

Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 01 55 24



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 01 55 24

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Twist Ranch (Exterior)

Travel Directions:

Follow Hwy 9 (also known as Township Road 282) 6.5 km east of Beiseker to Range Road 252 (watch for the brown “Grande Ole West Villa Ranch” sign). Turn right (south) onto Range Road 252, go 1.6 km. The ranch is behind the overgrown thicket on the east (left) side of the road.

Remarks:

Welcome to the Twist Ranch. No other *Brokeback* location received the investment of time and money that the production team lavished upon this desolate farmhouse some 80 km NE of Calgary.

This is a well-hidden landmark; indeed the front is completely obscured by a dense thicket of Albertan caragana. Just as Ennis generally did, you will find it most convenient to approach from the rear. The structure, which has faded considerably since the film was made, is boarded up, albeit imperfectly.

The ranch is located on rural farmland in an area once occupied by Native Blackfoot peoples. They called the region “Clear Running Water.” A deep lake, said to be filled with old Blackfoot arrowheads, is 9 km away. The Canadian Railway established a rail line here in 1883. By 1909, the completion of irrigation canals permitted large scale cultivation of wheat and the area was homesteaded, largely by German families emigrating from Nebraska and Kansas.

The current owner of the house grew up on an adjacent farm. His family acquired the property in the late 1960s.

Important:

Always obtain appropriate permission before entering private property. **Do not attempt to enter the buildings. They are structurally unsafe.** The buildings have been the subject of pilferage and vandalism. Please leave all that you find intact out of respect for the history, both real and fictional, of this powerful place.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 27 June 2015

Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 01 55 27



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 01 55 27

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Twist Ranch (Exterior)

Travel Directions:

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Remarks:

The owner of the Twist Ranch vividly recalls the commencement of shooting activity at this otherwise desolate and inherently lonely place.

“It was July 20, 2004, when the circus arrived (*circus* is the industry term for the caravan of production vehicles and crew). Twenty or so tractor trailers, barbeques, power generators, cranes, everything you can imagine. More than 100 people, easy. Security was tight; they had to block the highway,” he said, referring to a nearby two lane road.

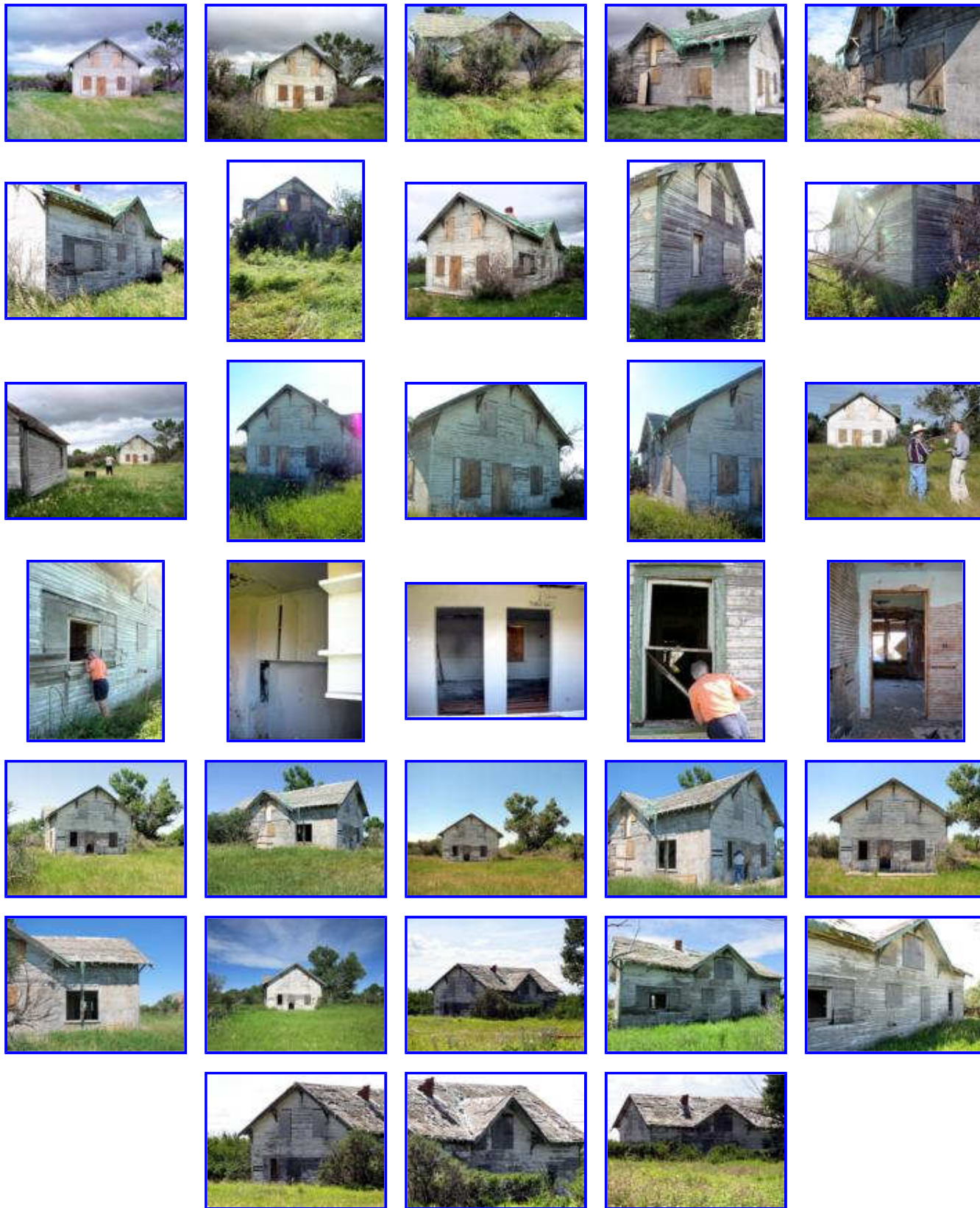
Before shooting, crews spent months restoring the house which had literally fallen down on itself. Extensive roof and carpentry work was required, the exterior façade and the rooms used in the film were plastered and painted. The green grasses and trees were treated with a desiccant in order to give them a brown / yellow hue. A small cemetery (which can be seen in some promotional footage, but not in the film) was erected to the left (south) side of the house.

“They must have driven that truck up to the house 20 times to get the shot they wanted,” he recalls.

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Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 27 June 2015

Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 01 55 33



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 01 55 33

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Twist Ranch (Exterior)

Travel Directions:

Follow Hwy 9 (also known as Township Road 282) 6.5 km east of Beiseker to Range Road 252 (watch for the brown “Grande Ole West Villa Ranch” sign). Turn right (south) onto Range Road 252, go 1.6 km. The ranch is behind the overgrown thicket on the east (left) side of the road.

Remarks:

The Twist Ranch house was probably constructed in the 1930s or '40s. It was occupied by the Elmer C. Esslinger family until it was sold in the late 1960s to a nearby farming family.

The house was furnished in fine oak pieces and had the feel of a “prairie mansion.” In addition to the first floor dining room and kitchen featured in the film, there is a large front parlor, a study, and a sewing room. There are four bedrooms upstairs, all similar in size. The house has an unfinished basement, as well.

A neighbor recalls a grandmother Esslinger and two “bachelor” sons, Bill and John. Mrs. Esslinger went to church with neighbors every Sunday. The sons rolled their own cigarettes. There was also a niece, who had a small child.

After the Esslingers sold the house it had a succession of tenants, mostly farm workers. The house fell into ruin during the 1970s.

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Quotation:

“A rather thin woman—probably sixty to sixty-five—comes out the door and on to the front porch that stretches across the front of a tiny windbeaten house ...” [1]

[1] *Brokeback Mountain - Story to Screenplay* by Annie Proulx, Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana (Scribner) ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-9416-4, page 89.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 20 June 2014

Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 01 55 55



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 01 55 55

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Twist Kitchen

Travel Directions:

Follow Hwy 9 (also known as Township Road 282) 6.5 km east of Beiseker to Range Road 252 (watch for the brown “Grande Ole West Villa Ranch” sign). Turn right (south) onto Range Road 252, go 1.6 km. The ranch is behind the overgrown thicket on the east (left) side of the road.

