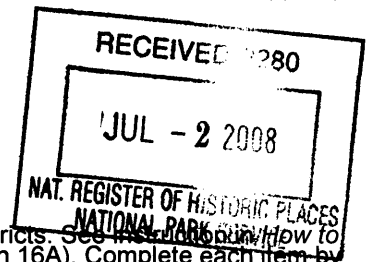


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

764



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pleasant Valley School

other names/site number 5LA.11144

2. Location

street & number County Road 143 just south of US Highway 160 [N/A] not for publication

city or town Branson [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Las Animas code 071 zip code 81027

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title: Mark Wolfe, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer; Date: 6/17/08

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- Entered in the National Register [] See continuation sheet.
[] determined eligible for the National Register [] See continuation sheet.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register
[] other, explain [] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper: [Signature] Date of Action: 8.13.08

Pleasant Valley School
Name of Property

Las Animas County/ Colorado
County/State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains
Rural School Buildings in Colorado

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURAL: Storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements
Other: WPA Rustic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone
walls Sandstone

roof Metal
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Pleasant Valley School
Name of Property

Las Animas County/ Colorado
County/State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Periods of Significance

1938

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Works Progress Administration

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Pleasant Valley School
Name of Property

Las Animas County/ Colorado
County/State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 602088 4113201 (NAD27)
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

The UTM point was derived by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation from heads-up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHF by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Abbey Christman, Survey Coordinator (prepared for the property owner)

organization Colorado Preservation, Inc. date 12/7/2007

street & number 333 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 300 telephone 303-893-4260

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80218

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Waldroup Ranch Inc. (Contact: Jerry Winford)

street & number 9002 CR 143 telephone _____

city or town Branson state CO zip code 81027

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

Pleasant Valley School
Las Animas County, Colorado
New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS
Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPS

Section number 7 Page 1

DESCRIPTION

The Pleasant Valley School stands on ranch land northeast of Branson. The isolated setting includes no other structures visible from the school. U.S. Highway 160 runs about half a mile to the north. The school lies on the west side of County Route 143, a dirt road. Two piles of rubble lie north of the school. The closer pile consists of the remains of the stone and concrete stairs which were once located at the front of the school. The further wood pile contains the remains from the small teacherage that once stood adjacent to the school.

The Pleasant Valley School is rectangular in plan, measuring 27' x 49', with walls and foundation constructed of sandstone. Sheets of corrugated metal cover the hipped roof with its exposed rafter tails.

The locally quarried stone is cut into quarry-faced ashlar blocks of uniform height, but varying length. The sandstone is gray in color and laid in regular courses. The mortar was applied somewhat sloppily, but workers incised regular, wide concave mortar joints giving it a much neater appearance overall. This is a technique commonly used on Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects in Las Animas County. The foundation is 3' thick and extends to about 8" above grade. The first 4' of the wall above the foundation is 2' thick; above that the wall is 18" thick. The setback created by the different wall thicknesses is unusual and gives the building a distinctive appearance. A tall red brick interior chimney is centered on the north side.

The entrance is centered on the east side of the school. The wide doorway has a heavy concrete surround; the door sill rests on top of the exposed foundation. Wide stone and concrete steps originally led up to the door; the steps have been removed but their outline remains clear. Above the doorway, "WPA 1938" has been roughly scratched into the stone. Window openings are located on either side of the door. The windows have concrete surrounds; the deep sills rest on top of the wider bottom portion of the wall and project beyond the wall.

On the south, a band of windows with a continuous concrete sill and lintel extends across the wall. As on the facade, the deep sill rests on the wider bottom portion of the wall and projects beyond the wall. Three wide, concrete posts divide the eight window openings into pairs. A second door is located on the west side of the school, near the south wall. The single-width door opening has a heavy concrete surround like the front entrance, and the sill rests on the raised foundation. Stone and concrete stairs lead up to the door; the top stair is missing. There are no openings on the north side.

All of the door and window openings have been covered with sheets of corrugated metal attached to wood frames. Six-over-six, wood framed sash originally filled the window openings. These were removed when the metal covering was installed and are stored in the interior of the school. The original design of the doors is not known. The existing metal roof was installed circa 1990. The window openings were covered circa 2000.

The interior is a single room with no partitions. The original wood floor and ceiling are intact. Plaster covers the walls.

