

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received JAN 20 1982

date entered MAR 1 1982

1. Name

historic Pinhook Battleground

and/or common

2. Location

street & number At the head of Castle Valley _____ not for publication

city, town T26S, R 24E, Sec. 5, SW1/4, SLM vicinity of Moab congressional district 01

state Utah code 049 county Grand code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Nat'l Forest

4. Owner of Property

name U.S. Forest Service, Moab District, Manti-LaSal National Forest

street & number 466 South Main Street

city, town Moab _____ vicinity of state Utah 84532

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. U. S. Forest Service, Moab District Office

street & number Manti-LaSal National Forest

city, town Moab _____ state Utah 84532

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Utah State Register has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1975 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Utah State Historical Society

city, town Salt Lake City _____ state Utah

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The area in which the Pinhook Battle took place encompasses several hundred undefined acres located in and around Pinhook Valley, all within the Manti-LaSal National Forest, Moab District. The Pinhook Battleground Site, nominated to the National Register, is approximately an eight-acre area composed of the actual battle site. Within this eight acre boundary (see map) is a small plot about twenty feet square which is the location of the common grave of eight men who were killed in the confrontation. The plot is brush-covered, with remnants of stones used to mark the site still in evidence. A one and one-half foot wall has recently been placed around the plot (Summer 1981). The plot is also marked by a stone monument, approximately four feet high and two feet wide, erected in 1940 by Grand County. While the monument itself, and stone wall, would not be considered eligible because of the fifty-year criteria, it does represent the significance attached to the site by local residents (in addition, it also represents a parallel to the placing of a National Register plaque to any National Register site). The monument and fence allow for the identification of the common grave and battleground site.

Pinhook Valley, at one time called "Little Castle Valley," lays at the head of Castle Valley, Grand County, at elevations ranging from about 6,000 to 7,500 ft. above sea level. The valley, about a half a mile wide and four miles long, trends in a northwest/southeast orientation, draining northerly into Castle Valley and the Colorado River. The area is rocky, brush-covered and without surface water except during heavy snowmelt or thunderstorms. Vegetation is sage brush, scrub oak with some juniper at the higher southerly end. Each side of the valley is bordered by steep, high rocky escarpments that rise 500 feet or more above the valley floor.

The valley is unoccupied except for the small Porcupine Ranch at its foot, about two miles below the monument. The only "improvements" in the valley is the jeep road that currently runs its length. This road was developed in the late 1800s to serve as the main route to the community at Miners Basin which became relatively significant in the 1890s and after the turn of the century. The road did not exist in 1881. With the realignment of the LaSal Mountain Loop Road in recent times, the old road down Pinhook Valley is now used only by occasional grazing interests, recreationists and Forest Service administrative personnel. It is suitable for off-road vehicles only and is classified as a jeep road. A part of a proposal to the Forest Service anticipates improvement of a segment of this road, which includes a graded parking area about 50 feet by 100 feet, approximately 100 feet east of the monument (put in during the summer of 1981).

Pinhook Valley today probably looks very much the same as it did in 1881, with the monument hardly visible among the oak brush and juniper.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Indian-White Relations
Specific dates	June 15, 1881	Builder/Architect		

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pinhook Battleground site in Castle Valley, Grand County, Utah is significant locally and regionally as the location of the largest and most tragic, Indian-White confrontation in terms of number killed, in Southeastern Utah. The site also exemplifies the long standing hostilities between Indians and Whites in Southeastern Utah. The area had been initially settled in 1855 by a group of Mormon missionaries sent from Sanpete County, some 200 miles to the west. The forty-one missionaries built a rock fort, near the crossing of the Colorado River at present-day Moab, but were forced to leave within a few weeks after an Indian attack killed three of their number. The fort site, known as the Elk Mountain Mission Fort is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Pinhook Battle took place June 15, 1881 in the mountains above present-day Moab more than a quarter of a century after the Elk Mountain Mission was abandoned. Thirteen white men and between seven and eighteen Indians were killed. The site also illustrates the relationship of Western Colorado and Southeastern Utah as the event which led to the Pinhook Battle took place on the Delores River in Western Colorado. The involvement of both federal troops, as a rescue unit,¹ and a citizens posse also illustrates the nature of law enforcement on the frontier and the complexities of Indian relations. The incident also proved of importance in the plea by local residents of Moab (the main settlement in Grand County) for continued settlement in the area. In 1940 Grand County and the Moab Lions Club illustrated the significance of this site locally by erecting a concrete monument at the site of the common grave in Pinhook Valley where the remains of eight of the thirteen white men killed were buried. Additionally, many of the place names in this region are derived from the names of the participants in this event and their families, and the region continues to contain descendants of many of those involved. Because of its isolated and unchanged character, the site is significant in its suggestion of man's dependence on cooperation and harmony in living on the frontier and the bridge to the tragic events of a century ago that it provides.

