

# COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

**SECTION I**

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**Name of Property**

Historic Name Garden Park School

Other Names \_\_\_\_\_

**Address of Property**

address not for publication

Street Address 5800 Garden Park Road

City Canon City vicinity County Fremont Zip 81212

**Present Owner of Property**

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name State Land Board- Contact: Kit Page

Address P.O. Box 88 Phone (719) 589-2360

City Alamosa State Colorado Zip 81001

**Owner Consent for Nomination**

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

**Preparer of Nomination**

Name Charlotte Bumgarner Date August 28, 2008

Organization Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway

Address 6778 County Road 102 Phone (719) 689-2461

City Guffey State Colorado Zip 80820

<p><b>FOR OFFICIAL USE:</b></p> <p><u>8/28/2008</u> Nomination Received</p> <p><u>11-14-2008</u> Review Board Recommendation  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approval <input type="checkbox"/> Denial</p>	<p>Site Number <u>5FN.2192</u></p> <p>Senate # _____ House # _____</p> <p><u>11-20-2008</u> CHS Board State Register Listing  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied</p> <p>Listing Criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E</p>
<p><b>Certification of Listing:</b> President, Colorado Historical Society <span style="float: right;">Date _____</span></p>	

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Garden Park School

**SECTION II**

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**Local Historic Designation**

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes ---  individually designated  designated as part of a historic district

Date designated \_\_\_\_\_

Designated by \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of municipality or county)

**Use of Property**

Historic EDUCATION/ school; SOCIAL/ meeting hall

Current VACANT/ not in use

**Original Owner** State Land Board

Source of Information Copy of Indenture/ lease; Interview with Kit Page, State Land Board

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**Year of Construction** 1895

Source of Information Royal Gorge Regional History Center; article by Bonny Walker; Superintendent's Report.

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**Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer** local residents

Source of Information Royal Gorge Regional History Center; Garth Mellick, descendent of one of the builders; article by Bonny Walter.

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**Locational Status**

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION III**

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**Description and Alterations**

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

# COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name Garden Park School

## SECTION IV

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### Significance of Property

#### Nomination Criteria

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

#### Areas of Significance

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education          | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology – prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Law                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology – historic             | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/ Recreation     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage               | <input type="checkbox"/> Military                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/ Settlement       | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/ Community Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/ Government      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning and Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine               | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social History |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |

### Significance Statement

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

### Bibliography

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

## SECTION V

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### Locational Information

Lot(s) N/A Block N/A Addition N/A

USGS Topographic Quad Map Copper Mountain

### Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES**

Property Name Garden Park School

**SECTION VI**

**Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs**

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

**SECTION VII**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION**

**Owner Consent Form**

**Black and White Photographs**

**Color Prints or Digital Images**

**Sketch Map(s)**

**Photocopy of USGS Map Section**

**Optional Materials**

**Use of Nomination Materials**

Upon submission to the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, all nomination forms and supporting materials become public records pursuant to CRS Title 24, and may be accessed, copied, and used for personal or commercial purposes in accordance with state law unless otherwise specifically exempted. The Colorado Historical Society may reproduce, publish, display, perform, prepare derivative works or otherwise use the nomination materials for Society and/or State Register purposes.

**For Office Use Only**

Property Type:  building(s)  district  site  structure  object  area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Other: Rural Schoolhouse

Period of Significance: 1895-1961

Level of Significance:  Local  State  National

Multiple Property Submission: Rural School Buildings in Colorado

Acreage one (1)

P.M. 6th Township 17S Range 70W Section 16 Quarter Sections SW SW NW SE

UTM Reference: Zone 13 Easting 479996 Northing 4268353 NAD27

Site Elevation: 6018 feet

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

Property Name Garden Park School

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## DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

The Garden Park School is located approximately nine miles north of Cañon City on Garden Park Road in Fremont County. The rural school sits in a one acre fenced off section on slightly elevated ground at a prominent bend in the road. This central location made it easy for students and ranching families to reach. The red of the canyon walls and the green of the pine trees surround the school and provide a beautiful setting when looking in all directions. Only the road gives any hint of civilization nearby. Integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, materials, workmanship, and design remain intact. The building has been vacant since it closed in 1961.