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Integrity

The school is in very good condition and relatively unchanged. The original doors and windows are gone and the openings have been covered with metal. The original roofing appears to have been replaced, but the original roof could have been metal as this was a roofing material used by the WPA in this area. The original roof framing is intact. The front stairs have been removed. On the interior, the original floor, ceiling, and plaster are intact.

The school retains a very high degree of integrity of location, workmanship, feeling, and setting. The stonework exhibits the handcraftsmanship associated with the WPA and the rural setting is the same as when the school was constructed. The integrity of materials is impacted by the lack of original doors, windows, and roofing. However, these were not major design elements of WPA buildings; these elements were typically inexpensive, pre-fabricated elements, often recycled from older buildings. Since the WPA project included demolishing an old frame school building on the site, some of these elements may have come from the demolished building. It is the stonework that is the character-defining feature of the building. The removal of the stairs impacts the design of the building, but since this is the only significant element of the original design that has been altered, it has a limited impact on the overall integrity of the school.

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Pleasant Valley School
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New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS
Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPS

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Pleasant Valley School, constructed in 1938 under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), is eligible for the National Register under the *New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF)*. The Pleasant Valley School meets the registration requirements of one of the property types delineated in the MPDF: *Educational Buildings (subtype: Primary and Secondary School Facilities)*.

The Pleasant Valley School meets Criterion A in the area of *Social History* for its association with President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal legislative agenda to rescue the United States from the Great Depression. This agenda included the creation of an unprecedented number of policies, programs, and agencies to provide relief, employment, conserve natural resources, and assist in construction of public works—all with the greater goal of stimulating the devastated economy. Constructed by the WPA, the Pleasant Valley School presents an important record of the federal relief programs administered in Colorado's eastern plains during the Great Depression. Though the dire economic conditions of the Depression affected all of Colorado, drought and dust storms hit the agricultural-based economy of the Eastern Plains especially hard. The construction of the school provided much-needed employment in an isolated, rural area of Las Animas County where little other work was available.

Additionally, the Pleasant Valley School meets Criterion A for its significance in the area of *Education*. Educational facilities were a major focus of New Deal construction. The school is an excellent example of WPA efforts to improve rural education facilities in eastern Las Animas County. The WPA constructed new schools and barns for several rural school districts and repaired the facilities of many others. This building, constructed for a small school district with minimal matching funds, reflects WPA efforts to improve education and to help small communities with limited resources.

The Pleasant Valley School meets Criterion C in the area of *Architecture*. It is a good example of WPA Rustic architecture as applied to a simple, one-room school building. The stonework displays the labor-intensive, hand-craftsmanship associated with the WPA. This craftsmanship particularly characterized projects in rural Las Animas County with its limited access to construction machinery or pre-fabricated materials. The WPA work crew quarried and finished all the stone used in the building. Most of the WPA crew would have been farmers or ranchers with little previous construction experience who learned the necessary masonry skills on the job.

The Pleasant Valley School also meets the registration requirements of the schoolhouse property type as delineated in the Multiple Property Documentation Form *Rural School Buildings in Colorado*. The building is eligible to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of *Architecture* as an excellent local example of the early twentieth century rural schoolhouse type built in stone.

The period of significance for all the above criteria is 1938, the time in which the WPA was involved in the construction of the school.

Historical Background

The population of eastern Las Animas County grew rapidly in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Land was available through various Homestead Acts including 1916 legislation that opened up land for ranching. In 1900, Las Animas County had a population of 21,842. By 1910, the population

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Pleasant Valley School
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Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPS

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had grown to 33,643 and in 1920 was 38,975. Proponents of dryland farming urged homesteaders into areas previously believed unsuitable for agriculture. Initially the homesteaders succeeded with the aid of higher than average rainfall in the 1920s.

As the homesteaders arrived in the county, they established many new school districts. Fifteen districts were established from 1900 to 1909, thirty-six from 1910 to 1919, and fifteen from 1920 to 1929. Residents established the Pleasant Valley School District in 1916. These districts provided education for children living on isolated farms and ranches. The high number of districts represents the fact that children could not reasonably travel more than five miles to school. Thus many small districts were scattered across eastern Las Animas County. Children attended first through eighth grades in these one-room schools that typically had just ten to fifteen students.

