

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

DRAFT

Historic name: Ramelli Dairy Ranch
 Other names/site number: Old 1862 Ranch
 Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 100 Green Gulch Road
 City or town: Chilcoat State: California County: Sierra
 Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:	_____ Date
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
_____ Signature of commenting official:	_____ Date
_____ Title :	
_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

OTHER: Dry Stone

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: wooden boards and framing members, lime masonry, fieldstone, aluminum sheeting, iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Ramelli Dairy Ranch is located in Sierra County's Long Valley near the border of Washoe County, Nevada. The property faces east towards a frontage dirt road accessible by traffic, Long Valley Road. The total area of the district is approximately eighty-six acres. The ranch's contributing resources include a stone milkhouse, a wood granary, and a concrete cistern. While no information specifically identifies Caesar Ramelli as the builder, the buildings' construction and/or alteration reflect the farming and utilitarian building experience of Ramelli, who originated from northern Canton Ticino, an Italian Swiss cultural region. Noncontributing resources include the main house, which has lost integrity, and a post-period of significance guest house, barn, and timber cover. The district retains all aspects of historic integrity.

Narrative Description

Overview

Ramelli Dairy Ranch is bounded by Long Valley Road and adjacent agricultural parcels. Originally owned by the Central Pacific Railroad Company, the property was owned by H.

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Bence before sale to Caesar Ramelli in 1877.¹ With no identified construction dates, the contributing resources may have been constructed by Bence before sale of the property to Ramelli. Resources are set along the western edge of a center lawn that meets a dirt pathway leading from the Long Valley access road. Against the west are the mountains along the Sierra Valley and additional parcels used for agricultural purposes. The town of Purdy was originally situated nearby before its buildings and structures were either moved or demolished. Purdy School served as a community center for the Ramellis with other Italian Swiss in the valley.²

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Stone Milkhouse (or Stonehouse) Creamery One Contributing Building

The stonehouse was used in manufacturing and storing cheese in 10, 20, and 25 pound quantities for sale.³ A physical assessment record notes a “dairy house” starting in 1903; the original construction date is unknown. Ramelli’s simple farm equipment included a thick steel butter churn, encased in brick.⁴

Exterior

East

The milkhouse has a mortar-bedded fieldstone foundation and stucco central foundation constituting the original stonehouse, while this whole block of the milkhouse is surrounded and framed with end gable shape design, and two wooden addendum lean-tos with shed sloping roofs and vertical board-and-batten siding on the northern and southern sides. The main, eastern facing façade of the creamery has a single-step wooden portico supported by three wooden supports, sheltering a single paneled door and twelve-lite double-hung window. Rectilinear shapes of the two shed additions, central block, and gable above define the plan, and echo that of utility. The building is representative of rural utilitarian building techniques for farm outbuildings. Dry stone construction with partial mortar joints, a steep pitched wooden gable roof with wood wings on either side and vertical board cladding is a common feature of farm outbuildings. An angled porch extends along the length of the main stone block and is supported by three original style square porch posts.

The rake of the primary gable is open, and below it is a door frame that leads into the attic area, held by a wooden stop-piece rotated across the door and frame. The fenestration is regularly spaced, and the single window on the front elevation produces bilateral symmetry adjacent to the door. The shingled porch covering is shingled with wood, and at the center a handmade wooden ladder leads to a hay-loft opening through the wood paneled wall above. Stone walls surround the creamery room where the cheese was crafted. The door, bordered by a painted green door frame, is four-paneled with a metal swing latch above the white porcelain doorknob. Each panel

¹ Downieville, California Deed Records: C.P.R.R. to H. Bence. 1862; H. Bence to C. Ramelli, 1887, Sierra County Assessor’s Office.

² Eslie Cann, “The Ramelli Cheese Cellar,” *The Washoe Rambler*, Vol. 5, No.4, Winter 1981, 106-107.

³ Cann.

⁴ Downieville, California Assessor’s Record Books, 1890-1905, Sierra County Assessor’s Office.

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is simply joined, with a feathered edge to be fastened in each stile. The wall is covered by scored stucco appearing to match the original cement that surrounds the main door frame.

The stonehouse has a wooden gable roof and lean-tos on the northern and southern elevations. The addendums are each covered by a corrugated aluminum sheeting, indicating they were built after the stonehouse block. The ridge of the shed slope matches the height of the original stone. Vertical plain board siding, a feature at times of barn buildings, covers the wood frame walls of each addition.

West

The stone of the west elevation is complete, unbroken and uncovered laid fieldstone, with loose mortar joints and in some areas completely dry-stone structuring. It is an outstanding area example of the loose stone construction technique, used for the stone storeroom. An opening, where a vertical siding board has fallen, remains in the apse of the gable above. The northern lean-to is smaller, so the west elevation wall is set back from the stone wall, creating an irregular shape at the back of the building.

North

The smaller northern lean-to splits this elevation into the wood frame of the addition covering just over half the left side, and the revealed masonry of the stonehouse, which is covered with similar stucco as the main facade. A double-hung window, similar to that on the front, is set in this uncovered portion of the wall. The vertical siding of the addition consists of wide boards, and the roof's aluminum covering is a silver color. A chimney, connected to the brick churn, is visible from the addition's shed slope and is protected with a flashing and casing.

South

The southern lean-to covers the full length of the stone wall and is sided in a vertical board-and-batten pattern. An opening for a window is framed on the westernmost side of the wall. The roof of the gable and the lean-to on the southern elevation is sheeted with aluminum that has developed a reddish patina.

A weather-vane and chimney perch on top the apex of the centered gable, at the ridgeline, closest to the main facade, over the central bay. An opening just behind the vane is more of an air-vent, and close to the middle of the ridgeline is a square brick chimney.

Interior

Central Storeroom

The central storeroom is floored in simple boards running from east to west. The wall material is horizontal boards which cover the masonry envelope of the main block. A hanging chimney is visible. The gable roof system is left half exposed on the northern side of the room.

North Lean-To (Creamery Churn)

The north lean-to is accessible by a door opening of vertical siding boards set at the edge of the lean-to wall closest to the stonehouse. The entrance leads to an open area, with the structural

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system of the roof addition exposed. Visible at the edges of this slope addition are the wood shingles of the main gable frame. Immediately to the right, or north of the entranceway is a brick oven butter churn, set against the wall of the east elevation. The churn is a rectangular brick block in which is a set a large iron container. A covering of thick wooden boards, adjoined to the brick base by a hinge, opens to this container by way of a pulley rope.

