' by 32'. It is quite possible, though, that the addition was present at this time. Josephine Fabian writes that this room was added in the "early twenties." She also states that Harry Clissold, the future mayor of Jackson who would hold that title for 30 years, had "spoken of working on Mrs. Lucas' homestead cabin when it was being built." While she does not say whether he was involved in the initial construction or with subsequent additions, the implication is that he worked on the west-room addition and the porch that accompanied it.²⁴

On the west section of the porch in a position which afforded breathtaking views of the peaks towering high overhead, Geraldine had a wooden swing suspended from the eaves.²⁵ At some point she also had an entire section of the porch--on the south side of the cabin--glassed in to form an enclosed porch. (See the historical photos which show the porch.) This "summer porch" was sometimes used in warmer weather for accommodating overnight guests.²⁶

The small room adjoining the kitchen on the northeast corner of the homestead cabin was added by Geraldine at some point. This addition, with its shingled construction, represents an obvious departure from the log architecture utilized elsewhere in Geraldine's cabin, and, in fact, this style of construction is not found anywhere else on the site. There are no documentary records to indicate when this room was constructed. The toilet and shower which are presently found in this small room were installed after Mrs. Lucas' death, as she never used this room as a bathroom. Geraldine never had indoor bathroom facilities at her homestead and instead relied upon an outhouse located a short ways to the east of her cabin. During her 25 years at the homestead she never had electricity, indoor plumbing, or sewage facilities of any kind.²⁷

Exiting her kitchen through this northeast room, Geraldine would have passed through the door located on the north side of the little room and found herself on the concrete steps which lead directly down to Cottonwood Creek. It was from here that Geraldine carried her water in buckets. Later--again the date is not known--she had a "pitcher pump" installed in the northeast entry room which made it easier for her to obtain water when the creek was

frozen over in winter.²⁸ This pump drew water directly from the creek.²⁹

Geraldine's cabin was heated by means of wood stoves, for which she had an ample supply of wood. She stacked her firewood in a pile along the east wall so that whenever she needed more wood for her stove she could simply open the window and reach outside to the pile.³⁰ Often during the cold winter months Geraldine would close off the large west room and use only the kitchen and bedroom. This made it easier to keep warm since she did not have to heat such a large interior space.³¹

With the addition of the west room, Geraldine had three main rooms in her cabin. The west room served as a living room, she made her bedroom in the south room, and her kitchen was situated in the north room.³² Aside from typical furnishings, including a very large number of rugs, her cabin was home to some rather unique items, including a walrus skull and tusks, a polar bear skull, a Siberian eskimo pipe, and a mounted kodiak bear head--all courtesy of her son, Russell, who brought them back from Alaska. And the presence of a piano, two violins, and a clarinet were evidence of Geraldine's musical proclivities. More typical of a Jackson Hole homestead cabin were the deer antlers, coyote skin, and mounted coyote head.³³

Geraldine obtained an additional cabin (WY-113-C), built for Naomi Colwell in 1919, when she purchased her neighbor's homestead in 1922. This became Geraldine's "summer kitchen," and it was here that she prepared her meals during the mild, snow-free months of the year. During the winter she eschewed the trek to Naomi's cabin, which was then located approximately 100 yards from her cabin, in favor of doing her cooking in her own kitchen. Naomi's cabin was later moved--after Geraldine's death--to its present location closer to the Lucas homesite.³⁴

The practice of two single women--one young and quite attractive--homesteading adjoining tracts and living together for a five-year period was a bit unusual for this time and place. Josephine Fabian has related an interesting account of this arrangement. Apparently Geraldine was concerned about the possibility of a romance between Naomi and her son and was determined to "break it up." Mrs. Fabian further explains that several local men have recounted their experiences with Naomi and Geraldine. Whenever one of the young bachelors would try to court Naomi they would be run off the property by Mrs. Lucas.³⁵

Geraldine's nephew recalls that eventually, once their real estate deal had been consummated, Mrs. Lucas "ran off" Naomi as well. From this point on, until her death 16 years later, Geraldine lived

alone on her isolated homestead. Evidently, however, this suited her just fine--even when she was snowed in for months at a time during the long Jackson Hole winters. Mrs. Lucas was a loner who did not require the company of others. With plenty of firewood, an awe-inspiring view of the jagged Teton peaks, and an abundance of reading material, she was apparently quite content.³⁶

When Geraldine did feel the need to leave the confines of her homesite she could do so on the back of a horse, for she owned a mare. Since she had neither a barn nor an abundance of winter feed, the mare would be sent to her brother's ranch down in Spring Gulch for the winter.³⁷ For summer transportation Geraldine could also call upon her 1924 Buick touring car. Soon after her son gave her this vehicle she had a garage, with a concrete ramp, built a short distance from her cabin.³⁸ The garage (WY-113-D), though remodelled since Geraldine's time, is still present on the site. Since neither horses nor automobiles were well-suited to winter conditions in the valley, Russell Lucas also provided his mother with a sled and a team of dogs to enable her to traverse the snow-covered landscape.³⁹ This sled can be seen today at the Menor's Ferry museum.

Mrs. Lucas' final proof testimony in 1921 lists under improvements a number of outbuildings: a log store house, a "grainary," a rabbit house, and a chicken house. These structures, which must have been built between 1913 and 1921, are no longer present, and no documentary records pertaining to them are in existence. Neither of Geraldine's two nephews, who first visited the site no later than 1927, recall seeing any of these structures. The only outbuildings that they do remember seeing are the garage (WY-113-D), a guest cabin (WY-113-E), and an outhouse. While the first two structures are still standing, it is quite possible that the existing outhouse (WY-113-G) dates from the post-Lucas period. Phil Lucas, Geraldine's nephew, recalls a single-room outhouse whereas the present outhouse is a two-room structure.⁴⁰

One other existing structure which dates from the Lucas years is a storage shed (WY-113-H) that is located directly east of Geraldine's cabin. It is possible that this is the same building referred to in her 1921 testimony as the "log store house, 14 x 22," although it is not built of logs and its actual dimensions are slightly less than 14 by 22 feet. In any case, this structure would appear to date from the late 1910s or 1920s.

