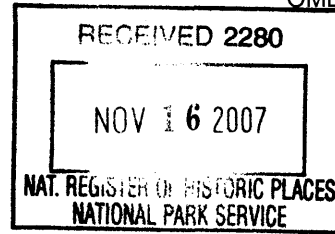


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1305

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in 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 Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds

other names/site number Horse Sheds; 5OT.478

2. Location

street & number 800 North 9th Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Rocky Ford [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Otero code 089 zip code 81067

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: 11/1/07

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:

- [X] 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: Edson H. Beall; Date of Action: 12-26-07

Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
Name of Property

Otero 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

4	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	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

#### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

0

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Fair

#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT

### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Adobe

roof Metal

other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Narrative Description

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

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**Continuation Sheet**

Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 1

New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS

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## DESCRIPTION

The Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds are located on the northern edge of the City of Rocky Ford in Otero County. The Adobe Stables are located on the eastern edge of the fairgrounds. Main Street runs along the east side of the stables. Mature elm trees are scattered around the stables. The racetrack lies to the west of the stables. There is one other surviving Works Progress Administration (WPA) project at the fairgrounds, a 1938 restroom and shower addition to the Exposition Building.

The Adobe Stables consist of four long, rectangular stable blocks that face each other across a large open space used for saddling and other race preparations (photo 4). The stable blocks are approximately 12' deep; each stall is roughly 10' wide. The total combined length of the four stable blocks is approximately 840', containing 80 stalls. On the western side, there is a single stables block, approximately 250' in length. On the eastern side, there are three stable blocks. From north to south these measure approximately 365', 125' and 100' in length. There is a gap of 10' between the northern and middle stable blocks and a gap of 50' between the middle and southern stable blocks. The northern break appears to be an original division between the stable blocks (photo 10). The city created the southern break when it demolished a section of severely deteriorated stables (photos 11 and 12). Stalls 1-25 are located in the west stables block. Stalls 26-85 are located on the east side. The original break in the stables block is located at stall 59. The section of stables demolished by the city contained stalls 71 to 75.

Slightly pitched shed roofs, which slope towards the rear, cover the single-story, rectangular plan stable blocks (photo 6). City workers have capped the walls with concrete to stabilize them; wooden roof framing rests on the concrete. Metal sheeting covers the framing. Roofs are missing from a section of stables on the east side (photo 10). There have been problems with the wind blowing the roof off this section. The stables are constructed of adobe blocks resting on a concrete foundation. The walls are approximately 8' tall. The adobe blocks measure roughly 6" x 6" x 12" (photo 14). WPA workers left the adobe blocks exposed instead of covering them with plaster, which is how WPA adobe block construction was usually finished. The original break on the east side shows evidence of having been whitewashed at one time; it is not known if this was an original treatment (photo 10). There are no interior corridors and each stall has its own exterior entrance (photo 8). The interior walls dividing the stalls are also composed of adobe blocks. The stall openings have simple wood framing and concrete sills. A wooden dutch door covers each opening. The floor of the stalls is dirt (photo 13). Each stall has a single, 4-light, fixed, wood-framed window on the rear wall. Exposure to weather has weakened the adobe walls on the north end of the stables, causing a portion of the north wall of the west and east stable blocks to collapse (photos 6 and 7).

City workers constructed the existing stables roofs in the 1970s. It is not known if this was the first time the roofs had been replaced or if the original mud and straw roofing had been replaced previously. At this time, workers topped the adobe walls with the existing wood and metal roofing. In 1983, volunteers replaced the original wooden dutch stall doors with new wooden dutch doors.

### *Integrity*

The Adobe Stables retain integrity of location, setting, association, workmanship, and feeling. Though the fairgrounds have changed since the 1930s, the general layout of the fairgrounds and location of the stables relative to the grandstand and track has remained constant. The deterioration of some sections

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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
Otero County, Colorado

Section number 7 Page 2

New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS

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of the adobe walls, the holes that have developed in the walls, and the demolition of several stalls on the east side has affected the integrity of materials and design. However, the sections of missing or damaged walls are relatively minor considering the overall size of the stables. Wood and metal roofing has replaced the original roofing of mud and straw. New doors have replaced the original doors, but both were wooden dutch doors. However, it is the adobe bricks that are the most significant material element in the stables, serving as an example of a regional vernacular construction method and of the craftsmanship of WPA laborers. The adobe walls are sufficiently intact to convey the workmanship and feeling associated with the adobe craft.

Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds

Name of Property

Otero 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.)

**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  
# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social History

Entertainment/Recreation

Architecture

**Periods of Significance**

1938-1957

**Significant Dates**

1938

**Significant Person(s)**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above).

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Works Progress Administration (WPA)

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior  
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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
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## SIGNIFICANCE

The Adobe Stables at the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds, constructed in 1938 by the WPA, are being nominated under the *New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). The Adobe Stables meet the registration requirements of one property type delineated in the MPDF—*Recreation and Culture* (subtype: *Fair*).

The Adobe Stables meet Criterion A in the area of Social History for their association with New Deal construction programs. Constructed by the WPA, the Adobe Stables present 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 stables were one of a series of WPA improvement projects at the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds between 1937 and 1940 that provided a significant source of employment for Rocky Ford. It is also the best surviving example of WPA work at the fairgrounds and in Rocky Ford.

The Adobe Stables also meet Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation. The stables are part of a fairgrounds facility that is very important to the history of Rocky Ford. The fair celebrates Rocky Ford's proclaimed title as the "Sweet Melon Capitol of the World." The fair draws visitors from throughout southeastern Colorado. Established in 1892, the Arkansas Valley Fair is the oldest continuous fair in Colorado. The fairgrounds also host a variety of 4-H programs, recreation activities, and special events throughout the year.

The Adobe Stables meet Criterion C for Architecture for its distinctive method of construction. The stables are a good example of adobe construction, a regional construction method that is becoming increasingly rare. It is especially rare for a structure with exposed adobe blocks to survive; WPA workers commonly covered adobe blocks with stucco. However, the fact that the adobe is exposed allows an uncommon opportunity to examine adobe construction methods more closely. The WPA used adobe construction for many of its projects in eastern Colorado since this indigenous construction method was both inexpensive and labor intensive, fitting with the WPA's objectives of spending as little of project budgets as possible on materials and as much as possible on labor.

The period of significance begins in 1938 when construction started and ends in 1957. The Adobe Stables remained in use through the 1990s. However, the period of significance ends in 1957 in order to comply with the National Register's fifty-year rule.

### *Historical Background*

George W. Swink, a State Senator and agriculturalist, started the first Watermelon Day in 1878, with free watermelon distributed to Rocky Ford visitors. This event evolved into the Arkansas Valley Fair. Established in 1892, the Arkansas Valley Fair is the oldest continuous fair in Colorado. Watermelons continue to be an important feature of the fair with 50,000 pounds of free watermelon distributed during the fair in 2006. Horse races and rodeo events are also a traditional feature of the fair. In the 1930s, race events included the half-mile race, three-eighths mile colt races, five-eighths mile race, three-eighths mile free for all, half-mile cowboy race for cowboys in stock saddles on work horses, and a one-and-a-half mile open relay race. Competitors rode in twenty-seven races during the fair in 2006. Livestock and arts & crafts exhibitions also play a prominent role at the fair.

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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
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During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Crystal Sugar Company owned the fairgrounds and leased them to the fair association. In 1936, the Arkansas Valley Fair Association purchased the grounds from the Crystal Sugar Company. The fair was an important community and regional event, especially during the Depression when people were seeking a distraction from economic hardships. The fair association announced a "new, novel, and peppy" fair program for the 1936 fair. The program included Tommy Douglas and his educated mule, stunt plane feats, ski jumping from fast moving automobiles, and stunt driving in addition to the usual horse racing, steer roping, and bulldogging contests. Attendees came from Oklahoma, Texas, and Kansas as well as from all over Colorado.

During the 1930s, several WPA improvement projects occurred at the fairgrounds. The county commissioners sponsored the first WPA improvement project at the fairgrounds in 1937, which consisted of general repairs, costing \$18,036. Improvements included painting the grandstand, rebuilding the boxes and replacing seating in the grandstand, and building a new corral.

