

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**  
RECEIVED MAY 25  
DATE ENTERED SEP 17 1979

**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

St. Elmo, Colorado *St. Elmo District*

AND/OR COMMON

St. Elmo, Colorado

**2 LOCATION**

*Patton, Gunnison, 1st, Main and Kepler St.*

STREET & NUMBER

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Elmo

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3

STATE

Colorado

CODE

08

COUNTY

Chaffee

CODE

015

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

*See Continuation Sheet*

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

*Chaffee Title-Abstract Company*

STREET & NUMBER

*305 G. Street*

CITY, TOWN

*Salida*

STATE

*Colorado*

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

*Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites (08/03/0007/03)*

DATE

*Ongoing*

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

*Colorado Historical Society; 1300 Broadway*

CITY, TOWN

*Denver*

STATE  
*Colorado*

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input 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		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The town of St. Elmo nestles 1000 feet below timberline in a basin at the end of a mountain ravine through which flows Chalk Creek. Once a virgin forest, the basin floor is now spotted with grasses, scrub brush, and pines as the area slowly recovers from the ravages of the mining boom which began a century ago. The townsite is flanked by groves of pine and aspen on the slopes of the mountains that rise abruptly above the town and create a spectacular visual setting.

St. Elmo itself consists of a group of commercial buildings and several clusters of homes. Forty-three structures dating from the 1880s and 1890s contribute to the historic integrity of the town while two recent intrusions detract from but do not compromise the integrity to any meaningful degree. All buildings are located along or near unpaved streets some of which have wooden sidewalks. The architecture is entirely vernacular and reflects the haste of construction, the cost and availability of building materials, and the desire to project a more prosperous, permanent appearance than was actually the case. This was characteristic of mining camps of that era. St. Elmo remains in this condition because it never grew into an important center of mineral production.

The buildings in St. Elmo are small and compact. For the most part the houses are tiny, rectangular structures made of wood; they have one to three bays in each facade, gabled roofs, and few decorative elements. Similarly, the commercial structures are small, one and two-story rectangular structures made of wood; they have from zero to three and occasionally more bays in each facade, gabled roofs, and few decorative elements except for false fronts on the main facade. These facades extend to the tip of the gable and were designed to offer an image of greater size, prosperity, and permanence, and to imitate commercial architecture of larger, more settled communities.

The exteriors of the structures are either log, rough-hewn boards, clapboards, newly-added metal, or a combination. What little masonry exists is of more recent origin and was added as a fire barrier; the structures originally had none owing to prohibitive costs. Most windows are single-sashed and double hung; a few are double sashed. The windows and doors have wood surrounds. The roofs are asphalt or metal, much of the latter having been added in recent times. The false fronts have a plain cornice. Most structures have chimneys. What little decoration exists on the buildings is of wood designed to imitate metal, brick, or stone decoration found on more elaborate structures situated in more developed, permanent urban areas.

# 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1380- present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Elmo is significant for its association with the mining industry which played so large a role in Colorado's development during the late nineteenth century; for its architecture, an exceptionally well-preserved example of the type, period, and method of construction that characterized the early stages of development in mining communities; and for the information the town has revealed and may reveal about the hurried evolution of mining in that isolated locale.

St. Elmo owed its existence to the emergence of the minerals industry in a mountainous area of Chaffee County. Exploration and development began in the vicinity of Chalk Creek in the early 1870s, if not earlier, notably with the opening of the Mary Murphy Mine, the region's most important and long-lived producer. Settlement grew primarily along Chalk Creek, which drew its name from the nearby cliffs. In October 1880 the inhabitants of the area, about 400 in number, obtained a plat for a town to be known as Forest City on account of the thick cover of evergreens, but the U.S. Postal Service objected to the name on the grounds the community might be confused with Forest City, California. The town then changed its name to St. Elmo.