While Mrs. Lucas obtained her land according to legislation that was intended to foster the agricultural development of public lands, she--like many other homesteaders in Jackson Hole and elsewhere in the West--had little interest in ranching or farming. She did fulfill the irrigation and cultivation stipulations

required to prove up her Homestead and Desert Land claims, but she appears to have engaged in only as much agricultural activity as was necessary to satisfy the law. Once her patents had been issued, she did little or no farming. Nor did she pursue ranching or keep any animals other than her horse and dogs.⁴¹ She did maintain a garden, on an island in Cottonwood Creek directly opposite her cabin, in which she grew rhubarb.⁴²

Needless to say, Geraldine did not support herself through her agricultural endeavors. She did not require a large income, for she led a simple, solitary lifestyle, and she was quite self-sufficient--she made all of her own clothes, for example.⁴³ She evidently could draw upon savings which she had accumulated during her 12 years of teaching. And an additional source of support was her son, Russell, who earned a healthy salary as the commander of a Coast Guard cutter and sent money to his mother regularly.⁴⁴

Russell's devotion to his mother did not extend to her homestead. He visited Mrs. Lucas approximately once every year, but he never took much of an interest in the place.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Geraldine decided to build a cabin for Russell next to her own. What is variously known today as the "main cabin" or the "Fabian cabin" is this cabin (WY-113-B) which was built for Russell Lucas. The actual construction date for this cabin is not known, since no documentary records exist and differing estimates are provided by Geraldine's nephews, ranging from 1925 to the early 1930s.⁴⁶ The structure was built by John and Ted Woodward, and the interior was finished by Jack Kranenberg; Ernie Moore built the fireplace.⁴⁷

While Geraldine was not directly involved in the actual construction, she did take an active role in selecting the trees that would furnish the logs. Determined to have the cabin constructed only from logs of uniform diameter, she scouted the Timbered Island to the east of her land and personally selected all of the trees to be cut for the project, measuring each tree with a tape before it was cut.⁴⁸ The finished cabin had a bedroom, living room, and den, and it also had space for a kitchen and bathroom.⁴⁹ The latter features were never built during the Lucas era. Geraldine did put in a bathtub and toilet, but since she never had plumbing installed these were never operational in her time.⁵⁰ After its completion, this impressive log structure was barely used at all during Geraldine's lifetime. Russell rarely visited, so, for the most part, his cabin lay empty.⁵¹ Geraldine made little use of the building herself, remaining instead within the walls of her own cabin. She did, however, house a portion of her library in Russell's cabin.⁵²

At the time of her death, Geraldine owned a total of 1353 books.⁵³ This is quite an impressive collection considering the isolated

location of Geraldine's homesite. Geraldine was an avid reader, and this was how she occupied much of her time during her long winter's "hibernation" on the homestead.⁵⁴ While Geraldine was indeed a reclusive loner who frequently sought company in the form of her books, this must not be construed to imply that she was not an outdoorswoman. To the contrary, she was an active woman who was often to be found snowshoeing, dog-sledding, or riding her horse. Undoubtedly, her most celebrated accomplishment was a successful climb of the Grand Teton, undertaken within three months of her fifty-eighth birthday. By reaching the summit of this imposing peak on August 16, 1924, she became only the second woman to have scaled the Grand.⁵⁵ This unusual feat--commemorated in a well-known photograph that shows an exuberant Geraldine Lucas holding the stars-and-stripes aloft on the summit--is only the most obvious reminder of the eccentric nature of the woman who homesteaded on Cottonwood Creek in 1913.

Meanwhile, events were unfolding which would place Geraldine Lucas in the middle of a long-running controversy and which would determine the ultimate disposition of her homestead.

From Homestead to National Park

While Yellowstone National Park was established in 1872 after a fairly brief birthing process, its neighboring park to the south would not be fully established until 1950, and then only after a long protracted struggle in the face of significant opposition. The idea of a "Teton National Park" had been suggested as early as 1898, but no progress had been made in this direction as of 1923 when an important meeting was held in Maud Noble's cabin in Moose.⁵⁶ On this occasion, Horace Albright, the superintendent of Yellowstone National Park who had been advocating the extension of his park's boundaries to include the Tetons and Jackson Hole, met with a number of local residents to discuss the possibility of preserving Jackson Hole and protecting it from further development. The plan decided upon at this meeting called for the purchasing of private land in the valley which would then be administered by the park service.⁵⁷ The key to successful implementation of this plan was a source of funding for these land purchases, and to this end it was John D. Rockefeller, Jr. who, after a 1926 visit to the area, provided the financial resources needed to undertake the plan.

The responsibility for purchasing private land in the valley was entrusted to the Snake River Land Company which was incorporated in 1927. Vanderbilt Webb was named president of the company, and a Salt Lake City attorney named Harold Fabian was selected as vice-president. Fabian undoubtedly did not anticipate that this project

would monopolize much of his time and energy over the next 25 years.⁵⁸

In 1929 Congress passed a bill establishing Grand Teton National Park, but since this park included only the peaks themselves and not the valley in front of the Tetons, this was not the park envisioned by those who had met at Maud Noble's cabin six years earlier. Therefore the Snake River Land (SRL) Company continued the purchasing of private landholdings in Jackson Hole which it had begun in 1927. Under the guidance of Fabian, Webb, and Rockefeller representative Kenneth Chorley, land was purchased secretly with no mention of either national park expansion or the Rockefeller connection.⁵⁹ The veil of secrecy was lifted in 1930, and the resentment of local residents over the actions of the Snake River Land Company increased dramatically as the true nature of the project became known. Many residents, particularly the ranchers, were strongly opposed to the idea of a national park in their valley.

