
3. Historical Background

Please provide historical background information for the property.

The Baker/Steiner Barn, constructed circa 1885, is one of the largest surviving and best preserved nineteenth-century log hay barns in the northern South Park. Connected with the Bakers and Schattingers, early pioneer families that played an important role in the historical development of ranching in the South Park, the barn is a highly visible reminder of the significant impact these families had on the area and the important role ranching, and more specifically hay production, played in the development of the Jefferson area.

Early on, American Indians recognized the nutritious nature of the native grasses that sustained the large herds of game that roamed the South Park. In the 1840s, Anglo visitors such as Rufus B. Sage observed the healthy herds of bison, elk, deer, and antelope found throughout the park and identified the area as ideal for stockraising.¹ However, the harsh climate conditions and remote location of the park discouraged Colorado's earliest ranchers from settling in Park County.

The discovery of gold along Tarryall Creek in 1859 made ranching in the South Park a far more attractive proposition. The gold strike at Tarryall brought hundreds of prospectors to the South Park. Seemingly overnight, large mining camps sprang up at Hamilton, Fairplay, Buckskin Joe, and other sites where gold had been found. The prospectors that flooded these rapidly growing communities needed food, creating a demand that encouraged the establishment of large cattle ranching operations in the wide open expanse of the South Park. Enterprising ranchers claimed land near reliable water sources and natural hay meadows, established their homesteads, and began raising cattle and growing hay.² The success of these ventures attracted a growing number of settlers like David Baker and his wife Emily Vance to the South Park.

Born in Reedsburg, Ohio, on August 16, 1844, David Alfred Baker moved to Iowa as a nine-year-old boy. There he worked on the family farm until enlisting in the Union Army in 1864. For two years, Baker patrolled the Nebraska, Kansas, and eastern Colorado frontier with Company E of the 7th Iowa Cavalry. After returning to Iowa, Baker attended Oskaloosa College and Normal School and then taught school for a number of years.³ In 1867, he married Emily Francis Vance of Eddyville, Iowa. Emily was just 17 at the time. Her mother, Elizabeth Bowman Vance, had died shortly after giving birth to Emily in 1850. Her father, John Vance, left Iowa for Colorado at the start of the 1859 gold rush when Emily was a young girl.⁴

Shortly after the birth of their first child, Luella, in 1868, David and Emily Baker traveled to the Colorado Territory, settling in Idaho Springs where Emily's father had acquired substantial landholdings.⁵ After two years in Idaho Springs, the Bakers moved to Denver for a short time before establishing a 160 acre homestead at the base of Kenosha Pass near Jefferson in 1873.⁶ Their eldest son, Willis Baker, was born in 1872 before the family's move to Jefferson.⁷ After establishing their homestead, the couple welcomed twin boys Clarence and Clyde in 1874, but the boys sadly died at a very young age. In addition to Luella and Willis, the couple would raise two more children to adulthood, Sidney (1885-1967) and Mary (1889-1962).⁸

In 1880, Baker reportedly owned 30 head of cattle, two horses, six milk cows that produced 150 pounds of butter in 1879. Hay was the only crop grown on the Baker land, with 50 acres devoted to that purpose.⁹ The number of acres Baker devoted to hay would quadruple over the next five years.¹⁰ The arrival of the railroad on the South Park encouraged the rapid growth of the hay and cattle industry in Park County after 1879. The new railroad provided fast, easy access to the Denver and Leadville markets, making cattle raising and hay production increasingly lucrative businesses for area ranchers.

In 1882, Baker received patent to the family homestead near Jefferson, later called the Upper Baker Ranch.¹¹ That same year, he expanded his holdings, purchasing 168 acres of federal land in Sections 3 and 4 of Township 8, Range 75.¹² This parcel included the site of the Baker/Steiner Barn. Three years



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later, Baker purchased an additional 280 acres of state land to the south for \$320.¹³ The northwest corner of this parcel intersected the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad line, which ran over Kenosha Pass through Como and on to Garo. These 448 acres, known as the Lower Baker Ranch, expanded Baker's holdings in Park County to over 608 acres.