By about 1880 the Indian problems in Utah and surrounding states had largely been settled. By the mid-1860s the Navajos had been moved to a reservation. Somewhat later the Apaches, Utes and Piutes were similarly settled on reservations; however, there were still some renegade groups who refused to conform and who caused problems in this area into the 1880s. It was in June 1881 that the last serious trouble with the Indians in the Moab-LaSal area occurred in which a number of fatalities resulted. Thirteen white men were killed and several wounded. An unknown number of Indians (between seven and eighteen) were killed and many wounded.²

9. Major Bibliographical References

Tanner, Faun McConkie, The Far Country, A Regional History of Moab and LaSal, Utah, Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Co., 1976. (Chap. 9, Pge. 115-146, with extensive bibliography. The most comprehensive reference on this subject.)
 The Deseret News, July 6, 1881.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 8

Quadrangle name Castle Valley, Utah

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References

A

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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Pinhook Battleground site is comprised of approximately eight acres located in T26S, R24E, Sec. 5, SW 1/4, E 1/2, SLM It is approximately 1 2/5 miles from the northeast corner of T26S, R23E, Sec. 12, and two miles from the loop road (see continuation sheet)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul S. Rattle, Member/Philip F. Notarianni, Historian

organization Moab Lions Club /Utah State Historical Society date March 1981 (redone January 1982)

street & number P.O. Box 565/300 Rio Grande telephone 801-533-6017

city or town Moab /Salt Lake City state Utah

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

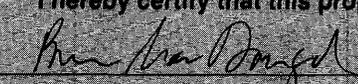
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Melvin T. Smith

title Melvin T. Smith, State Historic Preservation Officer date 1-11-82

For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register 	date <u>3/1/82</u>
Attest: <u>Emma Jane Saxe</u> Chief of Registration	date <u>2-22-82</u>

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Combining the various and sometimes conflicting accounts leads to the conclusion that the trouble in 1881 commenced a year or so earlier with the killing in 1880 of a white Indian agent at Meeker, Colorado by a mixed group of renegade Utes, Navajos and Piutes, said to be headed by Chief Posey, who were ranging the country and causing trouble. But the specific event that triggered the action in 1881 began with the killing of Dick May and John Thurman about May 1st near Dolores, Colorado when they apprehended the Indians stealing a large herd of their horses. Two large posses under the leadership of Capt. W. H. Dawson and Billy May (Dick's brother) were formed by local settlers in Western Colorado who pursued the Indians westward to the Blue Mountain (Monticello) area in Utah and thence north toward the LaSal Mountains. The Indians were accused of killing several other settlers and pillaging along the route of their flight. The two pursuing posses were thought to have totalled about 60 men. The Indians numbered 50 or more, in addition to women and children. A third posse made up of about 25 Utah settlers from the Blue Mountain area assembled under the direction of Spud Hudson. All pursued the Indians north toward LaSal, around the head of Spanish Valley and across the west face of the LaSal Mountains - Squaw Springs, Boren Mesa, South and Wilson Mesas and down Mason Draw into Little Castle Valley, or Pinhook Valley as it is known today, where the Indians made a stand.

Dawson and his group were the only men to participate in the battle which followed. The other groups were pursuing Indians in other directions or looking for a trail off the rim of Castle Valley to head off the Indians and arrived too late to help. The Dawson posse encountered a fresh trail on Wilson Mesa. Dawson decided to detail four men to scout ahead across the mesa and down a hill leading to a prong of Little Castle Valley.