Upon crossing the road, an intact concrete stile allowed children to dismount from their horses without ending up in the ditch as well as provide access through fenced parcels (see photo 9). The school faces south and is the only remaining building on the parcel. At one point a stable/barn and privies served the students; these are no longer standing. A cistern, now covered, stored water for the school; a horse drawn water tank brought the water to the cistern. Playground equipment consisting of a teeter totter, swings, and a slide were removed some time after consolidation. A baseball diamond once provided a place for ball games and other outdoor activities.

The one-story building is a typical one room school with a rectangular plan, front gabled wood shingle roof, central entry into a single classroom, and four 2/2 double hung segmental arch windows on each side (east and west). The foundation and exterior walls consist of sun-dried (adobe) bricks made with local clay from nearby Oil Creek. Stucco covers the brick walls in irregular patches and lies on the ground where it has separated from the walls. A wood cornice board, missing in places, runs around the entire building. A flat board that spans almost the entire width of the façade is attached above the doorway; its purpose is unclear, though it might have been placed as an attempt to deter the stucco separation. Decorative fishscale and diamond wood shingles cover the gable faces. A stucco covered chimney stands on the east wall, between the second and third windows.

Windows on either side are covered with corrugated metal panels to prevent further vandalism. These metal panels came from the former stable/barn. A wood door is accessed by a set of six concrete steps with a metal handrail down the center. Concrete side walls flank the steps and entry. A segmental arched transom sits above the door. Though not readily visible, an at-grade door on the western portion of the south façade wall provides access to the partial basement which runs along the west side of the building; this room served as storage for wood and coal used to heat the classroom. A coal chute can be seen at grade on the rear wall (north) and is covered with a board. An electrical box with wires running to it is placed on the rear wall; one light exists on the east wall while the remains of a light fixture project above the main entry.

The interior is in poor shape, having been vandalized over the years. Consisting of a single room, the area features wood wainscoting, chalkboards, and wood flooring, all original. An enclosed stairwell in the southwest corner provides access to the partial basement, used for storage of coal and wood. It is covered with beadboard and has an entrance into the classroom on its east wall. This door appears to have been a wood glazed door, though the glass upper pane and bottom wood panels are gone. Long boards attached horizontally to the rear of the classroom (along the entry wall) retain their coat hooks. A false ceiling was installed at an unknown date, but recent vandalism revealed the original 13'6" stucco covered ceiling above.

Minimal alterations have taken place during the life of the school. Though not original, the stucco

**Property Name** Garden Park School

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application occurred circa 1916-17 in an effort to deal with the failing sun-dried brick and was done during the period of significance. Due to continuing problems with the stucco and brick, in August 2007 a temporary buttress was erected to stabilize the west wall which exhibits the greatest deterioration. A historic photo dating to 1930 shows the concrete steps and side walls at the front entry already in place (see photo H3). Some original windows remain intact and can be seen from the inside, though they are covered on the outside with the metal panels. One window lost its corrugated metal panel and is now covered with a metal grate. It is unclear when the chimney moved from the west wall to the east wall, but it seems to be related to a switch from a wood or coal burning stove to some type of heater box that connected to an outside tank. Electricity came to the school in 1951, just 10 years before consolidation.

Although archaeological testing has not been performed at the site, the long period of use and the lack of surface disturbance increases the probability that there is the existence of archaeological deposits which may provide important site information.

Property Name Garden Park School

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### SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Built over a two year period to replace a wood schoolhouse destroyed by fire, the Garden Park School meets the registration requirements of the schoolhouse property type as defined in the *Rural School Buildings in Colorado* Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). Schoolhouses are associated with the influence of formal education on the development of rural and isolated settlements. These buildings provide physical evidence about the conditions of rural education in Colorado in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is therefore eligible to the State Register under Criterion A in the area of **Education**. The Garden Park School served as the educational center of this rural area from its occupancy in 1895 until consolidation forced its closure in 1961, with these dates as the period of significance for Education.

As the only public building for miles in all directions, the Garden Park School served as an important outlet for social gatherings such as "literaries," dances, Sunday school, and theater productions. It is eligible through the MPDF under Criterion A in the area of **Social History** with a period of significance of 1895 to 1961.

Finally, through the MPDF, the school is eligible under Criterion C for significance in the area of **Architecture** as it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the building type. The building displays such elements as a rectangular plan, front gabled roof, tall narrow windows on each side and a single classroom. Though some changes have been made, they were done during the period of significance. Viewing the school from a distance, its original use is easily discernable. The period of significance for Architecture is the year the school was completed and ready for use – 1895.