Described as a leading rancher in the Jefferson area, Baker was a prominent member of the South Park Ranchmen's Protective Association.¹⁴ He also served on the school board during the late 1880s-early 1890s and as a justice of the peace in 1879-80.¹⁵ By the mid-1880s, Baker reportedly controlled 720 acres in Park County, 200 acres of which was used for hay production.¹⁶ Physical evidence at the site suggests that David Baker constructed the Baker/Steiner Barn around this time, most likely to house hay cut from his hay fields, which produced over 200 tons of hay in 1885.¹⁷

Hay production played a highly significant role in the growth of the Jefferson area during the 1880s. In 1884, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that:

...the agricultural domain of Park County is chiefly in that most beautiful high valley known as South Park. . . . The chief product of this region is hay, the quality of which is unsurpassed by any known, if indeed it is not superior to any other. It is the native grass of the country, which runs to a bright green color. Horses and cattle will trample over the best timothy and clover to get this native hay of the parks.¹⁸

Ranchers could expect to harvest as much as three tons per acre from cultivated land and about one ton per acre from the area's natural meadows.¹⁹

During the 1890s, Jefferson area ranchers formed the South Park Hay Company to sell hay. Local rancher George Champion served as agent for association, supervising the selling and shipping of hay to buyers outside Park County. At the north edge of Jefferson was a large hay warehouse on the railroad wye that accommodated shipments during the haying season and into the winter.²⁰

Hay production and cattle grazing in the Jefferson area required a substantial irrigation system. In 1889, the Baker Reservoir was established on the eastern half of section 29 and west half of section 28, in Township 7, Range 75. The reservoir took advantage of a natural basin and held as much as 58,050,000 cubic feet of water. Water from the reservoir was used to irrigate the surrounding fields, but also for trout farming and ice production.²¹ Baker also held a number of other lucrative water rights, including a one-eighth interest in the Jefferson Lake Ditch, a one-third interest in the Burbaker Ditch, full interest in the Baker Ditch, which drew water from Guernsey Gulch, and one-half interest in the Beaver Creek Ditch.²²

In his *History of the State of Colorado from 1858 to 1890*, Frank Hall noted that by 1895, Baker controlled over 1200 acres and "owns quite a number of horses and cattle, which thrive on the grass which grows in luxuriant abundance upon his land."²³ The Bakers continued to enjoy significant success through the early 1900s, employing a number of ranch hands.²⁴ Emily died in December 1909, after suffering poor health for many years.²⁵ After Emily's death, David Baker continued to live on the ranch until 1911, when he retired from ranching and moved to Denver. Baker would remain in Denver until his death in 1934 at age 90.²⁶ He continued to own the ranch until 1916, when he sold the majority of his ranch property to Elizabeth S. Bates of Denver.²⁷ Bates, the widow of a Denver dentist, was involved in a very public scandal in 1899 when Maggie Ault, the wife of prominent Denver businessman Christopher Ault, sued Bates for \$10,000 on charges that she "alienated the affections of Mr. Ault from



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his wife.”²⁸ Both Bates and Christopher Ault denied Mrs. Ault’s claims and the jury in the Aults divorce trial supported Christopher Ault’s counter charges of desertion.²⁹

Around the time Baker sold the property to Bates, she was the proprietress of the Holland Hotel on Pennsylvania Street in Denver and apparently an active investor in real estate.³⁰ In May of 1916, Bates formed the Holland Land & Investment Company with Thomas Arnold and Joseph J. Walsh.³¹ After acquiring the Baker ranch, Bates promptly sold the property to the Holland Land & Investment Company, which did not hold the land for long.³² The company transferred the original homestead and Upper Baker Ranch property to Floyd C. Hall, husband of Mary Baker Hall, in March 1918.³³ At some point, Baker’s children took control of the Holland Land & Investment Company—the signatures of Luella Carruthers and Mary Hall appear on the deed transferring the property from the Holland Land & Investment Company to Floyd Hall. In January 1919, the company sold the Lower Baker Ranch property back to David Baker, who immediately transferred the property to Luella Baker Carruthers.³⁴ Luella Carruthers held the property only briefly before selling the Baker land east of the Denver South Park and Pacific Railroad to successful local rancher Peter Schattinger in June 1919.³⁵ Luella’s brother, Willis Baker, and her sister Mary Hall, continued to live in the Jefferson area for a few years, before moving to Denver. Willis’s son, Victor Baker, would return to Park County where he served as Fairplay’s longtime postmaster and co-founded the World Championship Park Burro Race held each year in Fairplay.³⁶