The Rocky Ford School District (Otero #4) purchased the fairgrounds in January 1938. The district planned to use the fairgrounds as a recreational facility for the nearby high school, creating a permanent facility for school sports and physical education. The school district leased the grounds to the fair association during the fair. After purchasing the fairgrounds, the school district applied for a WPA project to construct new horse stables, raze existing barns and horse sheds, repair the stock and implement building, repair the grandstand, and generally improve the grounds. The district submitted the project application (No. 465-84-2-196) on January 24, 1938. The total cost was \$24,022 with \$20,897 of that in federal funds. According to the application: "School District #4 is interested in improving this property in order that it might be more useful for carrying on all types of athletic events, 4-H club work, and various other types of school activities." According to a progress report: "the 'Old Mexican' idea was employed in roofing these sheds in that we used a mud, straw and sand mixture, laying it a depth of about 3 inches so as to make the roof water proof even in rainy seasons, thus affording a good insulated dry roof at a minimum cost to the sponsors." The WPA supervisor estimated that workers would need to manufacture about 60,000 large adobe bricks in order to construct the horse and stock stalls. Construction started in March 1938 and ended on November 25, 1938.

WPA work continued at the fairgrounds after the completion of the stables. In the fall of 1938, the school district submitted a project proposal (no. 665-84-2-185) for additional work at the fairgrounds. Included in the project was the construction of 30 new adobe stalls on the N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street side of the fairgrounds. These stables, on the opposite side from the previously constructed stables, were demolished at an unknown date. The project also included constructing an addition to the Exposition building at the fairgrounds, which the high school used for athletics. (This addition is intact.) The WPA also added steel bleachers to the Exposition Building. The total project budget was \$27,457 with \$23,425 of that in federal funds. The WPA approved the project in November 1938. Groundbreaking for the addition to the exposition building did not occur until almost a year later, in September 1939. The addition included showers and two dressing rooms as well as a heating plant. The WPA evidently considered the construction of the stables from adobe successful, since WPA engineers also chose it for the addition to the Exposition Building. The addition has a concrete foundation and reinforced concrete frame with a curtain wall of adobe brick. WPA workers covered the adobe blocks with stucco, so the adobe bricks are not visible.

During one of the improvement projects, WPA workers constructed an adobe wall around the fairgrounds. City workers removed the section of wall along the west side of the fairgrounds in the 1970s, and the wall on the south side in the 1990s. No sections of the wall remain. A chain link fence replaced the adobe wall.

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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
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New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS

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In the 1960s, ownership of the fairgrounds passed to the City of the Rocky Ford, but the Arkansas Valley Fair Association has continued to lease the grounds for the fair. The adobe stalls have been very popular with trainers keeping their horses at the fairgrounds and fair participants, since the adobe is cool in summer and warm in winter. After an improvement project in 1983, which included replacing the original stall doors, the city had fully rented the stables to horse trainers who used the stables year round. In the 1990s, horse trainers began to vacate the stables as their condition became more fragile. By 2000, the stables were vacant.



