

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION, GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

REGION: Rocky Mountain      PARK/AREA NAME: Glacier National Park      PARK NUMBER: 1430

STRUCTURE NAME: St. Mary Ranger Station      STRUCTURE NUMBER: 150

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: East end of Upper St. Mary Lake      QUADRANGLE NAME: St. Mary, MT  
 Zone Easting Northing      QUADRANGLE SCALE: 7.5-minute  
 UTM A: 12 321500 5400920

CLASSIFICATION:		NUMBER OF RESOURCES:	
OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:	CATEGORY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local	<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Objects
<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/private & public	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> TOTAL

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

The Old St. Mary Ranger Station is located on a level spot on a wooded hillside facing northeast over the east end of Upper St. Mary Lake. It measures roughly 27x27', is two-story (about 25' high), and is of log-on-log construction. The logs are split so that the inside faces roughly line up with each other. Corners are double saddle notched. Chinking is cement and oakum, although exclusively oakum in the early days. The roof is log and pole. The cabin roof is a regular gable of pole construction and is sharply inclined. Shingles are cedar. A brick stove chimney runs up through the center of the building. The windows are one-over-one double-hung, and there are front and rear doors. The interior partitions and walls are covered with unpainted beaded lumber. There is a large living room across the front, and a bedroom and kitchen across the rear. An enclosed, narrow stairwell leads to the second floor, which contains no partitions and was left rough except for a floor added over the subfloor. A full, shed-roofed front porch with pole supports and framing is a recent modification to the structure, but is compatible with its historic character. The 1½-story, full log wall design is unusual for a building of this modest scale in Glacier and unique among ranger station residences. Two 1½-story, log residences still exist on the west slope of the park (the Schoenberger and Doody homesteads) but this is the only known example on the east side. The construction is excellent, with well-matched and tightly fitted wall logs. The building is significant in the architectural history of Glacier National Park.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1913

The St. Mary ranger station residence, constructed by the first St. Mary District Ranger, served as both private residence and operational headquarters for the district. Meager fiscal budgets demanded that rangers use their own skills and ingenuity in constructing residence/stations. Until the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, the Department of the Interior administered Glacier. Only after that date was approval of park building design a mandate.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The St. Mary ranger station residence has both architectural and historic significance. Architecturally, it displays a unique design and excellent log craftsmanship, both of which were executed by local residents. The building typifies what National Park Service architects deliberately sought to achieve in Park Service rustic architecture in later years. Historically, the St. Mary ranger station is significant as one of the oldest administrative sites within the Park. The building is significant, both historically and architecturally, and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria a and c.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE:

List of Classified Structures (Oliveri and Williams, 1975), National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, CO.

FORM PREPARED BY:

DATE: June 1984

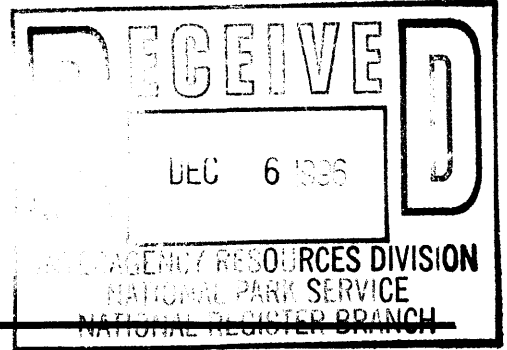
NAME/TITLE:

ORGANIZATION: Historical Research Associates, P.O. Box 7086, Missoula, MT 59807-7086

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

St. Mary Ranger Station (addendum), Glacier County, MT.



#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

*[Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

12.5.95  
Date

National Park Service  
State or Federal agency or bureau

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

*[Signature]*  
Signature of commenting or other official

SEP 29 1995  
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
___ entered in the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
___ determined eligible for the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
___ removed from the National Register ___ see continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (explain) <u>additional documentation</u>	<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>1/19/96</u>

Additional Documentation Accepted

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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MT.

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The following building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Additional documentation is provided below for the purpose of describing and evaluating the building interior for integrity and significance.