Born in 1853 in Cincinnati, Ohio, Peter Schattinger worked at a wholesale liquor house before leaving Ohio for Colorado in 1878. Schattinger and his brother Henry worked at a sawmill on the Continental Divide for one year before returning briefly to Cincinnati. In 1880, the Schattinger brothers again headed for Colorado, eventually traveling to the South Park and establishing a ranch five miles west of Jefferson near Michigan Creek. The brothers ran cattle and grew hay and expanded their land holdings to 600 acres. In 1890, Peter sold his interest in the ranch to Henry and established his own highly successful ranching operation nearby. Peter Schattinger and his first wife, Elizabeth Leseberg, had two children, Walter and Emma May.³⁷

Schattinger expanded his land holdings over time, purchasing the Charles Lavack ranch, and in 1919, the Lower Baker Ranch.³⁸ That same year, Schattinger sold the former Lavack Ranch headquarters to his son, Walter.³⁹ Peter Schattinger continued to hold title to the former Baker ranchland during the 1920s and early 30s. At this time, hay was the county’s principal crop, with more than \$330,000 worth of hay produced in 1930.⁴⁰ In 1931, Park County reported 23,480 acres of natural hay land and the hay these lands produced continued to be regarded as among the best in the state.⁴¹

It is not known if the Lower Baker Ranch was leased during this time or if the land was utilized by Walter Schattinger’s ranching and hay operation. Beginning in the 1920s, the Schattinger family ran a trucking company based in Jefferson in addition to their successful ranching and hay business. The family managed the company for several decades before Junior Pierce, a long-time driver for Schattingers, took over the business. Walter Schattinger was reportedly the first South Park rancher to haul hay and livestock by truck over Kenosha Pass.⁴²

According to Park County Assessor records, around 1920 a 1,032 square foot, one-story, wood frame house was built approximately 70 feet south of the Baker/Steiner Barn. An additional agricultural building, much smaller than the log hay barn, stood 170 ft south east of the house. The buildings were demolished after 2008.

Peter Schattinger died in May 1935 at age 91. At the time, a friend reportedly wrote:



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...any attempt to eulogize him would be superfluous, due to the fact that during his lifetime this world was made a better place in which to live by reason of his loveable personality, his altruism, a smile that was ever ready and his sage and sound advice. Suffice it to say that he was known as "Uncle Pete" by the majority of his acquaintances; and those who were unfortunate in that they did not know him personally had heard of his honesty, integrity, business acumen, his kindness to every living thing and his charitable philosophy which was exemplified in every moment of his conscious life. He was the ideal of youth and it was a matter of genuine pride when one spoke of him as 'friend'.⁴³

After Peter Schattinger's death, daughter Emma May Schattinger Steiner and son Walter Schattinger presumably inherited the Lower Baker Ranch property. In 1937, they divided the 440 acres into two separate parcels. In the deal, Emma Steiner acquired a 220-acre parcel containing the Baker/Steiner Barn along with a one-sixth interest in the Brubaker Ditch and a one-sixteenth interest and ownership in the Jefferson Lake Ditch Company.⁴⁴

At the time she acquired the property, Emma Steiner was living in California, with her husband Rudolph. Emma married relatively late in life, working as a stenographer in Denver before marrying German-born Steiner on February 27, 1918, at age 30.⁴⁵ The following year, the couple's only child, Walter, was born. Emma Steiner and her son, Walter, returned to Jefferson around 1940, presumably taking up residence on the Lower Baker Ranch property, which came to be known as the Steiner Ranch.⁴⁶ Emma Steiner apparently remained in Park County until her death in January 1964 at age 76.⁴⁷ Walter lived as a bachelor rancher until March 1976 when he married German-born Enes Loner in Denver.⁴⁸ After Walter's death in 1994, Enes Steiner continued to own the ranch until 2008 when the property was sold to the current owners. Today the Baker/Steiner Barn is the only visible reminder of the property's connection to the pioneer Baker and Schattinger families and Jefferson's early ranching history.

