

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic Resources of Marble, Colorado, and Vicinity

B. Associated Historic Contexts

I. Development and Peak Years of the Colorado Yule Marble Mining Industry, 1884-1917

II. Transportation Network Developed in Association with the Colorado Yule Marble Mining Industry, 1906-1917

III. Settlement and Development of the Town of Marble, Colorado, 1881-1917

C. Geographical Data

The "Historic Resources of Marble, Colorado, and Vicinity" are located in the Crystal River valley in Gunnison County, Colorado. The buildings, structures, mining resources, and transportation network associated with this multiple property listing are located in an area that is bounded, roughly, by Colorado Highway 133 on the west, the eastern edge of the town of Marble on the east, the Yule Creek marble quarries on the south, and the northern edge of the town on the north.

___ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Barbara Sudler
Signature of certifying official

6-15-89
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency or bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

7/28/89
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

The "Historic Resources of Marble, Colorado, and Vicinity" multiple property nomination is organized around the buildings, structures, mining resources, and transportation network associated with the town of Marble which, by the early twentieth century, had become the center of one of the most significant marble quarrying regions in the United States. The extensive marble deposits of the Yule Creek area--which have been compared to those of Carrara, Italy--were first developed in the 1880s and have supplied high quality marble to hundreds of landmark buildings throughout the nation, including the Lincoln Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the Washington Monument. Denver's State Capitol, Cheesman Memorial, and Immaculate Conception Cathedral were also constructed with Colorado Yule marble. The period of significance for the multiple property listing ranges from 1881 to 1917. The year 1881 marks the founding of the town of Marble, which was the hub of the region's mining and processing operations. After 1917, the popularity of marble as a building material decreased markedly, and the town of Marble began to decline.

Three historic contexts have been identified within this multiple property listing. The first context, "Colorado Yule Marble Mining, 1884-1917," includes resources associated with numerous aspects of the local marble operations, such as mining and finishing operations, as well as buildings associated with the Colorado-Yule Marble Company. The beginning date, 1884, marks the opening of the first quarry in the Yule Creek area. The second context, "Transportation Network Developed in Association with the Colorado Yule Marble Mining Industry, 1906-1917," includes the history of the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad, the Colorado-Yule Marble Electric Tramway, and the Treasury Mountain Railroad, all of which were associated with the local marble industry. The beginning date of this context, 1906, coincides with the arrival of the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad in Marble. The third context, "Development and Settlement of the Town of Marble, Colorado, 1881-1917" encompasses historic buildings and sites associated with the townsite. The year 1881 marks the founding of the town. The period of significance for all three contexts ends at 1917, when the town of Marble and the local economy began their decline.

The town of Marble is located in a rugged and remote area of Colorado, known for its exceptional natural beauty and varied topography and color. Situated at an altitude of 7,950 feet above sea level, Marble is located in Gunnison County, within the Elk Mountain Range of western Colorado, and is surrounded by the White River National Forest. The town is nestled in the Crystal River valley, dominated by Gallo Hill on the north, and Whitehouse Mountain, Treasure Mountain, and Rugged Mountain on the south. The Crystal River flows along the southern boundary of the town. The major marble deposits in the area are located on the eastern and western edges of Yule Creek, which flows into the Crystal River at a point southwest of the townsite. Carbonate Creek, which flows into the Crystal River from the north, divides the town in half, and has been responsible for major flood damage to the town. Access to Marble is via a six-mile road which follows the path of the Crystal River and connects with Colorado Highway 133. The nearest town is Redstone, which is located approximately ten miles away. Denver is located approximately 175 miles away.

X See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 1 Marble Multiple Property Listing

Geologic Formation of Marble in the Crystal River Valley

Marble is a relatively rare rock in the earth's crust. Among the first marble deposits located in the United States were those at Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Later important discoveries were located in Vermont and Georgia. The marble in the Colorado's Crystal River Valley measured favorably against those early deposits, and is considered to be among the purest and whitest marble in the world.¹

The marble deposits surrounding the town of Marble are estimated to be fifty to sixty million years old, formed by geological processes that began 200 million years ago. The geological history of the marble deposits of the Crystal River Valley began with the formation of limestone, from which marble is derived. Limestone is widespread in the mountains of central Colorado, where its formation has been named Leadville Limestone, after Leadville, Colorado. Limestone is formed in shallow, warm, marine waters, from the calcite precipitated by marine organisms. Two hundred million years ago, during the Mississippian Period of the Paleozoic Era, Colorado was below sea level, at which time the Leadville Limestone was deposited.

Soon after the limestone was deposited, a major mountain system developed in Colorado. These mountains, which have long since eroded away, are known as the Ancestral Rocky Mountains. The town of Marble is located at what was the edge of the Ancestral Rockies. As the limestone was stripped off the Ancestral Rockies by erosion, it became sediment. For the next 165 million years, during the Mesozoic Era, the remnants of the Leadville Limestone lay buried beneath the coastal plains of Colorado.

After the Mesozoic Era, the present Rocky Mountains were formed. As the earth rose and rock formations folded and collided, masses of molten rock or "magma" erupted from the earth's surface, intruding into overlying rocks. Such a mass of molten rock was responsible for heating up the Leadville Limestone and recrystallizing it into marble. Leadville Limestone, which is a black dense rock elsewhere in Colorado, metamorphosed into a sparkling white marble in the

¹J. F. Manning, "How are Marble Deposits Formed," The Marble Booster, 11 April 1914, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 2 Marble Multiple Property Listing

vicinity of Marble, Colorado.² Yule Creek was very active in the erosion process which uncovered the marble deposits.³

Many varieties of marble are found in the Yule Creek area, with colors ranging from the purest white to a deep blue or black. Some of the marbles are veined or variegated, a combination of many colors. The most valuable grade is Statuary Marble, which is pure white has the most uniform grain size and surface color. Other grades of marble taken from the Yule Creek quarries include: Veined or Second Statuary Marble, Golden-Vein Marble, Bottom-Base Stock Marble, and Crystal Grade Marble.⁴ Generally, the marble deposits along the western side of Yule Creek are of higher quality than those along the eastern banks.

Indians and Early Explorers in the Crystal River Valley

Native Americans were among the first people to inhabit the Crystal River Valley. The Ute Indians were the dominant tribe in the mountainous lands of western Colorado. These hunters and gatherers favored the Glenwood Springs region for its medicinal hot waters, and considered the area a sacred site.⁵ With its abundant grasses, timber, and wild game, the Crystal River Valley was a favorite summer hunting ground.⁶ In the late fall, the Utes would leave the high country to move down to the sheltered areas along the Uncompahgre and Gunnison River.

²Duane Vandenbusche and Rex Myers, Marble, Colorado: City of Stone (Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1970, fourth printing 1987), 2-4.

³George P. Merrill, "A report on the Colorado-Yule Marble Properties Based on Examination Made in August 1914," Colorado-Yule Marble Manuscript Collection, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

⁴Vandenbusche and Myers, 173-176.

⁵Steven F. Mehls, The Valley of Opportunity: A History of West-Central Colorado (Denver: Bureau of Land Management, 1982), 6.

⁶Mary Bland, History of the Crystal River Valley (Glenwood Springs, Colo.: Redstone Corp., n.d.), 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 3 Marble Multiple Property Listing

The first explorers in the region were Spanish. In 1765, Governor Cachuquin of New Mexico commissioned Don Juan Rivera to lead an exploratory expedition into the wilderness of western Colorado, and it is possible that Rivera and his men entered the Crystal River Valley. The next Spanish exploration of the area was in 1776, led by Fathers Escalante and Dominguez. Although it is believed that the expedition reached the present site of Marble, the Spanish did not attempt to establish communities in the area.

By the 1830s, trappers and traders had entered the Crystal River Valley. Fort Uncompahgre was built by Antoine Robidoux, a French trader, near the present town of Delta, Colorado, in the late 1830s. Some of Robidoux's trappers worked the Crystal River region, as did John Jacob Astor's traders in the early 1840s. Gold-seekers reportedly panned for gold in the Crystal River Valley on their way to California during the Gold Rush of 1849.

The first American expedition to enter western Colorado was that of John C. Fremont in 1843 and again in 1845. The end of the Mexican War in 1848 led to the inclusion of the area within the boundaries of the United States. The Hayden expedition surveyed the Crystal River in 1873 and 1874, giving names to many of the mountains and streams in the area. Hayden declared the Elk Mountain region presented the most complex geological problem he had encountered anywhere in the continent. Also in 1873, Dr. John Parsons of Denver led a separate geological expedition to the Elk Mountain region. Sylvester Richardson, one of the geologists on the Parsons expedition, later struck out on his own and explored the area around the present site of Marble. Richardson is credited with discovering the rock after which the future town would be named. Recalling his trip years later, he declared, "...halfway up the valley...I discovered that the rock...was marble."⁷

⁷Vandenbusche and Myers, 6-7.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 4 Marble Multiple Property Listing

George Yule "rediscovered" marble while prospecting in the area in 1874.⁸ Although Yule, who later served as sheriff of Gunnison County, was unable to get the financial backing necessary to develop his discovery, the district's famed marble deposits continue to bear his name.⁹ Yule Creek was named after George Yule, and the terms "Colorado Yule marble" and "Yule marble" refer not to a specific mining company, but to all the marble deposits in the vicinity of Yule Creek.

In 1873, the Utes signed the Brunot Agreement which ceded a substantial portion of their land in western Colorado. In 1880, another agreement ceded the majority of the Ute lands, opening up the Crystal River Valley to settlement.¹⁰ By the time the Utes were removed to reservations in southwestern Colorado and northern Utah in 1881, prospectors were actively searching for mineral deposits in the Crystal River Valley. Still, the area's marble deposits attracted little attention, and early prospectors were seeking precious metals. The short-lived but thriving communities of Schofield and Crystal flourished in the Crystal River Valley in the 1880s, profiting from the area's silver, lead, gold, copper, and zinc deposits.

⁸Ibid., 9.

⁹George Yule's obituary, Rocky Mountain Herald, 13 August 1910.

¹⁰Donald J. Hughes, American Indians in Colorado (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1977), 65.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 5 Marble Multiple Property Listing

By the early 1880s, silver miners in the Yule Creek area became increasingly aware of the white rock they continually encountered during their mining operations. One miner saw that there was "something peculiar" about the roof of his mine on Whitehouse Mountain. "It is composed of as fine a marble as you will find anywhere," he reported in 1884.¹¹ That same year, a Mr. Howell opened a quarry of "the ...purest white, yellow, and variegated marble." Located three quarters of a mile upstream from the town of Crystal, Howell's quarry is the first known marble quarry in the Crystal River Valley.¹²

On 1 October 1885, William Parry, John McKay, and G. D. Griffith located two 1500 by three hundred foot marble lode claims on the west side of Yule Creek. These two claims, the London and the New Discovery--along with the Blue Marble and the White Marble claims which were located in July, 1886, by Parry, McKay, Griffith, and A. A. Johnson--became the center of marble operations on Yule Creek. Griffith, who had been a marble worker in Wales, organized the marble operations, and crews began blasting marble from white cliffs nearly two hundred feet high. On the east side of Yule Creek, L. R. Ligier, E. Jones, and J. B. Wheeler also filed claims on marble deposits.¹³

