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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Strangers Grocery  
other names/site number Strangers Grocery, 5ME.4147

### 2. Location

street & number 226 Pitkin Avenue

N/A	not for publication
N/A	vicinity

  
city or town Grand Junction  
state Colorado code CO county Mesa code 077 zip code 81501

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.  
In my opinion, the property x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide   x   local

[Signature] Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer 1/22/13 Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register

    other (explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

[Signature: Mr. Edson H. Beall] Date of Action 3-20-13

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce /Department Store

Domestic/Multiple Dwelling

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian/Italianate

Romanesque

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete/Stone

walls: Sandstone

roof: Asphalt

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Stranges Grocery building, located at 226 Pitkin Avenue in Grand Junction's Little Italy, is a two-story, rusticated, random-course ashlar stone commercial building. It has a low-pitched front-gable roof obscured by a stone parapet on the primary façade, which faces south. The building is located towards the middle of the block surrounded by residential development. The setting has changed due to the fact that Little Italy is no longer intact as an ethnic neighborhood. Several of the original buildings in the neighborhood have either been heavily altered, or demolished, making Stranges Grocery one of the last intact resources of the area. Stranges Grocery store fronts Interstate-70, which is located approximately 20' south of the building.

This commercial building, which is roughly 25'x75', is a transitional local style of Italianate and Romanesque Revival. Though the Stranges Grocery building is not a pure form of either, it is a local derivation reflecting a regional architecture. The second floor windows are too wide and short to be truly Italianate, and instead, reflect early twentieth century proportions and placement. However, the main floor arches are influenced by Romanesque Revival architecture, as is the rusticated ashlar stonework.

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### Narrative Description

A series of three stone arches span the width of the building on the main level of the south (main) façade, the middle arch slightly narrower than the outer two. The main entry of the building consists of glazed double doors, which fit inside of the center arch. There is a single-paned arched transom window above the doors, filling out the space under the arched stonework, which is currently covered with particleboard. The flanking arches hold large single-paned arched windows, which are also covered with particleboard. A stringcourse visually separates the main story from the second story. The fenestration of the second story of the main façade consists of two windows, which are double-hung, centered over the two outer arches on the main story, these windows are also covered in particleboard. There is also a stringcourse with three courses of stone above the second-story windows. A simple stone cornice with stone dentils runs along the top of the building directly below the base of the parapet. In between the dentils the stone is carved with an "x". Centered underneath the row of dentils is a stone carved with the date "1909," the date of the building's construction. A short flat parapet wall hides the pitch of the shallow front gable roof with a small triangular pediment projection up from the center; echoing the roof's slope. The ends of the parapet are anchored with short piers topped with stone ball finials (photo 1). The exact date that the parapet wall was added is undocumented; however, Al Grasso, nephew of Nunzio Grasso, remembers it being added in 1924.<sup>1</sup> The parapet wall is constructed out of what appears to be the same stone, very much in keeping with the character of the exterior.

The main story of the west, eave-side of the building, has a pass-through entrance at the northwest corner. Slightly south of the entrance is what appears to be a small fixed window. The remainder of the main story is absent of fenestration. The second story has four larger main double-hung sash windows evenly spaced with stone sills. In between the southern most window and the window just north is a stone chimney that projects only slightly from the wall at the ground, and continues up about two feet beyond the eave. In the middle of the four larger main windows is a smaller fixed window with a stone sill, slightly offset to the north. Another single-paned smaller window with a stone sill is located between the northernmost larger main window and the larger main window just south. Towards the southwest corner, directly under the eave is a painted sign that reads, "GROCERY." The sign consists of painted white lettering with a painted black shadow.

The main story of the north (rear) gable end of the building has an entrance just west of the center of the building. To the east of the entrance is a twenty-five light fixed window. There is a wood stair case, with a ninety-degree turn, at the northeast corner of the building with a stone foundation. There is a second-story wood porch that is supported by four small wood posts. At the northeast corner there is an opening, currently covered with plywood; it cannot be determined whether the opening is a door or window. In the center there is a wood door, currently covered with plywood, with a stone lintel, and a small single-paned fixed window towards the northwest corner, with a stone lintel. The original stone parapet is still apparent, with a raised center, though a gable roof has been added. The gable roof, which was added on at a later year due to evidence found in historic photographs, can also be seen from this side (photo 3).

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<sup>1</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

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The main story of the east, eave side of the building has no fenestration. The second story has four double-hung sash windows, one being a double window with stone lintels (photo 4).

### Interior

The interior of Stranges Grocery retains its historic appearance. The first floor is divided into two rooms, a larger front store, approximately three-fourths of the building, and a smaller back room, presumably used as storage space. The main store room has hardwood floors and a painted white bead-board ceiling. There is simple casing, painted white, around the windows and doors. There are plaster walls lining the length of the east and west interior stone walls that appear in historic photographs. The storage area also has hardwood floors, and a painted white bead-board ceiling. There is a stairwell leading to the basement, as well as a stairwell leading to the second story. In the northeast corner there is a bathroom that was added sometime after the original construction.

The second story was divided into three apartments. Remnants of the original finishes are still evident throughout the rooms, including paint and several layers of wallpaper. The original woodwork remains, along with the built-in stove-pipe vents. There are two apartments at the south end, which are connected by a door. The apartment at the northeast side has a bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. The apartment at the northwest has a living area, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. There is evidence that a door was plastered over that leads from the hall to the kitchen area. At the north end of the second story there is a larger apartment, consisting of a living area, bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom.

### Integrity

The Stranges Grocery store exhibits a high level of exterior and interior integrity, including: original windows, original façade, original hardware, apartment layout on the second story, fixtures, and wallpaper. While there have been no major exterior additions, slight alterations have been made; however, many changes were within the period of significance. These small alterations can be seen by comparing an early historic photograph to the present state of the building. The historic photograph, approximately early 20<sup>th</sup> century, shows a wood porch on the main façade, which no longer exists. On the west side, the historic photograph also shows no smaller windows, or a painted sign that are now present. The parapet, gable-roof, and chimney are not original to construction, but were completed by 1924. According to an interview with Al Grasso, Nunzio's grandson, the Grasso's themselves added the chimney.<sup>2</sup> The location of the building has stayed the same, as the building has not been moved. The workmanship can be seen through the tool marks of each individual stone. The design of Stranges reflects a transitional local style of Italianate and Romanesque Revival. Though the Stranges Grocery building is not a pure form of either, it is a local derivation reflecting a regional architecture. While the setting has been altered with the demolition of parts of Little Italy with the construction of Interstate 70, the integrity of feeling and association are sufficient and overall the building retains good integrity.