¹ Rufus B. Sage, *Rufus B. Sage: His Letter and Papers, 1836-1847* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1956), 189.

² Front Range Research Associates, Inc., *Park County, Colorado, Historic Contexts* (Denver, CO: 2002), 3.

³ Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado from 1858 to 1890* (Chicago: The Blakely Printing Company, 1895), 390.

⁴ Elizabeth Bowman Vance, Find-A-Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com>.

⁵ *The Trail*, Volume II No. 8 (January 1910): 27-8.

⁶ Hall, 390.

⁷ *World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, accessed via ancestry.com.

⁸ *The Trail*, Volume II No. 8 (January 1910): 27-8.

⁹ 1880 Unites States Census Agricultural Schedule.

¹⁰ 1885 Unites States Census Agricultural Schedule.

¹¹ Park County Deed Records, Book 25, Page 8.

¹² Park County Deed Records, Book 25, Page 235.

¹³ Park County Deed Records, Book 31, Page 117.

¹⁴ *Fairplay Flume*, May 11, 1882; May 24, 1894.

¹⁵ Hall, 390.

¹⁶ 1885 Unites States Census Agricultural Schedule.

¹⁷ 1885 Unites States Census Agricultural Schedule. The September 24, 1885, issue of the *Fairplay Flume* reported that Baker produced over 275 tons of hay that year.

¹⁸ *Rocky Mountain News*, January 1, 1884.

¹⁹ *Rocky Mountain News*, February 21, 1880, 5.



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²⁰ Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 44.

²¹ Water Decree, Case No. 1636, May 22, 1913, 387-9. Phone conversation with Quentin Baker, September 24, 2013.

²² Park County Deed Records, Book 80, Page 363.

²³ Hall, 390.

²⁴ 1900, 1910 United States Census Records.

²⁵ *Fairplay Flume*, December 17, 1909.

²⁶ Hall, 390.

²⁷ Baker retained a one half interest in the land in the west ½ of the northwest ¼ of Section 34, Township 7, Range 75. This land was eventually conveyed to Floyd Hall, Mary Baker's husband, in 1918.

²⁸ *Denver Evening Post*, May 5, 1899. Ault claimed that Bates instigated an affair with Christopher Ault in 1892 and that she tempted Christopher Ault away from his wife "by wicked wiles and blandishments and the exercise of undue influence."

²⁹ *Rocky Mountain News*, August 6, 1899.

³⁰ *Denver Post*, October 27, 1912.

³¹ *Rocky Mountain News*, May 24, 1916. Holland Land & Investment Company, Articles of Incorporation, Park County Clerk's Office.

³² The deed issued at the time includes mention of a lease agreement with R. John Greenwell.

³³ Park County Deed Records, Book 89, Page 58.

³⁴ Park County Deed Records, Book 88, Page 130-1. These sales included water rights and a small parcel of land in block 17 of Jefferson.

³⁵ Park County Deed Records, Book 88, Page 182.

³⁶ *Fairplay Flume*, February 23, 1980.

³⁷ *Portrait and Biographical Record of the State of Colorado* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1899), 1296.

³⁸ Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 29.

³⁹ Park County Deed Records, Book 88, Page 179.

⁴⁰ Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 56.

⁴¹ Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 53.

⁴² Front Range Research Associates, Inc., 29.

⁴³ "'Uncle Pete' Passes Out of Useful Life," *Fairplay Flume*, May 31, 1935.

⁴⁴ Park County Deed Records, Book 112, page 334.