South Lean-To

The south lean-to is accessible via a similar entry as the north lean-to, though the door is structured with three horizontal battens, on the topmost of which is fastened a rotating wooden block to hold the door in place. The structural system of the shed roof is exposed.

Granary

One Contributing Building

Exterior

The wood-framed granary is an irregularly shaped utility building, with two side-gabled block sheds. On the east elevation are two open bays used for storage, that constitute one block, and a board-and-batten door set in the middle of a wall with exposed framing studs; this elevation is recessed further north notably as a separate, larger block of the building. The wall of this northernmost block is without siding, leaving the vertical wooden studs open. On the smaller block, which holds two utility bays, the walls are sided with vertical boards. The sides of the gable on each block extend different heights. The utility bay roofs have a smaller eastern slope, and a longer west slope. Both are covered with aluminum sheeting. Following the nature of various styles in vernacular granary construction, the building's plan prioritizes the storage offered.

Interior

The structural system of the roof on the interior is exposed. Atop the wooden rafters are sheathing boards that are covered by corrugated aluminum sheeting. The walls on the northernmost block are clad with the same horizontal siding. However, on the utility bay block, each bay wall is covered with vertical boards that are not connected with battens.

Concrete Cistern

One Contributing Structure

The rectangular concrete cistern for water is visible at ground level and offset slightly from the granary building in a field to the northeast. It is approximately a few square feet in size. Though there are no specific records of its construction or use, its existence would have been a useful agricultural tool for raising livestock and represents a successful practice of irrigation credited to Swiss-Italian ranchers.

NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Main House

One Noncontributing Building

A main house on the ranch was constructed and completed in October 1931. The front-facing south main elevation is arranged along a rectangular plan with a gabled roof. A wooden veranda, following the face of each elevation, extends outwards from the main entrance with a low pitch shingle roof covering. Brick arches extend over the windows, and a brick chimney accentuates

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the gabled roof. Brick and wood constitute the main building materials. The gabled roof is mainly constructed of wood, while each wall is brick. This house may have been in use by the Ramelli family. The style of the house is early twentieth century Italian Renaissance revival, due to its central use of brick and arched windows. Many wooden details and the interior were redesigned after 1935, such as the surrounding veranda. The surrounding covered porch was fully constructed after 1935, and the third story.⁵ Because these alterations do change the overall visual character of the building by shape and size, the main house does not retain its original appearance. Due to loss of integrity, the house does not contribute to the district.

Guest House **One Noncontributing Building**

The guest house was built in the early 1950s. It is a bungalow style, single-story wooden frame building of approximately 750 sq. ft. Constructed after the period of significance, the guest house does not contribute to the district.

Barn **One Noncontributing Building**

A metal pole barn remains in use along the west, behind the milkhouse and creamery. The barn was built in the 1950s and covers an approximate area of 84 feet by 48 feet. Constructed after the period of significance, the barn does not contribute to the district.

Timber Covering **One Noncontributing Structure**

A structure providing protection for cut timbers was constructed in 2020. The frame is made of wood. The cover includes a total area of about 20 feet by 60 feet. Constructed after the period of significance, the structure does not contribute to the district.

ALTERATIONS AND INTEGRITY

The most substantial alteration to the property during the period of significance is the addition of wooden features to the stonehouse. Construction of wooden lean-tos and a gable roof to protect the steel butter churn does not detract from the characteristic stone masonry, vernacular structuring, or expression of a notable practice of cultural economy for the Sierra Valley and state of California, thereby not affecting the historic integrity of these resources. The granary and creamery buildings have not undergone substantial alterations on record. No period photographs have been found, and visual inspection of physical material and hardware suggests construction during the early twentieth century due to the degree of deterioration.

In the mid-1990s, the property owners were notified of Sierra Pacific Power Company's Alturas Transmission Line Project. The project included a seven-acre substation located in Long Valley, close enough to the ranch to have negative long-term visual impacts. The Bureau of Land Management determined the ranch was within the Area of Potential Effect of the Bordertown substation and transmission lines. A consensus determination of the property's eligibility for the National Register required that the power company include a landscape mitigation plan for the Bordertown substation. The fifteen-foot-tall berm included ninety trees for visual screening.

⁵ Katie Green, "Annual Meeting at Loverin Ranch," *The Sierran*, Winter 2002, Volume 30, No. 2., 5.

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Dead trees have been replaced as obligated by the agreement, and the property owners continue to monitor the landscape mitigation plan as needed.⁶

The district retains integrity of *location*. The *design* still reflects the vernacular limitations of the resources' original building methods and is in keeping with designs familiar to areas of Northern Italy. The *setting* has not been adversely changed by the post-period of significance buildings and structures and the landscape of the ranch stays true to its qualities from the early twentieth century. The *materials* and *workmanship* represent those of a farmer-builder. The ranch continues to express original masonry used in its construction and many wooden structural details. None of the resources have been rebuilt or substituted with construction of newer materials. The *feeling* of domestic agricultural use and locally focused economy on a small ranch, along with the strong connection to the valley because of little change to the surrounding area is still felt. Since the ranch facilitated a form of reclamation agriculture during its operation, the *association* with agricultural practices of immigrants in the Sierra County during the turn of the twentieth century is strong.

⁶ Sierra Pacific Power Company, "Agreement," regarding Bordertown Substation landscaping plan revisions, 1998.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Swiss

Period of Significance

1887-1934

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Ramelli Dairy Ranch is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Agriculture and Ethnic Heritage: Swiss for its association with immigration patterns of Italian Swiss to Sierra County and its early industry. The property, including the county's only known surviving nineteenth century stonehouse creamery, provided competitive local cheese products to Reno, Nevada and the surrounding area. The period of significance is 1887 to 1934, the years Caesar A. Ramelli owned the property.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Multiple agricultural properties owned by the Ramellis established the family as experienced ranchers valuable to the dairy economy in Sierra County.⁷ The Swiss-Italians were part of a notable economy of dairy and ranching farmers and the Ramellis were respected members of this Swiss-Italian community in the Sierra Valley.