<sup>2</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Commerce
- Ethnic Heritage-European
- Architecture

**Period of Significance**

- Criterion A: 1909-1963
- Criterion C: 1909-1924

**Significant Dates**

- 1909
- 1924

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)  
N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Grasso, Nunzio (Master Stonemason)

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance for Commerce and Ethnic Heritage begins in 1909 with the construction of the store and extends to 1963 when the store ceased operation. During the period of significance, the grocery store was owned and operated by members of the Stranges family.

The period of significance for Architecture begins when Stranges Grocery was built in 1909 and extends until 1924 when the parapet, gable-roof, and chimney were added.

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Stranges Grocery is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and European Ethnic Heritage from 1909 to 1963, and Criterion C in the area of Architecture for the years 1909-1924. The grocery represents the social and commercial development of Grand Junction's Little Italy, which has largely disappeared. This store is representative of the strong commercial center that helped Little Italy remain viable. Going to the local market was something that occurred either every day, or every couple of days; beyond being a necessary shopping trip, it also served as social center for the community.<sup>3</sup> Stranges Grocery exemplifies the central role of Little Italy in the local Italian community. Stranges is also one of the few remaining buildings in Grand Junction built of rusticated sandstone. Though the Stranges Grocery building is not a pure form of either Italianate or Romanesque Revival, it is a local derivation reflecting regional architecture. In addition, the grocery stands as an example of the masonry works of the well-known Grasso family. Stranges Grocery is significant due to its architectural style and materials as well as its association with Grand Junction's Little Italy.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Carl L. Stranges immigrated to the United States, from Italy, in the 1880s at twenty years of age. After his arrival in the United States, he moved to the Grand Valley of Colorado and resided there until shortly before his death in 1942. Carl Stranges opened his grocery store in the southwestern portion of the downtown Grand Junction area often referred to as "Little Italy" due to the concentration of Italian residents and Italian-owned businesses in the area. Three other grocery stores and an icehouse were located within a two-block area of the Stranges store. Carl Stranges owned and managed the grocery until shortly before his death in 1942. He willed the store to his niece and her husband who continued to operate the store until 1963. Since that time, a variety of businesses under several ownerships have used the building. The current owner, Majorie Montgomery, uses the building as a warehouse and storage facility.<sup>4</sup>

**Criterion A: Commerce (1909-1963)**

Stranges Grocery is significant in the area of Commerce because of its associations with and support of the Little Italy neighborhood. Stranges Grocery is located at 226 Pitkin Avenue; however, it was not the only grocery store within the Little Italy neighborhood boundaries. It is common within Italian communities to have several grocery stores located fairly close to each other, owned by different families, with different product availability.

The grocery store is an important remnant of the economic development of Grand Junction's Little Italy area. A sense of community identity developed quickly in Grand Junction's Little Italy as the Italians settled together and established their own neighborhood south of Main Street. The Italian immigrants purchased the majority of their goods within Little Italy and the stores stocked items that would appeal to the community. The commerce generated from the store helped develop the Little Italy neighborhood. Without successful business district within the neighborhood, Little Italy would have been unable to sustain itself in such a cohesive manner. Out of the four grocery stores that were located within the boundaries of Little Italy, Stranges Grocery is the only building that retains integrity.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Caitlin Zanga, "Ordinary Italian occurrences as viewed by a foreigner," in *www.wral.com*, accessed on June 5, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

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### **Ethnic Heritage-European (1909-1963)**

Stranges Grocery is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage as it illustrates that the Italians had truly carved out a place for themselves in Grand Junction. They were established enough to have multiple grocery stores dedicated to the regional traditions and cuisine that they were accustomed to. The Grand Valley experienced an influx of Italian immigrants around the turn of the twentieth century and many of them worked and lived in the southwestern part of downtown Grand Junction near the railroad. The Italian immigrants in Grand Junction experienced social pressure and discrimination, though this was unfortunately often commonplace across the country. In the United States, Italian immigrants were frequently subjected to extreme prejudice, racism and, in some cases, violence. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Italians were immigrating to the United States, Italians were often seen as uneducated peasants.<sup>6</sup> Due to the rise of the KKK in Grand Junction and the increased social pressure and discrimination, as well as a desire for familiar cultural traditions the Italian immigrants created a small social enclave where they lived, shopped, and socialized. Then, and for several decades thereafter, the area was referred to as Little Italy. Having several Italian grocery stores within Little Italy reinforced the tight-knit community and their strong cultural anchors. The act of going to the neighborhood grocery stores to pick up fresh ingredients was also seen as a social event and catching up with neighbors reinforced cultural connections.

### **Criterion C: Architecture (1909-1924)**

Stranges Grocery is significant under Criterion C for architecture because of its association with master stonemason, Nunzio Grasso and the rare transitional style it exhibits along with the local use of rusticated sandstone. Designed and built in 1909 by Nunzio Grasso, the Stranges Grocery building represents a historic type, period and method of construction. It is one of the few remaining buildings built of rusticated sandstone in Grand Junction and stands as a one of the few examples of the masonry work of the well-known Grasso family stonemasons.

The Stranges Grocery building reflects the transition between Italianate and Romanesque Revival styles. It is an example of a regional type, depicting proportions and fenestration that are not clearly defined as either. The second-story windows are too petite and spaced too far apart to be considered purely Italianate. Windows found in the Italianate style are taller, thinner and closely spaced.<sup>7</sup> During the turn of the century, one can see windows starting to become shorter and wider, this is what the windows on the second story of Stranges Grocery depict. The most striking feature is the rusticated, ashlar sandstone, of which there are no other buildings in Little Italy remaining that were originally constructed using the stone. This stonework is a typical material used in the Romanesque Revival styles. The first story round arches along the main façade are a popular feature of the style. The Stranges Grocery store provides evidence of a transitional style, a work completed by Nunzio Grasso, and the rare use of rusticated sandstone in the area.

The character-defining features found on the Stranges Grocery building of both the Italianate and Romanesque Revival styles include the: rusticated sandstone, ashlar stonework, dentils, stringcourses, stone arches, symmetrical storefront, parapet and parapet detailing, stone date marker, and stone sills. However, the most exceptional element of the building is the exterior material of rough sandstone, which is unusual in Grand Junction for a small commercial building such as a grocery.

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### **Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

#### **Criterion A:**

The rise and fall of Little Italy in Grand Junction coincided with the rise and fall of Little Italies across the country. Between 1880 and 1920, the U.S. saw a large surge of Italian immigrants, an estimated four million through census records. This was largely a result of Italian unification in 1861, which caused the economic conditions of

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<sup>6</sup> Alan G. Gauthreaux, *An Extreme Prejudice: Anti-Italian Sentiment and Violence in Louisiana, 1855-1924*, History4All.Inc. accessed October 31, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resources, *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, 1986, 25.