John C. Osgood, and the Early Development of Colorado Yule Marble Mining

Early financial backing for the development of the Yule marble deposits came from John C. Osgood, one of Colorado's most powerful capitalists. In 1883, Osgood had formed the Colorado Fuel Company. In 1892, Osgood's company consolidated with the Colorado Coal and Iron Company--which was headed by Colonel Channing Frank Meek, who would later play a significant role in the development of Marble--to form the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. With Osgood as president, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company became the largest employer in the state. Eight miles downstream from Marble, Osgood built the idyllic community of Redstone, a planned community which provided company housing to employees who worked in Osgood's coal coking operations.¹⁴

¹¹Vandenbusche and Myers, 11.

¹²Ibid., 11-12.

¹³Vandenbusche and Myers, 12.

¹⁴Redstone, Colorado, Multiple Property Documentation Form

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 6 Marble Multiple Property Listing

Osgood began buying land in the Crystal River Valley in the early 1880s. In 1886, in order to develop his holdings, Osgood and his associates created the Crystal River Toll Road Company and the Colorado and Utah Railway Company. Although no road or rail construction was immediately undertaken, the formation of these companies signaled a serious attempt by Osgood to overcome the isolation of the Crystal River Valley and thereby develop the region's mineral reserves.¹⁵

In 1886, Osgood also purchased the bonds to many of the Yule Creek marble claims, making their further development possible.¹⁶ In April, 1891, he renewed his interest in the marble deposits by acquiring a quit-claim deed on some of the holdings that he had bonded five years earlier. In 1893, Osgood displayed a mammoth block of Colorado Yule marble at the Columbian Exposition, which won first prize as the finest exhibited. Osgood's quarry, which is still in existence, is located on the eastern side of Yule Creek.

In 1903, John D. Rockefeller and George Gould gained control of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, and Osgood resigned as chairman of the board of directors. As a result, Osgood's interests in the Crystal River Valley, including his Yule Creek marble operations, declined. Still, while others would play a more significant role in the history of Marble, Osgood was a powerful presence in the Crystal River Valley and his early financial interest contributed to the development of Colorado Yule marble.

¹⁵Lee H. Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West: The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 1872-1903 (Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1976), 83; and the Redstone, Colorado, Multiple Property Documentation form.

¹⁶Vandenbusche and Myers, 12.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 7 Marble Multiple Property Listing

Several marble companies are associated with the early history and development of marble operations in the area. In 1891, the same year that Osgood acquired his marble holdings, the Colorado Marble and Mining Company was formed. The company's general manager, S. W. Keene, actively publicized the quarries, exalting the quality of Yule Creek marble to potential buyers from New England and Italy. The Marble City Quarry Company, run by Dr. Kline and A. J. Mitchell, was also operating by the early 1890s.¹⁷ In 1904, I. A. and L. M. Strauss, together with Thomas C. Hood, incorporated the Crystal River Marble Company. The company constructed a railroad line to the Strauss Quarry, located on the eastern banks of Yule Creek, but the cost of the railroad and the inability to locate quality marble on their claims led to the financial collapse of the company in 1912.¹⁸

The Colorado-Yule Marble Company and Marble's Greatest Period of Expansion,
1905-1917

Colonel Channing Frank Meek, who had merged his fuel and iron company with Osgood's, would be the man who would have the most significant impact on Marble's development. Between 1905 and 1912, Channing Meek served as president of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company. Under his dynamic leadership, Colorado rose from tenth to third in the nation's marble production; and marble quarries were started that would provide material for a hundred buildings across the nation, including the Lincoln Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. During the years of his presidency, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company spent over three million dollars developing quarries, mills, and transportation. In 1905, at the beginning of Meek's directorship, Marble had a population of six. By 1912, the year of his death, the town boasted a population of fifteen hundred. Although the Colorado-Yule Marble Company was not the only company operating in Marble during the early twentieth century, it soon became the largest and most significant. And, in the eyes of the townspeople, Colonel Channing F. Meek was the patron saint of Marble.

¹⁷Ibid., 19.

¹⁸Ibid., 54.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 8

Born in Ohio in 1855, Meek first became associated with marble as a boy when he worked as a marble cutter in Iowa. He became aware of and visited the Yule Creek marble deposits between 1890 and 1893, when serving as president of the Colorado Coal and Iron Company. Like Osgood, Meek was extensively involved in railroads. He was chief dispatcher of the Rock Island Railroad in Iowa, and general manager of the Denver, Texas and Fort Worth Railroad. In 1896, he purchased and electrified the street car lines in Mexico City. Meek was also well known as an organizer of large corporative interests, and organized the Shredded Wheat Company and the American Biograph Company.¹⁹

With financial backing from New York, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company was incorporated on 14 February 1905 at \$2,500,000. The company's intent was "to quarry, manufacture, and prepare for market and for all building and other purposes, marble, granite, slate, stone, and building materials of every name and nature."²⁰ Meek understood the importance of good transportation in the area, and helped secure the arrival of the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad into Marble in 1906. With strong financial support and a transportation network in place, the local marble economy entered its greatest period of expansion.