Geraldine Lucas was herself an ardent foe of both the Snake River Land Company and the National Park Service. In general, she had no affection for the federal government. This may, in part, be the result of her frustrating experiences dealing with the federal bureaucracy in the course of finalizing her land acquisitions. In any case, she was violently opposed to government regulation, and she did not relish the thought of the federal government acquiring all of the land in the valley.⁶⁰ Geraldine held the opinion, typical among frontier Westerners, that the land was there to be used and that it should not be taken away from the homesteaders and ranchers to be set aside as a park.⁶¹

Given this frame of mind and the fact that she owned a prime parcel of land at the foot of the Grand Teton, it was inevitable that Geraldine Lucas would become a persistent source of frustration for Harold Fabian and the Snake River Land Company. Horace Albright wrote to Fabian in 1929 that "If you could get the Lucas place for \$50,000 you would be making a 'ten strike.' That is the most beautiful place there is in the country."⁶² But Mrs. Lucas was not eager to sell her place--at least not at a price the Snake River Land Company was willing to pay. Geraldine reportedly vowed, "They'll never get me off this land," and in reply to a purchase offer she retorted, "You stack those silver dollars as high as the Grand Teton and I might talk to you."⁶³ A subsequent letter from Fabian to Webb offers a grim assessment of the outlook for purchasing the Lucas place: "Geraldine Lucas - seems to have no intention of selling at any price."⁶⁴ In 1929 Chorley wrote Fabian a letter in which he discussed their options for dealing with the stubborn Mrs. Lucas:

You did not comment on this, but we are inclined to think that \$135 an acre with a life lease, is entirely too high, and we are not at all sure that condemnation proceedings would bring the price of this property down, although, as we understand it, Mrs. Lucas is a very old lady and there might be reasons for handling her property in a different way than you would with men like Kimball.⁶⁵

As it would turn out, Geraldine Lucas' advanced age was the only thing the Snake River Land Company and the park service had going for them in their efforts to obtain her land.

In addition to her stubbornness, Webb, Fabian and company also had to deal on occasion with Geraldine's eccentricity. Snake River Land Company purchasing agent Dick Winger once wrote of a grandiose plan envisioned by the troublesome homesteader:

Geraldine Lucas called on me the other day and explained her ideas to me. She has decided now that it must be incorporated in her deed that no hotel or camp is to be built on her place, and that the place is to be designated as a summer residence for all future Presidents of the United States. She also wants an Act of Congress to this effect. She insists that the president be invited to come and look the place over and she is sure that he will not be so discourteous as to refuse.⁶⁶

Besides this plan for a presidential retreat, Geraldine hinted at one other idea for the ultimate disposition of her land. In a 1936 letter to a former Oberlin classmate she mentioned her interest in leaving the land to her alma mater:

... Ann Arbor has a surveying and engineering summer school [here in Jackson Hole]. I wonder if Oberlin College would care to establish a summer school among this beautiful scenery? You might find out for me. I don't expect to live forever, growing old and unattractive, but still retain a deep love for Oberlin College.⁶⁷

Two years later, when an Ohio dentist and his family were passing through the area and encountered Geraldine, the notion of a land donation to Oberlin was still on her mind. Several years later, the dentist recounted his conversation with the elderly homesteader in a letter to the dean of Oberlin College:

She told us that the government had offered her \$50,000 for her property, but that she refused the offer and was holding out for \$100,000. The government wanted her land to make into a park, because from her home, one could get a very good view of the mountains. She said she intended to keep the property

and give it to Oberlin College, if she did not get the amount she wanted for it. Her son had no use for it because he was located too far away.⁶⁸

Soon after the visit by the dentist and his family Geraldine died, never having contacted college officials about a possible land donation. Her land would not go to her beloved Oberlin College; instead, it would eventually fall into the hands of the National Park Service that she so loathed.

Geraldine Lucas died of heart failure at the age of 71 on August 12, 1938. But even death could not force the strong-willed homesteader off of her land. After cremation, an urn containing her ashes was interred in a large granite boulder that rests in a meadow on the western edge of her acreage. A bronze placque with the inscription, "Geraldine A. Lucas 1866-1938," faces up toward the Grand Teton and is still present today.

In Geraldine's estate, her real estate acreage was appraised at a value of \$19,204.05, and her personal property was valued at \$508.80.⁶⁹ Russell Lucas arrived on the scene shortly after his mother's death, and he wasted no time in disposing of her property. He quickly made arrangements to sell all of Mrs. Lucas' personal property and real estate to J.D. Kimmel. Kimmel purchased Geraldine's belongings for the appraised price of \$508.80, but he never took possession of these items; instead, Russell disposed of his mother's possessions by dumping them in a nearby cesspool.⁷⁰ To acquire Mrs. Lucas' real estate Mr. Kimmel paid considerably more than the appraised value. On August 31, 1938 he contracted to purchase all of Geraldine's land, just over 428 acres, for a price of \$60,000.⁷¹ This sale became final in September of 1939 with the final distribution of Mrs. Lucas' estate.

J.D. Kimmel, who already owned a number of properties around Jenny Lake, acquired the Lucas property with the intention of subdividing the acreage and selling lots for homesites.⁷² He eventually abandoned these plans, however, after becoming good friends with Harold Fabian, who, of course, hoped that the Lucas homestead would become part of the national park. Josephine Fabian relates an important conversation between the two men in the summer of 1944:

Kimmel: Fabian, I can ruin your whole damn project.
Fabian: I know you can, 'Uncle Kimmel.'
Kimmel: But I ain't a goin' to.

Kimmel proceeded to offer to sell all of his property, including the Lucas place, for what he had paid for it--provided that he would be given a lifetime lease on the Jenny Lake properties.⁷³ Fabian quickly accepted the offer, and soon thereafter the Lucas

Homestead was safe from future development, in the hands of the Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc., the reincorporation of the old Snake River Land Company.⁷⁴

While the Lucas property was now protected, it was not yet owned by the U.S. Government, nor were the parts of the valley which had been incorporated since 1943 in the Jackson Hole National Monument yet part of the National Park. But the long fight over the issue of national park protection of Jackson Hole was finally coming to a close. In April 1949, interested parties--including Harold Fabian, who was representing the Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc.--met in Washington to hammer out an agreement ending the park extension controversy. They succeeded, and later that year, on December 19, 1949, the Jackson Hole Preserve turned over 32,437 acres in Jackson Hole to the federal government.⁷⁵ Over 29,548 acres of this donation were added to Grand Teton National Park on September 14, 1950 when President Truman signed a bill increasing the park to its present size. Geraldine Lucas' homestead along Cottonwood Creek at the base of the Tetons was now part of a national park

The Fabian Years

It is ironic that the home of Geraldine Lucas, an outspoken foe of the campaign to extend Grand Teton National Park's boundaries, would come to be occupied by one of the men most responsible for implementing the park extension plan. Contrary to a popular misconception, Harold Fabian never actually owned any of the Lucas property; but for all practical purposes the land and all of the buildings located there belonged to Fabian from shortly after the time they were sold by J.D. Kimmel, for this would be Mr. Fabian's summer home for the final 29 years of his life.