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southern Italy and Sicily to worsen. Southern Italians found themselves paying steep taxes and rents after Italy was unified and shifted its resources to the industrial north. Due to heavy taxes and other economic measures that were imposed by the Italian government on the south, many tenant farmers, land owners, and small business owners found it virtually impossible to carry on their lifestyles. Rather than trying to survive with meager means, many southern Italians chose to emigrate.<sup>8</sup> In a report by the American Commissioners of Immigration in 1862, the primary causes of immigration were:

...superior living conditions in the United States, higher wages, fewer hours of labor, better living and the exemption from the exactions imposed by foreign governments upon their citizens, such as military duty, burdensome taxes, and regulations involving freedom of movement and personal liberty, and the general belief that the United States presents better opportunities for rising to a higher level than are furnished at home.<sup>9</sup>

This immigration carried on strongly until the early 1920s. World War I, the Emergency Quota Act of 1921, and the Immigration Act of 1924, served to put an abrupt end to the large flow of Italian immigrants into the US. However, like Little Italy in Grand Junction, by the 1920s Little Italies across the country had stabilized and grown into prosperous communities.<sup>10</sup>

The Italian community in Grand Junction began to grow in the 1890s when the railroad provided its Italian workers enough money to send for their wives and children in Italy. This influx of Italians immigrating to Grand Junction coincided with the overall influx of Italians immigrating to the United States. The immigrants from southern Italy vastly outnumbered those coming from the north. The southern immigrants were seeking relief from the economic and social conflict they were experiencing in their homeland.<sup>11</sup>

The families who had migrated to Grand Junction came predominately from the region of Calabria in southern Italy, bringing with them their distinctive culture, using it to adapt to their new home.<sup>12</sup> Because these southern Italians were generally coming from rural areas, they found many aspects of the American West similar to their lifestyles in Italy. The Italians in the Grand Junction area succeeded, partially due to the specific geographical similarities between the Grand Valley, where Grand Junction is located, and Calabria, Italy.<sup>13</sup> The Grand Valley offered a mild climate, two rivers to supply water for irrigation, and a bounty of inexpensive farmland in a sparsely populated area.<sup>14</sup> Owning land became a primary objective for Italian immigrants in Grand Junction because it symbolized independence from life's changing circumstances, and offered a secure place for a family to live and grow.<sup>15</sup>

The first generation of Italian immigrants in Grand Junction were able to survive because of their strong cultural anchors from Italy, through their sense of community and family. Because of the availability of land and the general similarities between their homeland and the Grand Valley the settlers were able to be successful in the area. The Italians who moved to Grand Junction were able to reestablish the most important aspects of their Italian culture.<sup>16</sup>

In the United States, Italians tended to cluster into small semi-independent communities within the context of a larger city. In many cases there was some actual physical boundary serving to partially segregate the residents from the rest of the city. Boundaries such as a park, body of water, or hill would sometimes serve as the

<sup>8</sup> Luciano J. Iorizzo, *Italian Immigration and the impact of the padrone system*, (1980), 160.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>10</sup> Humbert S. Nelli, "Italians," in Stephan Thernstrom, ed. *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, (1980), 545-60.

<sup>11</sup> Alisa Zahller, *Italy in Colorado: Family Histories From Denver and Beyond*, (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, 2008): 53.

<sup>12</sup> Sue Ann Marasco, "Transplanting the Body: Bringing Southern Italian Culture to Grand Junction, 1870-1930," in *Journal of the Western Slope*. Volume 14, Number 2, (Spring 1999): 2-4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>16</sup> Marasco, "Transplanting the Body," 2.

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community boundaries. However often enough there were only invisible lines, which contained the Italian community just as effectively.<sup>17</sup>

Grand Junction's Little Italy was located from First Street on the west, Fifth Street on the east, except for where the Whitman Park is, Colorado Avenue on the north and South Avenue on the south. This neighborhood developed a distinct enclave where its Italian residents lived, worked, shopped, and educated their children.<sup>18</sup> Many newcomers to the United States found work amongst Colorado's railroads, mines, mills, and smelters, while others worked as peddlers and day laborers.<sup>19</sup> Most of the men worked on the railroad that ran along the northern border of Little Italy. In many cases, foreign-born laborers played a critical role in constructing railroads, subways, tunnels, bridges, and in supplying farm labor.<sup>20</sup>

Family was one of the most important values in the Little Italy community. After the early immigrants, such as Carl Stranges, settled, they sent for their families while simultaneously sending the message to other Italians that Grand Junction was a good place to settle. Once the newcomers arrived, those who were already established provided a place to stay for the newcomers until they were able to buy land, and get a start in the neighborhood. This is most likely why the second story of Stranges Grocery contained apartments, providing a place for families to stay while they were getting settled.<sup>21</sup> According to the Polk City Directory, the apartments above Stranges were listed as "rented apartments" in 1916.<sup>22</sup> A community member, who still resides in the area, recalls that the rooms were large enough for a bed, chest of drawers, and a sink, with one bathroom for each apartment. She remembers that the rooms were rented by family members of those living in the area who did not have room in their homes for more people, or by those who worked on the railroad including engineers, conductors, and brakemen.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1920s, the Italians in Grand Junction faced intensified discrimination when the Ku Klux Klan organized in the area. It seemed to the Italians as though the Klan's tactics were targeted towards boycotting their businesses. The Italians were able to avoid the other areas of town where confrontation with the Klan could occur, by staying, living, and shopping within the boundaries of Little Italy.<sup>24</sup> During the 1920s and 1930s, the Italian community came into maturity, and as a result its wealth and general acceptance within Grand Junction increased. The Italians began to expand into the larger businesses and professional communities in Grand Junction. This growth continued until the Great Depression, which destabilized railroad jobs, causing many community members in Little Italy to leave the Grand Valley to find other work.<sup>25</sup> Stranges was last listed in the Polk City Directory as a grocery store in 1953, and in 1963 it was listed by the Directory as vacant for renters.<sup>26</sup>

Little Italy is composed of approximately twenty-four blocks. Raso's Store, which became a liquor store after prohibition, was located on South Second Street, Pantuso's at First and Main, and Longo's Grocery store.<sup>27</sup> In the same area as Stranges Grocery store was an ice house, confectionary shop, as well as a meat market. The meat market was also owned by the Stranges and was located next door at 230 Pitken. These stores were found within a two block area. According to Al Grasso, Nunzio's grandson, they walked to Longo's Grocery store every Saturday to do their shopping, and returned to the store on Sunday to play bocce ball and drink wine. This was a common practice for Italians in the Little Italy neighborhood. Grocery shopping was frequently, every few days or

<sup>17</sup> Lawrence Frank Pisani, *The Italian in America* (New York: Expedition Press, 1957): 124.