In the 1930s, these small school districts suffered. Already limited in resources due to their small size, the drought, dust storms, and Depression hit the districts hard. Many homesteaders defaulted on loans and could not pay school taxes. The harsh conditions of the 1930s drove other homesteaders out, reducing the number of residents supporting the schools. By 1940, the population of Las Animas County declined to 32,369. By 1950, it shrank to just 25,902.

New Deal programs first assisted these rural school districts under the Civil Works Administration (CWA). Organized in late 1933 and designed to be a public works program that could put people to work quickly, the CWA provided immediate relief to help people through the winter of President Roosevelt's first year in office. Jobs were typically small, since the projects were intended to last only 90 days. In eastern Las Animas County many projects improved roads and rural schools. School projects included repairing existing school facilities, constructing gymnasiums at Branson and Kim, and building a barn for the Prairie Star School.

The Works Progress Administration, established in May 1935, continued efforts to both improve schools and provide jobs in rural Las Animas County. The WPA served as the major source of public jobs for the unemployed during the latter part of the thirties. Its main goal was to put the unemployed back to work and off of the relief rolls. The WPA encouraged "small useful projects" designed to provide employment for a maximum number of needy "employable" workers in the "shortest time possible." These jobs were especially vital in rural Las Animas County where there was no other work available for the farmers and ranchers devastated by drought. The WPA funded numerous road and school projects in eastern Las Animas County in order to provide jobs. In most areas, the WPA required that local sponsors of projects provide at least 20 percent of the project funding. That appears to have been often waived in this area where the need was so desperate. The WPA constructed one-room schools at Bunker Hill, Long Ridge, 7-D, and Pleasant Valley.

The Pleasant Valley School District submitted a WPA project proposal (No. 165-84-2517) on August 28, 1936, for the construction of a new school for the Pleasant Valley District. The project also included the demolition of a "small frame structure." The building to be demolished was presumably the existing school building, likely erected in 1916 when the district was established. The proposal presented the project cost as \$3,870. The federal government would cover \$3,537 of total. According to the proposal, the district needed the new building "to afford the children a safe and pleasant place in which to attend school."

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There appears to have been a long delay between the approval of the project and the start of construction. The project file gives no indication of the reason. Construction was underway by the spring of 1938. In June 1938, the WPA suspended work when the project funds ran out. The initial budget had been underestimated. Many of the WPA projects took longer than originally estimated. The major reason was likely the inexperience of much of the work crews. These crews had to quarry the stone, transport it to the project site, and finish the stone before starting the actual building construction. The district submitted a second proposal (665-81-2-23) on June 8, 1938, for additional funds to complete the school. The cost was \$2,650, with the entire supplemental amount in federal funds. The WPA crew resumed work on September 8, 1938. They completed the school on November 20, 1938. A WPA project inspector reported that the construction was good but perhaps more substantial than needed, stating that the "foundation and wall look strong enough to carry a Woolworth building."

As noted in the Rural School MPDF, many Colorado schoolhouses share a number of physical characteristics in respect to scale, proportion, massing, and window and door placement. The most common schoolhouse built in the state during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was one-story, wood frame with a gable roof and a rectangular plan. It had a central entry in the gabled end; large, double-hung sash windows evenly spaced on the side walls; a single undivided interior space; and often included a belfry.

The Pleasant Valley School exhibits some of these characteristics in its one-story size, rectangular plan, and undivided interior space. It has a less common hipped roof and its windows are primarily grouped on the south side. Stone construction is less common statewide but fairly typical in southeast Colorado where sandstone outcroppings provide opportunities for local quarrying. Given the building philosophy of the WPA in regard to its unemployment relief mission, stone represented a logical choice for school construction. Architecturally, the Pleasant Valley School is a good representative example of rural school buildings in southeastern Colorado.

The School Reorganization Act of 1949 recommended that the Pleasant Valley School District consolidate with the Branson School District. District residents voted for consolidation in 1950 and the Pleasant Valley School closed that year with a final enrollment of four students. When the school opened in 1938 it served 13 students ranging in age from 8 to 16. The current property owner remembers attending a community dance held in the building shortly after it closed as a school. At that time the building was also used to store cake cattle feed. The building has been used for hay storage since at least 1970. The current owner removed the front stairs to allow for better truck access to the building.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Doggett, Suzanne and Holly Wilson. *Rural School Buildings in Colorado* National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, Denver, CO: Colorado Historical Society - Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, March 1999.