As Josephine Fabian has recalled, her husband was asked by Vanderbilt Webb and Kenneth Chorley in 1945 to assume the job of managing the land that the Jackson Hole Preserve, Inc. had acquired for future inclusion in the park. When Fabian agreed, Chorley and Webb then suggested that, in Mrs. Fabian's words, "he move his headquarters to the Lucas place and fix it up for his home in Jackson Hole."⁷⁶ It is difficult to say with any certainty whether the establishment of the Fabian residence at the Lucas place was actually the idea of Webb and Chorley, or whether in fact it was a move that Harold Fabian had already anticipated. In any case, the Fabians took up residence there the following summer, and they would continue to spend their summers at the Lucas place--usually from mid-June through mid-September--until Harold's death in 1975.⁷⁷

At this time the Lucas property was actually owned by the Jackson

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Hole Preserve, Inc., of which Fabian was a charter trustee and, as mentioned above, an important executive. The land had been deeded to the Jackson Hole Preserve by John D. Rockefeller shortly after his purchase of the Kimmel properties. On December 16, 1949 this acreage, along with the bulk of the JHP landholdings, was donated to the U.S. Government--the Lucas property was included in Deed Number two of this donation. Shortly before this, however, the JHP had granted a ten-year lease for the Lucas place to the Grand Teton Lodge Company (formerly the Grand Teton Lodge and Transportation Company) on November 9, 1949. The GTL Co., in turn, sublet the property to Harold Fabian.⁷⁸ Thus did Harold and Josephine Fabian obtain their summer home within Grand Teton National Park.

In 1956, with the lease having since been reassigned from the Grand Teton Lodge Company to the Jackson Hole Preserve, the National Park Service recommended to the Secretary of the Interior that the lease be extended through September 14, 1975--25 years from the date on which the park extension bill had been signed into law. The Department of the Interior subsequently granted to the JHP an extension of the original 1949 lease. The Jackson Hole Preserve was to pay the sum of \$100 for the use of "Part of the Geraldine Lucas Property," and there was no mention of Harold Fabian other than the stipulation that the lease would expire upon his death should he die between October 31, 1959 and September 14, 1975.⁷⁹

In the spring of 1946, the Fabians began work at the Lucas place to transform the simple homestead into a modern summer home. Heat would still be provided by wood stoves, as in Geraldine's time, but now, for the first time, the site would feature electricity, plumbing, and a sewage system. The powerhouse (WY-113-F) was constructed to house a "Kohler plant" which would provide electricity. A well was dug and the pump shed (WY-113-I) built, and plumbing was installed by a Salt Lake City plumber who had brought second-hand materials with him from Salt Lake on account of the shortage of new plumbing materials resulting from World War II. Bathroom fixtures, which were also in short supply, were obtained by Fabian through a friend who was dismantling a pilot training school in Los Angeles.⁸⁰

Naomi's cabin (WY-113-C), Geraldine's "summer kitchen," was moved at this time to its present site nearer the other buildings in order to facilitate water and sewer connections.⁸¹ Also at this time, a bathroom was added to Naomi's cabin, which the Fabians referred to as the "sleeping cabin."⁸² Two septic tanks were installed--one at the southeast corner of Naomi's cabin and the other to the west of Russell's cabin (WY-113-B).⁸³ Telephone lines were installed in both of the main cabins (WY-1134-A and WY-113-B). The improvements were completed just in time for the June 6, 1946 arrival of the first guests to visit the new Fabian

residence. Governor Hunt of Wyoming, Lester Bagley--Wyoming's Game and Fish Commissioner, and Newton Drury--the Director of the National Park Service, all arrived for important meetings relating to the park extension project.⁸⁴

While the Fabians certainly modernized the Lucas complex and remodelled some of the interiors, the buildings in which they lived were the original structures which Geraldine Lucas had put in between 1913 and 1938. There are only two outbuildings which were clearly added by the Fabians--the powerhouse (WY-113-F) and the pump shed (WY-113-I), both constructed in 1946. As mentioned above, the outhouse (WY-113-G), may also fit into this category.

The basic interior spaces of Russell's cabin (WY-113-B) remained the same as when Geraldine first had the cabin constructed. The major changes here were made in the central section of the cabin, where Geraldine had taken only tentative steps toward installing a functional bathroom and where she had left space for the future addition of a kitchen. Here the Fabians put in two bathrooms and used the remaining space as a hallway. Harold and Josephine made their bedroom in the northwest room which had its own bathroom. The northeast room, which can be entered either from the interior hall or through a door opening out onto the porch, served both as a den and as a guest bedroom. Relatives of the Fabians often stayed here.⁸⁵

The spacious living room was a popular gathering spot for the Fabians and their guests, particularly in the evening after dinner. Here, and in the other rooms, one would have been struck by the large number of beautiful Navajo rugs which the Fabians had collected over the years. In addition to being laid on the floors and over chairs, some of these rugs were also hung on the walls of this cabin, which, since it contained both the living room and the Fabians' bedroom, was usually referred to during the Fabian years as the "main cabin" or the "lodge cabin."⁸⁶

Geraldine's cabin (WY-113-A) was used by the Fabians primarily as a place for preparing and serving meals. The west room--Geraldine's living room--was the dining room, and it contained a table which could be lengthened by the addition of several leaves so as to accommodate a good-sized party. The porch was entirely open, rather than enclosed by glass as the southern section had been in Geraldine's time. The kitchen was located, as it was in Geraldine's time, in the north room, and the south room served as a bedroom for employees. The Fabians employed a couple--usually an older couple--to work on the property each summer. The woman did all of the cooking, while her husband served as a ranch hand, taking care of the horses and doing other odd jobs.⁸⁷ The most notable change made to this cabin, aside from modernizing the

kitchen, was the installation of a toilet and shower in the small entry room at the northeast corner--the room in which Geraldine had a pitcher pump.