<sup>18</sup> Marasco, "Transplanting the Body," 2.

<sup>19</sup> Zahller, *Italy in Colorado*, 53.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew F. Rolle, *Minorities in American Life: The American Italians, Their History and Culture*, ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc.1972): 57.

<sup>21</sup> Marasco, "Transplanting the Body," 15;27.

<sup>22</sup> Polk City Directory, 226 Pitkin Avenue, 1916.

<sup>23</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

<sup>24</sup> "Transplanting the Body: Bringing Southern Culture to Grand Junction, 1870-1930", 30.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>26</sup> Polk City Directory, 226 Pitkin Avenue, 1953 and 1963.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

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weekly, and often the stores were used for social gatherings.<sup>28</sup> Raso's store stocked a wide range of imported oil, cheese, pasta, and olives, advertising in English, "general merchandise, grocery and meats."<sup>29</sup>

It would appear that multiple grocery stores were able to survive because of the variety in the goods that they sold. Unfortunately, it is unclear as to what exactly each of these four grocery stores sold; however, it can be assumed in order for them to have coexisted that there was a diversity in merchandise. It is a common practice in Italy for a neighborhood to have several traditional neighborhood grocery stores for instance in some small Italian towns:

*Alimentari* - Small grocery store with foods of all kinds; *Drogheria* - Grocery store with mostly dry goods (canned goods, spices); *Enoteca* - Wine; *Farmacia* - Pharmacy; *Formaggeria* - Cheeses; *Frutta e Verdura* - Fruits and vegetables; *Gelateria* - Ice cream (*gelato*); *Latteria* - Dairy (milk, butter, cheese); *Macelleria* - Fresh meat, salami, and sausage; *Mesticheria* - Hardware; *Panificio* - Bread; *Pasticceria* - Pastries, cakes; *Pescheria* - Fish; *Pizzeria* - Pizza; *Rosticceria* - Take out and eat-in roasted foods, usually meats and vegetables; *Salumeria* - Cold cuts, cheese, salami, some canned goods (also called a *Pizzicheria* in some regions); *Supermercato* - Supermarket (larger grocery store).<sup>30</sup>

In an undated photograph depicting the interior of Stranges Grocery store some of their merchandise can be seen. The walls were lined with shelves that were stocked with canned goods. Sausage can be seen hanging towards the front of the store, and counters line the east and west sides. In front of the counter on the west side wooden crates appear to be holding bread and vegetables. On the east side of the store the counter appears to be filled with dry goods, while a large scale sits on the counter. At the rear of the store a coffee grinder can be seen, and a furnace is situated at the rear of the store, with the middle of the store left open. There are no remaining remnants of the store on the interior.

Currently, there are two other buildings remaining in Grand Junction's Little Italy that were used as grocery stores. However, these buildings do not retain as much integrity as Stranges Grocery. The facades of the other two remaining grocery buildings, located at the corner of Pitkin Avenue and South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on the East side and at approximately 321 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, have been altered and no longer have their historic integrity.

#### Criterion C:

The architect and builder of the Stranges Grocery store was Nunzio Grasso, born in 1873. Nunzio first came to America in 1881, where he lived with an uncle in Altoona, Pennsylvania. However, he returned to Italy for several years, then came back to America in 1901, with his wife, Concetta, and their one-year-old daughter, Nina. The three came through Ellis Island on September 11, 1901. When Nunzio returned to America, he went directly to Grand Junction. Soon after arriving, Nunzio had a contract job executing the stone work for the Schiesswohl building, which still stands at 131 S. Sixth Street. This building was the first of many buildings, bridge abutments, and highways built by Nunzio on the western slope that made him one of the best know masons in Grand Junction. Though an Italian family, the Grassos never lived in Little Italy in Grand Junction. Instead, Nunzio built his home at 924 North First Street, on the route for the Little Bookcliff Railroad, using stone from the same quarry that he used to build the Stranges Grocery Store. This was a convenient location for a family where stone quarried from the Bookcliffs was one of the most important aspects of their business. The stone was brought down from the Bookcliffs on the Little Bookcliff Railroad by the Italians living in Little Italy and working on the railroad. The train passed directly in front of the Grasso house and would stop so that the Grasso family could unload their stone from the train into the field across from their house. The family would then deliver the stone, at first by horse and wagon and later a Model T, to a project site.<sup>31</sup>

Though the Grassos did not live in Little Italy they were frequent visitors to the area. Nunzio's grandson recalls walking to Little Italy every Saturday to do their grocery shopping, and returning to the store on Sunday where the

<sup>28</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Sue Ann Marasco, "Transplanting the Body," 16 and 18.

<sup>30</sup> Pat Byrne, "Food Shopping for Vacation Renters in Italy," in *Italy Perfect, Summer 2009*.

<sup>31</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

Stranges Grocery

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men socialized, played bocce ball, and drank wine.<sup>32</sup> Although Grassos were not residents of Little Italy, the area was an intrinsic part of their lives.

Nunzio sold his first home located at 924 North First Street, and purchased 726 North Seventh Street from Bud Burthorn, the owner of the La Court Hotel. Nunzio improved the property by building a fence and garage out of stone, both of which remain there today. The stone he used was in the same rusticated, random-coursed ashlar that he used to construct Stranges Grocery. He later built another home at 838 North First Street. When he dismantled the Redstone Castle Gate House at Redstone, Colorado, he numbered each stone, then reassembled them at 2502 North First Street for Lincoln Coit who was a banker here in Grand Junction in 1945.<sup>33</sup> In addition to the work Nunzio did in the Grand Junction area, he also built: the Catholic Church in Fruita, using rusticated stone; retaining walls on Million Dollar Highway; and gates for several cemeteries. The Municipal Cemetery, in Grand Junction, has a gate constructed out of uncut stone and the walls around the cemetery are constructed using cobblestone. The Calvary Cemetery, just north of the Municipal Cemetery in Grand Junction, has cobblestone walls all around the perimeter. The Independent Order of the Odd Fellows Cemetery, just east of Grand Junction, has what appears to be a gate with short cobblestone walls as well as the gates for the Masonic and Veterans Cemetery. Grazzo constructed all of these.<sup>34</sup>

Nunzio constructed the caretakers and golf club houses at Lincoln Park, out of uncut stone. The original St. Joseph's School, which was lost to a fire several years ago, was constructed out of rusticated stone, like Stranges Grocery. The Redlands Country Club, as well as many of the houses around the Club, were also constructed out of stone by Nunzio. The Redstone Castle Gate House was Nunzio's last job; he retired after completing the reconstruction, ending the career of an artist with stone. Though masonry buildings are not relatively rare in Grand Junction, stone buildings are; especially rusticated stone such as Nunzio built with, making Stranges Grocery Store a gem within the City.