St. Elmo's greatest era of prosperity came in the 1880s. Both the Denver South Park & Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande railroads ran lines into town, while stagecoach firms set up offices to use the community as the point of origin for routes that ran over Tin Cup Pass to Aspen, Gunnison, and Tin Cup. For a time St. Elmo also served as the staging point for construction of the Alpine Tunnel, built under the continental divide 12,000 feet above sea level. But St. Elmo never became a great mining center. Except in the Mary Murphy Mine, the silver-lead ores never proved exceptionally rich or extensive. Population peaked out at around 1800 people in the mid-1880s. Then the decline began. The mines petered out, the railroads tore up track, and the populace drifted away. St. Elmo remained "frozen" as a mining town that never attained the eminence of Central City, Leadville, or Cripple Creek.

Unlike most mining communities St. Elmo never sustained a cataclysmic fire that destroyed entire towns and lead to rebuilding in masonry. Thus a substantial amount of the early, vernacular wooden architecture remains today much as it was in the late nineteenth century, a reminder of the early days in the evolution of most mining communities.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hunbeutel, Lacy, Nuggets from Chalk Creek. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Century One Press, 1975.

Smith, Don, Chalk Creek to the Past. Denver, Colorado: Western News, 1965.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 70 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Garfield, Colorado

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:62500

UTM REFERENCES

A 

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

B 

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

C 

1	3	3	8	2	6	5	0	4	2	8	4	5	0	0
ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING										

D 

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

E 

ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING										

F 

ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING										

G 

ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING										

H 

ZONE	EASTING			NORTHING										

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundaries include that part of St. Elmo which was settled; this is the northern section of the "dogleg" that comprised the historic boundaries of the town. These boundaries may be seen on the sketch and the U.S.G.S. Quadrangle maps that accompany the nomination. 4 UTM points define the nominated area.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY

STATE	CODE	COUNTY

(WHB 9.13.79)  
CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Doug Hagen

ORGANIZATION

DATE

February 20, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1701 Welch Street #8

(303) 482-4217

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Fort Collins

Colorado

# 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

*William C. Johnson*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE May 16, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 7-17-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*William H. Johnson*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 9-14-79

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CONTINUATION SHEET St. Elmo, Colorado ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE 1

Note: It is the understanding of the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office that Marie R. Skogsberg, owner of many properties listed below, is now deceased; owner notification should probably be addressed to:

Ray Kolker  
Vice President and Trust Officer,  
and  
Virginia Mae Milam  
Co-executor of the Estate of Marie R. Skogsberg  
The First National Bank and Trust Company of Oklahoma City  
120 North Robinson  
Post Office Box 25189  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Marie R. Skogsberg<br>821 N.E. 39th Street<br>Oklahoma City, Oklahoma | 11. Same as #1  |
| 2. Same as #1  | 12. Same as #1  |
| 3. Catherine Lamb<br>1565 North Athenian<br>Wichita, Kansas              | 13. Same as #1  |
| 4. Same as #3  | 14. Same as #1  |
| 5. Same as #1  | 15. Midway Business Center "B" Corp.<br>3993 Mountain Avenue<br>San Bernadino, California |
| 6. Marvin Ross Greiner<br>1652 South Emerson Street<br>Denver, Colorado  | 16. St. Elmo Fire & Protective Assoc.<br>St. Elmo, Colorado                               |
| 7. Ellen Sante<br>1062 Pearl Street<br>Denver, Colorado                  | 17. Same as #1  |
| 8. Priscilla R. Hartmann<br>Box 27<br>Nathrop, Colorado                  | 18. Same as #1  |
| 9. Same as #1  | 19. Same as #1  |
| 10. Same as #1   | 20. Flora V. Harrison<br>115 West 10th, #4<br>Seaside, Oregon                             |
|  | 21. Same as #1  |
|  | 22. Dean F. & Mildred Hardgrove<br>415 North Cooper<br>Colorado Springs, Colorado         |