The Garden Park School is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of **Architecture** for its method of construction. After losing the first school, constructed of wood, to fire in 1891, the locals chose to use a less flammable material. They built this new school with abundant local materials, using clay from Oil Creek for the foundation and making adobe bricks for the walls. It took nearly two years to complete the school. Local rancher Luther Langford stuccoed the exterior walls in 1916 and 1917, a typical treatment for adobe which was susceptible to deterioration from the elements. With the loss of some of the stucco in recent years, the original adobe bricks are clearly visible. Again, the period of significance is 1895.

### Historical Background

Named after the celebrated explorer John C. Fremont, Fremont County was one of the original counties in Colorado Territory, formed in 1861. Creation of subsequent counties in the years before and after statehood in 1876 reduced the size of the county to its current size. As the county seat, Cañon City was a busy town and already housed a prison facility built in 1870 at the time of its incorporation in 1872.

In the late 1860s many homesteaders were attracted to the rich valley known as Garden Park, north of Cañon City. This lush valley sits amongst wondrous mountains and was perfect for many forms of agriculture. Apple trees did very well and soon orchards covered the fields adjacent to Oil Creek.

During the Cripple Creek Gold Rush, Garden Park benefited from supplying produce and beef to thousands of gold seekers flooding the area. Cripple Creek was one of the world's largest and most well known gold fields. Cripple Creek, however, was a latecomer to mining activity in the state, not being discovered until 1891. Development of the mines was also slow, with larger mining operations

Property Name Garden Park School

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not being set up until a couple of years after the initial discovery. The discovery of gold made it a high priority to link the Cripple Creek and Victor Mining District to the cities of the Front Range and Arkansas Valley. Roads, and shortly thereafter, railroads, carried construction materials, food, clothing, coal, ore, and people to and from the mining towns. Construction of a toll road from Cañon City to Cripple Creek, through the Garden Park area, provided a route for stage coaches, freight wagons, and those traveling on horseback. Tolls along the Shelf Road ranged from \$.30 for a horse and rider to \$1.75 for a six-horse stagecoach. Funded by Cañon City businessmen, the road opened in 1892 taking six hours to get upgrade and four hours downgrade. With multiple railroads arriving in 1894, Cripple Creek was a prosperous mining town. The mining district saw great activity for two decades before slowing down. The ranchers and farmers flourished during those years, being one of the main suppliers of food for the miners and their families.

Under the Colorado Territorial government the formation of school districts established a three member board consisting of a President, Secretary and Treasurer who were authorized to hire teachers and collect taxes for the operation of the district. New school districts formed rapidly during this period and the first school district for Fremont County, District No.1, was organized in Cañon City in 1866.

School District No. 5, originally called Oil Creek, was established in June 1869; this district was later known as Garden Park. The first teacher, Eva Serena Sadoris, boarded in the community and was considered part of the family. Typical of the time period, Miss Sadoris was single because married women were not allowed to teach in the district until 1934. The first school in the Garden Park District sat about a quarter of a mile from the current school in a draw by Oil Creek that boasted the name of "Schoolhouse Gulch". The average number of students in attendance at this school from 1889 to 1891 was 28 students. This school burned down in 1891, creating a need for building a new schoolhouse. Taking two years to complete, construction of the school began in 1893 with the building of a foundation with clay from nearby Oil Creek. Families of students who would attend the school assisted in the production of bricks, using local clay and setting them out in the sun to dry. The school officially opened in 1895 with 48 students. Sometime around 1916, in an effort to avoid deterioration of the adobe bricks, local resident Luther Langford stuccoed the exterior.

As indicated by the school census records, the average number of students in attendance for the years 1889 to 1936 was 26 students. Many names on those rolls, including Freek, Tomlinson, Sage, and Chess, were prominent members of the community who made the area famous for its produce and cattle. There are some families still in the area today who have connections to those pioneer families.

Most of the students who attended were country kids and they sometimes had to help out their families, even if that meant missing school. Students were not always able to attend school for a full day and harvest time would cause most to be absent for several days. Mrs. Helen (Chess) Shoemaker, a long-time resident who attended Garden Park School as did her parents and children, remembers her uncles telling her of kids in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade as old as 21. The school rosters seem to prove this true.