Little is known about Carl Stranges, and the Stranges family, though through several obituaries give some insight to the family. Mrs. Carl Stranges succumbed to a long illness, at the age of 56, reported in an article dated April 27, 1931, and in a newspaper article it was said that she was the, "...wife of Carl Stranger, former widely known local merchant, and resident of western Colorado for nearly 45 years." The article goes onto detail her life in Grand Junction stating, "She was-----in marriage to Carl Stranger and came to enjoy an unusually wide [group] of friends and acquaintances during the many years he operating a [grocery] store on Pitkin Avenue. Mr. Stranger retired from active business life several years ago, but the couple continued to make their home adjacent to the store building at 226 Pitkin Avenue."<sup>35</sup>

Carl Stranges died in his sleep in California at the age of 77, reported in an article dated March 18, 1942. Carl Stranges was born in Italy, and immigrated to America when he was 20 years old. He went to Grand Junction soon after he arrived in the country, and was a resident there ever since. The article states that, "More than 30 years ago Mr. Stranges opened a general store on Pitkin avenue, retaining the ownership until the time of his death and the active management until his health failed."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Nelli, "Italians," 545-60.

<sup>34</sup> Kathy Jordan, "Italian mason was Artist with local stone," in <http://www.historic7thstreet.org/remembers/decpdfs/littleitalypart2.pdf>, accessed August 21, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> "Pioneer of City Died on Sunday," in *Unknown Newspaper*, April 27, 1931.

<sup>36</sup> "Carl Stranges Dies in Sleep in California," in *Unknown Newspaper*, March 18, 1942.

Stranges Grocery  
Name of Property

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County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Byrne, Pat. "Food Shopping for Vacation Renters in Italy," in *Italy Perfect, Summer 2009*.

"Carl Stranges Dies in Sleep in California," in *Unknown Newspaper*, March 18, 1942.

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Jordan, Kathy. "Italian mason was Artist with local stone," in <http://www.historic7thstreet.org/remembers/decpdfs/littleitalypart2.pdf>, accessed August 21, 2012.

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Nelli, Humbert S. "Italians," in Stephan Thernstrom, ed. *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, (1980).

"Pioneer of City Died on Sunday," in *Unknown Newspaper*, April 27, 1931.

Interview between Kathy Jordan and Al Grasso, April 14, 2012.

Interview between Kathy Jordan and Marjorie Montgomery, Owner of Stranges Grocery.

Interview between Kathy Jordan and Kristen Ashbeck, Senior Planner, City of Grand Junction.

Interview between Kathy Jordan and Sam Rainguet, Communications and Community Relations Coordinator, City of Grand Junction.

Pisani, Lawrence Frank, *The Italian in America*, (New York, New York: Expedition Press).

Polk City Directory, 226 Pitkin Avenue, 1916.

Polk City Directory, 226 Pitkin Avenue, 1953 and 1963.

Rolle, Andrew F. *Minorities in American Life: The American Italians, Their History and Culture*, ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc, 1972).

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"Transplanting the Body: Bringing Southern Italian Culture to Grand Junction, 1870-1930.

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U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resources, *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, (Washington D.C.: 1986), 25.

Zahller, Alisa, *Italy in Colorado: Family Histories From Denver and Beyond*. (Denver, Colorado: Colorado Historical Society, 2008).

Zanga, Caitlin, "Ordinary Italian occurrences as viewed by a foreigner," in *www.wral.com*, accessed on June 5, 2012.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: History Colorado

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5ME.4147

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

The UTMS were derived by OAHP from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHP by the U. S. Bureau of Land Management.

**UTM References (NAD 27)**  
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 12 710 400 432 6559  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Pitkin Avenue runs along the south side of the property. The property is bounded on the east and west by empty dirt lots. A parking lot forms the northern boundary line. The size of the lot is approximately 100'x50'.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

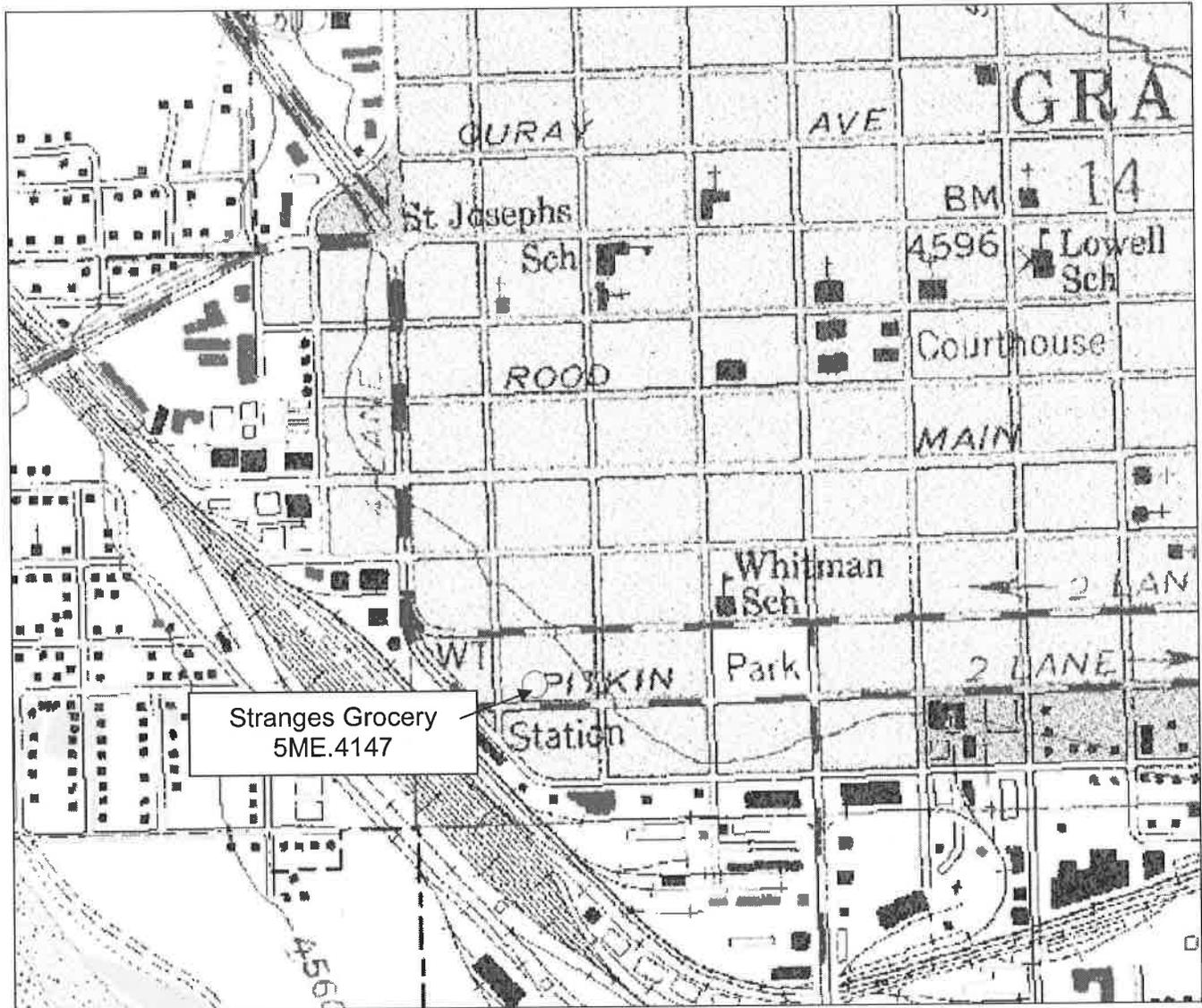
The boundary includes all land historically and legally associated with Stranges Grocery.

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USGS Section – Close Up  
Grand Junction Quadrangle  
7.5 Minute Series

PLSS: T 1S, R 1W, Section 14, N SW SW SW  
UTE PM  
Elevation: 4580'



Stranges Grocery  
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Mesa County, Colorado  
County and State

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Rachel Parris, Endangered Places Program Coordinator (for property owner)  
organization Colorado Preservation, Inc. date May 22, 2012  
street & number 1420 Ogden Street, Suite 103 telephone 303-893-5271  
city or town Denver state Colorado zip code 80218  
e-mail rparris@coloradopreservation.org

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

### Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Stranges Grocery

City or Vicinity: Grand Junction

County: Mesa County

State: Colorado

Photographer: Patrick Eidman

Date Photographed: August, 2011

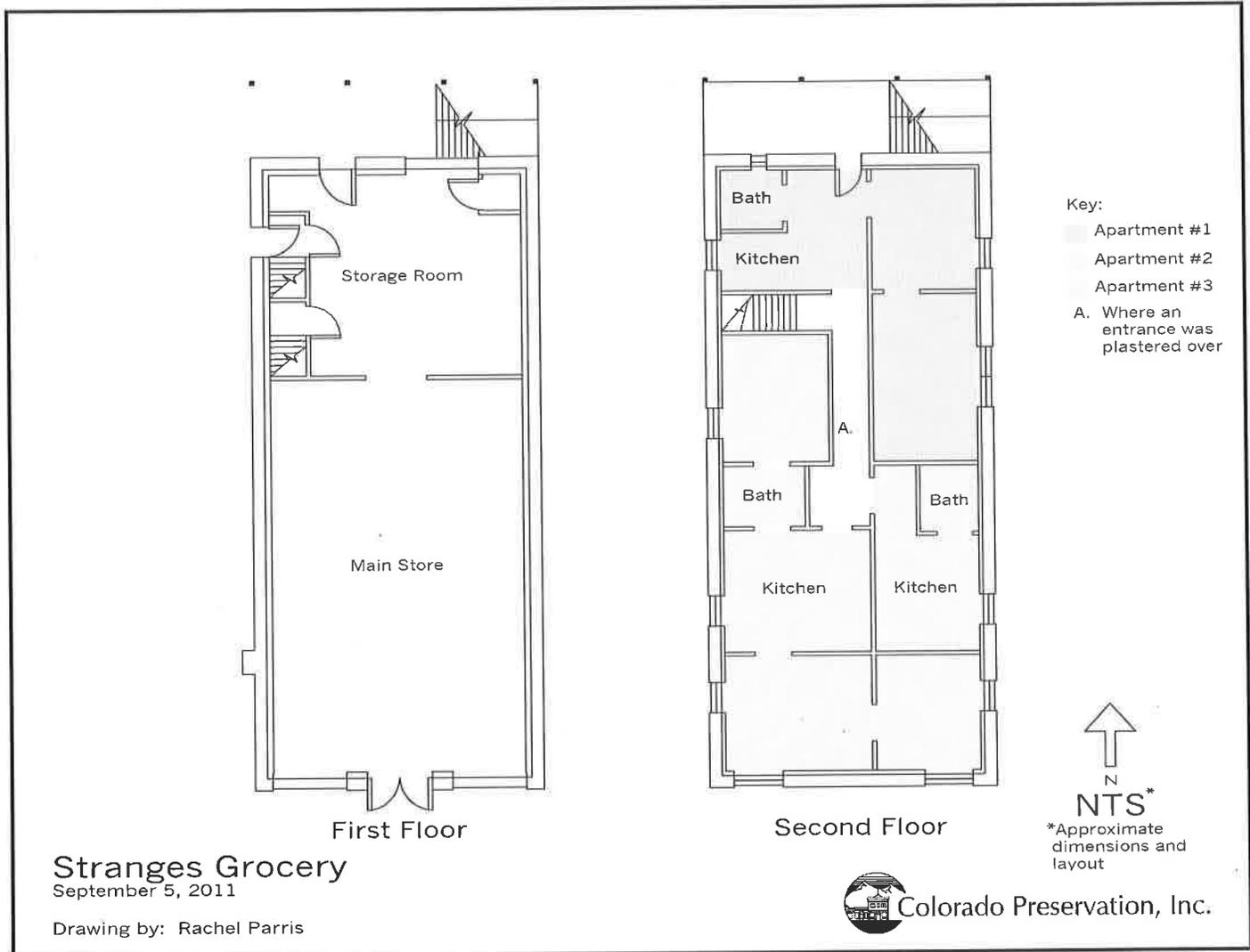
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 4. South side, camera facing north
- 2 of 4. West side, camera facing southeast
- 3 of 4. North side, camera facing south
- 4 of 4. East side, camera facing southwest