Agriculture

The exploration and settlement of the Sierra Valley began with early settlers including Jim Beckwourth, Miles Goodyear, and A.P. Chapman, and later settlers from New England. New England families brought with them their own farming practices and Sierra Valley's fertile grounds were amenable to crops like alfalfa and herding of beef cattle. Among these settlers was the Church family, who settled the first townships in what became Sierra County.⁸

Immigration to Sierra Valley in the late 1800s introduced an increased labor supply and implementation of land-maintenance practices, combined with a greater market. The economy of farming is recognized as a primary identifying characteristic of the county. Specifically, many ranches at the early outset of the area around what became Long Valley farmed crops like alfalfa, and dairy farms grew in prominence as cattle took to the vast fields of the valley. The market for hay and alfalfa exploded in the late 1870s, when there was a concurrent decline in wholesale agriculture prices. Ramelli was able to purchase the hay and alfalfa needed to feed his cattle herd. Since that time, the products fed surrounding settlements in Sierra County and Nevada, with further evidence that these products could have traveled as far as the western coast of California. Besides being an involved member in his local ranching community,⁹ some of Ramelli's cheese products appeared at the Nevada Exhibit for the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, indicating the extent of his agricultural notoriety.¹⁰ Examples of comparable

⁷ Downieville, California, Deed Record from H.H. Bence to Caesar Ramelli, Assessor's Office.

⁸ *Illustrated History of Plumas, Lassen and Sierra Counties: with California from 1513 to 1850* (San Francisco: Fariss & Smith, 1882).

⁹ *Nevada State Journal*, "Nevada Star Grange Convenes Thursday," September 16, 1939, 5.

¹⁰ *Reno Gazette-Journal*, "Many Nevada People Seek Fair Prizes," January 22, 1915, 2.

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ranch properties, in Sierra County and in Washoe County and Carson County, Nevada are already recognized on the National Register for their importance.¹¹ Since the parcel originally stood on the Nevada side of the California border before the state line was redrawn, the ranch's agricultural activity has contributed to patterns of industry in both California and Nevada.

The family was respected for their industry in the community. They attended Grange Club meetings.¹² In addition to taking over the Ramelli Dairy Ranch after Caesar's death,¹³ son Charles Ramelli owned the Bella Vista ranch property (one of the major developed ranch lands in the greater area), before it was traded multiple times later in the twentieth century. During the period of significance, the family and their business were technically Washoe County residents and Nevada voters because of their proximity to the state line, before it was resurveyed in 1872, though their contributions were to the land that became Sierra County. The USGS resurveyed the line in the 1890s because of issues with the 1872 survey; during the 1890s the line from 1863 was still recognized. Much of the information found about the Ramellis' importance to the community in Sierra County was also found in records related to Washoe County, Nevada.

Further research is needed into Ramelli's business ventures elsewhere in California where he may have had business partnerships. Gonzales Creamery had mentioned his name in Salinas.¹⁴

Early settlers had found the valley just right for dairying and grazing, as explained by Joan Roth in *The Sierran*.¹⁵ Ramelli owned seventy-five cows, which produced his milk. Variable sizes of cheese at the ranch suggests high demand, including from business customers. The region was promoted for opportunities because of the ample environment for dairy production.¹⁶ Near Truckee Meadows (Reno vicinity), "the production of butter, cheese, and fluid milk for both the mining and railroad towns had become an important enterprise,"¹⁷ including Ramelli's dairy products. A 1914 dinner at the Riverside Hotel in Reno celebrated Nevada products including Ramelli's cheese (**Figure 1**).

Dairy agriculture was a part of the greater ranching and farming economy and culture during the period of significance for both Sierra Valley and nearby Washoe County. Other ranches that operated within the period of significance in the area of the Carson Valley include the Ferretto Ranch, Jones Dairy Ranch, the Gould Ranch, Caughlin Ranch, and Big Canyon Ranch. Edwin Farris also owned cattle land in Plumas County, besides Washoe County. Ranches of the Sierra Valley were comparable to the Ramelli Ranch in their type of operation, and many focused on the raising of beef cattle.¹⁸ These ranches typically would have stock of cows, but few exist now

¹¹ Holly Walton-Buchanan, *Land of the Buckaroo: Historic Ranches of Western Nevada* (Reno: Jack Bacon and Company, 2013), 151.

¹² *Reno-Gazette Journal*, "Sierra Valley Grange Members are Honored," April 12, 1940, 14.

¹³ *Nevada State Journal*, "Caesar Ramelli, Nevada Resident, Called By Death," October 2, 1934, 4; Downieville, California Deed Record: Caesar Ramelli to Charles Ramelli, 1935, Sierra County Assessor's Office.

¹⁴ *The Californian*, "Will Make Cheese" January 14, 1900, 4.

¹⁵ Joan Roth, "A History of Sierra Valley," *The Sierran*, December 17, 1969, Vol. 1, No. 4.

¹⁶ C.A. Norcross, *Agricultural Nevada*, Charles River Editors, March 22, 2018.

¹⁷ *Nevada State Journal*, "Nevada Star Grange Convenes Thursday" 16 Sep. 1939, p.5

¹⁸ Roth, "A History of Sierra Valley."

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in the area with any remaining similar structures from creameries. Agriculture was known as a chief interest and resource for Washoe County in 1888.¹⁹ The Butter industry, for example, in Washoe County grew under assessment records from 3,450 in 1865 finally to 222000 in 1886, a substantial growth before a steady level. If such a high level of output was needed, the products produced here would have been an integral part of that market.²⁰

Since the placement of this property was between Truckee Meadows pastures and Reno, the butter and cheese that was shipped before settlement in Sierra County expanded, from production further west, could be supplemented by Ramelli's ranch, and business by the 1880s when Reno was expanding in population was high. The method of constructing irrigation ditches, in land reclamation, aligned with this style of farming that did not rely on massive equipment or yields. A butter wrapper noting his cheese company remained and was found at the property.

Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage

Prejudice overcome, the Italians practiced that intensive agriculture, preached by reclamationists...²¹

The immigrant is often seen displaying dedicated values to a strong work ethic and commitment to creating a life for both family and community. Some of the farming techniques common to areas like Switzerland's Canton Ticino, from where Caesar Ramelli had immigrated, had an influence on how farming was to be practiced.²² So actually, the property's indication of farming practices itself is central to ethnic definition of Swiss-Italian communities. It has been recognized as well, that the landscape gave a sense of nostalgic familiarity due to the climate and natural environment of surrounding mountain ranges.²³ This period at the turn of the century was in every sense foundational for communities of Italians that developed in coastal areas of California and pockets inland. Between 1880 and 1910, the population of Italians had increased by about fourteen times compared to the 1870s.²⁴ The relative percentage of the population influenced by Italian roots should not be understated for California and Nevada: Nevada still claims the top percentage of Italian-Americans than any other state in the west, and California is next.²⁵

The Reclamation Act, and consequential Newlands reclamation projects, were initiated in 1902 and 1903 respectively, after many immigrants like the Ramellis had purchased land and begun farming techniques familiar to them on new soils.²⁶

¹⁹ N.A. Hummel, *General History and Resources of Washoe County*, Nevada Educational Association, 1888, 49.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Walton-Buchanan, *Historic Ranches of Western Nevada*, 151.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 160; "Italian American Population in All 50 States," compiled by the Research Department of the National Italian American Foundation, based on the United States Census of 2000,

http://www.niaf.org/research/2000_census.