Wolfenbarger, Deon. "New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2005. On file in the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.

Works Progress Administration project file. National Records and Archives Administration, College Park, Maryland.

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Pleasant Valley School
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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

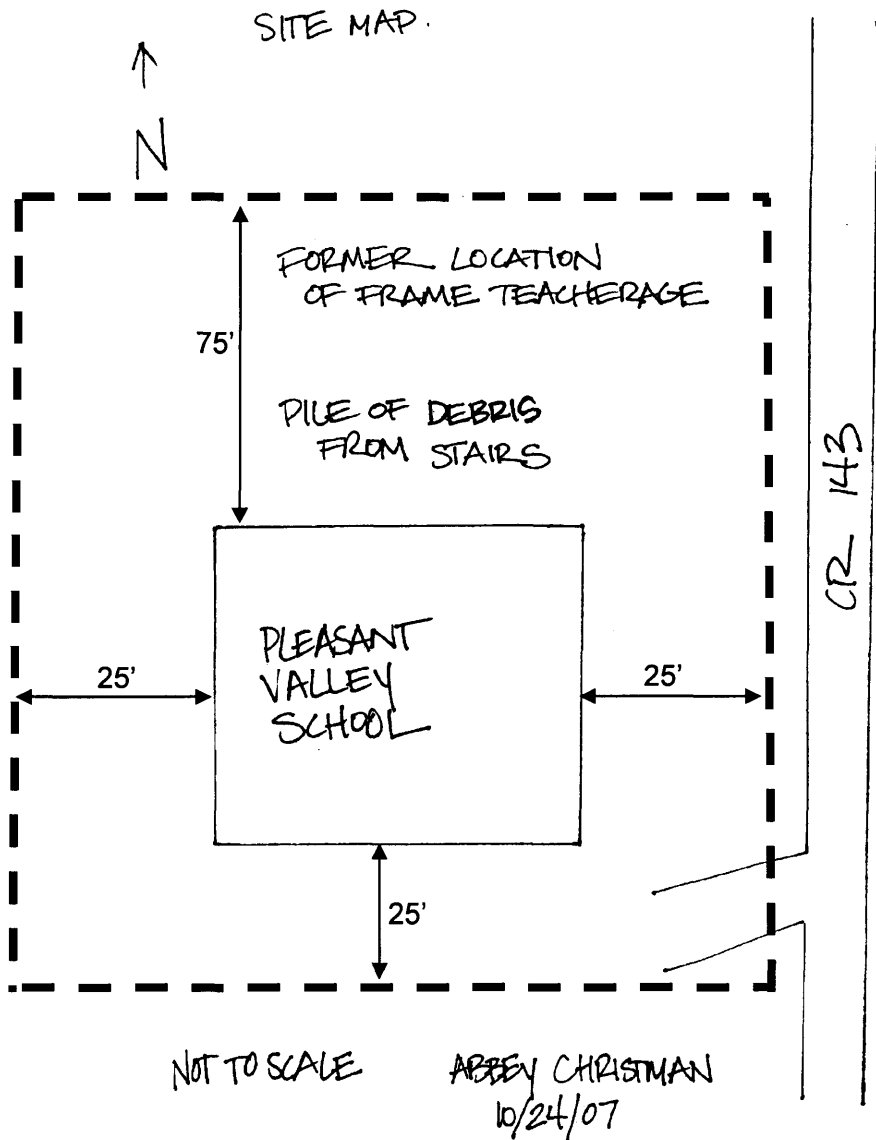
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries include only the immediately surrounding land forming a rectangle extending out 25 feet from the east, south and west walls and 75 feet out from the north side in order to include the remains of the teacherage.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This nomination includes all land historically associated with the school.