The Fabians made use of the various outbuildings which Geraldine had erected, and they undoubtedly made some interior modifications in these structures. The garage, which was used during this period as a storage building, may have seen some interior rebuilding. Its metal roof was almost certainly put in place by the Fabians.

Both the small guest cabin (WY-113-E) originally erected by Mrs. Lucas and the newly relocated Naomi's cabin (WY-113-C) were used to accommodate overnight guests--and there were plenty such visitors during the Fabians' tenure at the Lucas place.

Josephine's grandniece concludes that the Fabians' primary pursuit during their many summers along the banks of Cottonwood Creek was "to share Jackson Hole with all of their friends and family ... They really wanted to share the place with people."⁸⁸ And this they certainly did. Josephine kept a full guest calendar throughout the summer. In addition to overnight guests hailing from all over the country, many local residents were invited to join the Fabians for dinner. Josephine would host major dinners for both local and overnight guests roughly four nights each week. Held in the west room of Geraldine's cabin, these dinners might be attended by as many as 20 or more people.⁸⁹

Josephine devised a clever means of keeping a roster of their many guests through the use of clothes pins. Each guest's place at the dinner table was marked by a clothes pin on which was written their name and the date. Should a guest later make a return visit, his or her original pin would be retrieved to again serve as their placemaker, and the new date would be added. In the meantime, all of the clothes pins were placed in a display hanging on the dining room wall, forming a roster which ultimately included over 1800 "clothes pin guests."⁹⁰ Among these can be found the names of a number of prominent national figures such as Herbert Hoover, Governor Lester Hunt, Governor Leslie Miller, and Senator Clifford Hansen. The presence of 16 different Rockefeller names is not surprising given Harold's long association with both John D. Rockefeller and Laurence Rockefeller in the course of the park extension project. In addition, the clothes pin collection serves as something of a "Who's Who in the History of Jackson Hole," including as it does such notable names as Olaus Murie, Elena Hunt, Harry Clissold, Katherine Burt, Homer Richards, and Harrison Crandall.⁹¹

While most guests came for pleasure rather than business, Harold Fabian did conduct some business with his visitors, and important

meetings, such as those with Governor Hunt, Commissioner Bagley, and NPS director Drury in June of 1946, were held on occasion at the Fabian retreat.⁹² Throughout his residence at the Lucas place, Harold engaged in a variety of park-related and conservation projects, both before and after his 1955 retirement from his law practice. One of his favorite projects was the Jackson Hole Preserve's restoration of Menor's Ferry in Grand Teton National Park. Fabian spearheaded the effort to restore the ferry, which had carried valley residents across the Snake River from 1892 to 1927, and the newly operational ferry was dedicated in 1949.⁹³ Harold's work on behalf of the national parks continued when he was appointed to a six-year term on the Secretary of the Interior's Advisory Board for National Parks, a body which he chaired from 1962 until the end of his term in 1964. Mr. Fabian then continued working with this group, upon the Secretary's request, in a consulting capacity. He also later served as a member of the Yellowstone Park-Grand Teton Planning Team.⁹⁴

Josephine Fabian, when not occupied hosting her guests, also engaged in a number of projects during her summers at the Lucas place. She interviewed a number of long-time residents of the valley, eventually producing several hundred oral history tapes. She would sit with the old-timers in the main cabin (WY-113-B) living room and talk with them while a reel-to-reel tape recorder, unobtrusively situated in a corner behind a Japanese screen, captured the conversations.⁹⁵ Josephine also completed two writing projects which reflected her love for the Jackson Hole country and her interest in its history. Her short guidebook to the area, Jackson Hole: How to Discover and Enjoy it, was first published in 1949, and she later wrote The Jackson's Hole Story, "An historical novel set in the Grand Teton Mountains of Wyoming," which was published in 1963.

Life at the Fabian summer residence revolved around an appreciation of the beauty of the site. Harold Fabian was happiest when seated on the porch of Geraldine Lucas' cabin, gazing upward at the Teton peaks which pierced the sky to the west. And for after-dinner entertainment, the Fabians and their guests would often gather in the main cabin's living room to peer out the windows at the elk herd which usually appeared each evening to partake of the salt lick which had been set out in the meadow.⁹⁶

During the day, the area's beauty was also enjoyed through more active pursuits such as fishing and riding horses. The Fabians would keep on their property enough horses, obtained from the horse concession at Jenny Lake, to meet the riding needs of their guests. This was the standard practice until around 1970, when a severe windstorm blew down the corral and the barn. Both of these structures were located to the south of the Lucas Homestead site,

and the ruins which are presently visible approximately 100 yards to the southeast of the complex may be the remains of the small barn which the Fabians used for storing saddles and other items.⁹⁷ If this is the case, it is also possible that the Fabians' barn may actually have been a structure which was originally erected by Naomi Colwell.

The Fabians also spent a considerable amount of their time and energy working to maintain the beauty and the physical integrity of their summer retreat. "It's too bad you never saw it when they had it really well-maintained," comments Josephine's grandniece as she recalls the beauty of the Lucas place under the Fabians' stewardship.⁹⁸ A buck-rail fence, diligently maintained by Harold Fabian, encircled the entire complex in a wide arc that began and ended on the banks of Cottonwood Creek. Inside this fence was an impressively green lawn, neatly mowed and watered by a series of ditches--still visible today--which the Fabians constructed to bring creek water to their yard. At times, however, the problem was not how to obtain sufficient water but how to deal with its overabundance. Cottonwood Creek overflowed its banks at least twice between 1961 and 1976, thus flooding the site. This caused the crawlspace under the kitchen in Geraldine's cabin to fill with water, and it also wreaked havoc with the water and sewage systems. The water pump in particular proved to be a persistent source of aggravation on these and other occasions.