The scouting party, after nearly reaching the bottom of the long hill leading to the valley, saw an arroyo or gulch about half a mile ahead of them. Just beyond was a low hill covered with a growth of scrub oak and large and small boulders. Looking at this point intently for a few minutes, they saw, or imagined they saw, a red blanket flit for an instant, then disappear behind a rock. They also positively saw an Indian pony moving about among the brush. Although they were not certain that the Indians were setting up an ambush, they thought it good wisdom to report at once to Capt. Dawson.

After brief consultation with his men, Dawson decided to send a part of his small force ahead a short distance on the trail to investigate, with

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instructions to fall back to the main body if they were fired upon. He called for fifteen volunteers to carry out the dangerous task, and twenty men promptly stepped forward. Capt. Dawson chose fifteen, telling them to be careful and to remember that if they were fired upon, the others would be close behind. They were instructed under such conditions to return to the main group as quickly as possible, or to seek the nearest shelter of rocks and brush.

Slowly and carefully the fifteen men advanced to within about forty yards of the gulch. This was the area which became known as "the battleground." Suddenly the Indians, who had been concealed in the rocks and brush on the hillside, opened fire on the advance guard. Four men fell dead instantly. Immediately the others looked for a place of shelter. Realizing that they must cross about 150 yards of open ground to reach their comrades following behind them, and seeing the gulch only a few yards ahead, they made a dash ahead and reached the gulch in safety. But here they learned that they had made a serious mistake, for the Indians crawled through the brush and rocks above them and poured in an effective crossfire upon them. They could not return the fire to advantage because they were unable to see the Indians except for a fleeting glance of a hand or gun. This trap, in which they obviously found themselves, was between Indians on Porcupine Ridge and those in the oak brush in Pinhook Valley under Harpole Mesa.

After about an hour of fighting, six more of Dawson's men were killed. The remaining five crawled to a cave or a hole in the gulch where the Indians could not see them. This was the second day of the battle and the Indians had evidently gone up Mason Draw to Bald Mesa. The Indians must have been hidden all through the brush and on top of the mesa. The brush was short and choppy (near the site of the present monument) and provided excellent cover for the Indians.

By now Dawson's main body of men had come to within about two hundred yards of the gulch. They had seen the four men fall from the bullets of the Indians and the remainder run for the shelter of the gulch, but they could offer no assistance and were compelled to seek shelter among the small boulders and scrub oak. Jim Hall of Rico was wounded in the leg at the beginning of the battle. Jordan Bean had received a serious head wound in the first volley.

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The Indians seemed to have ample ammunition and were better armed than the posse, nearly all of them having .44 Winchesters. The posse had a hodgepodge of old buffalo guns, Sharpes rifles, and a few Winchesters, old-fashioned black powder guns with short range; thus the slow velocity of the bullets precluded accuracy in distance shooting. Because the Indians were concealed a greater part of the time, damaging shots were difficult.

One Indian, thought to be a chief, exposed himself almost derisively by climbing onto a huge boulder. The members of the posse could hear his voice, no doubt shouting instructions to the other Indians about how to go about getting a shot without taking chances themselves. Many of the posse fired at this man, but the slow-moving bullets fell short and he escaped unharmed.

At this stage of the battle, the whites heard several shots in quick succession a short distance down the valley. The next day the bodies of two men, apparently unarmed, were found dead. After a time they were identified as the Wilson brothers, Alfred and Isadore, of Moab, who had camped on Castle Creek and had come to investigate the shooting. They could have been working their cattle from here or from a camp in Castle Valley. In any event they must have wandered unaware into the Indian position and thus became casualties of the battle.

Capt. Dawson, not knowing that the greater number of his men in the gulch had already been killed, and wanting to help them at any cost, knew something must be done. So far it had been every man for himself, hunting the best place possible for shelter. Dawson and his men decided to send a volunteer runner to make a dash for the gulch. His task would be to persuade those hiding there to make a run for the main body of men to escape the lethal trap.

Pat McKinney, a fast footman, volunteered to perform this dangerous mission. Reportedly he stripped to his underwear and socks, and hatless, he crept forward through the brush and boulders as far as possible, then stood suddenly erect and made a dash for the gulch where the remainder of the advance guard was crouched. The Indians saw him at one as he streaked across the open space, and a hail of bullets cut the dust around him. He managed to reach his destination unhurt. When he learned that eight of the fifteen had been killed and three wounded, he thought it best they all remain where they were until darkness of night would allow their escape.