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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
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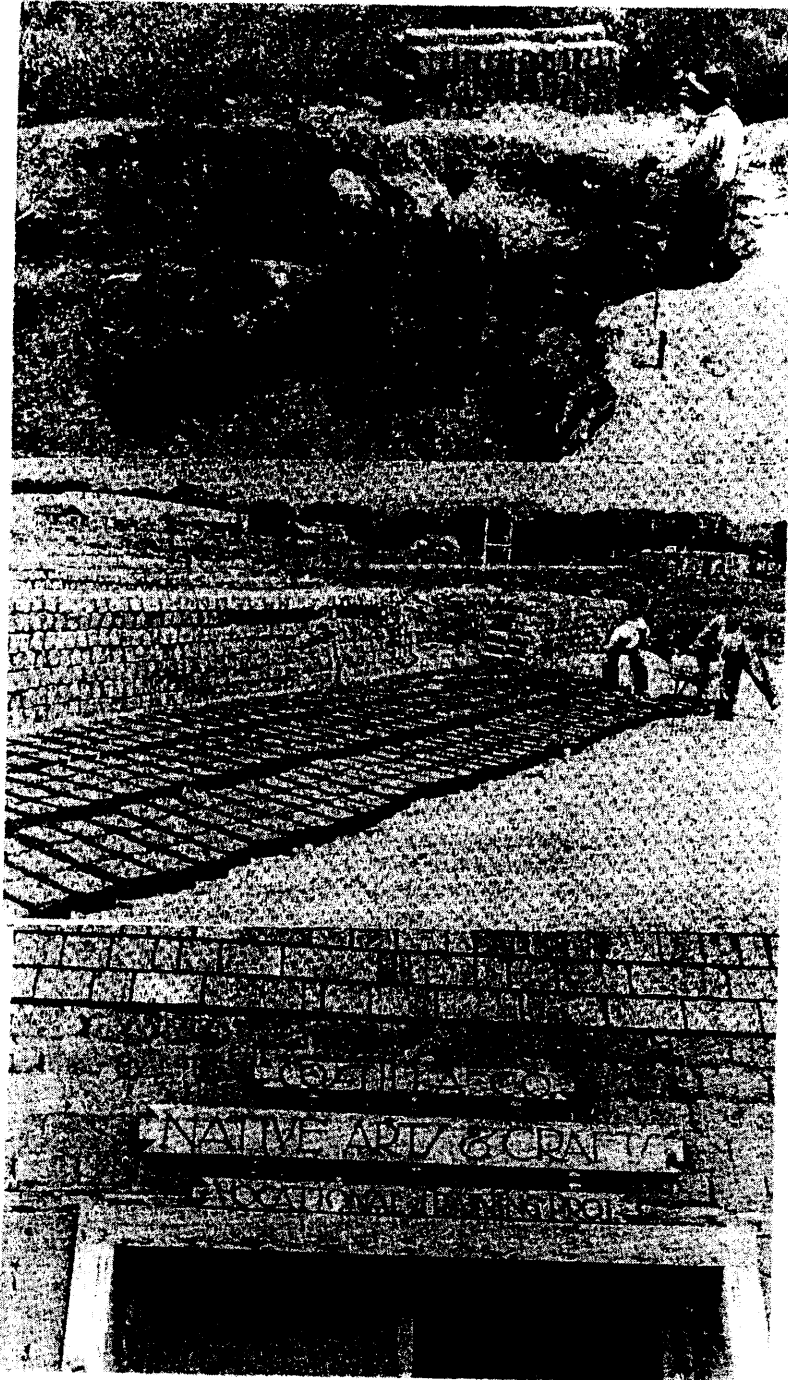
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New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS

August, 1936

THE WPA WORKER

7



A  
Renaissance  
of  
Dobe  
Construction

The structural values of dobe in rather well defined areas of low rain and humidity have been recognized from even ancient times. This type of building has found new acceptance in the WPA program. The simplicity and low man year cost of producing dobe and its unique insulating characteristics have greatly encouraged local sponsors to adopt dobe as a building material.

The accompanying pictures show the simple method of producing and sun-drying the blocks and appearance in the unfinished wall. There is no question about the value, effectiveness and long life of dobe construction when erected in its proper dry environment away from heavy rainfall or flood.

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National Park Service  
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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
Otero County, Colorado

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WPA project files, National Archives and Records Administration.

Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
Name of Property

Otero County/Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.2

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 612684 4213005 (NAD27)  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

The UTMS were derived from heads up digitization on Digital Raster Graphic (DRG) maps provided to OAHF by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

### 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 (for property owner)

organization Colorado Preservation, Inc. date 5/1/07

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

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80204

## 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 City of Rocky Ford

street & number 203 Main Street telephone (719) 254-7414

city or town Rocky Ford state CO zip code 81067

**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.

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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
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## **GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The 1.2-acre nominated boundary follows Main Street on the east side. On the north, west, and south sides the boundary extends twelve feet (12') from the exterior walls of the stables, forming an L-shaped area around the stable buildings.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