Stranges Grocery  
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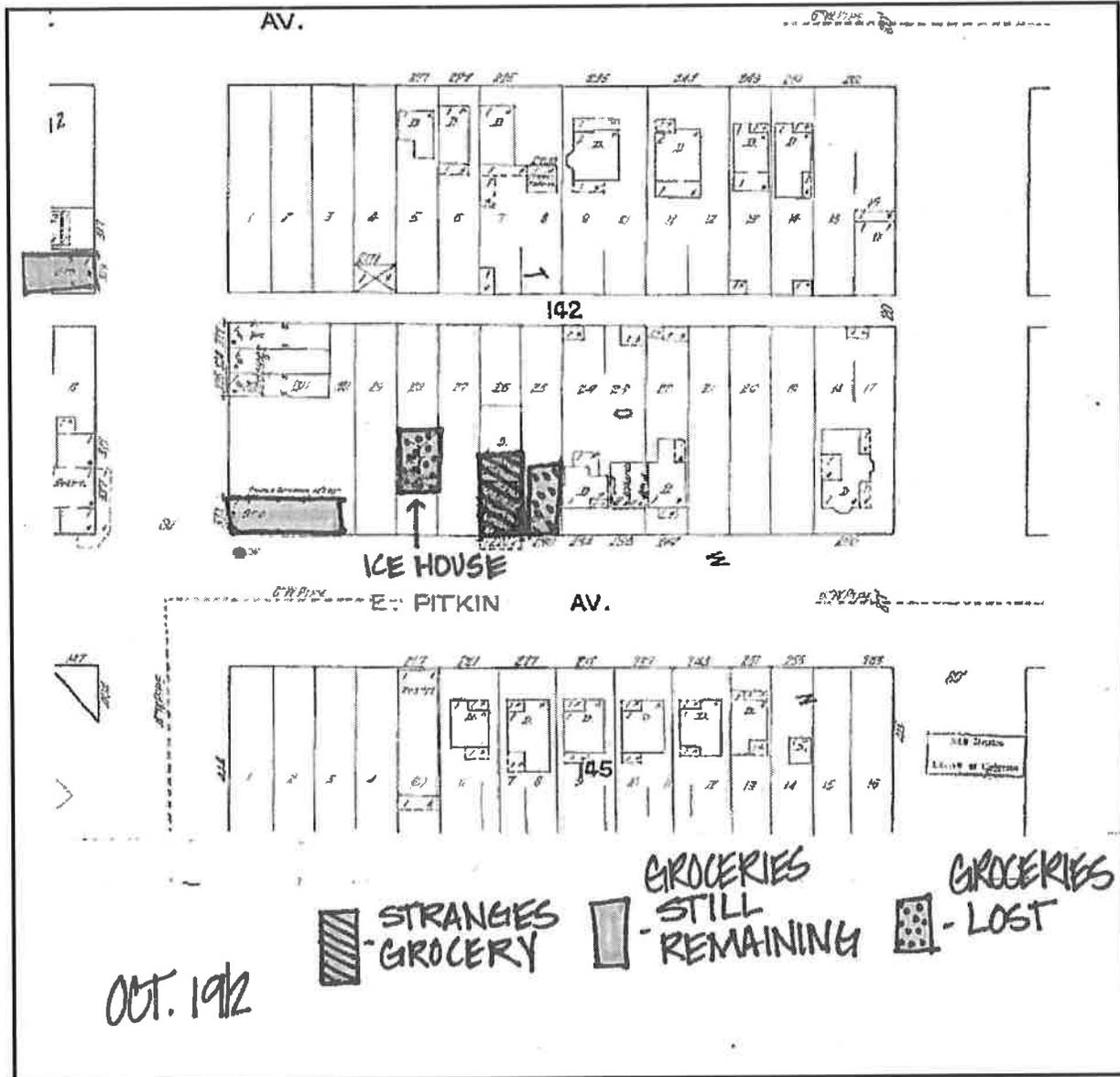
**Plans**



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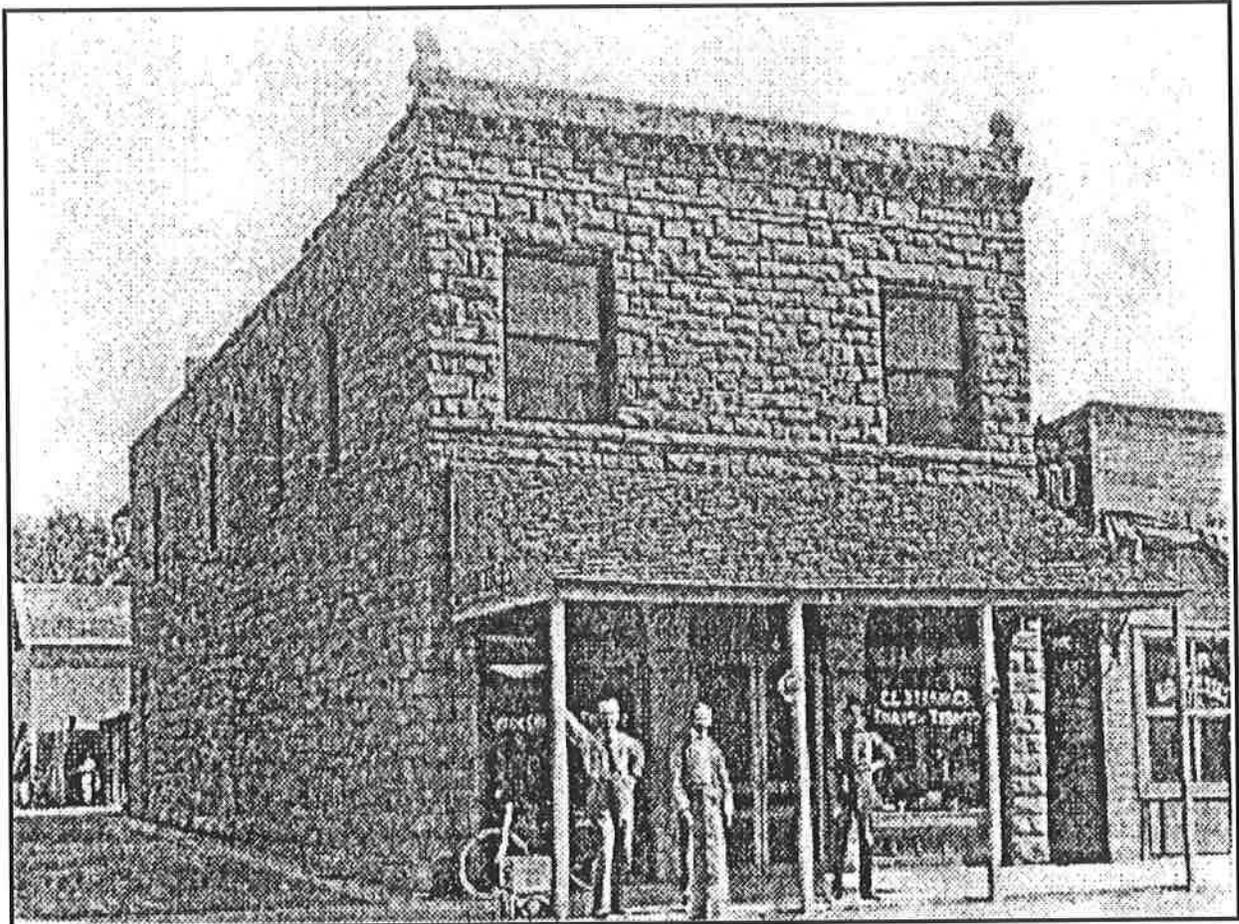
1912 Sanborn Map showing other neighborhood grocery stores