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Darkness fell, and in a short time Pat McKinney and the remainder of the advance guard joined the main body of men. Since all must have food and water, they carefully gathered up the wounded, retiring two miles southeast to a large spring where they spent the night. At daybreak, they were all in the saddle with the exception of two men who were left to care for the wounded.

The Hudson group reached the battleground a day too late, as did seventy men who came from Rico in response to a courier who had been sent for reinforcements. By the time they reached the site, the Indians had taken their best horses and vanished. The Indians left two of their dead on the battlefield, but the trail showed a number had been wounded.³

The defeated party began a return trip back to Colorado, and near Monticello (approximately fifty miles south of Moab) they met a rescue unit of the Ninth Cavalry and a detachment of the Thirteenth Infantry sent from Ft. Lewis, Colorado. Reports indicate that this unit had "belatedly" left Ft. Lewis and were not completely welcomed by the group of whites returning from the battle site. The reasons for the Army's delay in moving ahead have not been determined, but federal troops were dispatched to help in the conflict.⁴

A letter in the Deseret News, (Salt Lake City), written June 22, 1881, revealed the overall reaction to the event by several Moab residents. The call for more settlers was especially evident. In part, the letter read as follows:

The people of the Valley have all fortified up at the old Mormon Fort, and expect to remain so until this trouble is settled. It is expected that this war will continue, and this place is not strong enough, if attacked by Indians, and we need some more settlers here to strengthen the place. There is every facility for making good homes, and the present crops look flourishing . . . The health of the people is generally good. Your brethen,

R.H. Stewart

A.G. Wilson

W. A. Peirce⁵

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The victims of the so-called Pinhook "massacre" were Hard Tartar, John Galloway, Wiley Tartar, Hiram Melvin, Jimmy Heaton, and George Taylor of Rico; Tom Click of Dolores, Dave Willis of Mancos, and Alfred and Isadore Wilson of Moab. Three were severely wounded: Jordan Bean, Jim Hall and Harg Eskridge. The bodies of Hiram Melvin and Dave Willis were moved in October 1881 by their families. Willis was interred at Mancos and Melvin at Dolores. Two other victims of the Indians' slaying are also buried at Dolores: Dick May and John Thrumman. The remaining eight men were buried in common graves at the battle site.

A monument has been erected to their memory by Grand County, sponsored by the Moab Lions Club. It was dedicated November 11, 1940 by William R. McConkie.

Except for the Porcupine Ranch, a small piece of private property located about two miles down the valley from the monument, the entire area is unoccupied, undeveloped and under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Forest Service. It has remained basically the same since the June 1881 incident. Limited seasonal grazing appears to be the only foreseeable use. There is no surface water in the valley except during periods of heavy snowmelt and cloudbursts. The Grand County organization, with the Moab Lions Club as sponsor, has applied to the U. S. Forest Service, at its suggestion, for a special use permit to accommodate this monument.

(Much of the above historical account was summarized in March 1981 by P. S. Rattle, from Chapter 9 of The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and LaSal, Utah, 1974, by Faun McConkie Tanner, published by Olympus Publishing Company, Salt Lake City.)

FOOTNOTES

¹This rescue unit, not involved in the actual battle, was from Ft. Lewis, Colorado, and was composed of four companies of the Ninth Cavalry and a detachment of the Thirteenth Infantry. See, Charles S. Peterson, Look to the Mountains: Southeastern Utah and the LaSal National Forest (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), pp. 67-68.

²Charles S. Peterson, Look to the Mountains, p. 67.

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³Estimates of total Indian dead range from seven to eighteen, as reported in Charles S. Peterson, Look to the Mountains, p. 67, to "at least eleven," as referenced in Faun McConkie Tanner, The Far Country: A Regional History of Moab and LaSal, Utah (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing Co., 1974), p. 115.

⁴Charles S. Peterson, Look to the Mountains, pp. 67-68.

⁵The Deseret News, July 6, 1881, p. 353.

