

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received JAN 16 1986

date entered FEB 13 1986

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Carson School

and/or common

2. Location

street & number State Highway 96

not for publication

city, town Carson

vicinity of

state NM

code 35

county Taos

code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Frank and Kathy Perry

street & number General Delivery, Box P

city, town Carson

N/A vicinity of

state NM 87517

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Taos County Courthouse

street & number Box 676

city, town Taos

state NM, 87571

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Carson School was started in 1920 and completed within three to four years. The basalt stone was hauled three miles by horse and wagon from the nearby Rio Grande Gorge. Local men constructed the building. The stone was shaped by a local stonemason, Mr. Willis. The school is the only stone structure of several that Willis worked on in the vicinity which is still in good condition. Access to a two thirds basement is gained by concrete steps. It houses a wood furnace. The frame outhouse with shed roof to the north of the school house is in fair to good condition.

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The dimensions of the Carson school are approximately 40'x60' with 12' ceilings. The hipped gable roof is covered with wood shingles. Beneath it are exposed rafters and a frieze board. The principle facade faces south onto state route 96 which passes from east to west. The original opening on the south side was the size of a door with side lights and transom. The opening is still topped by a concrete lintel but has been infilled and surfaced with stucco. The reduced opening accommodates a single wooden door which is accessed by a simple concrete path.

On the roof above the south door is a square belfry with fish scale pattern shingle siding and a wood shingle hipped roof, topped by a flag pole. The belfry's original bell was removed by the El Rito School District and taken to Ojo Caliente in 1983, when the structure was sold to the current owners.

The east and west walls are solid stone except for one window opening on the south end of each wall. Concrete sills and lintels accent these openings. The two large openings on the north wall are interrupted by an exposed chimney which was originally brick but later covered with concrete. These openings are approximately 7 feet high and 4 feet wide, and have continuous concrete sills and lintels. The 6 four over four slightly recessed sash to each side have been boarded up. These north windows provided natural light without glare. Beside this functional benefit, the naturalistic view from the north windows was probably less distracting to students than a view of the nearby road would have been.

The interior was originally one large room. In the 1920's, the room was divided into an entry hall which opened to either side into symmetrical cloak rooms on the south side and classrooms on the north side. The six doors which connect the entry hall, cloak rooms and classrooms are five-panel of pine. The inside perimeter walls are surfaced with pine tongue and groove wainscotting and plaster-covered lath. The ceilings are also plaster-covered lath. The floor and subfloor are wood. A handmade blackboard on the west wall of the west classroom has been retained. One classroom still contains several of the large tables and benches which served as desks.

The Carson schoolhouse retains its architectural integrity. The minor interior alterations reflect changes made to accommodate the growing community and educational needs.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** circa 1923

**Builder/Architect** Troy Shupe

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

A succession of schoolhouses in the homestead community of Carson indicates that public education was a local priority. The original Carson school, built circa 1912, was a twenty foot square frame structure. In 1915, William Shupe and his wife, Mattir, deeded the land for the existing schoolhouse to the Carson School District No. 33 for one dollar. The more permanent stone structure, started in 1920 and completed within three to four years, reflected the long-term educational aspirations of the Carson community. The Carson schoolhouse is historically significant for its adaptive use by the community and architecturally significant for its vernacular form, native materials and workmanship.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Interviews: Mr. Verde Shupe, General Delivery, Carson, NM  
(505) 758-3210

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.25 acre

Quadrangle name Carson

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	4	3	1	3	4	0	4	0	2	4	4	6	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

1.25 acres, "situated in the Southeast 1/4 of Section 28, Township 25 North, Range 11 East, N.M.P.M.,

(see continuation sheet)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathy Perry/Edited by Tina C. Van Dyke/Historical Architect

organization New Mexico HPD date 11/12/85

street & number 228 East Palace Avenue, Rm. 101 telephone (505) 827-8320

city or town Santa Fe state NM 87503

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-7-86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register Entered in the  
National Register

[Signature] date 2/13/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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The community of Carson developed after the Homestead Act of 1862 was signed by President Lincoln. Most of the land in the vicinity was claimed in the late 1800's and early 1900's. In 1889, William K. Shupe discovered the vicinity of Carson while out walking from his job at a saw mill in Tres Piedras, twenty-five miles away. In 1908, Shupe, a Mr. Baumgardner, and a Mr. Rogers filed on adjoining property in the Carson area.

By 1912 when Shupe moved his family to Carson, there were already a dozen or so families settled in the area. Shupe and other settlers built an irrigation ditch which connected with another one which ran from northwest of Tres Piedras for thirty miles to the Rio Grande. The ditch, called the Arroyo Aguaje de la Petaca or water spur, made it possible to irrigate the Carson countryside. Corn, wheat and gardens contributed to the economic base of the early community, but the local pinto beans were renowned throughout the Taos area. The Shupe family alone grew more than 212 acres of beans.

The irrigation system proved so successful that the community built a dam to extend the water supply beyond the months of winter run off (near what is now the Carson reservoir). Many locals mortgaged their homes to finance the project. Even though the dam held, the plan failed because the volcanic rock in the dammed area would not hold water. Many locals lost their homes as a result, and left the community.

Shupe's sons, Troy and Verde, were instrumental in the construction of this vernacular schoolhouse. Troy had the contract for construction. Verde hauled all the water and part of the stone and lumber used in the structure as a seventeen-year old lad. The native basalt rock was quarried from a nearby gorge and shaped by a native stonemason, Mr. Willis. The schoolhouse is the only extant stone structure of several which Willis worked on in the vicinity. The stone and its finished surface remain a distinct example of local materials and craftsmanship.

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Although the original one-room schoolhouse may have served the initial needs of the community, the interior was divided into two classrooms in the late 1920's. These interior alterations suggest that attitudes and methods regarding public education changed as the community did. The additional classroom probably reflected an increase in the number of school-aged children as the community grew. With a larger school-aged population, two classrooms probably allowed for separation into groups so that the teacher in each classroom could differentiate between the educational needs of younger and older students.

Oral tradition relates that approximately 40 students attended the Carson School at its peak, when the community population was close to 150 people. The structure also doubled for Mormon church services, to serve many of the original settlers, and for occasional funerals. This multiple use continued until 1932, when public education was consolidated within the nearby Ojo Caliente Independant School District. Carson residents subsequently leased the structure for community activities, including dances, potluck dinners, and autumn country fairs.

The Carson schoolhouse was transferred to the present owners in January of 1983. The structure has retained its original architectural integrity despite minor alterations and adaptive uses. The substantial native materials, local workmanship, and vernacular form make the Carson schoolhouse an excellent example of utilitarian architecture which reflected community aspirations, and physical changes made to accommodate changing community needs.

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Verbal boundary description and justification

more particularly described as follows:

"Commencing at the Southeast Corner of Section 28, Township 25 North, Range 11 East, N.M.P.M., at the intersection of two public roads in Carson, New Mexico; thence North 10 rods along the East Boundary of Section 28 to a point; thence, West 20 rods along a line parallel to the South Boundary line of Section 28 to a point; thence, South 10 rods along a line parallel to the East Boundary line of Section 28; thence, East 20 rods along the South Boundary line of Section 28 to the point and place of beginning. Containing 1.250 acres, more or less."



# CARSON SCHOOLHOUSE

CARSON, NEW MEXICO



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