In October 1907, the Cuyahoga County Commissioners selected Colorado Yule marble for the interior of the county court house in Cleveland, Ohio. The Colorado-Yule Marble Company threw its efforts into fulfilling this \$500,000 contract, as well as \$100,000 worth of smaller contracts. The company's newly completed finishing mill, which had been built 228 feet in length and 50 to 75 feet in width, began the first of several expansions. In 1908, when Ohio's Mahoning County also contracted with the Colorado-Yule Marble Company for its courthouse in Youngstown, the mill was enlarged again, this time at an estimated cost of \$200,000.²¹

¹⁹Sketches of Colorado, vol. 1, (Denver: The Western Press Bureau Co., 1911), 215; and Vandenbusche and Myers, 43-47.

²⁰Colorado-Yule Marble Company incorporation papers, Colorado-Yule Marble Manuscript Collection, Colorado Historical Society, Denver.

²¹Vandenbusche and Myers, 53-55.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number E Page 9

Marble Multiple Property Nomination

The Colorado-Yule Marble Company mill is located on the southern edge of Marble near the Crystal River, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally, marble was transported to the mill from the quarries, which are located south of town along Yule Creek, by horse-drawn sleds and steam-driven tractors. After 1910, the mill and the quarry were connected by the Colorado-Yule Marble Electric Tramway. At the mill, the quarried marble was processed into finished products such as columns and monuments.

The Knickerbocker Syndicate, a New York investment corporation headed by Charles Austin Bates, promoted the purchase of stock in the marble operations. Through the syndicate's publicity and Meek's business connections, a three million dollar stock promotion venture was financed. Backing the promotion were the Colorado-Yule Marble Company's new power plant, a newly-completed \$75,000 mill, and an estimated ten million dollars worth of marble deposits. The Colorado-Yule Marble Company set production records in 1910, securing contracts for the Denver Post Office and the Montana State Capitol.

By 1912, the mill--which was ultimately enlarged to approximately one-quarter mile in length--was the largest marble mill in the world, turning out enough stone to fill a million dollars' worth of contracts. In the generous spirit of the times, Meek donated free marble for the building of the town's Columbus Catholic Church, the congregation of which was largely made up of Italians who worked in the company's marble operations. But on 12 August 1912, Meek was killed when the air brakes on the electric tramway car he was riding on failed. The church received no more free marble, and only the church's foundation and cornerstone were laid. The foundation, which still stands, remains as a final monument to Meek's generosity and popularity in the town.

Upon Meek's death, Charles Austin Bates of the Banker's Trust Company assumed control of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company. Although the company's new management lacked the inspirational leadership of Meek, it still managed to secure important contracts. In 1913, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company secured a contract to furnish marble for the interior of New York's Equitable Building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 10 Marble Multiple Property Listing

In 1914, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company secured its most famous contract, to supply the marble for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. Memorial designer Henry Bacon wanted to use the whitest, soundest, and most beautiful marble possible. Soon thereafter, Dr. George P. Merrill, head curator of geology at the United States Museum in Washington, D.C., concluded the Marble deposits were the ideal choice. "It is not excelled by any marble in America," Dr. Merrill concluded, "and I cannot recall...foreign deposits which excel it."²² The Lincoln Memorial contract was the largest single contract for marble ever obtained in the United States.

World War I and the Beginning of Marble's Decline

World War I had a devastating effect upon Marble. European immigrants had supplied much of the skilled labor for the quarrying and milling operations. With the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on 28 June 1914, and the beginning of World War I, many of town's skilled Austrian workers returned home to fight for their country. On 26 April 1915, Italy entered World War I on the side of the Allied Powers, and the Italian government called for the return of all Italian citizens in foreign lands. Italian emigrants who failed to return risked losing their Italian citizenship and property; they also feared reprisals for their families. Marble's Italian immigrants, many of whom had never become naturalized citizens, returned to their homeland.²³ Thus, just when business was booming, the town was deprived of most of its skilled labor, at a time when it needed it most.

World War I affected the town in other ways. After the United States entered the war, the marble industry was declared non-essential to the war effort. As a result, coal, steel, and other essential materials could not be obtained. In addition, that portion of the building industry which utilized marble declined during the war years, and the demand for marble virtually ceased.

By the end of 1917, Marble was a dying community. On 18 July 1916, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, which had been financially over-extended since its inception, went into receivership. Judge George W. Allen of Denver ruled that the company's operations were to be shut down as soon as all standing orders were

²²Ibid., 81-82.

²³Marble Chips, June 1985.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 11 Marble Multiple Property Listing

completed.²⁴ Reeling from the collapse of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, Marble was further staggered in 1916 when a fire ravaged much of the town, destroying many of the businesses on main street. On 5 September 1917, the Redstone Marble Company, started by J. C. Osgood in 1905, also voted to dissolve because of poor economic conditions in the marble industry. Finally, when the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad petitioned the State Utility Commission to cease train service in October, even the most loyal of Marble citizens were forced to leave and find employment elsewhere.

Although they never reached the production levels enjoyed by Colonel Meek during the peak years of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, a number of marble companies continued to operate in Marble after 1917. In the 1920s, new companies began acquiring the marble operations. The Yule Marble Company of Colorado, incorporated in 1921, and The Carrara Yule Marble Company, incorporated in 1922, merged as the Consolidated Yule Marble Company in 1924, acquiring the bulk of the Colorado Yule Marble Company's holdings.²⁵ Other companies in the area operating during these years include the White Marble Company, the Colorado Marble Company, and Tennessee-Colorado Marble Company. By 1922, an agreement was also made with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad to restore the Crystal River and San Juan Line.