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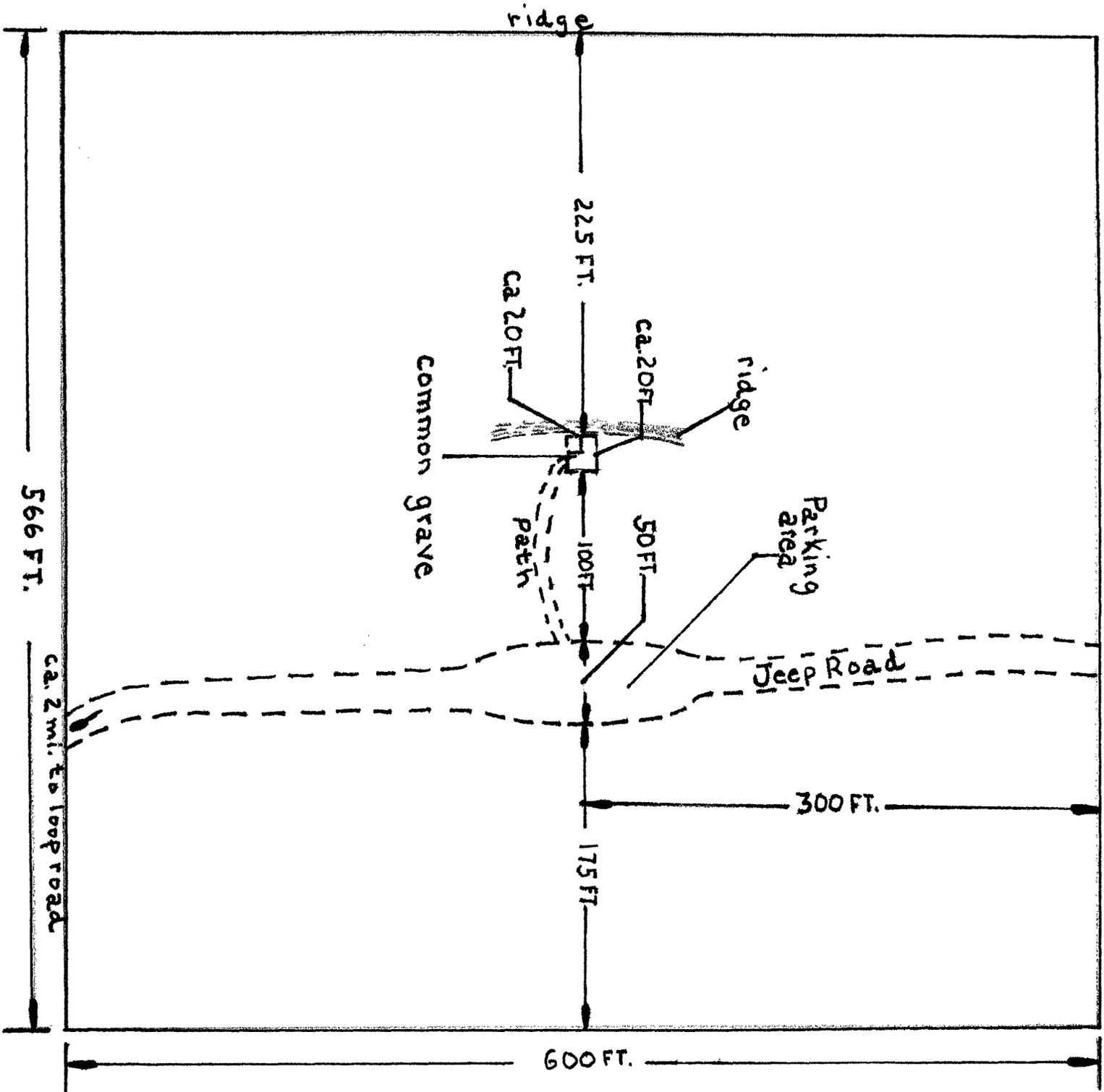
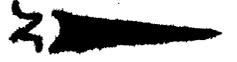
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which runs east of Pinhook Valley.