²⁶ Churchill County Chamber of Commerce, "Farming and Dairying on the Newlands Irrigation Project"; Norcross, *Agricultural Nevada*.

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The immigrant population in the early 1890s due to emigration of peoples from Canton Ticino in Switzerland ran dairying businesses and farms, with most numbers of these peoples owing their birthplace to the provinces of Val Levantina or Val Maggia, out of the eight provinces in this district of Switzerland. The number of immigrants and exact time they arrived from Switzerland to the Sierra Valley has not been established, as of course it is difficult to be sure of every person who traveled and rely on records of the time. Most of these peoples likely traveled from other areas of California after immigrating and ended up taking settlement in the Sierra Valley.²⁷ It is important, first, to note, the migration of settlers from Ticino is not a trend local to the Sierra Valley, so most who arrived did so in other regions in California, and this is why they may have traveled to the Sierra Nevada from there. According to Dr. Perret, the number of migrants to the United States in general from Ticino between 1850 and 1947 reached about 27,000.²⁸ The township of Seneca, established circa 1880, often attracted immigrant mining workers, while the area closer to Vinton, established in 1896, and later surrounding areas attracted ranchers and farmers; the towns of Loyalton and Sierraville were also established.²⁹ The frequency with which these people entered these communities and developed networks while Sierra County was formed is significant as influencing culture.

In order to understand what triggered the migration of Italian-Swiss to the Sierra Valley and therefore a culture that built so many dairy ranches to the valley, the economic and political circumstances of Switzerland can be considered. Switzerland in the mid-nineteenth century was facing economic hardship that affected many rural workers and families and caused emigration from all areas of the country to others like Australia, South America, North America, and Argentina predominantly, with many of the people also eventually settling in California coasts or the Central Valley to practice either mining operations or ranching operations. The Sierra Nevada, a great distance from the coast, became a settlement for those few who did travel so far, and became a home to the ranching businesses that provided the immigrants with a living. Political issues within Italy and Austria as well as an Austrian blockade had made the economy of Ticino weak, and while this area of Switzerland suffers from a lack of natural resources in general the news of gold discovery between 1848 and 1852 on the North American west coast rivaled mining claims globally, so emigration became a thorough solution to economic problems for many rural Swiss with the highest emigration from the Val Maggia area of Ticino peaking in 1854.³⁰ The Homestead Act of 1862 is cited as major legislation in the United States that provided economic incentive for migration of this sort. Though the number of immigrants and their establishment is small compared to other areas, such as Stanislaus County for example;³¹ many if not most of the farms of the Sierra Valley were at least in part worked by Swiss Italian immigrants. Crop shortages and failures by natural floods of ‘Lago Maggiore’ that came later, in 1868, had become so destructive to farms in Switzerland, while amid high emigration from

²⁷ H.F. Raup, “The Italian Swiss in California,” *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No.4, 305-314, University of California Press, December 1961.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Roth, “A History of Sierra Valley.”

³⁰ Raup, “The Italian Swiss in California.”

³¹ Ibid.

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Ticino in 1869 and population fluctuations. By 1910, Italians were the largest foreign born group to the Truckee Meadows area.³²

Population also had made ranching opportunities less promising there than in the Americas, just before the immigration movement slowed after 1874.³³ Immigrant groups from the Ticino area have settled across cities in the United States, and all areas of California — Central Valley gained 3,570 by 1930³⁴ — where the Sierra Valley attracted some of these peoples early.

Typically, the groups that established communities, like the Ramelli family, in the Sierra Valley were farming, ranching, or mining families. This follows the general pattern of occupation for the ethnically Italian immigrant to the state of California, with a small percentage of only about twenty percent of Swiss Italian immigrants actually working in mining operations³⁵, though at the time the number of Californians as farmers was also about twenty percent. So these established communities focused on farming as they had in Switzerland, and are credited to have taken great care of the lands.³⁶ Ramelli's dairy shows similarities with the tendency for the Ticino immigrant to coastal dairies despite its location. As early as 1860, publications from companies advertising higher wages as well as economically fruitful and advantageous or opportunistic land deals reached areas of Europe in the late 1800s³⁷, which may have attracted some of these immigrants, as there was certainly an increase in immigration to the western United States at this time period. Some of these Italian Swiss became more established as families in the Sierra Valley, through generations becoming respected members of the community. Many Italian Swiss families are noted for their settlement in Sierra County, and specifically for the community's contribution to the heritage of the Valley, evident in periodicals of the Sierra County Historical Society. Other Ramellis, who are not direct relatives, were established in the Valley with the first settlement of Matteo and Emilio Ramelli around 1879. Emilio's wife's uncle gifted a ranch to Emilio within the Valley so that Emilio would pay for the family to make passage over from Switzerland. The Martinettis were established in the area by Isaac Martinetti who first arrived in the Sierra Valley at the age of 16, in 1889, to work in mining at Sierra City. Eventually, he bred mares at different ranches, and married before then purchasing a ranch at the Theophilus Maddux property that sold butter and cream in 1916. Born in Airolo, Switzerland, Caesar Ramelli had experiential knowledge of Swiss cheese production practices.

Milking herds and creameries rose around the end of the nineteenth century in the area.³⁸ According to census data from the 1800s, the first Italian Swiss documented by census in the

³² Delaplane, Gaye. "La Dolce Vita" Reno Gazette-Journal, October 4, 1998. pp. 1B

³³ Raup, "The Italian Swiss in California."

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Albin J. Cofonoe, "Themes in the Italian Settlement of Nevada," *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXV, No. 2, Summer 1982, 116-129.

³⁷ Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860: A History of the Continuing Settlement of the United States* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1940), 295.

³⁸ Ana Koval and Katharine Boyne, Historic American Buildings Survey, "Peter Dalton Ranch (Joseph Ferretto Ranch)," September 1990, No. NV-22, 6.

