



Nature  
HISTORY  
Discovery

# Southeastern Oregon Historical Sites

The Frenchglen Hotel is 60 miles south of Burns, Oregon on paved Hwy. 205. Follow the signs to the Round Barn located just off Hwy 78, on the road to Diamond.

To make reservations at the Frenchglen Hotel please call 1-541-493-2825.

For more State Park information contact:  
1-800-551-6949  
[www.oregonstateparks.org](http://www.oregonstateparks.org)

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department  
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63400-8079 (6/04)

## Frenchglen Hotel



## Pete French Round Barn



# The Wild West

We all have images of the wild west and how it was tamed. We dream of buckaroos battling cattle rustlers and living off the land. We dream of leading the solitary, independent life the west offered for so many people.

Yes, roads have been paved and electricity established, but the wild landscape of the west has been preserved in southeastern Oregon like nowhere else in the state. In this area, you can still stand in the middle of an open field and cast your eyes to the open horizon. Rolling hills, flat plateaus and steep mountains dot the horizon. Sagebrush and cattle are near enough to touch in this uppermost reach of the Great Basin.

## Peter French's Empire

The west was a place of dreams for thousands of people, and this was also the case for Peter French, who operated the largest known cattle ranch in the region. Backed financially by Dr. Hugh Glenn of Jacinto, California, French made his way to Oregon in 1872 with 1,200 head of cattle.

French and his men settled in the Donner und Blitzen Valleys of southeast Oregon, where his cattle had plenty of room to roam, and plenty of grass to



feed on. It was in these valleys that French began his rise to the top of the cattle kingdom. He established the French-Glen Livestock Company, and began acquiring cattle, land and horses. At the peak of French's reign, the 1,200 cattle he brought to Oregon had multiplied into 45,000 cattle and 3,000 horses and

mules roaming on 100,000 acres of land. The land was known as the "P" ranch.



Despite French's power and status in the area, he was plagued with problems. Indians attacked his ranch, and homesteaders began squatting on his land. Although

the land was not legally theirs, French had no way to evict them.

French's problem with squatters and land boundaries continued to grow until December 26, 1897 when a boundary dispute left French dead, having been shot in the head by a homesteader. Although this was the beginning of the end of the "P" ranch, French's impact shaped this area and can still be felt today.

# The Frenchglen Hotel

Nestled in the upper end of the Blitzen Valley, with Steens Mountain looming in the distance, the little town of Frenchglen was originally a part of Peter French's "P" ranch. The hotel was built in the mid-1920s to house stagecoach travelers as well as ranch visitors. In the 1920s, the main store from the "P" ranch headquarters was moved to Frenchglen and today it lives on as the town's mercantile store. A post office (and therefore the town) was established in 1930. The name Frenchglen is derived from Pete French, his boss Hugh Glenn, and their French-Glen Livestock Company.



## The Original Style

The architectural style of the Frenchglen Hotel is commonly called American Foursquare. Although this style's popularity peaked between 1895 and 1930, it is still found in virtually every town across America. It is the all-American family home.

This style is characterized by a two-story cube shape, a porch across the front, and a lack of ornament and detail. The style was popular because it provides a large home, but its basic shape and simplicity makes it inexpensive to build.

The Frenchglen Hotel is a typical example of this style and although it is not extravagant, it defines what rural America once was. When the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) remodeled and added to the rear of the building in 1938, they were careful not to lose the hotel's original architectural style.

## Living in the Past

The historic Frenchglen Hotel, this town's main focal point, takes you back to a simpler, quieter time. Originally built in the mid-1920s and remodeled in 1938, this eight-room hotel is reminiscent of the past in its every nook and cranny. Although telephones and television cannot be found here, hearty family style breakfast and dinners as well as a comfy covered screened porch draw local and national visitors.

## Exploring the Area

Stop by this hotel when you are exploring the Steens Mountain or the Malheur Wildlife Refuge. The area is renowned for its wildlife and bird watching, and it leaves visitors with rare and memorable experiences of a unique Oregon landscape.

# The Round Barn

Cattle king Pete French designed and constructed this unusual barn around 1880. It was built to break wild horses during the

long, harsh Eastern Oregon winters. On average, French's ranch hands moved between 300 and 1,000 horses in and out of the barn each year. After training, the horses were made either to work for French, or sold.

## Unique Design

The barn's circular design is perfectly suited for its purpose. It is 100 feet in diameter and includes a 60 foot round stone corral, built for foaling. A 20' wide paddock surrounds this inner corral, and was used for working the horses in the dead of winter.

The interior of the barn has an umbrella-shaped center truss-like structure centrally supported with rafters.



*Pete French Round Barn.*



*The Round Barn's interior structure.*

It is thought that to get rafters that tall, juniper trees had to be cut from the bottom of a deep canyon, the closest of which is 150 miles away

in the Blue Mountain Forest. The stone for the corral was hauled from eight miles away by horse-drawn wagons. The lumber for the door, window frames, roof and outside walls was freighted from both Northern California and an area just north of Burns.

## Historical Landmark

Although it is certain that French built at least one more of these barns, this is the only one that remains. Rumors suggest that a third barn existed, but no evidence of one has been found.

The Pete French Round Barn is on the National Register of Historic Places and is open to the public year-round, weather permitting. Travelers need to be aware that this historic site isn't a day-use area or wayside.



*The barn's circular design is supported by a center truss-like structure.*