While the battleground area contains several hundred acres, the boundary for this nomination was chosen as the most probable battleground site. This eight acre area contains the common grave plot and is bounded by high ridges or heavily covered areas of brush. The common grave plot was used as the approximate center of the boundary. Published accounts, as well as the proposed Special Use Appl. by the Moab Lions Club (attached) and visual inspection, were used in determining the boundary.

Pinhook Battleground Castle Valley, Grand County, UT.

Approximate scale:
1/8 in. = 10 FT.



JAN 20 1982

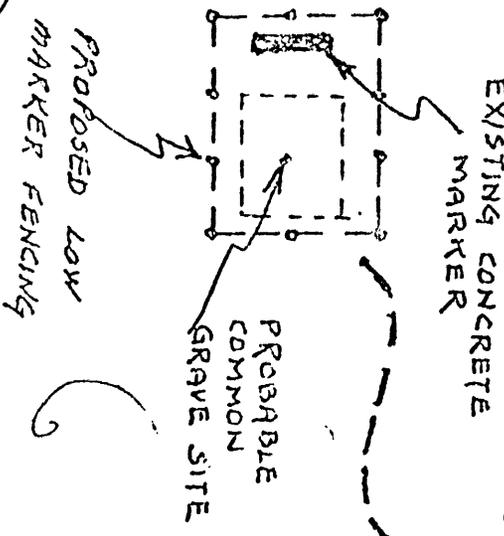
PROPOSED IMPROVED PINHOOK BATTLEGROUND SITE
SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM - NOT TO SCALE
ATTACHMENT TO USFS SPECIAL USE APPLICATION

APPROX. 600 FEET

TO RECAPITULATE RANISH - 2.1.11

APPROX. NORTH
↑

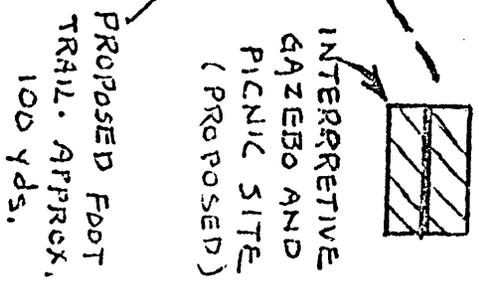
BOUNDARY OF 5 ACRES
SITE - APPROX 600 X 360 FT.
SUBJECT TO FUTURE FENCING
IF REQUIRED.



