

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

**Root Cellar (Building 13)**                      *FINAL*

Bar U Ranch

The Root Cellar at the Bar U Ranch was built before 1910, but its exact construction date is unknown. It is no longer in use. The Root Cellar is a component of the Bar U Ranch National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 92-17.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Root Cellar, as a component of the Bar U Ranch complex, was designated “Classified” because of the historical associations of this building and the ranch as a whole, because of the exceptional qualities of the site and setting, and because of its contribution to the overall aesthetic and functional qualities of the complex.

The Bar U Ranch is strongly associated with the development of ranching in Alberta. The Root Cellar played a supporting role to this development, and is believed to have been constructed in association with either the existing Bunkhouse/Cookhouse or its predecessor. Root cellars such as this were commonly built in rural Canadian locations to store vegetables and other food items.

Constructed before 1910, the building is associated with George Lane, a prominent Alberta cattleman, who was hired at Bar U in 1884 to serve as the ranch foreman and who ran the ranch between 1902 and 1925. The Root Cellar is also associated with Patrick Burns, who purchased the Bar U Ranch in 1927 to add to his vast cattle empire. Burns, who is recognized as the kingpin of the meat processing industry in western Canada during the mid-1920s, has been designated a person of national significance.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, the Root Cellar contributes to the character of the Bar U Ranch. The structure is located directly behind the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse, within the community centre. It is also a component of the collection of pre-1927 buildings which contribute to the landmark value of the complex as one of the region’s most important early ranch sites. This landmark value is reinforced by the designation of the complex as a National Historic Site.

The utilitarian nature of the Root Cellar’s design is in keeping with the overall character of the Ranch. Its exterior appearance visually links it to the other buildings on the site.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Root Cellar resides in its functional design and form, its construction materials and techniques, and its setting.

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This utilitarian storage structure is comprised of a subterranean cellar with a wood-frame entrance shed above that is partially buried with banked-up earth. The cellar portion consists of an excavated cellar with rocks lining its interior walls. A mound of earth, probably over a substructure of logs or timbers, covers the hollow. The exposed section of the Root Cellar and its relationship with the mound of soil around it contribute to the building's visual cohesiveness within the site and to its utilitarian character. This configuration poses a conservation challenge, but at the same time the design was based on an acceptance of the need to renew and replace materials as required. Basic function was the main concern. This understanding should inform any intervention.

The shed portion, of frame construction using milled lumber, shelters the stairs leading to the underground space. The shed is sheathed with shiplap and its roof is clad with cedar shingles. The colour scheme of the shed (barn red walls and white trim) is in keeping with tradition across the Prairies.

Any development should seek to retain the functional quality of the site and respect existing patterns of access and circulation. Any changes to circulation or access should consider historic patterns. The relationship and orientation of the Root Cellar to the Bunkhouse/Cookhouse is important to the building's heritage character.

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

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