As stated in the *Rural School Buildings in Colorado Multiple Property Submission*, "Schoolhouses were often no more than two or three miles apart, .... Parents did not want their children travelling too far or traversing dangerous terrain." In the Garden Park area, however, some students lived approximately seven miles from the school. While many walked, others rode horses every day, their lunches carried from home in a paper sack or old lard bucket. Lunch was a time for games; even the teacher participated from time to time. Reportedly one of the favorite games early on was "Guards and Convicts" where the kids divided into half and the convicts escaped into a wide area, making the guards hunt them down. Swings, a teeter totter, and a slide were installed, and a small baseball diamond laid out; frequently played popular games of the



Property Name Garden Park School

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day included "Kick-the-Can" and "Ringer."

According to former student Helen (Chess) Shoemaker the school year started the day after Labor Day and ended in the middle of May, with time out as needed or harvesting or storms. The school year always ended with a community picnic. An article from the *Cañon City Daily Record* on February 5, 1883, states that the school closed after a four month term. The teacher at the time was Mr. H. Newberry. The article goes on to report that, "The district is small and hence for want of funds, can never have more than from four to six months school during the year." Patrons and friends attending the end of term exercises were quite pleased with the students' progress, so the shortened school term didn't appear to have a negative impact on their education.

As noted in many first hand accounts of long-time residents the school house was the focal point of the Garden Park community, serving as dance hall, church gathering space, and meeting place. An April 25, 1979, article in the *Fremont County Sun* mentions Eric Freek remembering "that the building was used for 'litararies,' dances, and Sunday school." An April 28, 1926, article in the *Cañon City Daily Record* notes: "The dance given at the school house Friday night by Ed Higgins and Coleman Spurgeon was well attended." The same article also recaps a recent baseball game on the school grounds. "The Garden Park ball team played the Cañon City high school team on the Garden Park diamond. The score was 10 to 6 in favor of the Garden Park team."

During the late 1950s, before the school closed, attendance dropped down to five students in all grades combined. Sometimes they took their lunches over to nearby Red Canyon Park or went on field trips into Cañon City. Even in those waning days a student occasionally could be found riding his/her horse to school. One of those last students, Janice (Shoemaker) Zeiler, is now a principal in a Cañon City school, indicating that students received a good education.

Garden Park School was used continuously until 1961 when consolidation forced the closure of many rural schools; students were then bussed the 10 miles into Cañon City. Even with its closure, the building stands as a prominent landmark on a bend in Garden Park Road, part of the Gold Belt Tour Byway. Over the years many people have tried to preserve the building with minimal success. In the last five-plus years the community has taken a renewed interest in the preservation of the school. Efforts have been made to secure the building in order to stop vandalism and two engineering studies were completed in order to evaluate the stucco separation and sagging west wall, and a search to find a new use for the building. Some ideas discussed recently include storage for the local volunteer fire crew, neighborhood gathering spot, local polling place or local geology/ history education center.

Property Name Garden Park School

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Doggett, Suzanne and Holly Wilson. *Rural School Buildings in Colorado Multiple Property Submission*. Denver, CO: Colorado Historical Society, 1999.

"Garden Park." *Canon City Daily Record*, 28 April 1926.

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Larscheid, Bonnie. *Drennan School* National Register nomination form, 5EP.4967. On file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society, October 2007.

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Mendinghall, Joseph Scott. *Cripple Creek Historic District* National Historic Landmark nomination form, 5TL.2. On file at the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society. 1975.

Rautenstrauss, Kent. "Garden Park School lives only through Memories." *Fremont County Sun*, 25 April 1979, p. 13.

Shoemaker, Helen Chess. Telephone interview by Charlotte Bumgarner, 20 October 2007.

Walter, Bonny. "Reminiscence, Garden Park School." *Cañon City Daily Record*, 10 June 2004.

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Wolfe, Doris and Leah Quesenberry. *Exploring Colorado's Roads to Riches*. Gold Belt Tour National Scenic Byway, 2004.

Zeiler, Janice Shoemaker. Telephone interview by Peggy Sorenson, 15 September 2008.