ROCKS

SHALLOW DRAW

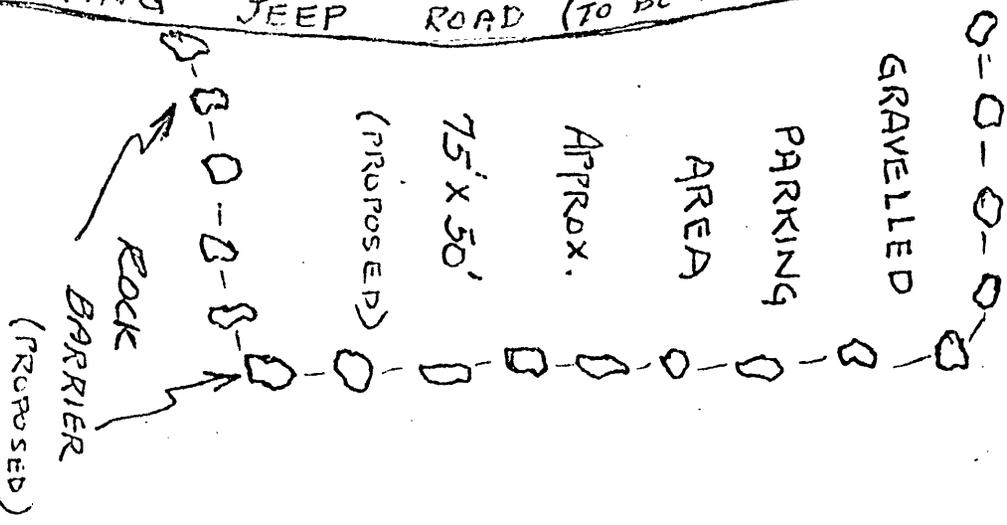
OAK BRUSH



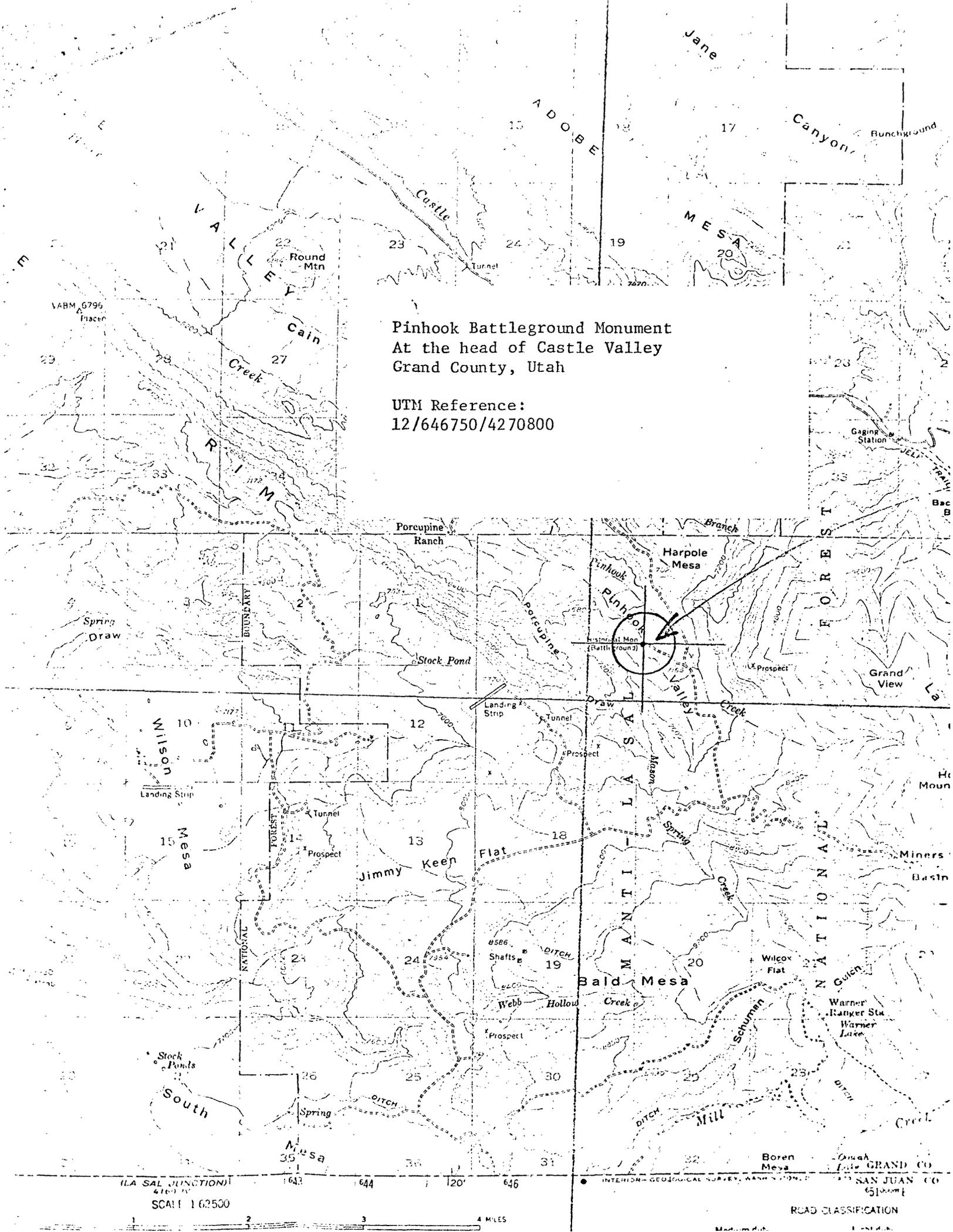
ROCK PROJECTIVE BARRIER

EXISTING JEEP ROAD (TO BE IMPROVED)

POSSIBLE FUTURE CATTLE GUARD



APPROX. 360 FEET



Pinhook Battleground Monument
 At the head of Castle Valley
 Grand County, Utah

UTM Reference:
 12/646750/4270800

ILA SAL (UNCTION)
 4100 W
 SCALE 1:62500

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

GRAND CO
 SAN JUAN CO
 651000 E

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

1 2 3 4 MILES