

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received **MAR 22 1983**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Battlement Mesa Schoolhouse 5CE1166

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number 7201 300 Road, n/a not for publication

city, town Battlement Mesa n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Garfield code 045

**3. Classification**

| Category  | Ownership                                  | Status  | Present Use                                       |
|---|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> occupied                     | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> private           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both              | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress             | <input type="checkbox"/> educational              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                  | <b>Accessible</b>                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | n/a in process                             | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted              | <input type="checkbox"/> government               |
|   | n/a being considered                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial               |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> no                           | <input type="checkbox"/> military                 |
|   |  |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Vacant |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Battlement Community Trust (3 Trustees)  
1236 302 Road

street & number 0926 308 Road  
0134 303 Road

city, town Battlement Mesa n/a vicinity of state Colorado 81635

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Garfield County Court House, Clerk & Recorder

street & number 8th Street (Post Office Box 640)

city, town Glenwood Springs state Colorado 81601

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Colo. Inventory of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date On going  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Colorado Preservation Office

city, town Denver, state Colorado

## 7. Description

|                                    |  |   |   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                   |  | <b>Check one</b>                              | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good      | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins                   | <input type="checkbox"/> altered              | <input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed               |   |   |

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

The Battlement Mesa Schoolhouse presently stands as a stone "T"-shaped structure with an attached front entryway (as the attached floor plan shows).

The rear portion of the school is the original structure, constructed in 1897, with stone from a local quarry. An original photograph pictures this building with a hip roof, four windows on each side wall, two doors in front and two in the rear. A bell tower was perched on the west roof. The interior consisted of a wooden floor, panelled wainscoting and lath and plaster walls and ceiling. Some ornate doorway trim is still remaining. This part of the school is thought to have been constructed by a Mr. Reed.

The front portion of the building was constructed of stone from the same quarry ten years later, in 1907, also with a hip roof. The bell tower was relocated to rest on the gabled entry. Structural differences indicate that a different builder was involved.

Later remodeling added a row of five windows along the south wall of the front portion, possibly reflecting a prairie school influence. A kitchen was also built at the rear of the original school room.

Coal was stored under the west side of the front room for use in the school's two stoves. An exterior coal shoot allowed unloading with an interior stairway for access.

There are 22 windows; one doorway at the front and two in the rear. Four chimneys (3 brick and 1 metal) protrude from the roof.

The stone slab over the doorway reads "Battlement Mesa School District No. (obliterated) 1909."

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Battlement Mesa School  
Garfield County, Colorado  
Continuation sheet

Item number 7

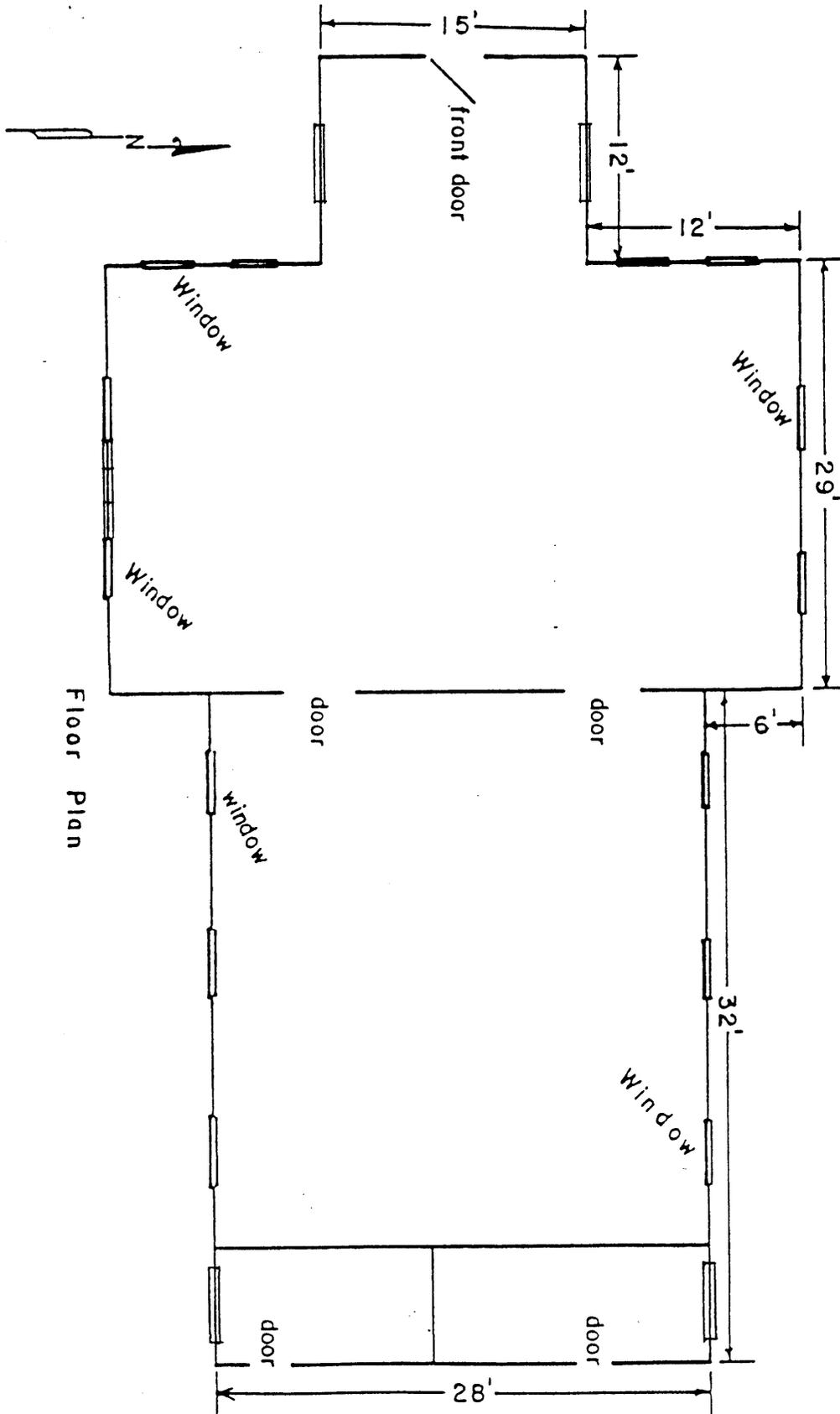
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date entered

