



A, C, & J. DAWSON/CARPENTER RANCH DISTRICT
13250 U. S. Highway 40, East of Hayden

The Dawson/Carpenter Ranch has a long association with the agricultural development of the Yampa Valley and remains a local landmark as one of the most historic and visible working ranches in the area. It exemplifies the traditions of Euro-American ranching in that it typifies homesteaders' and early ranching activities. Beginning in 1902, the ranch was owned by John Barkley Dawson, a former scout and Texas Ranger, who, with partner Charles Goodnight, was the first to trail cattle in 1859 from Texas to Colorado over what later became known as the Dawson Trail. Dawson built many of the 31 remaining structures on the property and lived on the ranch until 1915. He became a major local producer of hay and livestock, which included large herds of elk and buffalo, and, during his ownership, acquired nearly 2,000 acres of homesteads, river-bottom acreage, and pastureland. He was one of the first breeders to cross cattle with buffalo to produce 'cattalo' and was a significant influence in the development of the American quarter horse. The ranch has national significance for its association with Farrington Reed Carpenter, an influential local attorney and Hayden's first, who worked as a ranch hand beginning in 1906 and managed the ranch from 1926 until 1946, when he purchased the property on which he lived until his death in 1980. Beginning in 1934, Carpenter served as the first Director of the

Federal Grazing Service, and his guidance laid the foundation for public domain land management that ended the era of free open-range grazing in the West. He championed legislation pertaining to cattlemen's land rights, helped negotiate a truce between sheep and cattle factions, established grazing districts, fought for decentralized grazing, was significant in implementing the Taylor Grazing Act, and helped establish understanding between stockmen and the federal government. He was also the first Director of the Bureau of Land Management. Some of the extant buildings were homestead cabins that have been moved onto the site. The built environment includes the main house, consisting of five homestead cabins moved onto the site and bonded together; the barn; bunkhouse; various calving, machine, and hay sheds, and other structures related to ranching such as weigh scales, corrals, irrigation ditches, and a collection of early farm implements and equipment, and retains its structural integrity and function. The property is currently owned by The Nature Conservancy. Its operation as a working cattle and hay-producing ranch as well as a research and educational facility and the presence of the buildings used within their historical context create a strong sense of the connection between current and historic events as well as the significance of the Yampa River, which supplies water for the ranch via irrigation ditches first constructed in the 1880s and offers an extensive high-quality, well-preserved riparian habitat refuge that demonstrates the property owners' long-practiced philosophy of good stewardship and interest in wildlife. NRHP: 5-6-98.