In 1928, the Vermont Marble Company, through representatives Jake Smith, F. G. Partridge, and W. W. Blood, formed the Yule Colorado Company. Although operated for a short while as a subsidiary of the Vermont Marble Company, which acted as its sales agent, the company eventually assumed charge of the entire operation in Marble.²⁶ In 1930, the Yule Colorado Company received perhaps the most prestigious marble contract in U.S. history, to provide marble for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Yule marble was chosen for the monument because it was the only quarry capable of providing such a large and solid block of marble.

Despite the contract for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and several other significant structures, Marble had, by 1931, dwindled to 217 people. In 1932 and 1933, during the depths of the depression, wages averaged forty cents per hour at

²⁴Vandenbusche and Myers, 98.

²⁵Ibid., 110.

²⁶Ibid., 119-120.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 12 Marble Multiple Property Listing

the quarry and mill. On 11 September 1941, the Vermont Marble Company announced it was closing its Colorado marble operations. In October, 1941, the quarry ceased operation. Finally, in November, the world's largest marble producing mill closed for the last time. World War II and the postwar popularization of linoleum and authentic-looking marble substitutes extinguished any hopes that the quarries would soon reopen.²⁷

Although decreasing demand was a dominant cause of the decline of the local marble industry, other factors came into play. The Colorado-Yule Marble Company, under the leadership of Channing Meek, purchased and installed only the best equipment. While this practice improved production, it also encumbered the Colorado-Yule Marble Company with a three million dollar debt which proved to be too great a burden to carry. The high cost of removing unwanted surface stone, as well as costly processing facilities, also led to the collapse of the local marble companies. The exodus of the town's immigrant labor at the beginning of World War I, as well as a series of snowslides, fires, and floods, also hindered operations. Finally, the high cost of transportation has been identified as being a major cause of the failure of Marble's quarries. Eastern cities were the major marble markets and, with the heavy cost of shipping, the Yule Creek quarries could not compete with the marble companies of Vermont and Georgia.²⁸

II. TRANSPORTATION NETWORK DEVELOPED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE COLORADO YULE
MARBLE MINING INDUSTRY, 1906-1917

Efficient and inexpensive transportation was critical to the development of the Colorado Yule marble industry. By the end of the nineteenth century, Marble and its mineral wealth had attracted considerable attention, but the development of the area was hampered by a lack of good transportation. Although a number of railroads came close to Marble, they never came all the way up the valley, despite lobbying efforts by the town's developers. When Osgood exhibited his mammoth block of marble at the Columbian Exhibition in 1893, it had to be hauled down to the railroad at Carbondale on mule-drawn sleds.²⁹ Sleds were also used when Colorado Yule marble was selected as the stone for the Colorado State

²⁷Denver Post, 21 November 1988, 7A.

²⁸Vandenbusche and Myers, 153-155.

²⁹Vandenbusche and Myers, 20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 13 Marble Multiple Property Listing

Capitol. Even a good wagon road into the area wasn't built until 1902.³⁰

With his background in railroads, Channing Meek realized how important easy and economical transportation was to Marble's future. Shortly after the incorporation of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company in 1905, Meek immediately set to work bringing a railroad into town. From the Crystal River Railroad Company, Meek secured a lease of the right-of-way between Placita and Marble. On 23 November 1906, the long-awaited first engine of the newly-formed Crystal River and San Juan Railroad pulled into Marble. The standard gauge railroad was constructed from a connection with the Crystal River Railroad at Placita, and from there ran in a southerly direction for 7.3 miles to Marble. The Crystal River and San Juan Railroad ran two short trains each day. The railroad would bring in supplies and equipment, and haul out finished marble products. The railroad station, which is no longer standing, was located on the southern edge of the town of Marble near the finishing mill; the railroad tracks were located north of the Crystal river.³¹ A sixty-foot, marble-lined turntable, which is still in existence, was located at the end of the track. Portions of the railroad bed are still visible between Marble and Colorado Highway 133. Colorado Highway 133 covers the remainder of the railroad line to Placita.

With the decline of the marble industry, the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad ceased operations in 1917. By 1922 an agreement was made with the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad to restore the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad line to Marble. In 1942, however, the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad train into Marble was abandoned.

Two other railroad lines are associated with the history of the town of Marble and the local marble industry. The Colorado-Yule Marble Electric Tramway, completed in 1910 by the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, connected the finishing mill on the southern edge of Marble to the quarries on Yule Creek. Prior to the construction of the tramway, quarry workers had to carry marble down the steep, winding road to town by horse-drawn wagons and, later, steam tractors. While the electric tramway greatly increased the efficiency of the marble operations, it was also responsible for one of Marble's most tragic events. In 1912, Meek was

³⁰Ibid., 40.

³¹Dell McCoy, The Crystal River Pictorial (Denver: Sundance Publications, Ltd., 1972), 109, 141.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 14 Marble Multiple Property Listing

killed when the air brakes failed on his tramway car. The Colorado-Yule Marble Electric Tramway was dismantled in the 1940s, but its route is still visible on the western side of Yule Creek.

The Treasury Mountain Railroad was completed in 1910 by the Crystal River Marble Company, connecting that company's marble operations on Treasure Mountain with the town of Marble. The Treasury Mountain Railroad's standard-gauge line did not extend all the way up to the Crystal River Marble Company's Strauss quarry; the last steep incline was reached by a funicular tramway, a type of cable car system which was operated with two incline flatcars. Both the Strauss quarry and the railroad were located alongside the eastern banks of Yule Creek. By 1912, the Crystal River Marble Company was bankrupt and the quarry and railroad were abandoned.³² The tracks of both the Treasury Mountain Railroad and the funicular tramway have been removed, although the railroad beds and some of the ties can still be seen. A concrete building associated with the railroad is also still standing at the end of the standard-gauge line on Treasure Mountain.

III. SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN OF MARBLE, COLORADO, 1881-1917

The settlement of the town of Marble dates to 1881, when W. F. Mason and John Mobley founded the town of Clarence at the junction of Carbonate Creek and Yule Creek. At approximately the same time, William Woods and William D. Parry, plotted the town of Marble immediately west of Clarence. The presence of the two communities encouraged miners to begin wintering in the area, and supplies were hauled down from Gunnison. Although the two towns originally competed for residents and businesses, they merged in 1892 when Marble was the first to secure a post office. The town of Marble was incorporated in 1899.

As the marble industry flourished under the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, so did the town of Marble. With the arrival of the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad in 1906, the town of Marble finally enjoyed the "boom" which had been promised by the first marble discoveries in 1870s. Town lots, which could not be given away the previous year, sold at \$35 to \$250, and an estimated 250 people moved into the community. Some were Swedes and Italians who had moved into town to work in the quarries, others were eastern businessmen who had invested heavily in the marble operations. In terms of population and prosperity, 1910 was one of the peak years in Marble's history. While the census lists 782 people, Marble's

³²McCoy, 202-203; and Vandenbusche and Myers, 54.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 15 Marble Multiple Property Listing

population in that year has been estimated at being closer to two thousand, with five to seven hundred workers employed in the various marble operations.³³

Marble's private residences are generally vernacular, reflecting local taste, custom, and materials. Despite the preponderance of marble, few of the buildings were constructed of that native stone. Most of the town's residences are simple wood frame structures, one to two stories in height with gabled roofs. A few of the earliest buildings are constructed of log. Few historic commercial buildings survive.

The rapid influx of workers into Marble during the peak years of expansion resulted in a severe housing shortage. The local lumber yards couldn't keep up with demand, and many of the town's residents were forced to live in tents. In addition to the town of Marble, a community of bunkhouses and shacks just west of the workings developed. This settlement, which became known as Quarry Town, was made up largely of single men. The last building in Quarry Town collapsed a few years ago, and only scattered boards remain.

In order to ease the housing shortage created by the rapid development of the marble operations, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company constructed company cottages for its employees. Colorado-Yule Marble Company carpenters constructed most of the cottages between 1905 and 1908, peak years of development and operation of the company. Although only a few of these buildings survive, at least ninety-one were constructed.

The smaller company cottages were located on both sides of the road leading into Marble, directly north of the milling operations. These vernacular, one-story, side-gabled, four-room cottages came wallpapered and furnished, and could be rented for four dollars a month.³⁴ Considering their proximity to the mill site, many of these cottages may have been rented by the town's Italian immigrants, who provided much of the skilled labor in the mill. The larger cottages in town were one-and-a-half stories in height, with gambrel roofs. These buildings could be rented for twelve to fifteen dollars a month.³⁵ Both the

³³Vandenbusche and Myers, 67-68.

³⁴McCoy, 162; and Vandenbusche and Myers, 57.

³⁵McCoy, 57.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 16 Marble Multiple Property Listing

large and small cottages were painted white with green trim, the colors of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company.

Other improvements were also made in the town during its peak years of development. A town square was set aside for a park, streets were improved, and electric lights and telephone wires installed. The school was expanded and, in some cases, held two sessions a day.³⁶ Also established was a manual training school, directed by A. R. Ambrosini. This vocational school, which trained many of the mill's most skilled workers, provided courses in mechanical drawing, manual training, design, and the rudiments of architecture and sculpture.³⁷ Although not part of the public school system, the vocational classes were often held in the Marble High School.

Although Marble today consists of scattered buildings, historic photographs and Sanborn maps show that the town was densely populated, and most town lots were infilled. The town's main street was originally lined with false-front wooden structures, most of which were destroyed in a 1916 fire. Several of the town's privately-owned residences, such as the William Parry house, pre-date the Colorado-Yule Marble Company.

The Town of Marble Since 1941

Despite the closure of the quarry and mill, Marble never became a ghost town. Although the town's municipal books were closed and no elections were held for thirty-two years, a small number of people continued to live in the town year-round. In the early 1970s, the town government reactivated when twenty-one registered voters got together and elected a mayor. In 1977, the Marble Historical Society was formed to collect and preserve the town's past. The town's high school now serves as the town museum.

In recent years, the Marble area has become a popular recreation area, as the area's magnificent natural scenery encourages hiking, camping, and jeep tours. Following the depression of the 1930s, many of the historic homes in Marble were razed by local residents who needed the lumber, or by absentee owners who did not want to pay taxes on the properties. Some of the homes were

³⁶Vandenbusche and Myers, 52.

³⁷Ibid., 86.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number E Page 17 Marble Multiple Property Listing

also relocated to surrounding communities, such as Grand Junction or Glenwood Springs. Summer residents built new homes in the area, although infill has been minimal. Through the years, recreational and real estate development plans have focused on the area, but none have materialized and the town has remained relatively unchanged since the closure of the quarry in 1941.