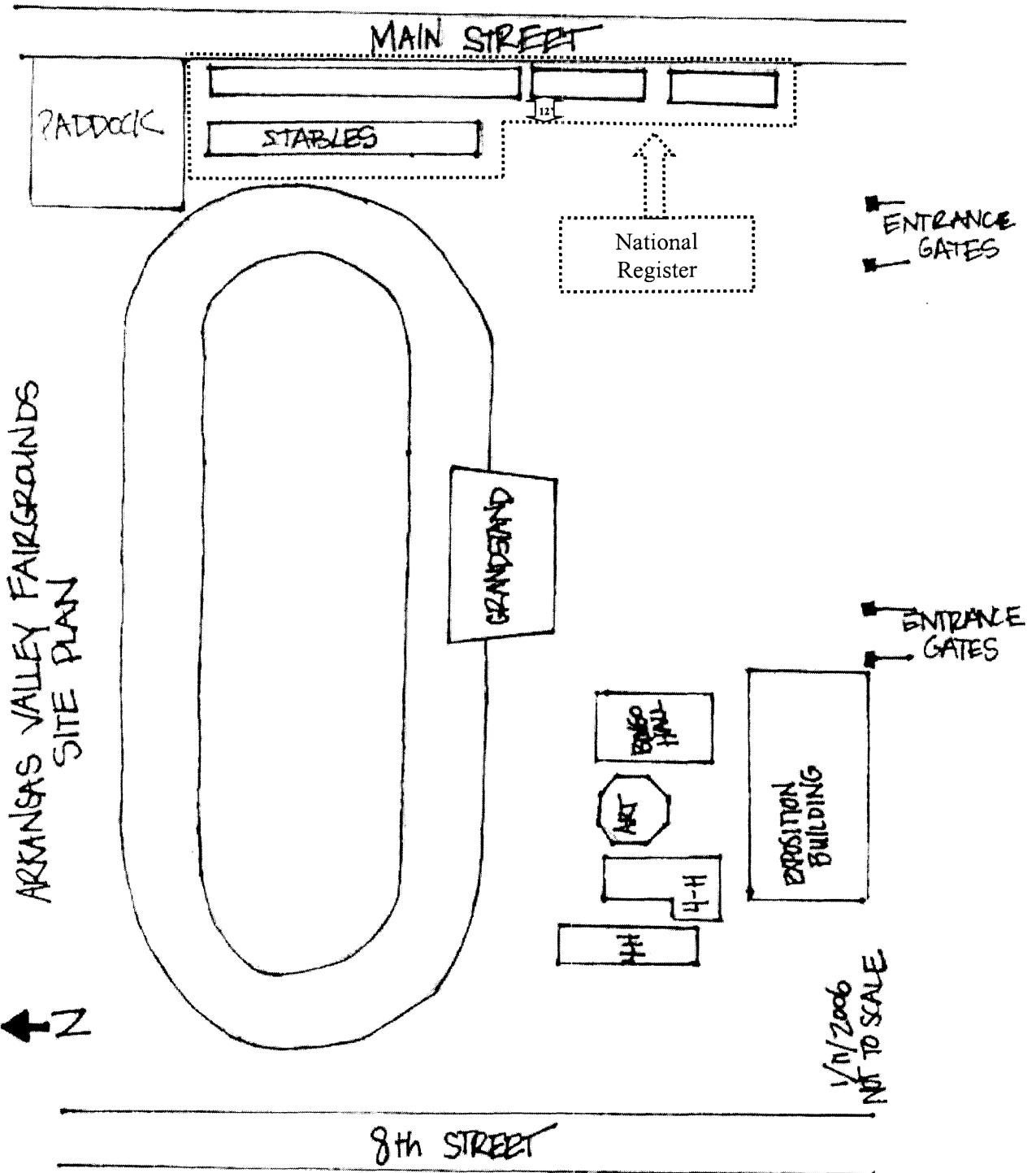
The boundary includes the land historically associated with the adobe stables. The boundary excludes the surrounding fairgrounds, since they have undergone many alterations. There is only one other surviving New Deal constructed feature at the fairgrounds, a restroom and shower addition on the west side of the Exposition Building. Since this building is at the opposite end of the fairgrounds and no other features associated with the New Deal are located between the buildings, it is excluded from the boundaries.

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National Park Service  
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 Otero County, Colorado

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## PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Name of Property: Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds

Location: 800 North 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Rocky Ford, Colorado

Photographer: Abbey Christman

Date of Photographs: 1/11/06

Negatives: Digital files submitted to National Register, Washington, D.C.