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valley was listed a dairyman in 1880.³⁹ By 1900, there were fourteen Italian Swiss-immigrants documented in various occupations. By 1910, there were thirty-five Italian Swiss immigrants documented in Loyalton and nineteen Italian Swiss immigrants in Sierraville. In the 1920 census, thirty-two of the Swiss Italian immigrants were documented in the valley, with some likely unaccounted for due to the inaccuracies of census data. Fluctuations occurred in immigration patterns at the turn of the twentieth century, often mirroring economic strife,⁴⁰ so, the promise of an area like the valley for agricultural potential was still intrinsically tied to immigration from Canton Ticino or European immigration overall.

Some context of other Swiss-Italian families explains the community the Ramelli Ranch found itself in, among other immigrants with strong ties to the original farming practices of their home in Switzerland. All of these families and their community explain the ethnic cultural importance of the Italian Swiss-in the Valley's settlement, in which the Ramelli family played a strong role, and their cheese cellar is representative. Genasci, Dotta, Lombardi, Fillippini, Torri, and Grandi families were all involved in the ranching business. Other names of Italian Swiss who migrated later into the nineteenth century, and as the period of significance for dairying agriculture in the valley came to a close included Maddelena, Scolari, Solari, Ponci, Podesta, Dellera, Bonta, Trosi, Polanti, Guscetti, Pasquetti, Vanetti, and D'Andrea.⁴¹ Mr. Ramelli seemingly regularly attended Grange Club meetings at the same time as other Italian ranchers like Joe Ferretto, whose ranch has already been recognized for its historic significance in agricultural development to the Truckee Meadows area of Nevada.⁴² The Ramelli family's involvement extended outside of the Long Valley area, as evidenced by the younger Ramelli's "Sierra Grotto Saloon" in Reno, Nevada.⁴³ They are fascinating representatives of such an ethnic heritage in the Sierras. Since the ranch is closer in location to Nevada and the Carson Valley, it is unique for how it connected the heritage formed in the Sierra Valley with the heritage of the growing Reno area. The Ramelli sons participated in other community organizations, such as the Altar Society or Grange Club, and hosted Home Economics meetings for the wider community.⁴⁴

Ramelli and his family maintained a connection to their ethnicity, as evidenced by their mentions concurrently with other Italian families in newspaper articles, and reference to funeral services in Switzerland.⁴⁵

³⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Sierra Valley Records 1870, Ancestry.com.

⁴⁰ Franklin D. Scott, *Emigration and Immigration* (Cabin John, MD: Wildside Press, 2009).

⁴¹ Maren Scholberg, "Italian Swiss in Sierra Valley, Sierra County," *The Sierran*, Vol. 26, No. 1. Summer, 1998.

⁴² Koval and Boyne, "Peter Dalton Ranch (Joseph Ferretto Ranch)."

⁴³ *Reno Gazette-Journal*, "Leaves Note to Tell of His Death in the Hills," October 5, 1907, 1.

⁴⁴ *Nevada State Journal*, "Nevada Star Grange Convenes Thursday," September 16, 1939, 5; *Reno Gazette Journal*, "Plans Made at Meeting of Altar Society," March 24, 1954, 9.

⁴⁵ *Reno Gazette-Journal*, "Andree's Body is Taken Home," September 27, 1930, 2.

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Land Acknowledgement:

We wish to acknowledge and honor the indigenous communities traditionally from this region. To recognize the homelands of the Northern Paiute and Washoe tribes, this document acknowledges this historic context as situated within the homelands of the Paiute and Washoe people.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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November 10, 1951.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Sierra County Historical Society, Sierra County Assessor's Office,
Nevada Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 86.32 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 39.643020 Longitude: -120.006850

2. Latitude: 39.643240 Longitude: -120.011910

3. Latitude: 39.650110 Longitude: -120.011910

4. Latitude: 39.650110 Longitude: -120.00730

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The property boundaries follow the general boundaries of the assessor's parcel described and acreage indicated within the section of Township 21N Range 18E.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Historically associated with the property, as listed on the original deed to Caesar Ramelli.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nathan Barnes

organization: _____

street & number: 1117 Saratoga Street #2

city or town: Boston state: MA zip code: 02128

e-mail: nbarnes2498@gmail.com

telephone: (775) 224-4728

date: December 2021; Revised March 2022, July 2022, August 2022

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs

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to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Ramelli Dairy Ranch
City or Vicinity: Chilcoot
County: Sierra
State: California
Photographer: Corri Jimenez
Date Photographed: February 28, 2021

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 28 Landscape view, looking east
- 2 of 28 Guest House, northwest elevation, looking south
- 3 of 28 Main House, south elevation, looking north
- 4 of 28 Storage Box, camera direction unknown
- 5 of 28 Granary, east elevation, looking west
- 6 of 28 Granary door, east elevation, looking northwest
- 7 of 28 Granary, north elevation, view of stud framing system, looking south
- 8 of 28 Granary, south and west elevations, looking northeast
- 9 of 28 Granary, north and west elevations, looking southeast
- 10 of 28 Granary, north and east elevations, looking southwest
- 11 of 28 Granary, interior, looking northwest
- 12 of 28 Granary, interior, looking southwest
- 13 of 28 Granary south bay, looking northwest
- 14 of 28 Granary south bay, rafter detail, looking southwest

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- 15 of 28 Granary, west lean-to, looking south
- 16 of 28 Milkhouse, east elevation, ~~door detail~~ front door, camera looking west
- 17 of 28 Milkhouse, east elevation gable end, camera looking southwest
- 18 of 28 Milkhouse, east elevation, stucco detail camera looking southwest
- 19 of 28 Milkhouse, full east elevation, camera looking southeast
- 20 of 28 Milkhouse, eave detail east elevation, looking northwest
- 21 of 28 Milkhouse, west elevation, looking southeast
- 22 of 28 Milkhouse, east elevation, looking southwest
- 23 of 28 Milkhouse, north elevation, camera looking southwest
- 24 of 28 Milkhouse, and west elevations, looking northeast
- 25 of 28 Milkhouse, south lean-to, east elevation, looking west
- 26 of 28 Milkhouse, east elevation, east elevation, looking west
- 27 of 28 Milkhouse Butter Churn, interior, looking east
- 28 of 28 Milkhouse, Butter Churn stack, north lean-to interior, looking east