But a new chapter in the history of Marble may soon begin. In November, 1988, Stacy Dunn, president of the newly reorganized Colorado-Yule Marble Company, announced plans to reactivate marble operations. Dunn's company has acquired a seventy-year lease of the marble quarries from the Vermont Marble Company, and hopes to profit from the increasing popularity of marble in residential and commercial construction. Marble usage in the U.S. increased 850% between 1980 and 1987.³⁸

Upon learning of the Colorado Yule Marble Company's plans, the Denver Post commented that, "It's good to see the resurgence of a non-polluting industry in an economically depressed area of Colorado."³⁹ But, like its predecessor, the new Colorado-Yule Marble Company must first solve what has been one of the town's perennial problems. Recognizing the importance of good transportation access, the new company is working towards improving the narrow six-mile road which connects Marble to Colorado Highway 133 and the greater markets beyond.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Denver Post, 26 November 1988, 6B.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type: Colorado-Yule Marble Company Cottages

II. Description

The Colorado-Yule Marble Company built at least ninety-one cottages for its employees. Two types of cottages have been identified, large and small. The large cottages were, presumably, for management; the small cottages for laborers. The cottages are basically vernacular frame buildings, with board and batten siding. Some of the buildings, however, may also have been built with clapboard siding (see Marble Town Hall National Register nomination form). All the buildings were originally painted in the Colorado-Yule Marble Company colors, white with green trim. Although exact dates of construction have not been determined, the cottages were probably constructed between 1905 and 1908, peak years of development and operation of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company.

The large company cottages are one and one-half story buildings, with either front or side gambrel roofs, with overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. The side gambrel buildings feature a small, center, front-gabled dormer. All the large company cottages have an open, full-width front porch with post supports and wooden balustrades. The first floor of each building has narrow, double-hung windows. The gambrel ends are faced with square cut wood shingles, and feature small, rectangular, casement-style windows. At least three examples of the larger company cottages are still in existence.

The small company cottages are side-gabled, one-story buildings with board and batten siding. Each cottage has a full-width, open, front porch supported by post supports. It appears that all of the small cottages have been either destroyed or relocated to other communities. A field survey would have to be undertaken to determine if any of the small cottages are still in existence.

III. Significance

Because they are associated with the history and development of the town of Marble and the local marble industry, the Colorado-Yule Marble company cottages are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A. Because the Colorado-Yule Marble Company cottages are rare examples of employee housing for workers of Marble's quarries and mills, they are also eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C. The cottages were built in response to the housing shortage created by the rapid development of the marble operations after the formation of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company in 1905. The Colorado-Yule Marble Company cottages fall under two historic contexts identified for this multiple property listing: "Development and Peak Years of the Colorado Yule Marble Mining Industry, 1884-1917," and "Settlement and Development of the Town of Marble, Colorado, 1881-1917."

IV. Registration Requirements

In order to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C, the Colorado-Yule Company cottages must (1) have been constructed by

X See continuation sheets for additional property types

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number F Page 1 Marble Multiple Property Listing

the Colorado-Yule Marble Company between 1905-1917; and (2) represent their original design, workmanship, materials, and setting. Because the cottages are significant primarily for their architectural value, a Colorado-Yule Marble Company cottage that has been moved would still be eligible under criteria consideration B, as long as it was still located within the town of Marble, had the same orientation, and was located in a setting similar to its original surroundings. Only a small number of Colorado-Yule Marble Company cottages are still in existence. While some of the cottages have been remodeled with new doors and windows, they may still be eligible to the National Register if they have retained enough original design elements and workmanship to reflect their historic character.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number F Page 2 Marble Multiple Property Listing

I. Name of Property Type: Private Residences in Marble, Colorado

II. Description

Marble's private residences can generally be described as simple, front-gabled, frame structures, with either weatherboard or board and batten siding. The earliest buildings, which may date from the town's incorporation, feature narrow, double-hung windows, and simple wooden window and door surrounds. Most of Marble's private residences, however, were constructed during the building boom associated with the peak years of the Colorado-Yule Marble Company, 1905-1917.

Some of the larger, two-story residences constructed during the 1905-1917 building boom have Queen Anne styling, and feature turned spindle porch supports and decorative shingling. These larger private homes are generally located on the northern end of town. Most of the town's private residences, however, are more simply designed and are located within the main part of town. A common building style, also built during the building boom, is a one and one-half story, wood frame building with overhanging eaves, exposed rafter beams, six over one and rectangular casement-style windows. Many of Marble's private residences have secondary structures, usually wood frame sheds with wood plank siding.

III. Significance

The private residences of Marble are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. Because the residences are associated with the history of the town and the development of the local marble industry, they are eligible under criterion A. Because the style and construction of the buildings are representative of early, privately-constructed, residential housing in the town of Marble, the private residences are also eligible to the National Register under criterion C. The private residences of Marble fall under the historic context of "Settlement and Development of the Town of Marble, 1881-1917."

While Marble's private residences represent a variety of style influences, their simple construction is typical of early housing in the mining communities of the Rocky Mountain region. Unlike the town's company cottages, which were built to house the Colorado-Yule Marble Company's labor force, the private residences are associated with some of the town's earliest and most long-term residents, who may or may not have been connected to the Colorado-Yule Marble

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number F Page 3 Marble Multiple Property Listing

Company. Included among the buildings in this property type are the homes of William Parry, one of the town's founders. It is also possible that other private residences belonged to eastern businessmen who had invested heavily in the Colorado Yule quarries and who frequently visited the town.

IV. Registration Requirements

In order to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, Marble's private residences and secondary structures must (1) have been privately constructed within the 1881 to 1917 period of significance; and (2) represent their original design, workmanship, materials, and setting. Important design elements include original roof shape, siding, window and door surrounds, and porch detail. Because of the town's depressed economy and dwindling population, few private residences within Marble have been remodeled beyond their historic integrity. Although some buildings have been damaged by neglect and disrepair, most of Marble's private residences have retained a high degree of historic integrity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number F Page 4 Marble Multiple Property Listing

I. Name of Property Type: Churches

II. Description

Marble's churches are typical of the one-story, Gothic-style churches constructed in western mining communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The buildings are basically rectangular-shaped, Gothic-style, one-story, wood-frame structures with clapboard or board and batten siding. Building features usually include a vestibule, a wood frame steeple and bellfry, and Gothic-arched stained-glass windows.