The Fabians paid meticulous attention to the buildings as well as to the grounds. The buildings were well-maintained, with the porches and roofs redone almost yearly and the logs oiled regularly--even on the storage sheds. Some of this work was carried out by the Grand Teton Lodge Company, which took responsibility for the water and electrical systems and for major repairs.⁹⁹

At the age of 90, Harold Fabian had to be flown by ambulance plane from Jackson Hole to Salt Lake City in September 1975.¹⁰⁰ He died several months later on December 7th. Fabian's medical emergency forced him to leave his summer home during the same month in which the lease was to have expired. The expiration of the Fabian lease, however, was not enforced, as Josephine returned to the property for several more summers. She spent her last full summer at the Lucas place in 1981 and returned the following summer to remove her belongings. Josephine died in Salt Lake City on December 20, 1984.¹⁰¹

After Josephine Fabian's departure, the park service utilized the site for employee housing for the next two summers.¹⁰² After this the Lucas place was abandoned, and the elements soon began to take their toll on the neglected structures. The fascinating

history which is contained in this site is now quickly fading from view as its buildings deteriorate.

A Look Back

Geraldine Lucas lived on her homestead for 25 years after first taking up residence there in 1913. After a brief interval of vacancy, Harold and Josephine Fabian initiated their 32-year stewardship of the property. It would be difficult to conceive of two more different sets of occupants. Mrs. Lucas was an independent, strong-willed, reclusive eccentric who was in one sense a person of her time--a westward-moving migrant who took advantage of federal legislation to carve out of the public land a home for herself in the frontier West--and in another sense was a woman ahead of her time--a divorced single-mother who returned to school, pursued a career, and then at the age of 45 came west to singlehandedly establish a homestead. However one might categorize Geraldine Lucas, she clearly was cast from a different mold than were the Fabians. Mr. Fabian was a successful lawyer and businessman who had ties with one of the country's wealthiest and most distinguished families and who was an active participant in efforts to place many of America's scenic treasures under government protection. Geraldine Lucas, by contrast, felt no need for the federal government to be in her backyard.

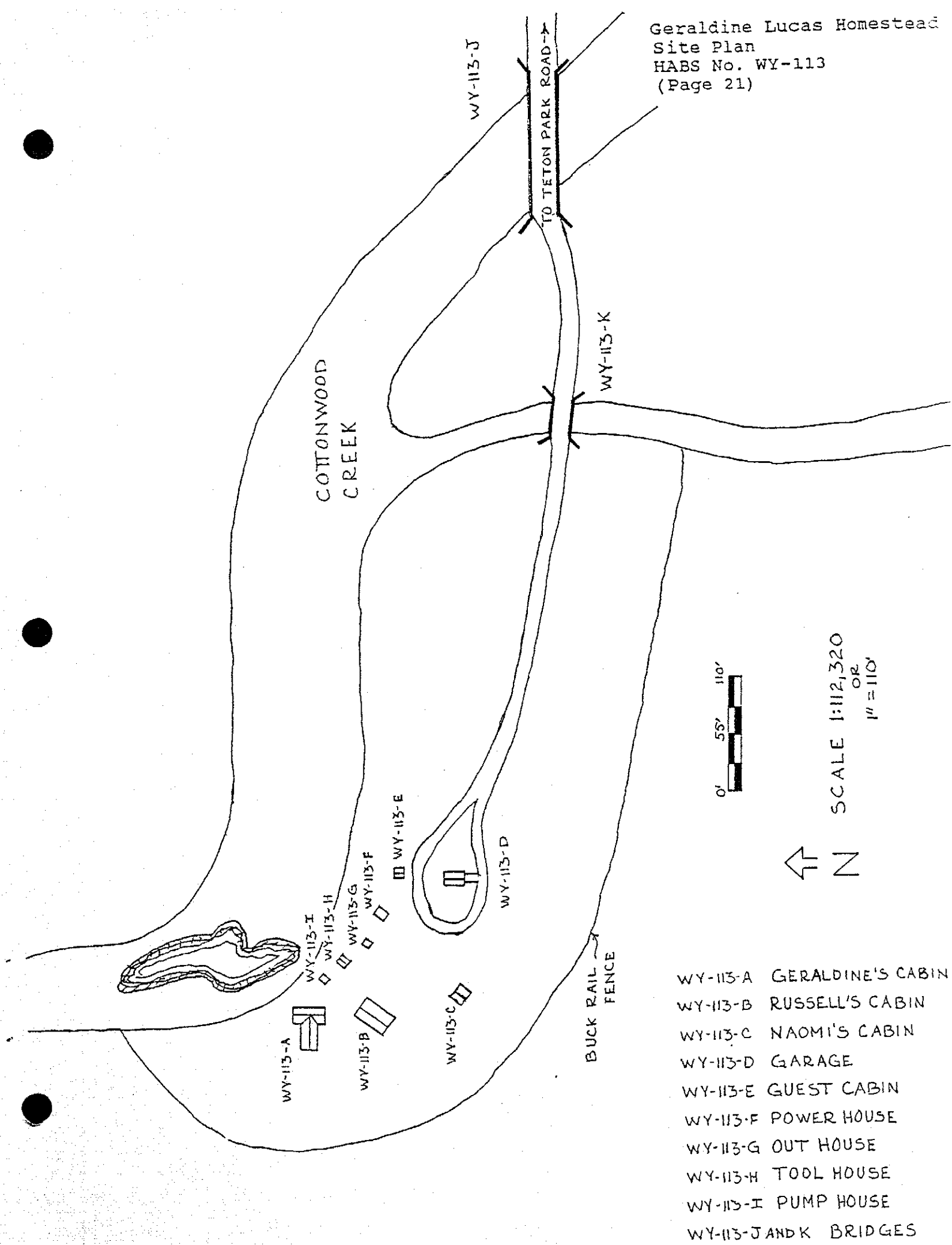
The only thing which these two strikingly different persons had in common was their appreciation of a wonderfully beautiful spot. For Geraldine Lucas it was a very private refuge--her own small domain. For Harold and Josephine Fabian it was a jewel to be shared with a multitude of family, friends, associates, and ultimately--after their deaths--with the entire nation. It is through their mutual connection to the Lucas Homestead that these two divergent faces of the American West are linked.