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

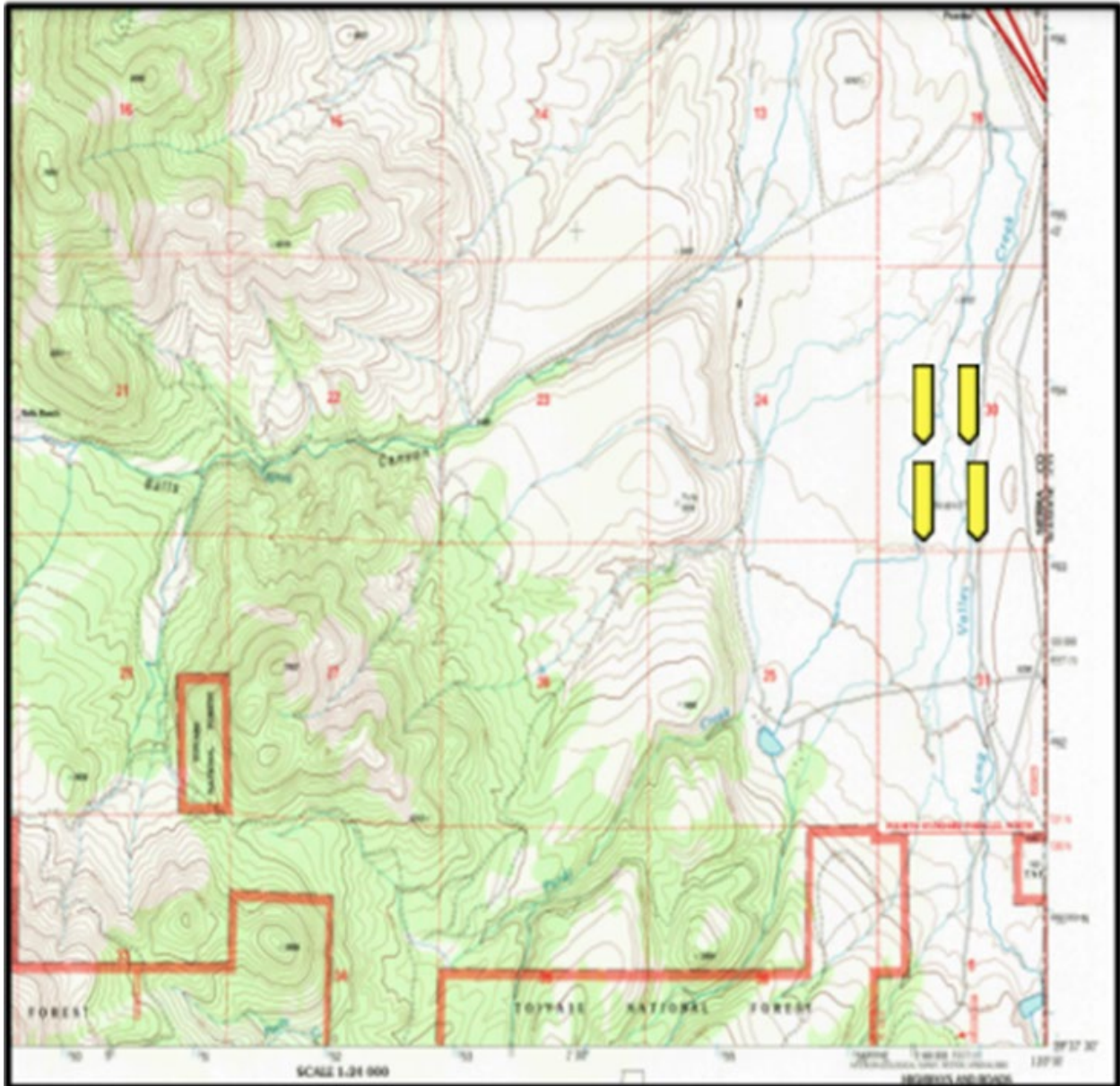
The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Location Map

Source: Balls Canyon, California, 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Map, U.S. Geological Survey, 2000