Remarks:

The cupboards and counters are there, but sadly, Roberta Maxwell is gone. It was here that Jack’s mother became Ennis’s mother. Moms!

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Quotation:

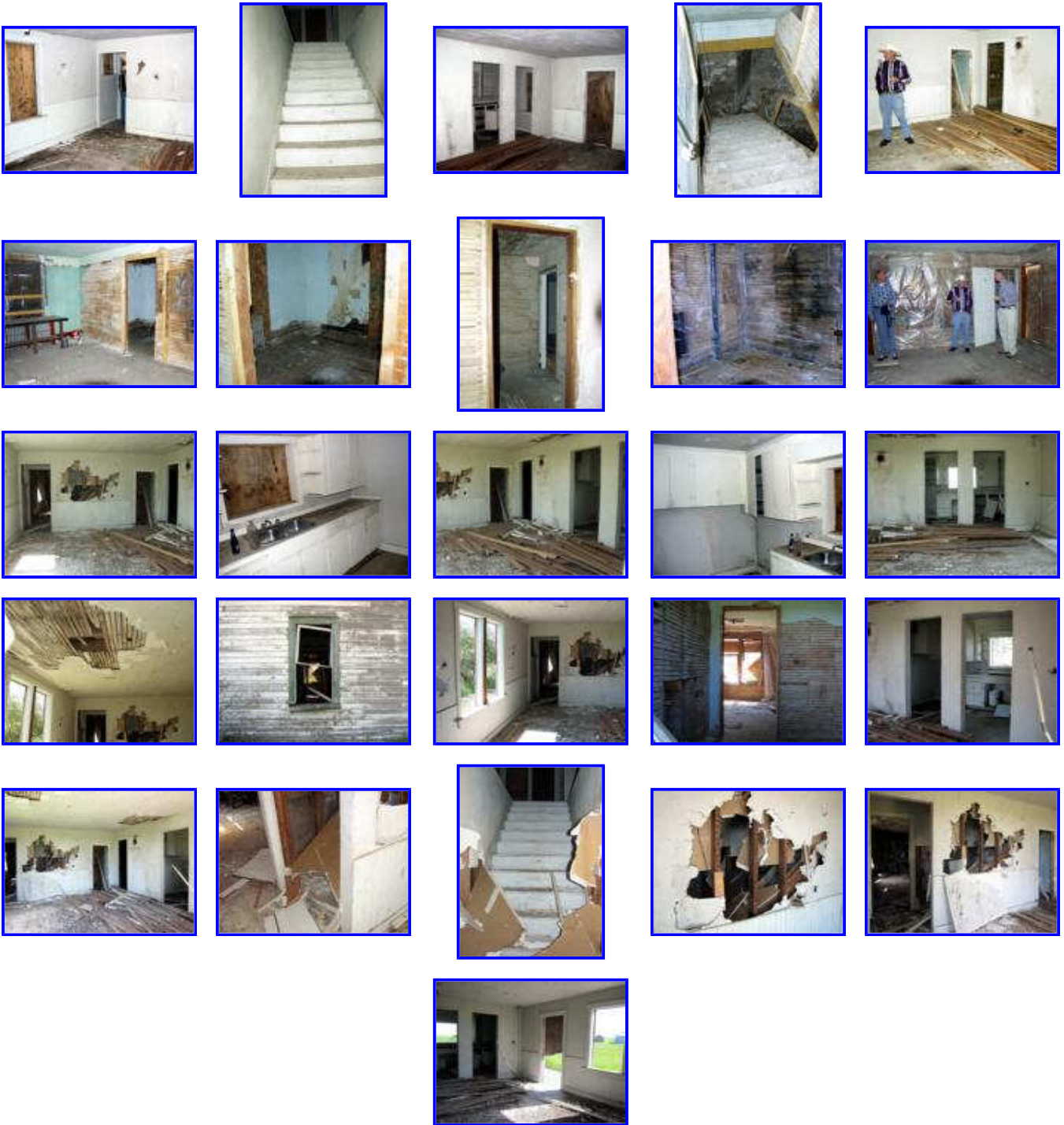
“Want a cup of coffee, don’t you? Piece of cherry cake?”