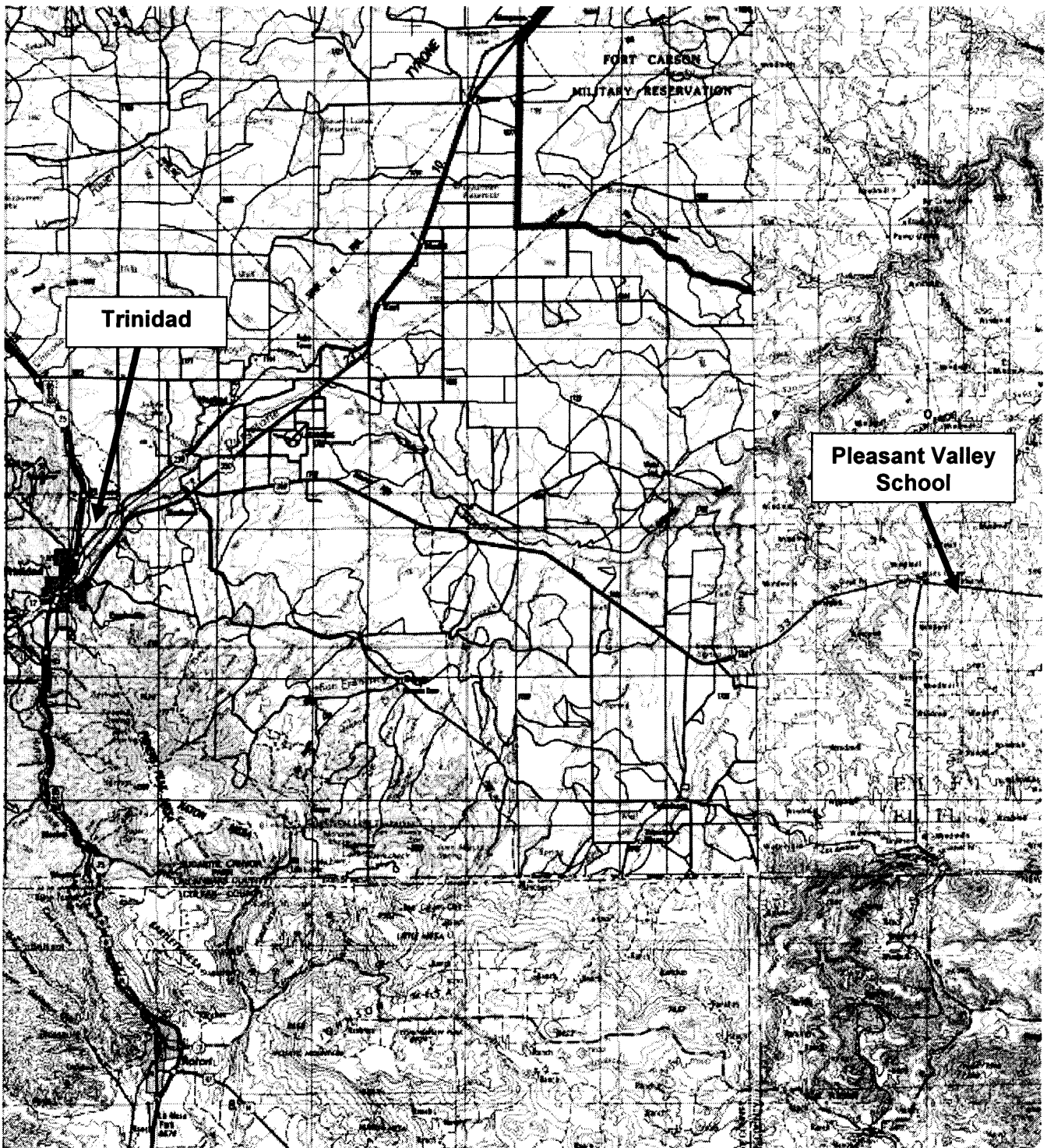
Approximate boundary location



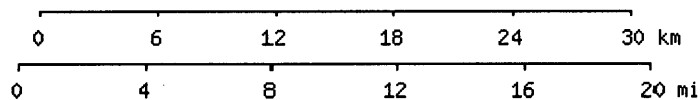
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Pleasant Valley School
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USGS Patterson Crossing (CO) Quadrangle
Projection is UTM Zone 13 NAD83 Datum