Photographs printed on HP Premium Photo Paper with HP 100 gray photo cartridge

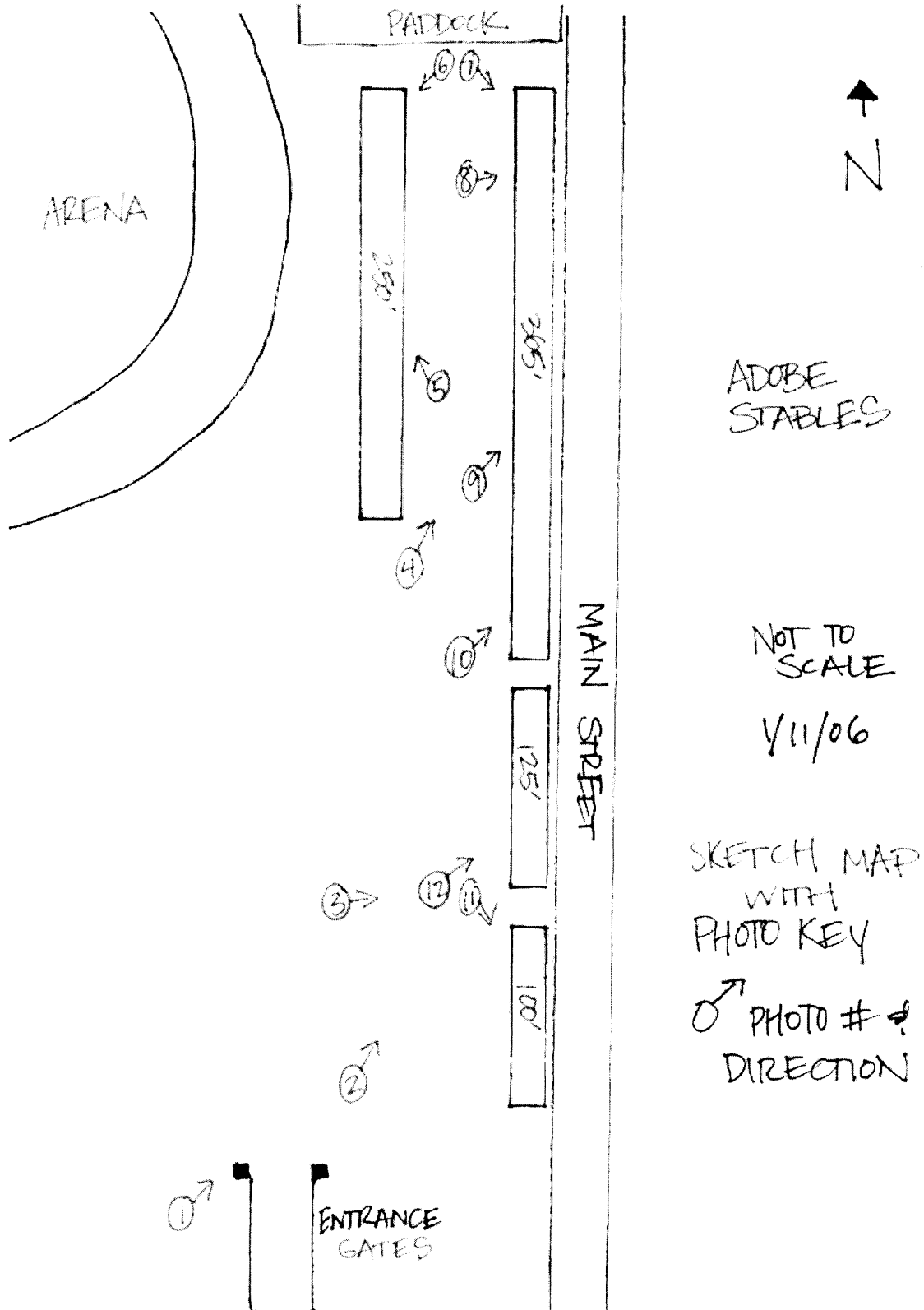
<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	East entrance to Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds; Adobe Stables visible in the background. Facing northeast.
2	East section of stables. Facing northeast.
3	East section of stables. Facing east.
4	West and east sections of stables. Facing northeast.
5	West section of stables. Facing northwest.
6	North end of west section of stables. Facing southwest.
7	North end of east section of stables. Facing southeast.
8	Detail of stalls on east section of stables. Facing east.
9	East section of stables. Facing northeast.
10	East section of stables showing gap at stall #59. Facing northeast.
11	East section of stables showing gap where stalls #71 to 75 were located. Facing southeast.
12	East section of stables showing gap where stalls #71 to 75 were located. Facing northeast.
13	Interior of stall.
14	Detail of adobe bricks.

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ADOBE STABLES

NOT TO SCALE

4/11/06

SKETCH MAP WITH PHOTO KEY

♂ PHOTO # & DIRECTION

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National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Adobe Stables, Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds  
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New Deal Resources on Colorado's Eastern Plains MPS

**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Rocky Ford Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 /612684 E / 4213005 N (NAD27)  
PLSS: 6th PM, T 23S, R 56W, Sec. 7  
Elevation: 4180 feet