⁴⁵ Colorado Statewide Marriage Index, 1853-2006.

⁴⁶ 1940 United States Census Records.

⁴⁷ Emma May Steiner is buried in the Como Cemetery along with Peter Schattinger and other members of the Schattinger family.

⁴⁸ *Rocky Mountain News*, June 26, 1994.

4. Statement of Significance

Please explain the significance of the property in relation to the criteria selected in Section 1.

*The Baker/Steiner Barn is eligible for designation as a Park County Historic Landmark under **Criterion A** for its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Park County.*

The Baker/Steiner Barn, constructed circa 1885, is one of the largest and best preserved nineteenth-century log hay barns in the northern South Park. Early on, ranchers in the Jefferson area recognized the superior quality of the South Park's hay. Successful ranchers quickly moved to acquire the area's natural hay meadows and cultivate adjacent lands for hay production. At the time the Baker/Steiner Barn was built, hay production was one of South Park's principal industries. Large quantities of hay were shipped out of the county via rail, but many tons were stored on local ranches to feed cattle during the winter months. Without sufficient hay, cattle had little chance of surviving the long and harsh South Park winter. Early ranchers therefore constructed large barns, typically of logs, to store their hay. Unfortunately, many of these barns have been lost over the years to fire or long-term disuse and decay. Today, the Baker/Steiner barn stands as a highly visible reminder of the important role that hay production played in the development of ranching in the South Park.

*The Baker/Steiner Barn is eligible for designation as a Park County Historic Landmark under **Criterion C** for its identification with a person(s) or group(s) who significantly contributed to the culture, history or development of a local community, Park County, State of Colorado, or the United States.*

The Baker/Steiner Barn is associated with David Baker and Peter Schattinger, two early South Park settlers that, with their families, significantly contributed to the development of ranching in Park County. After arriving in the Jefferson area in the early 1870s, Baker and his wife Emily established a homestead near the base of Kenosha Pass and began raising cattle and growing hay. By 1895, Baker had significantly expanded his holdings and was producing nearly 300 tons of hay each year. Baker's success was such that his biography was included in Frank Hall's History of the State of Colorado from 1858 to 1890. In 1919, Jefferson-area ranching mogul Peter Schattinger acquired the barn and the surrounding 448 acres that comprised what was known then as the Baker's Lower Ranch. Schattinger, along with his brother Henry, began ranching in the northern South Park in 1880. Peter Schattinger branched out on his own in 1890, building a prosperous ranching operation that he later passed on to his son Walter and daughter Emma Schattinger Steiner. Emma Steiner and her descendants would own the Baker/Steiner Barn until 2008. Peter Schattinger's 1890 homestead, located near Michigan Hill, remains intact and is still owned by the Schattinger family. However, the Baker/Steiner Barn is one of only two surviving buildings associated with the Baker family. The barn stands today as a fine testament to the Baker's once extensive ranching operation and the family's role in the development of ranching in the Jefferson area.

*The Baker/Steiner Barn is eligible for designation as a Park County Historic Landmark under **Criterion F** for its historical, architectural, or cultural value as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure including, but not limited to, bridges, barns, sheds, bunkhouses, water towers, windmills, arrastras, and flumes.*

The Baker/Steiner Barn is one of Park County's largest and finest examples of a late nineteenth-century double-pen hay barn. Early homesteaders in Park County built a wide range of utilitarian outbuildings to serve their needs, including a variety of barn types. The double-pen barn, consisting of a central aisle flanked by two pens, is an early barn type typically found in frontier settings. Barns of this type were constructed of logs, a readily available resource in newly settled areas, using simple construction techniques. As ranching in the South Park matured, timber frame barns with vertical board siding became more common, generally replacing earlier log barns. Enclosing over 5,400 square feet, the



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Baker/Steiner Barn is particularly exceptional because of its large size and high level of integrity. Though other double pen log barns may be found in the South Park, very few are in as good condition as the Baker/Steiner Barn, which retains the vast majority of its historic material and has undergone relatively few modifications over time.