Property Name Garden Park School

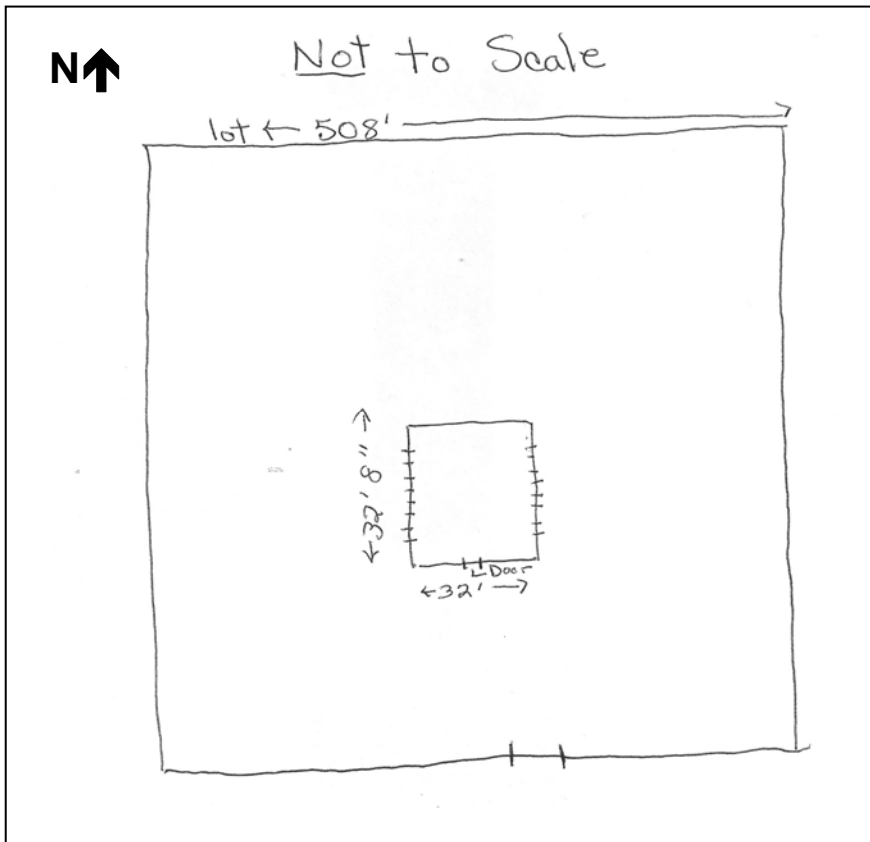
**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

A piece of land two hundred and eight and fifty two hundredths (208.52) feet square taken out of: the NW quarter of the South East quarter of Section 16, Township 17 South, Range 70 west, 6<sup>th</sup> PM in Fremont County.

More particularly described as follows: Beginning at a point 165 feet North of the South West quarter of said above subdivision, on the West boundary line thereof, thence running North 208.52 feet, thence East 208.52 feet, thence South 208.52 feet, thence West 208.52 feet to place of beginning, Containing one (1) acre more or less.

**Site Plan**



**Property Name** Garden Park School

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### **PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-12:

Photographer: Chris Geddes/ Peggy Sorenson  
Date of Photographs: July 30, 2008/ August 30, 2007  
Negatives: digital images

Photo No.                      Photographic Information

- 1 Oblique/ overview, camera facing northeast
- 2 West wall, camera facing east
- 3 North (rear) wall, camera facing southwest
- 4 East wall, camera facing southwest
- 5 Close up of east wall, camera facing west
- 6 Close up of south façade and entry, camera facing north
- 7 Oblique of south façade, camera facing northwest
- 8 Close up of sun dried brick
- 9 Stile south of school, camera facing east
- 10 Setting, camera facing north
- 11 Interior- north wall
- 12 Interior- southwest corner of classroom showing stairwell to partial basement

### **PHOTOGRAPH LOG - HISTORIC**

These photographs may not be included in Internet posted documents and other publishing venues due to copyright restrictions.

H1: A small group of students stand in front of the Garden Park School, pre-1916. Photo courtesy of Garth Mellick.