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 23. Same as #1   | 40. Same as #8  |
| 24. Dwight D. & Mary H. Wilkinson<br>2826 Cheyenne<br>Pueblo, Colorado       | 41. No longer existent, see below   |
| 25. Same as #1   | 42. Same as #1  |
| 26. Same as #1   | 43. Same as #1  |
| 27. Same as #1   | 44. Same as #8  |
| 28. Same as #1   | 45. Same as #8 (labeled #0 on map)  |
| 29. Same as #1   | 46. Same as #1 (labeled #00 on map)   |
| 30. John L. & Louise A. Hundley<br>813 West 6th<br>Concordia, Kansas         | Ruins, Land, or other Property within the<br>District:<br>R. J. and May J. Fishel<br>1150 South Fenton Street<br>Lakewood, Colorado |
| 31. Same as #30  | Marie E. Loshbaugh<br>305 Thirteenth Street<br>Salida, Colorado   |
| 32. Same as #1   | A. C. and Hattie Merrill<br>c/o Margaret Merrill<br>Wesley Manor #1-15<br>Jacksonville, Florida                                     |
| 33. Same as #1   | Lucy Miller<br>Box 294<br>Salida, Colorado  |
| 34. Carlisle Cravens<br>James Fielder<br>1504 West Abram<br>Arlington, Texas | L. C. Moore<br>Iroma E. Moore<br>c/o Irma Demshki<br>2020 Jerry Murphy Road, #312A<br>Pueblo, Colorado                              |
| 35. Tom Cravens<br>Box 310<br>Arlington, Texas                               | Fred F. and Gladys Lucille Parke<br>3993 Mountain Avenue<br>San Bernadino, California   |
| 36. Same as #35  |   |
| 37. Same as #1   |   |
| 38. Same as #1   |   |
| 39. Same as #8   |   |

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Tom Patterson  
384 Hollyberry Lane  
Boulder, Colorado

Edith Sheppard  
c/o Marie Miller  
2020 South Stuart Street  
Denver, Colorado

Bill and Priscilla Smalley  
c/o Priscilla Hartmann  
Box 27  
Nathrop, Colorado

James Treat  
Michael Henderson  
4100 Highway 50  
Salida, Colorado

The Harvest Corporation  
3993 Mountain Avenue  
San Bernadino, California

Estate of Sidney Riebschied and Rachel Dryer  
c/o Francis Riebschied, Attorney  
1224 Bannock Street  
Denver, Colorado

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Complete Inventory of Buildings Contributing to the Integrity of the District:

1. Barn and Livery Stable (East Poplar): 1880, vertical plank construction; simple wall cutouts for windows, some with original flaps; gable roof.
2. Log Cabin (East Poplar): Pre-1900, two stories, square, vertical board and batten on upper story, gabled tin roof with chimney.
3. Log Cabin (Main St.): 1880s, one-story, rectangular, verandah across front, tin roof.
4. Log Cabin (Main St.): 1880s, similar to #3.
5. Alexander Cabin (south of Main St.): 1880s, one-story, rectangular log cabin, verandah, medium gable roof.
6. Miners Exchange Building (Main St.): 1880, one-story rectangular, log and clapboard construction, false front, gabled tin roof.
7. Commercial Structure (Main St.): ca. 1885, one-story rectangular clapboard siding, false front, gabled tin roof with chimney.
8. Office Building (Main St.): 1880s, two-story rectangular, vertical shaped timber and clapboard, false front, tin roof.
9. Storage Shed (Main St.): ca. 1890, one-story rectangular building of rubble and horizontal log construction, rough hewn log roof; west wall was original firewall of the town.
10. Cabin (South of Main St.): 1880s, two-story rectangular log structure, medium gabled tin roof, single chimney.
11. Commercial Structure (Corner of Main and 1st Streets): 1920s, one-story rectangular, vertical plank and clapboard facing construction, gabled tin roof.
12. Commercial Structure (Main St.): 1880, two semi-detached buildings rectangular in plan, clapboard construction, false front, tin roof, originally a funeral parlor.
13. Stark Hotel (Main St.): 1880s, two-story rectangular, clapboard construction, false front, gabled tin roof with chimney.
14. Canteen (Main St.): 1880, single-story rectangular building of clapboard construction, low gabled tin roof, stovepipe straddling center ridge.