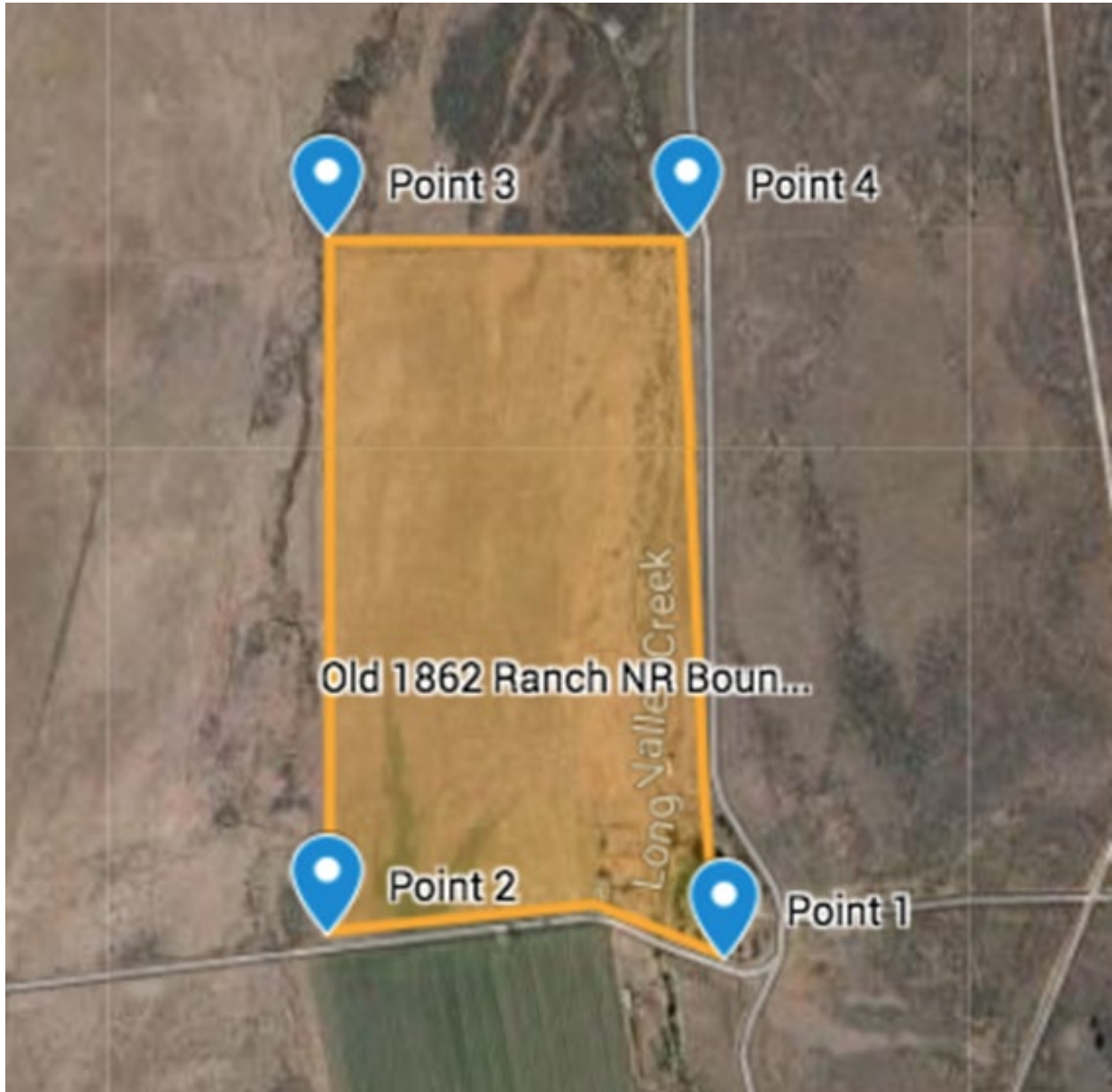


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Boundary Map

Source: Google Maps, Satellite Aerial Image

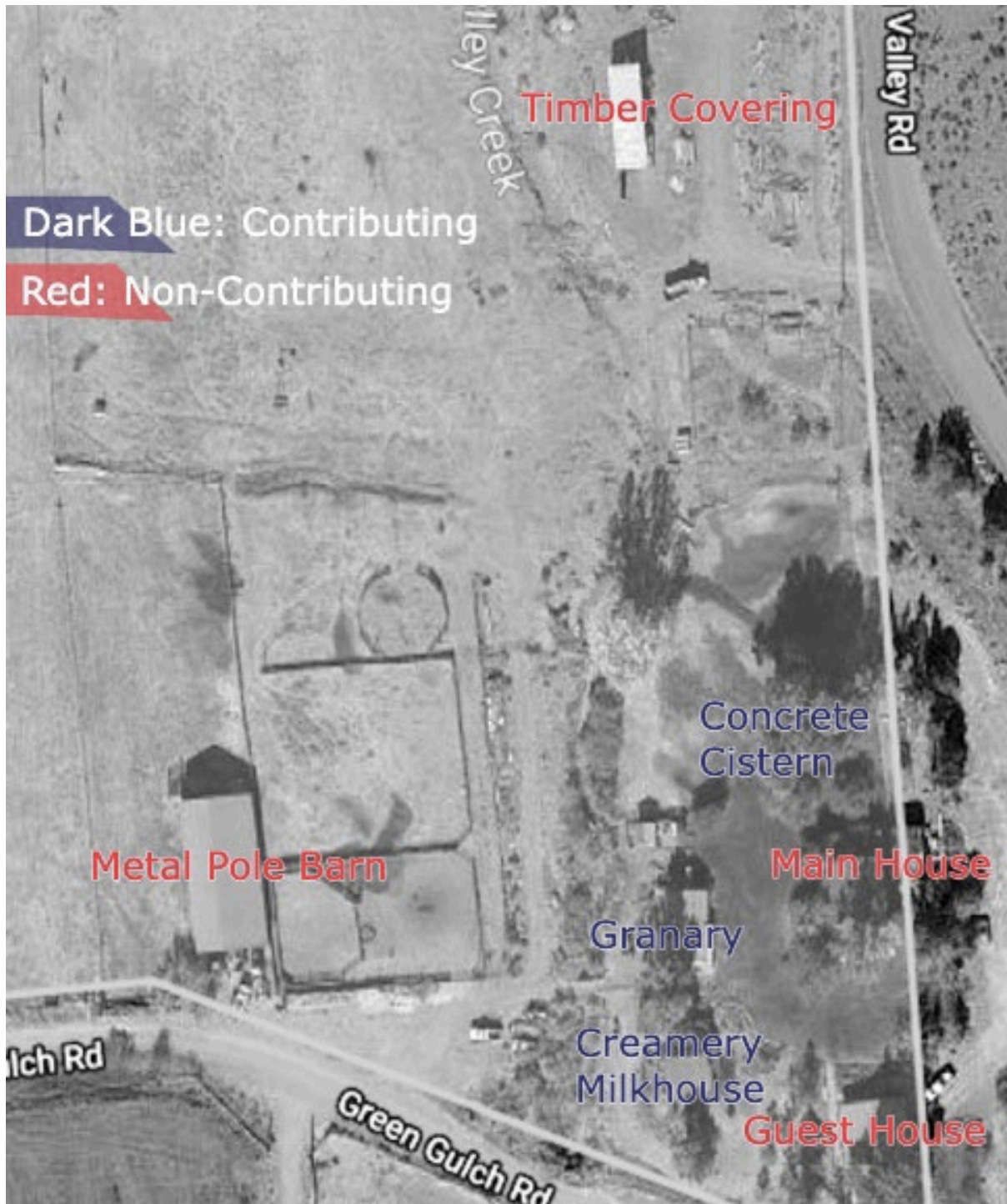


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Sketch Map

Source: Google Maps, Satellite Aerial Image



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo Key 1 of 3

Source: Google Maps, Satellite Aerial Image



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

Sierra, California
County and State

Photo Key 2 of 3

Source: Google Maps, Satellite Aerial Image



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo Key 3 of 3

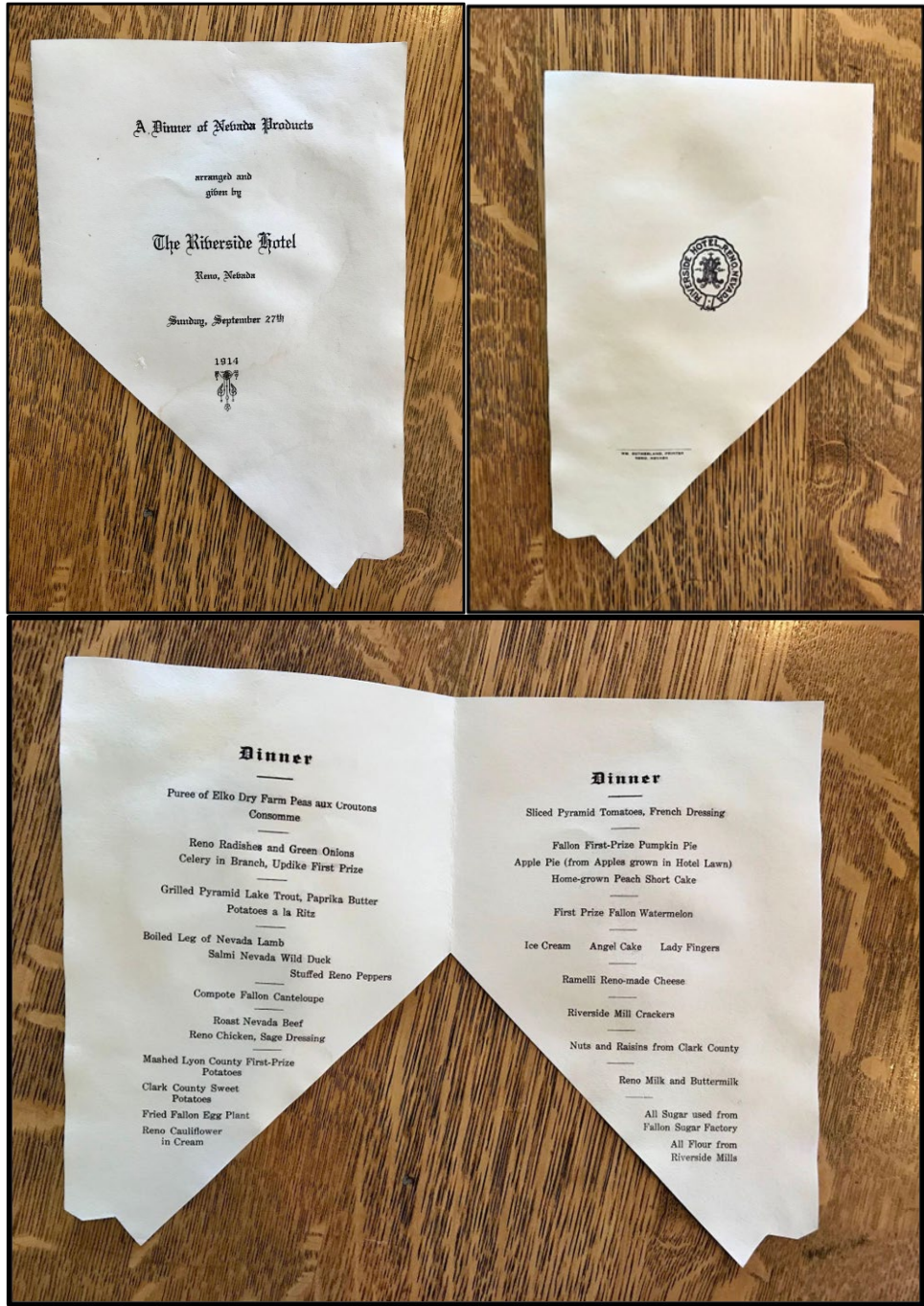
Source: Google Maps, Satellite Aerial Image



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Figure 1 Riverside Hotel, Reno, Nevada, 1914. A Dinner of Nevada Products menu included “Ramelli Reno-made Cheese.” Source: Jan Loverin.



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Figure 2 C. Ramelli Creamery Butter Wrapper, c. 1930; Source: Jan Loverin. Purdy was later incorporated into Chilcoot.

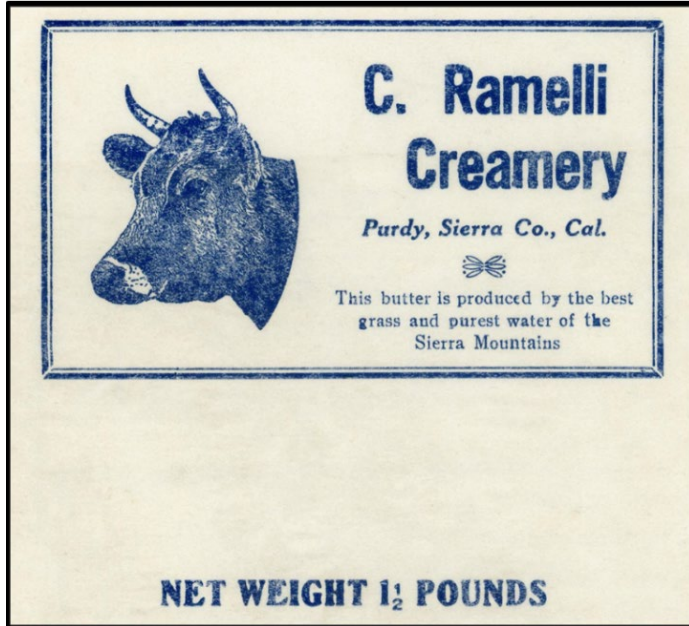


Figure 3 Caesar Ramelli (left) and unidentified companion carrying cheese, 1981; Source: "The Ramelli Cheese Cellar," *Washoe Rambler* Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1981, Nevada Historical Society, Reno, NV



Caesar Ramelli holding cheese.

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Photo 1 Landscape view, looking east



Photo 2 Guest House, northwest elevation, looking south



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 3 Main House, south elevation, looking north



Photo 4 Storage Box, camera direction unknown



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo 5 Granary, east elevation, looking west



Photo 6 Granary door, east elevation, looking northwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 7 Granary, north elevation, view of stud framing system, looking south