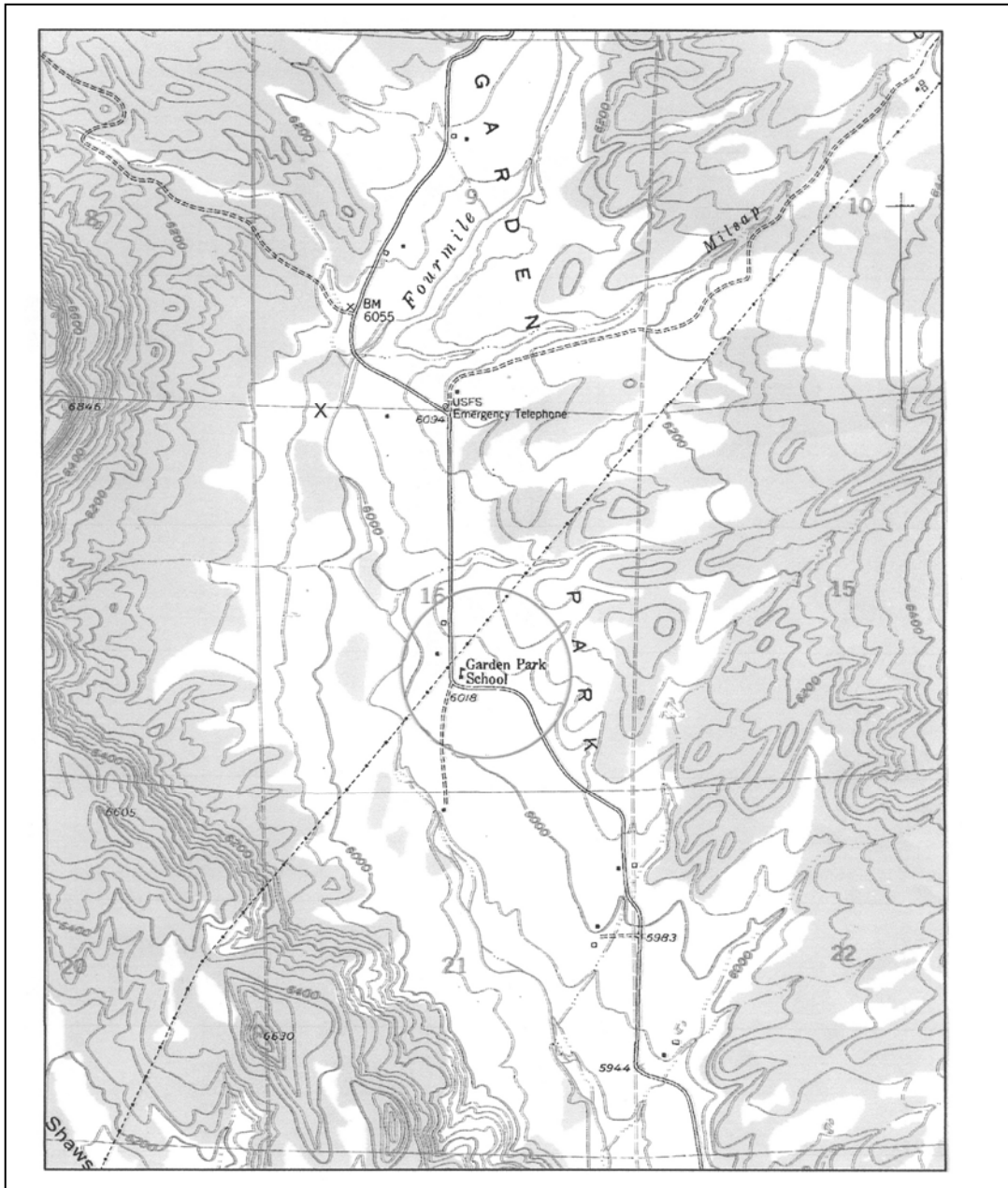
H2: A large group of students stand in front of the Garden Park School. Photo courtesy of the Royal Gorge Regional Museum and History Center.

H3: Three students outside the Garden Park School in 1930. From left to right are: Verl Freek, Helen Chess (now Shoemaker), and right Roy Canterbury. Note that the concrete steps and sidewalks in place. Photo courtesy of Helen Chess Shoemaker.

H4: Garden Park School in 1961. Student second from left is Janice Shoemaker (now Zeiler). The younger girl and boy in the hat are also Shoemaker children. Photo courtesy of Helen Chess Shoemaker.