OLD BATTLEMENT SCHOOL  
FLOOR PLAN



# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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** 1897; 1907 **Builder/Architect** Builder: Mr. Reed

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

The Battlement Mesa School is highly significant for Battlement area residents because for over fifty years (from 1897 to 1957) it served as the center for all community life.

George Sipprell, an early settler and a law graduate from Maine (who served as woodsman, postmaster, banker, lawyer, and judge for the area) donated the four acre site in 1895 to "the people of School District 18" for use as a school site. The first school on Battlement Mesa - a log building - had become too small for the increasing numbers of children.

Construction began in 1897, undertaken by local men under the direction of Mr. Reed. R.O. Gardner (later famous for shooting Kid Currey following the Parachute train robbery of 1904) Jeff Curley, Sweiber, Doby, George Parmenter, Blasins Werhonig (from Mahrenberg, Germany) Joe Triman, Wesley Shutt and others cut rock from the local quarry, hauled it by team and with mud mortar built a one-room school (the rear of the present building).

Mrs. Mary Shutt was the first teacher in the new building. The school members were Mrs. John Mc Guirk, Willian K. Tanney and Nels M. Goode.

An addition, also of stone, was built on the front of the building in 1907. Two teachers were employed for many years and enrollment reached as high as 70 pupils in the eight grades of District 18. Teachers included Mr. Neidham, Frank Stayton, Mr. Osbourne, Nellie Underwood, Maude Bailey, Miss Emile, Miss Huber (who suddenly quit one Christmas because the boys were too "ornery"), Mr. Cochran (who instilled law and order), Miss Reedle, Miss Sandusky (a tiny woman, who by virtue of her charm and wit, was able to throw away the willow switches), Miss Hessler, Albert Gardner, Olive Brown, June Brown, Vera Foster, Mary Luellan and Mr. Poplin.

The Battlement Mesa School served as the center of all community life. Water meetings and farmers union meetings were held; many church services, funerals and weddings provided ceremony. Community dances, Christmas programs and potlucks brightened the nights. Ball games were played on the front lawn.

School District 18 divided during the 1920s when a school was built at Wallace Creek, a few miles to the west. Battlement bacame District 45.

On June 10, 1948, the school board (Clyde E. Smith, Mrs. Albert (Mona) Gardner and H.F. Marrow) voted to consolidate with District 16 in Grand Valley (now Parachute). One June 17th, the Battlement Community Trust was established to maintain the old schoolhouse for community gatherings and events.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Erlene Durrant Murray. Lest We Forget. Grand Junction, Co: Quahada Corporation, 1973 .

Andrew Gulliford. "Country School Legacy" (National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, 1981) film  
Continuation Sheet 2

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 4 acres

Quadrangle name Grand Valley, Colo.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 2 | 7       | 5 | 5 | 7 | 8        | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 2 | 7       | 5 | 5 | 7 | 8        | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

C 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 2 | 7       | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7        | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

D 

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 2 | 7       | 5 | 5 | 7 | 7        | 0 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Zone |   | Easting |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

E 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

F 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

G 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|--|---------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Zone |  | Easting |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries at the Battlement Mesa School property are shown as a red line on the attached map. (See Map 2)

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

| state | n/a | code | county | code |
|-------|-----|------|--------|------|
|       |     |      |        |      |

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roger Ludwig, Human Services Planner

organization Garfield County date 10/28/82

street & number 201 - 8th Street telephone (303) 945-9158

city or town Glenwood Springs state Colorado 81601

## 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 Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer (Acting) date March 16, 1983

### For NPS use only

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

Entered in the  
National Register

date 4/21/83

John Nelson Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet 2

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During the following ten years the school and its "one piano, two stoves, tables and chairs" continued to serve as a central place for the community. Oil companies, however, with interest in the oil shale deposits across the river began buying all available farms and ranches. By 1960 there were few residents in the area and most of the land lay vacant.

The building fell into disuse and rapidly became the prey of vandals. The chairs, piano and stoves were stolen, the school bell removed, wainscoting was stripped and burned, the doors taken and the windows destroyed.

Exxon Company U.S.A. with the Tosco Corporation founded the Colony Project, intending to deliver 90,000 barrels per day of shale oil. To house the thousands of workers necessary, they formed Battlement Mesa, Inc. with the order to create a new town - expected to reach 25,000 people by 1985 - on land adjacent to the old school. Once filed and approved, it became the largest planned unit development in Colorado.

Before the Colony shutdown on May 2, 1982, new schools, roads, trailer parks, apartments, shopping areas and single family homes were constructed. Battlement Mesa continues to provide residence for over 2,000 people and is likely to boom again as Mobil, Union and Chevron pursue their plans for oil shale.

Above it all stands the silent Battlement Mesa School.

9. (Continued)

\_\_\_\_\_, Colorado Heritage News (April, 1981).