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15. Commercial Complex (Main St.): 1880s, a complex of smaller buildings joined in a random plan, vertical plank and vertical log construction, false fronts, medium gable and single pitch roofs covered with tin.
16. Town Hall (Main St.): 1880s, one-story rectangular, clapboard and vertical plank siding, gabled tin roof with belfry on apex; related circular or polygonal structure near northeast corner.
17. Log Cabin Duplex (Main St.): 1890s, one-story rectangular, horizontal and vertical log construction, medium gabled tin roof.
18. Annabelle Stark Ward Cabin (Main St.): 1880s, one and one-half story rectangular, clapboard siding, medium gabled tin roof.
19. Pink Cabin (Main St.): 1880s, one-story rectangular, clapboard siding, wing, period wallpaper.
20. Harrison Cabin (Main St.): 1880s, one-story rectangular, horizontal rough-hewn log and clapboard construction, false front, gabled tin roof.
21. Grey Cabin (Main St.): 1880s, one-story rectangular, clapboard siding, false front, gabled tin roof.
22. Hardgrove Cabin (Main St.): 1889, one-story rectangular many additions over time, medium gable roof, fieldstone chimney.
23. Marie's Cabin (Main St.): ca. 1885, two-story rectangular, horizontal log construction, tin roof.
24. Wilkinson Cabin (1st St.): 1906, one-story rectangular, horizontal plank construction, rear wing, medium gable roof.
25. Log Cabin (1st St.): 1880s, one and one-half stories, horizontal log and vertical board and batten construction, medium gable roof, rear chimney.
26. Commercial Structure (Gunnison St.): ca. 1890, rectangular, split level with deck.
27. Commercial Structure (Gunnison St.): ca. 1890, rectangular split level with deck and false front.
28. Wilks Cabin (Gunnison St.): 1906, one-story rectangular, horizontal plank construction, low gabled roof, central chimney.

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29. Log Cabin (Gunnison St.): 1880s, one-story square, horizontal log construction, low gabled tin roof.
30. Hundley Cabin (Pitkin St.): 1889, one-story square, horizontal log and plank construction, low gabled roof straddled by chimney.
31. Hundley Barn (Pitkin St.): 1889, rectangular, vertical plank construction.
32. Log Duplex (Gunnison St.): 1880s, one-story rectangular, horizontal log and vertical plank construction, hip roof covered with tin.
33. Cabin (Gunnison St.): 1880s, one-story rectangular, clapboard facing, altered wing, medium gable roof.
34. Craven Cabin I (Gunnison St.): 1889, one-story rectangular, vertical plank and horizontal log construction, altered rear wing, medium gable roof.
35. Craven Cabin II (Gunnison St.): 1889, one-story rectangular, clapboard facing construction, low gable roof, two chimneys.
36. Barn (Gunnison St.): ca. 1890, vertical plank construction.
37. Log Cabin (Gunnison St.): 1889, one-story log cabin, square, low gabled tin roof with chimney.
38. School (Poplar Gulch): 1882, one-story rectangular, horizontal plank construction, high gabled roof.
39. Cabin (1st St.): Pre-1900, one-story square vertical log construction, low gabled tin roof.
40. Cabin: pre-1900, square, shingle and metal sheeting, low gable roof.
- (41. Cabin: recently razed.)
42. Cabin--House of Lancaster (Pitkin St.): ca. 1900, one-story rectangular, gabled tin roof.
43. Cabin (Pitkin St.): Pre-1900, one-story rectangular, horizontal log and vertical plank construction, gabled tin roof.
44. Log Cabin (Pitkin St.): ca. 1900, one-story, rectangular, horizontal log and vertical plank construction, gabled tin roof.

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Complete Inventory of Modern Buildings Compatible with the Character of the District:

- Store: with porch
45. (Labeled #0 on map) House (Main St.): 1950s, one-story L-shaped, frame construction.
  46. (labeled #00 on map) Trading Post (Main St.): 1950s, one-story, irregular shape owing to additions, frame construction.

printed on acid-free paper

NORTH

50 100 200ft

Townsite of ST. ELMO/COLORADO locator & survey reference