Stranges Grocery  
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**Historic Photos**



**Historic Photo 1** Exterior of Stranges Grocery, date unknown

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**Historic Photo 2** Interior of Stranges Grocery, date unknown

Stranges Grocery  
Name of Property

Mesa County, Colorado  
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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

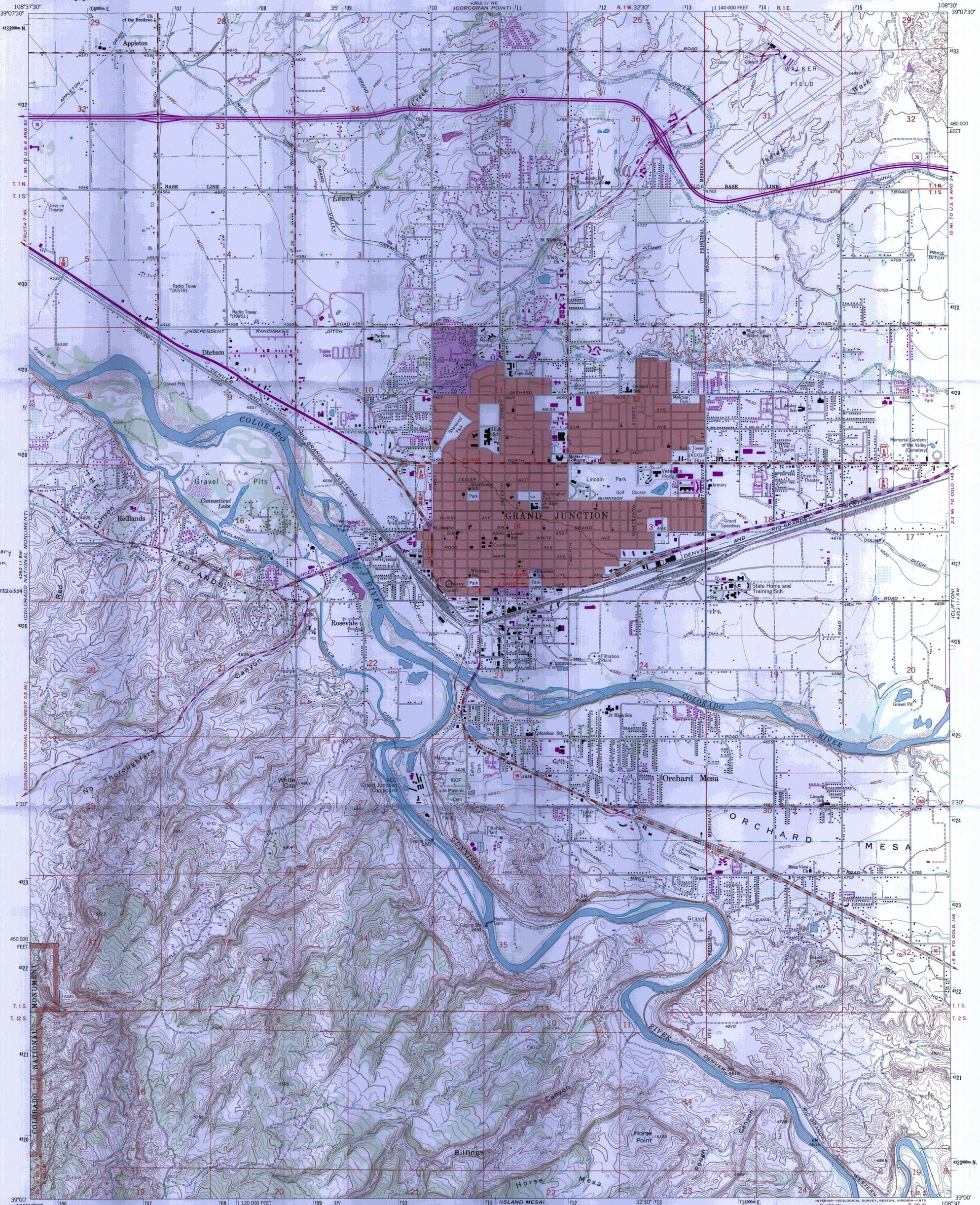
name Marjorie Montgomery

street & number 929 Ouray Avenue telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Grand Junction state Colorado zip code 81501

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



Stranges Grocery Grand Junction Mesa County

12 710400 4326559

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1958. Field checked 1962

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum

10,000-foot grid based on Colorado coordinate system, central zone

1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 12, shown in blue

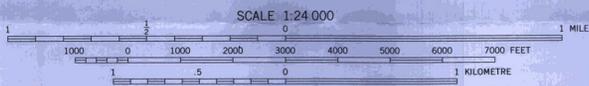
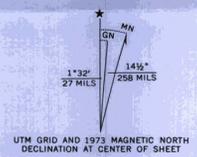
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

Where omitted, land lines have not been established

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 10-FOOT CONTOURS NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION table with symbols for Interstate Route, U.S. Route, State Route, Primary highway, Light-duty road, hard or improved surface, Secondary highway, hard surface, and Unimproved road.



GRAND JUNCTION, COLO. N3900-W10830/7.5

1962 PHOTOREVISED 1973 AMS 4262 II SE-SERIES V877

ISSN 0-607-11508-X



1909



**FOR RENT**  
**1 & 2 BDRM. MOBILE HOMES**  
**245-7701**

**WARNING!**

**NO PARKING**  
EXCEPT IN DESIGNATED AREAS  
VIOLATORS WILL BE  
CITED





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Stranges Grocery  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: COLORADO, Mesa

DATE RECEIVED: 2/01/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 3/05/13  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 3/20/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 3/20/13  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000079

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 3-20-13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



22 January 2013

Carol D. Shull  
Keeper of the National Register  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye "I" Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor (MS 2280)  
Washington, D.C. 20005-5905

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are pleased to submit for your review the enclosed National Register of Historic Places nominations for the Fruitdale Grade School (5JF.2084) and the Stranges Grocery (5ME.4147).

The State Review Board reviewed the nomination at its meeting on 21 September 2012. The board voted unanimously to recommend to the State Historic Preservation Officer that the properties met the criteria for listing in the National Register.

We look forward to the formal listing of these properties. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kara Hahn".

Kara Hahn  
National and State Register Historian  
(303) 866-4683  
kara.hahn@state.co.us

Enclosures

Registration forms  
USGS maps  
CDRs  
Photographs