III. Significance

Because Marble's churches are associated with the history and development of the town, they fall under criterion A. Because the style and construction of the buildings are representative of early church architecture in the mining communities of western Colorado, they also fall under under criterion C. Religious structures are ordinarily not eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. However, since Marble's churches derive their primary significance from their architectural importance and their association with the history and community development of the town, they are eligible to the National Register under criteria consideration A. The churches fall under the historic context of "Settlement and Development of the Town of Marble, 1881-1917."

IV. Registration Requirements

In order to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, Marble's churches must (1) have been constructed within the 1881 to 1917 period of significance; and (2) represent their original design, workmanship, materials, and setting. Because the churches are significant primarily for their architectural value, a Marble church that has been moved will still be eligible under criteria consideration B.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number F Page 5 Marble Multiple Property Listing

I. Name of Property Type: Schools

II. Description

Marble's schools were constructed by the Marble School District. The structures are basically early twentieth century, Craftsman-style, two-story, wood frame structures with shiplap siding. The buildings are generally U-shaped, with a symmetrically arranged facade. The center, entry porches typically have front-gabled roofs supported by large porch piers constructed of marble. Other noteworthy building features include overhanging eaves, casement style windows, marble foundations, and marble sills and lintels. Marble's schools are always painted white and green, the colors of the Colorado-Yule Marble company.

III. Significance

Because Marble's schools are associated with the history and community development of the town of Marble, they are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A. Because the schools reflect early twentieth century, institutional architecture in Colorado's mining communities, they are also eligible to the National Register under criterion C. Marble's schools fall under the "Settlement and Development of the Town of Marble, Colorado, 1881-1917" historic context.

IV. Registration Requirements

In order to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places, a Marble school building must (1) have been constructed as a school within the 1881 to 1917 period of significance; and (2) represent its original design, workmanship, materials, and setting. Significant architectural features include the buildings' weatherboard siding, marble foundations, and Craftsman-style porch and window details.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing

The survey began with a literature review of the Crystal River Valley. Among the sources utilized were the Colorado-Yule Marble Collection of the Colorado Historical Society, the collections of the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library, and the Gunnison County Assessor's office. Marble, Colorado: City of Stone by Duane Vandebusch and Rex Myers was the basis for much of the historical information in this multiple property listing. Local historian Oscar McCollum, who is head of the Marble Historical Society, was a major source of information. Among the individual property owners who interviewed were Paul Ganley, owner of the Parry house, and Doris Brumbaugh, pastor of the Marble Community Church. Winifred VanOver and Judy Betz Hughes, former Marble residents, were also interviewed. Historic photographs of the Marble area, as well as the 1914 Sanborn Map of Marble, were significant sources of information. The 1910 U.S. census records of Marble were also examined.

As part of the project, the Marble area was field surveyed in October, 1988, and March, 1989, by historians Christine Whitacre and R. Laurie Simmons of Front Range Research Associates, Inc. Photographs were taken by Roger Whitacre. Whenever possible, both the interiors and exteriors of buildings were documented. The field survey concentrated on the buildings in town of Marble, and the historic resources associated with railroads and the mining operations were not intensively surveyed.

The three historic contexts identified with the multiple property listing encompass the major historical themes of the Marble area, and include a wide range of property types. Four individual property nominations were also developed as part of this project: the William Parry House, the Marble High School, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, and the Marble Town Hall. These individual properties were previously identified by the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office as having a high degree of historic significance. As directed by the State Historic Preservation Office, the surveyors selected the individual properties from the historic buildings listed in the Self-Guided Walking Tour, Marble, Colorado prepared by Duncan McCollum for the Marble Historical Society. The Colorado-Yule Marble Company Mill was previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The surveyors also identified a number of properties which, because of budget and time restraints, were not analyzed as property types but which fall under the three identified historic contexts. It is recommended that these properties be further evaluated to determine their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Included among these properties are the Marble Cemetery, the Colorado-Yule Marble Company Quarry, the Strauss Quarry, the Osgood Quarry, and the railroads identified in the "Transportation Network Developed in Association with the Colorado Yule Marble Mining Industry, 1906-1917" historic context. All the other buildings and structures within the Self-Guided Walking Tour should also be further evaluated, particularly the marble foundation of the Columbus Catholic Church, the town jail, and the marble-lined turntable of the Crystal River and San Juan Railroad. In addition, the surveyors recommend that the town of Marble be surveyed to determine how many other historic structures

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number G Page 1 Marble Multiple Property Listing

are still in existence. The preliminary field survey indicated that at least three Colorado-Yule Marble Company cottages are still standing, although more may be located.

The historic archaeological potential in the Marble area also needs to be more fully addressed. Local historian Oscar McCollum has speculated that, because of the extensive floods that have occurred in the town of Marble, historic archaeological artifacts may have settled in the foundation ruins of some of the town's buildings. The Quarry Town site may also yield archaeological information.

Funding for this project was provided to the Colorado Historical Society by the Inactive Mines Program of the Mined Land Reclamation Division of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. The project was initiated by Barbara Norgren of the Colorado State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and Loretta Pineda of the Inactive Mines Program.

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___See continuation sheet.

Primary location of additional data:

___State Historic Preservation Office

___Other State agency

___Federal agency

___Local government

___University

___Other

Specify Repository: _____

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