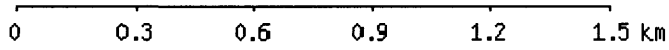
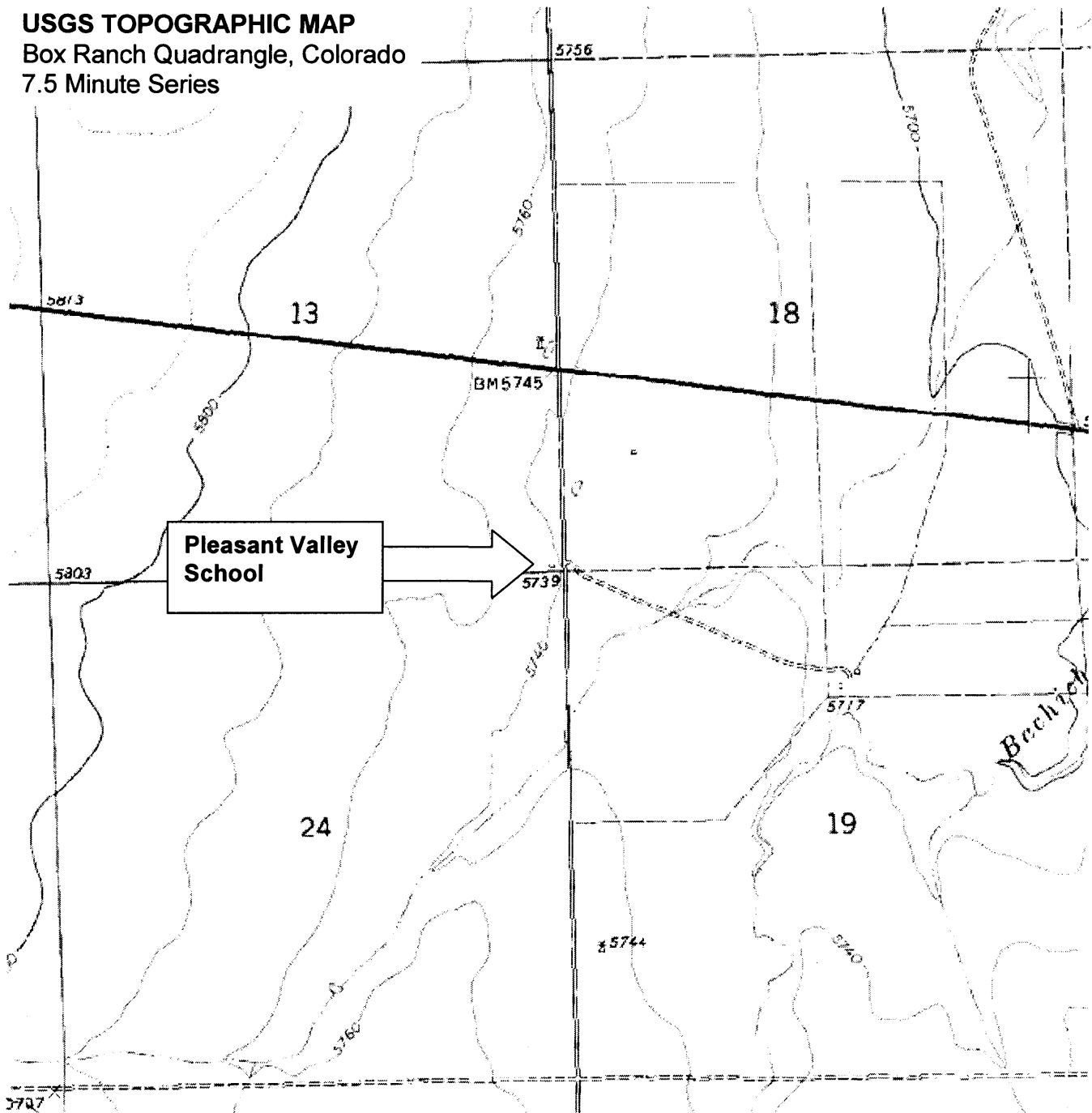
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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Box Ranch Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series



topozone
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USGS Box Ranch (CO) Quadrangle
Projection is UTM Zone 13 NAD83 Datum



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 Las Animas County, Colorado

New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS
 Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPS

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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: Abbey Christman
 Dates of Photographs: 9/15/06- # 2, 4, 6, 7
 10/24/07- # 1, 3, 5, 8, 9
 Location of Negatives: Digital files submitted to National Register, Washington, D.C.
 Photographs printed on HP Premium Photo Paper with HP 100 gray photo cartridge

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
------------------	---------------------------------