Photo 8 Granary, south and west elevations, looking northeast



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 9 Granary, north and west elevations, looking southeast



Photo 10 Granary, north and east elevations, looking southwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 11 Granary, interior, looking northwest



Photo 12 Granary, interior, looking southwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo 13 Granary south bay, looking northwest



Photo 14 Granary south bay, rafter detail, looking southwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo 15 Granary, west lean-to, looking south



Photo 16 Milkhouse, east elevation, ~~door detail~~ front door, camera looking west



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo 17 Milkhouse, east elevation gable end, camera looking southwest



Photo 18 Milkhouse, east elevation, stucco detail camera looking southwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

Sierra, California
County and State

Photo 19 Milkhouse, full east elevation, camera looking southeast



Photo 20 Milkhouse, eave detail east elevation, looking northwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 21 Milkhouse, west elevation, looking southeast



Photo 22 Milkhouse, east elevation, looking southwest



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
Name of Property

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Photo 23 Milkhouse, north elevation, camera looking southwest



Photo 24 Milkhouse, and west elevations, looking northeast



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 25 Milkhouse, south lean-to, east elevation, looking west



Photo 26 Milkhouse, east elevation, east elevation, looking west



Ramelli Dairy Ranch
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Photo 27 Milkhouse Butter Churn, interior, looking east



Photo 28 Milkhouse, Butter Churn stack, north lean-to interior, looking east