### 7. Narrative Description

#### St. Mary Ranger Station (#150), 1913

Constructed prior to the initiation of the NPS Landscape Division and prior to the introduction of standard plans, the St. Mary Ranger Station is of a unique exterior design and interior floorplan. Following the building's listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986, the interior of the ranger station was refinished (on the basis of former resident Eva Beebe's descriptions) to match the original historic appearance. The building now is used as an interpretive center, representative of the park's earliest ranger stations.

As described in the original nomination, a large living room (historically a joint office/sitting room) runs across the front of the building and a bedroom and kitchen run across the back half. An enclosed, narrow stairwell leads to the attic space, which contains no partitions and is unfinished except for the flooring. Pervasive interior finishes include varnished oak and fir flooring, and the narrow tongue-and-groove varnished beadboard used on all interior walls and cupboard units. In contrast to other buildings within the park, painted surfaces are conspicuously absent. (A 1954 maintenance report identifies all interior wall surfaces (wallboard and beadboard) and the drop ceiling as painted and kitchen floors as covered with linoleum. According to park officials, however, Beebe reported that the painted finishes and linoleum were post-construction alterations.)

Two-inch oak flooring, stained dark with a dull matte finish, covers the floor of the front room. Vertical 1" beadboard, varnished, covers all interior walls. Door surrounds, window surrounds, and floorboards are constructed of 4" knotty pine, finished with a crude butt joint. A brick stove chimney runs along the wall between the living room and kitchen and is used to vent a small antique wood-burning stove that rests on a modern "sand-box" heat-proof hearth. As throughout the ground level, stained 6" fir boards, secured above exposed log purlins, form a drop ceiling.

A five-panel varnished door leads from the living room to the kitchen. Four-inch fir flooring, stained, covers the floors and beadboard covers the interior walls (laid horizontally rather than vertically on the west wall). A large Monarch woodburning cook stove, vented through the central brick chimney, dominates the space. Built-in cupboards, also constructed of beadboard, and a wood countertop line the north half of the east wall and feature decorative exposed hinges and simple latch units similar to those found on historic buildings throughout the park. A trap door to the cellar, with what appears to be original hardware, is offset in the kitchen floor.

A five-panel door leads from the kitchen to the small bedroom, finished as per the kitchen with the exception of the east wall, where the beadboard siding is laid horizontally.

A door, constructed of 3" vertical tongue-and-groove secured with horizontal braces, leads from the living room to the open attic space. Stairwell walls are finished with beadboard. The attic space remains unfinished, with exposed log walls and an open ceiling that reveals the recently rebuilt roof. Six-inch

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floorboards, although conforming to 1954 specifications, also appear to be part of the restoration. The central brick chimney bifurcates the space.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

This building is one of the first constructed in the park, prior to initiation of the standard plans and large material orders that resulting in construction of markedly similar buildings at opposite corners of the park. It is thus difficult to gauge the degree to which the restored interior represents a restoration "in kind." However, the current finishes conform in general to the "v-groove vertical siding," "two-inch oak flooring," and "four-inch fir [bedroom] flooring" specified in 1954 maintenance documents. The painted wallboard, kitchen linoleum, and paint on ceiling boards and interior siding described in these same 1954 documents are presumed to be post-construction alterations. There is no record of original molding or of original cupboard units.

Despite gaps in our understanding of historic finishes, the current interior conforms generally to historic specifications and is appropriate to the period of construction and to the building's architectural style. The interior contributes to the building's significance.

### Photographs

- 1) Photographer: Nancy Niedernhofer
- 2) Date of Photographs: June 1993
- 3) Location of Negatives: National Park Service, RMR-RC, Denver, CO.

PHOTO NUMBER	STRUCTURE NAME AND NUMBER	LOCATION/DIRECTION OF VIEW
1	Ranger Station (#150)	Front room - stove
2	Ranger Station (#150)	Bedroom
3	Ranger Station (#150)	Kitchen - stove
4	Ranger Station (#150)	Kitchen - cupboard detail

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