Homestead Buildings

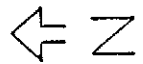
There are nine architectural structures associated with the Lucas (Fabian) homestead. All of these structures are wooden, four are dwellings, and the other five structures being related outbuildings.

Site: Geraldine Lucas Homestead

- A. General setting and orientation: The Lucas (Fabian) homestead is located approximately 4.5 miles north of Moose, Wyoming along the banks of Cottonwood Creek. The homestead sits in a meadow at the foot of the Grand Teton Mountains and is rather isolated, as it is set back about 1/4 mile from the park road and no other structures exist for approximately a one mile radius. There are two bridges along the service road which connects the homestead to the park road. The nine wood structures on the site are arranged in a circular pattern, with the majority of the structures following along the creek bank.
- B. Historic landscape design: During the Lucas era, this site functioned as a homestead. Geraldine Lucas grew a variety of crops on her land surrounding her cabin, and traces of the irrigation ditches to her fields still remain. A buckrail fence, whose remnants can also be seen, marked the boundary of Geraldine's homestead. After Lucas, this site functioned as a vacation home for the Harold Fabian family. There were no major changes to the landscape during this period, except that crops were no longer grown.

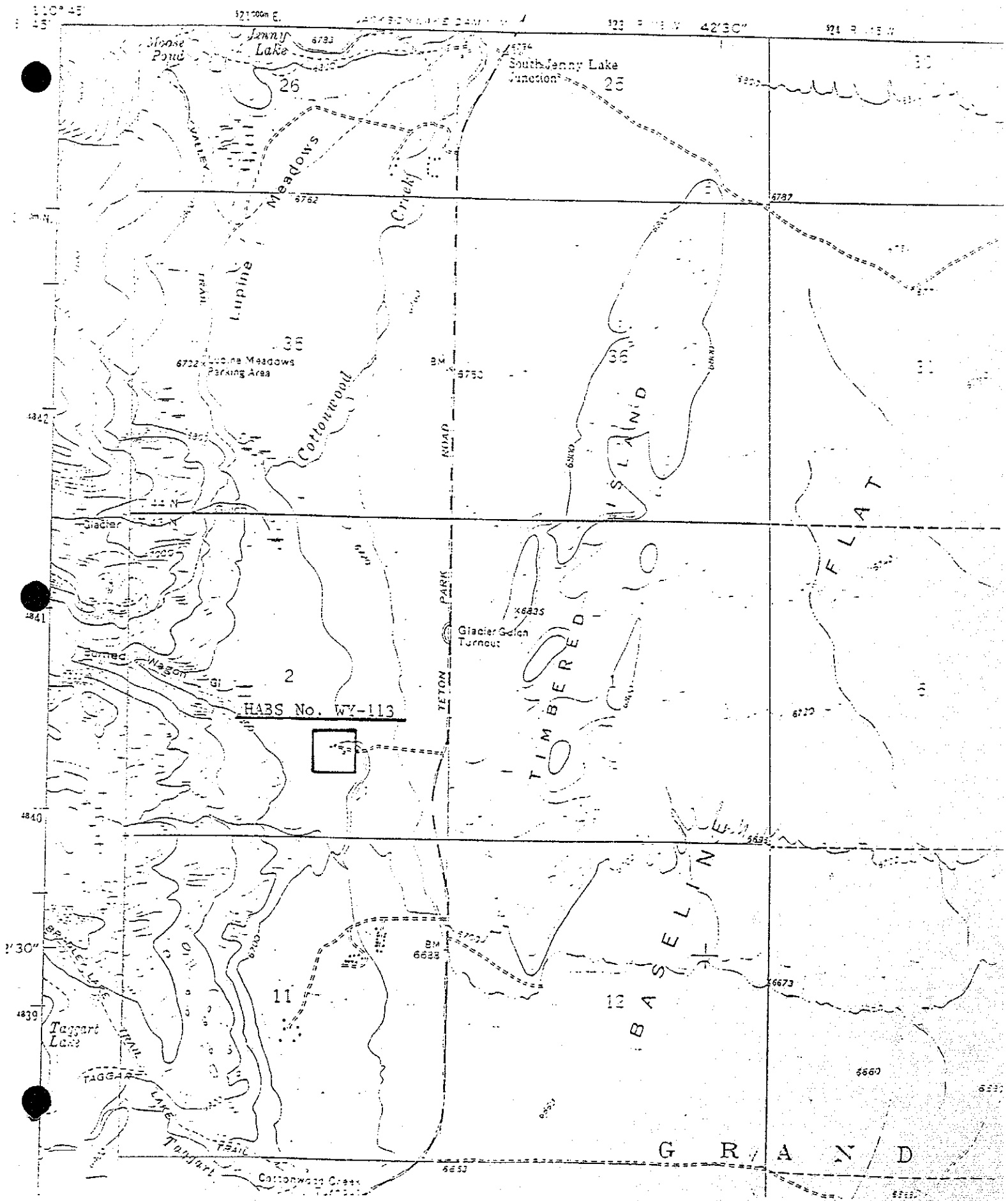


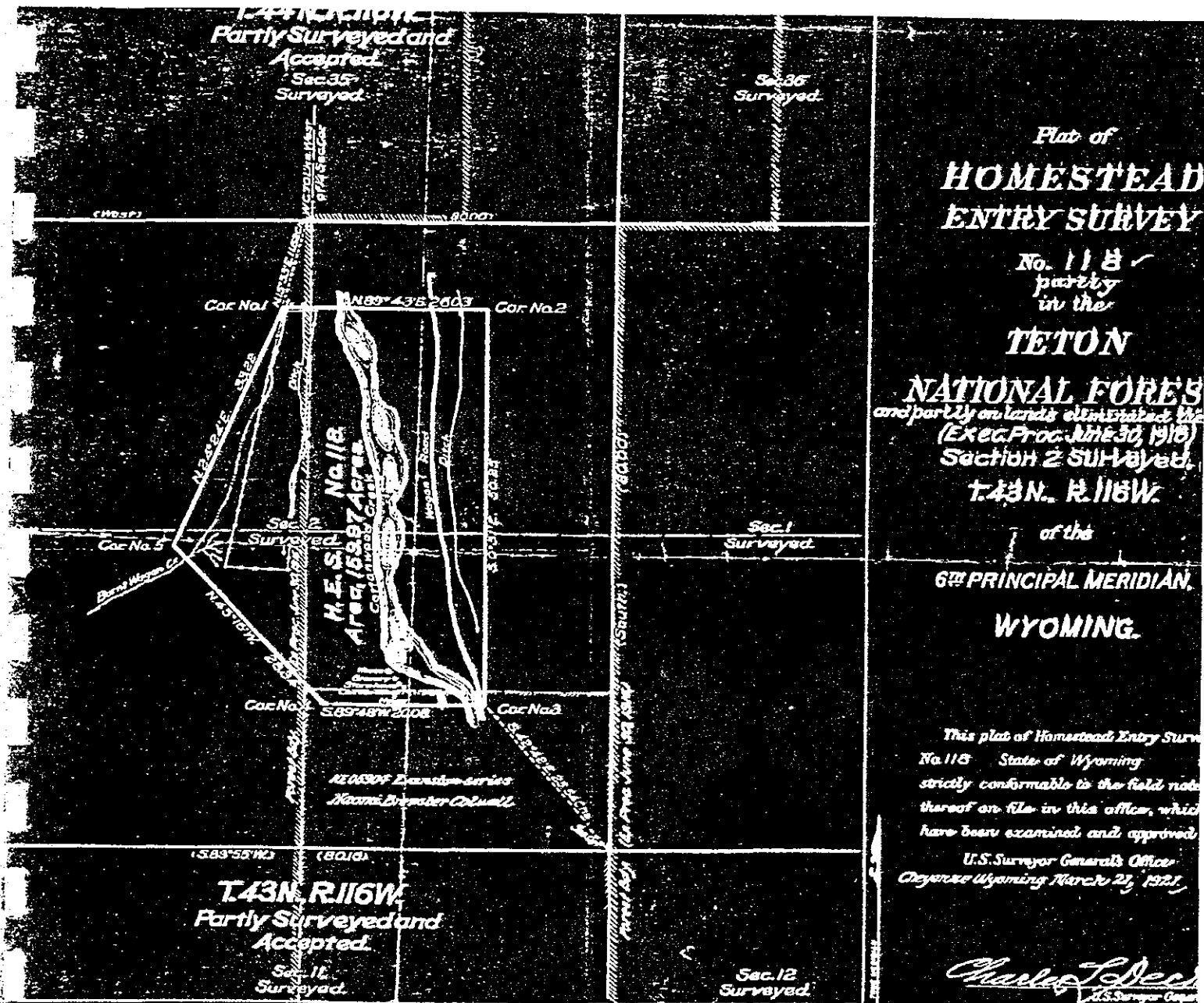
SCALE 1:112,320
 OR
 1" = 110'



- WY-113-A GERALDINE'S CABIN
- WY-113-B RUSSELL'S CABIN
- WY-113-C NAOMI'S CABIN
- WY-113-D GARAGE
- WY-113-E GUEST CABIN
- WY-113-F POWER HOUSE
- WY-113-G OUT HOUSE
- WY-113-H TOOL HOUSE
- WY-113-I PUMP HOUSE
- WY-113-J AND K BRIDGES

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY





SCALE: 10 chains to 1 inch

No.	Date	When Surveyed		Date of Approval
		By	Completed	
40	February 1916	September 1916	September 1916	March 6, 1917
40	February 1916	September 1916	October 4, 1916	March 6, 1917

Areas in Acres	
H.E. Survey No. 118	Conflicts
In Section 2	159.97
	23.37

Act of June 11, 1906	Act of July 24, 1919
List No. 4-1165	Dated March 11, 1913

III. ENDNOTES

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3. Ibid., 9.1.