Pictures of surrounding area:



First Floor
Plan





Revised 20 June 2014

Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 01 59 05



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 01 59 05

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Jack's Room

Travel Directions:

Follow Hwy 9 (also known as Township Road 282) 6.5 km east of Beiseker to Range Road 252 (watch for the brown "Grande Ole West Villa Ranch" sign). Turn right (south) onto Range Road 252, go 1.6 km. The ranch is behind the overgrown thicket on the east (left) side of the road.

Remarks:

Yes, the sloping ceiling over the bed area, the window, and the radiator are all there. The closet and its secret compartment are mostly intact (the back wall has been removed but is stored nearby). Ennis wept mightily in this room and you will too.

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Pictures of surrounding area:



Second Floor
Plan





Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 02 00 20



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 02 00 20

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Jack's Room

Travel Directions:

Follow Hwy 9 (also known as Township Road 282) 6.5 km east of Beiseker to Range Road 252 (watch for the brown "Grande Ole West Villa Ranch" sign). Turn right (south) onto Range Road 252, go 1.6 km. The ranch is behind the overgrown thicket on the east (left) side of the road.

Remarks:

Although there was an original closet in the same general location, Jack's closet was reconfigured for the film including, of course, the side compartment. The closet door is now gone; perhaps it is someone's large souvenir. We normally discourage this kind of thing but in this case it seems metaphorically appropriate. So, too, the brown chest of drawers, original to the house, appears to be missing. The rear closet wall has been removed but is stored in the adjacent hallway.

The owner of the house retained the horse and rider figurine from Jack's room. It was originally his and he lent it to the producers, among many other western decor items. The owner's son has the wooden cross from the dining room wall.

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Quotation:

"I kept his room like it was when he was a boy. I think he appreciated that. You are welcome to go up to his room, if you want."

Pictures of surrounding area:



Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 02 02 16



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 02 02 16

Location: Range Road 252, east of Beiseker, AB

GPS: 51d 22m 18.24s -113d 25m 31.08s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Twist Ranch (Exterior)

Travel Directions:

Follow Hwy 9 (also known as Township Road 282) 6.5 km east of Beiseker to Range Road 252 (watch for the brown “Grande Ole West Villa Ranch” sign). Turn right (south) onto Range Road 252, go 1.6 km. The ranch is behind the overgrown thicket on the east (left) side of the road.

Remarks:

The filming of a major motion picture here, “way the hell out in the middle of nowhere,” was understandably a big event. Those on the scene during the shooting process recall many interesting details: the actors arrived in PT Cruisers; great effort was made to avoid including power lines in the shots; every scene was shot and re-shot many times. “They must have folded the shirts in that bag a hundred times,” said someone who was there to watch.

At one point (Actors Guild?) work rules required an end to shooting for the day, but Heath Ledger waived these and shooting continued into the night. Committed to authenticity, Ledger also voluntarily participated in the shooting of Roberta Maxwell’s lines, though a double had been assigned this task.

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Quotation:

“Thank you for this.”

Pictures of surrounding area:



Chapter 18 - Crazy Notions - 02 02 30



DVD capture



Contributed photo

DVD Time Code = 02 02 30

Location: Hwy 22, south of Longview, AB

GPS: 50d 20m 36s -114d 12m 10s

Map / Satellite Image: [Google Link](#)

Site Name: Return from Twist Ranch

Travel Directions:

From Longview, take Hwy 22 south 13 km to the Bar U Ranch. Continue south 9.1 km to 786 Ave. Turn east (left) on 786 Ave., and go approximately 2 km to the curve in the road at the hill. Park and look behind you (south and west). You will see two telephone poles south of an intersection and the access road running north and south behind them.

Remarks:

Yet another “bookend,” this image is virtually identical to the film’s memorable opening shot. Alone, paper bag in hand, an older and much sadder Ennis makes his way back down that mountain road.

Important:

The fence is electrified. Do not touch it.

Pictures of surrounding area:



Revised 23 March 2009