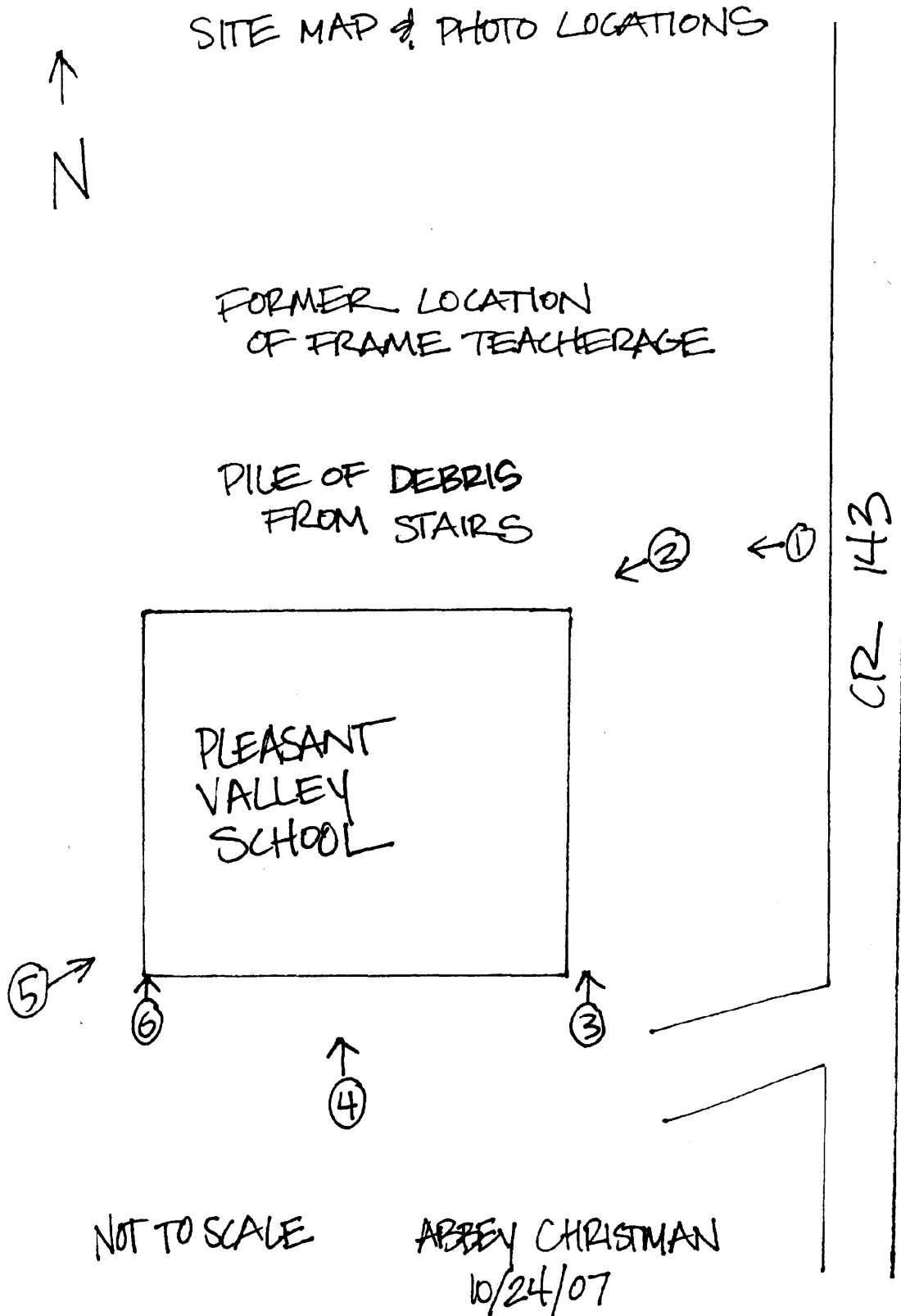
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | East side of the school showing the former location of the teacherage to the north (right). Facing west. |
| 2 | East and north sides of the school. Facing southwest. |
| 3 | East (front) side of the school showing former location of the stairs. Facing north. |
| 4 | South side of the school. Facing north. |
| 5 | West side of the school. Facing northeast. |
| 6 | Detail of the masonry showing the exposed foundation and thicker lower wall. Facing north. |
| 7 | Detail of WPA inscription. Facing west. |
| 8 | View of interior. Facing west. |
| 9 | View of interior. Facing east. |

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NOT TO SCALE

ABBEY CHRISTMAN
10/24/07