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16. Fabian, 5.
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27. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
28. Phil Lucas, interview.
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30. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
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33. Probate Record #196, Clerk of District Court, Teton County Courthouse, Jackson, Wyoming.
34. Phil Lucas, interview.
35. Fabian, 5.
36. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.

40. Rod and Joyce Lucas, Phil Lucas, interviews.
41. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
42. Phil Lucas, interview.
43. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
44. Fabian, 3-4.
45. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
46. Rod and Joyce Lucas, Phil Lucas, interviews. Phil Lucas estimates that the cabin was constructed around 1925 while Rod Lucas believes it was built some time in the early-1930s.
47. Fabian, 3.
48. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
49. Fabian, 3.
50. Phil Lucas, interview.
51. Rod and Joyce Lucas, interview.
52. Letter, D.D. Smith to Dean of Oberlin College, March 21, 1941, in Geraldine Adorna Lucas alumnus file, Record Group 28, Alumni & Development Records, Oberlin College Archives, Oberlin, Ohio.
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82. Rubrecht, interview.

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89. Ibid.

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

Geraldine Lucas Homestead
(Harold Fabian Vacation Home)
On west bank of Cottonwood Creek approximately
2 1/2 miles downstream of Jenny Lake
Moose Vicinity
Grand Teton National Park
Teton County
Wyoming

HABS No. WY-113

HABS
WYO
20-MOOS.V
7-

Alan Bucknam, Photographer, June 1992

- WY-113-1 GENERAL OVERVIEW, CAMERA LOOKING WEST/SOUTHWEST,
GARAGE ON LEFT AND GUEST CABIN ON RIGHT.
- WY-113-2 GENERAL OVERVIEW, GUEST CABIN IN FOREGROUND, POWER
HOUSE, OUT HOUSE AND GERALDINE LUCAS CABIN IN
BACKGROUND LOOKING WEST/ NORTH WEST.
- WY-113-3 GENERAL OVERVIEW LOOKING WEST, RUSSELL LUCAS CABIN
IN FOREGROUND AND GERALDINE LUCAS CABIN IN
BACKGROUND.

HAAS NO 04-113-1



HABS NO. WY-113-2





HAB5 NO. WY-113-3