Property Name Garden Park School

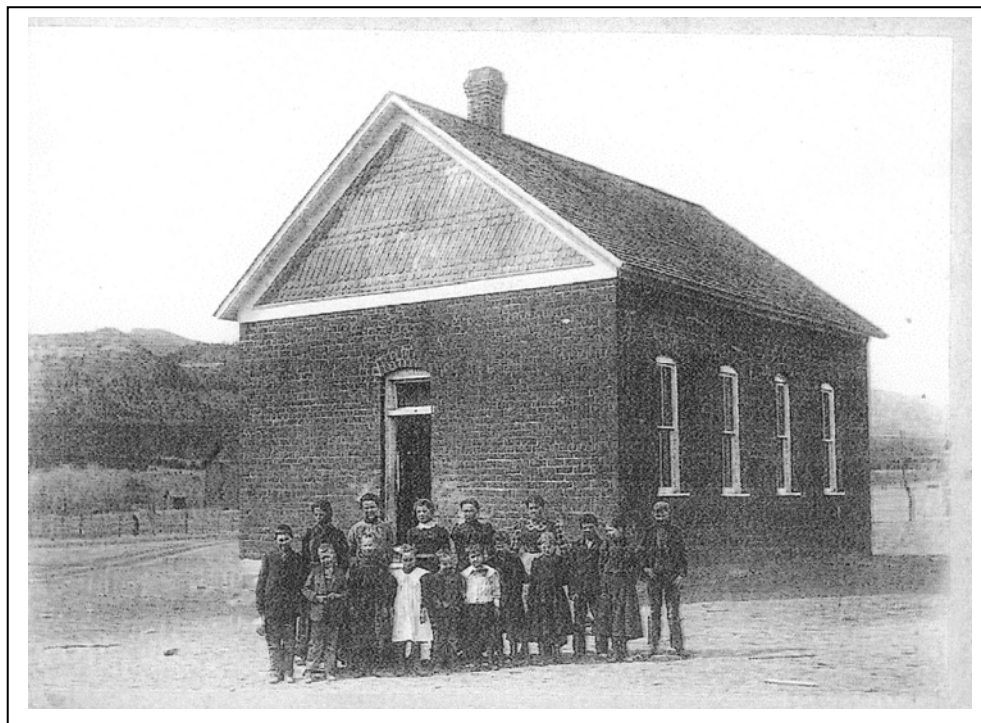
**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Cooper Mountain Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series



Property Name Garden Park School

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**PHOTOGRAPHS - HISTORIC**



H1: A small group of students stand in front of the Garden Park School, pre-1916.



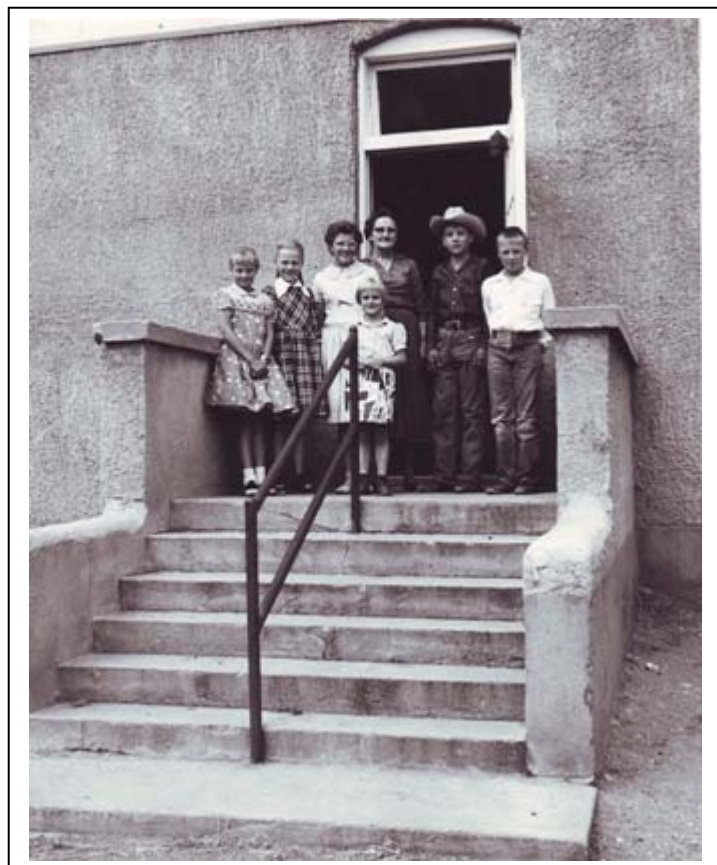
H2: A large group of students stand in front of the Garden Park School. Pre-1916.

Property Name Garden Park School

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H3: Three students outside the Garden Park School in 1930. From left to right are: Verl Freek, Helen Chess (now Shoemaker), and Roy Canterbury. Note that the concrete steps and sidewalls are in place.



H4: Garden Park School in 1961. Student second from left is Janice Shoemaker (now Zeiler). The younger girl and boy in the hat are also Shoemaker children.