

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED DEC 28 1979

DATE ENTERED FEB 8 1980

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Capilla de San Juan Bautista

AND/OR COMMON

La Iglesia de La Garita

2 LOCATION

NW of La Garita

STREET & NUMBER

At the mouth of Carnero Canyon 8 miles west of US 285

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

La Garita *me*

VICINITY OF

3

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Colorado

08

Saguache

109

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: none

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Diocese of Pueblo (Charles A. Buswell, Bishop)

STREET & NUMBER

1426 Grand Avenue

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Pueblo

VICINITY OF

Colorado 81003

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Saguache County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Saguache

Colorado 81149

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites (55/07/0006)

DATE

Ongoing

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society, 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Denver

Colorado 80203

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the mouth of Carnero Canyon, about eight miles west of US 285, the Capilla de San Juan Bautista is a single detached structure one and one-half stories in height and designed in the shape of a "T". The primary building material is adobe which forms a wall twenty inches thick at the base and which is covered with white stucco. The main or south facade has three bays, the east and west facades five bays, and the rear facade four bays. A two-story bell tower topped by a cross rises from the center of the main facade. The roof is gabled and covered with reddish brown shingles.

The secondary features are very simple. The most notable are the red-brick lancet windows which give the church a Gothic appearance. This fenestration is reflected in the four openings in the slate-blue belfry. Entry occurs through a covered set of double doors located in the bell tower. Above the entrance is a round window surrounded by red brick. The interior has a high, stamped-metal ceiling, hard wood floors, and stucco walls.

Near the church lie two other items of note. One is the ruin of an adobe nunnery. The other is a cemetery with hand-carved grave markers identifying the dead, all or nearly all of Hispanic origin.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1873--present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Capilla de San Juan Bautista is significant for its role in the community of La Garita and for its architectural features. The church is also a prominent landmark that looms above the town.

The history of the Capilla de San Juan Bautista begins in the 1850s when Hispanic settlement of the San Luis Valley pushed northward into what is now Saguache County. In 1858 the need for supplies and protection prompted the settlement of La Garita (the Guard House), but a decade later, the concentration of population shifted westward from the mouth of La Garita Canyon to the mouth of Carnero Canyon. The reason: the discovery of gold in the hills nearby. In 1873 the settlers used logs and adobe to build a church and a nunnery; they named the structure the Capilla de San Juan Bautista (the Church of St. John the Baptist), who was the patron saint of La Garita. As in most Spanish communities, the church became the center of both social and religious activities; it also served as the center of Catholic activity in the western San Luis Valley until 1888 when the parish headquarters were moved to Del Norte. The original church continued to serve La Garita until it burned in 1912. Construction of the present building began the same year, but the work required a decade of effort, and it was not until 1923 that the structure was completed. This new church continued to serve the same functions as the old structure until 1957 when it was abandoned. Since then, the church has fallen into disrepair and sustained some damage from vandals. The nunnery has fallen into ruins though some of the walls are standing. Many of the old, hand-carved headstones still remain in the cemetery.

There are many adobe churches still standing in the San Luis Valley, but the Capilla de San Juan Bautista is one of the finest and most elaborate. The lancet windows give the structure a certain Gothic feeling, but the building is not in the style of a Gothic Revival. Near the church lies the cemetery which contains some of the best examples of Hispanic stonework available. Though the original church was destroyed, the ruins of the nunnery still remain, reflecting the type, period, and method of construction of such small adobe buildings of the 1870s.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

White, Frank A., La Garita (Cooper Printing Company, 1975)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 10

QUADRANGLE NAME Twin Mountains SE, Colorado

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	3	3	8	9	0	3	5	4	1	8	9	8	2	0
ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

B

1	3	3	8	9	0	3	5	4	1	8	9	6	7	0
ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

C

1	3	3	8	8	7	5	0	4	1	8	9	6	7	0
ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

D

1	3	3	8	8	7	5	0	4	1	8	9	8	2	0
ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

E

ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

F

ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

G

ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

H

ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning 100 yards east of the northwest corner of the northeast quarter section thirty-six (36) Town and Range aforesaid running thence south 155 yards, thence east 312 8/31 yards. Thence north 155 yards; thence west 312 8/31 yards to the place of beginning, containing ten (10) acres of land

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Beatrice Baca (with assistance from Frank White and Bob Buchanan, San Luis Valley Historic Society)

ORGANIZATION Artes del Valle Craft Co-operative DATE May 1, 1979

STREET & NUMBER 301 East Third Street TELEPHONE (303) 754-3191

CITY OR TOWN Center STATE Colorado

81125

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 Arthur C. Johnson Dec. 10, 1979

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol O'Shea DATE 2-8-80
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: William H. Abraham DATE 2.5.80
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION