Pinon Canyon
(Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site)
Purgatoire River Area
Model Vicinity
Las Animas County
Colorado

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPY OF MEASURED DRAWING

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PINON CANYON

(PINON CANYON MANEUVER SITE)

HABS No. CO-96

For information about other structures at Pinon Canyon, see:

- HABS No. CO-89 Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead
- HABS No. CO-90 Samuel Taylor Brown's Sheep Ranch
- HABS No. CO-91 Eugene Rourke Ranch
- HABS No. CO-92 Asa T. Haines Homestead
- HABS No. CO-93 John Sanders Cross Homestead
- HABS No. CO-94 Moses B. Stevens Homestead
- HABS No. CO-95 Mary Doyle Homestead

Location: Location contains 380 square miles bordered by the Purgatoire River on the east, Cedar Hills on the west, Black Hills on the north, and the Hogback on the south. Model vicinity, Las Animas County, Colorado.

Present Owner/Occupant: The Department of the Army.

Present Use: Mechanized army training maneuvers.

Significance: The history of settlement of the Pinon Canyon area in southeastern Colorado can be considered a microcosm of settlement in the American West. Pinon Canyon area saw traders and trappers, Indian removal, mining, cattle drives, stage lines, the coming of the railroads, open range ranching, conflicts between sheep and cattle men, homesteaders and a compromise between land users and the land. The region also contains the beauty of the American West. The cliche of wide-open spaces is an apt description for some of the areas in southeastern Colorado. Other areas contain ruggedly beautiful canyons and arroyos that can easily be
compared to the more well known natural wonders in the West. As in other areas of the West, the environment is both beautiful and harsh.

Pinon Canyon, bordered on the east by the Purgatoire River, comprises 380 square miles between La Junta and Trinidad. Ranging from elevations of 5,000 to 5,800 feet, the area possesses several different geographical areas. Looked at clockwise, the western border has broad, rolling prairie thinly covered with short grass vegetation. Hills, dotted primarily with Juniper and Pinon, rise and break the monotony of the plain. The big Arroyo Hills are found to the northeast of the property; two other areas of hills along the northern border are known as Cedar Hill and Black Hills, respectively. Draining the prairie located in the center of the property are several steep canyons and arroyos which run west towards the Purgatoire River. From the north, the arroyos include Minnie Canyon, Bent Canyon, Red Rock Canyon, Lockwood Arroyo, Taylor Arroyo, and Van Bremer Arroyo. The rough and broken country flattens into bottom lands at the river. The southwestern border of Pinon Canyon is defined by the Hogback, a nine-mile long upthrust of basalt. Some springs exist in the area, but the ever present Cholla and Prickly Pear cactus reinforces the fact that the area is extremely arid, averaging less than fifteen inches of precipitation per year.

Because of the land's aridity, settlement proved to be a risky undertaking. A few successes were tempered by the many failures. The land in southeastern Colorado dictates its use and the settlers and homesteaders who recognized that use were most successful. The seven existent historic homesteads in the Pinon Canyon area of Las Animas County were all cattle or sheep ranches. The original settlers of the homesteads, the Rourke family and Eugene Rourke's sister Mary Doyle, the Arnet family, Thomas Hughes, Asa Haines, Moses Stevens, and Underwood Rogers all quickly realized that the land could be best used for grazing. Moreover, most of them understood that 160

1Although other homesteads and ranches survive, Robin Haynes's and Beverly Bastian's Historical Architectural Evaluation of 49 sites in the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, (Denver, 1987) determined they lacked sufficient physical or informational integrity, or historical significance, to be listed on the National Register of Historic places. For a list of the ineligible sites, see pages 4-2 to 4-18.

2Of the six homesteads for which homestead applications are obtainable, only Underwood Rogers attempted farming; eight acres were planted with corn, beans, and pumpkins. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Certificate No. 2563 filed by Underwood Rogers of Trinidad, Colorado in 1882 and patented on March 19, 1887, by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office. The Thomas Hughes application is missing. Adam Arnet, a more representative homesteader, stated in his testimony to have his claim approved, "there is no cultivatable land on any part of the entry for the reasons that it is too steep, mountainous, and rocky
acres could not sustain them and that additional grazing land would be needed for their survival.

American settlement in the Purgatoire River drainage of southeastern Colorado came relatively late, but the region is rich in history. First controlled by the Spaniards and then by the Mexicans after 1821, the area was little explored and settlement virtually non-existent under the Hispanics. The first Americans who came into the area did so not to settle, but were merely passing through on their way to the northern New Mexican settlements to take advantage of the markets that had opened after Mexico overthrew Spanish rule. The Santa Fe Trail and the opening of the Santa Fe trade marked the beginning of American influence in the area.

The profitable Santa Fe trade became a magnet to American traders, and more and more became involved, utilizing the Santa Fe Trail, a portion of which passed through southeastern Colorado. Known as the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail, the route generally followed the Arkansas River upstream, then went south between the Purgatoire River and Timpas Creek, eventually going through Raton Pass into New Mexico. Improved through the years, the rugged and difficult path became the main route into the New Mexican settlements. In 1846, the U.S. acquired a considerable amount of land from Mexico, including what would become southeastern Colorado.

The years between 1848 and 1858 saw little if any settlement in the area. What finally prompted permanent settlement in the area was the discovery of gold in the Colorado Rockies in 1858. Gold lured many people into the region and new towns and cities sprang up, including Denver. By 1861, the mines had attracted enough people into the region that Congress

\[\text{...and rough and is valuable for grazing only.} \] National Archives. Serial No., 08232, Homestead Patent No. 461786, filed by the Heirs of Marguerite Arnet of Thatcher, Colorado, and patented January 23, 1915, by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office.


4 Paul Friedman, History and Oral History Studies of the Fort Carson-Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area, Las Animas County, Colorado, (Denver, 1985): 40-41.

established Colorado Territory. Although most people settled north of the Arkansas River, a few trickled into southern Colorado. Some were disillusioned miners hoping to start over, others realized that the area of the Purgatoire River drainage could be farmed and surpluses sold to the newly formed mining camps and towns. Hispanics arrived first and began raising sheep in the area, selling wool to the newly opened markets. Although sheep were the first introduced livestock in the area, cattle quickly followed. Cattle began to be driven to the mining camps as early as 1859. Although most came from Texas, some later came from newly established ranches along the Purgatoire River, marking the beginning of the cattle industry in the area.

By 1859, several Hispanics from New Mexico were living in what would shortly become Trinidad, Colorado. A few Anglos also began moving into the area in the early 1860s, but a majority of the settlers in the early period were Hispanic. One of the leaders of the Hispanic migration into the area was Felipe Baca. Baca, from Mora County, New Mexico, first came through the Trinidad area in 1860 on the way to Denver to deliver some goods. He realized that the bottom lands along the Purgatoire River could be ideal for growing crops. In 1861, he returned to the area to farm. His venture successful, he returned to Mora County in order to persuade other families to follow him to the Purgatoire River Valley. Convinced by Baca, twelve families agreed to return with him and arrived in the valley in 1862. The Baca group’s success in the early 1860s prompted other Hispanic families from New Mexico to settle in the area, making the Hispanics the dominant group.

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6 Friedman, History and Oral History of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area, 61.
By 1862, the population in the Purgatoire River Valley had increased to such an extent that a group of Hispanics and Anglos founded the city of Trinidad. In 1866, the city was incorporated and shortly after became the seat of newly created Las Animas County. Trinidad, acting as a magnet, attracted even more settlers into the area.\textsuperscript{11}

One of the most prominent Hispanic families that settled early in the Pinon Canyon Area were the Cordovas, who homesteaded land just east of the Purgatoire River on both sides of Chacuaco Creek.\textsuperscript{12} Arriving in 1867, Juan and Antonio Cordova received patents on their land in 1873.\textsuperscript{13} Other early Hispanic settlers included Damacio Lopez and his family. The Lopezes, along with eleven other families, settled near the mouth of the northernmost ravine, Minnie Canyon, along the Purgatoire River bottom lands.\textsuperscript{14} While a majority of the early settlers in Pinon Canyon were Hispanic, some Anglos also homesteaded in the area. Isaac Van Bremer established a homestead in 1861 along the arroyo eventually named after him. A sheep rancher, he eventually became one of the most prominent citizens in the area.\textsuperscript{15} Eugene Rourke, originally from Ireland, came to Colorado by way of Illinois hoping to strike it rich in the gold fields, but became disillusioned and moved to the Purgatoire River area in 1869. Rourke established a homestead at the mouth of Bent Canyon and became a cattle rancher. His family's tenure in the area was the longest of any of the early settlers.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{11}Morris F. Taylor, \textit{Trinidad, Colorado Territory}, (Pueblo, 1966), 24-25, 43.

\textsuperscript{12}This location is just outside the United States Department of the Army's Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site. Chacuaco Canyon drains into the Purgatoire River from the east just south of Bent Canyon, which flows from the west.

\textsuperscript{13}Taylor, \textit{Trinidad, Colorado}, 58.

\textsuperscript{14}Morris F. Taylor, \textit{Pioneers of the Picketwire}, (Pueblo, 1964), 9.

\textsuperscript{15}"One Hundred Year Old Scout Dies After Eventful Career," \textit{Rocky Mountain News}, December 1, 1902; "Colorado Pioneer Dies Over One Hundred Year Mark," \textit{Denver Times}, November 29, 1902.

\textsuperscript{16}Friedman, \textit{History and Oral History of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site}, 74, 76.
Although living in essentially the same environment, the subsistence and settlement patterns of the early Hispanic and Anglo settlers differed to some extent. In the Hispanic's case, several families or a group of relatives would homestead on adjoining land, usually located on a permanent water source. Irrigation ditches would be dug and small plots of land would be planted with subsistence crops that occasionally produced a surplus. Some stock was raised, usually sheep with an occasional cow. All work on the adjoining homesteads would be communal, so that there was a sense of community involvement on the Hispanic homesteads. Examples of communal Hispanic settlements include those founded by Felipe Baca, the Cordova brothers, and the Lopezes. The Anglo settlers, on the other hand, selected relatively isolated homesteads near a source of water. By so doing, they were able to take advantage of the surrounding unpatented and uncorralled federal lands stock grazing purposes.

In addition to the impetus provided by gold mining, the removal of various American Indian tribes from Pinon Canyon by the 1870s encouraged permanent settlement. Although the Purgatoire River area seemed uninhabited or even uninhabitable to early travellers of the region, various American Indian tribes had long resided in the area. The predominant tribes in the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s were the Utes and the Jicarilla Apaches. Threatened with displacement and scarcer game as more and more Hispanics and Anglos settled the land, the tribes retaliated with increased raids. Through a series of treaties, the Tabeguache Utes and all of the Jicarilla Apaches were removed from the Purgatoire River area by 1868. The Mouache Utes, even though peaceful, were removed from the area in 1878. While the Utes were relatively peaceful by the mid-1860s, other tribes began raiding the area. The Cheyennes and Arapahoes, from east central Colorado made forays into the area, especially after the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864. The Kiowas and Comanches, from Texas and Oklahoma, occasionally stole stock from the area.

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17 Paul Friedman, in Valley of lost Souls: A History of the Pinon Canyon Region of Southeastern Colorado (Denver, 1989), 28-29, writes that one local historian believed that there were some twenty-seven plazas founded on the Purgatoire River in the 1860s.


during this period, but by 1876 the area was relatively devoid of Native Americans.  

The Barlow and Sanderson stage line also helped stimulate settlement during the early 1870s. After receiving the contract to carry mail to Santa Fe in 1866, the Barlow and Sanderson Company generally followed the route used by previous contractors, which followed the old Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. In 1871, the company opened a new route that roughly paralleled the Purgatoire River. As the population near the river increased, the stage company wanted to take advantage of the business opportunities that the area promised. This route stayed in place for approximately five years until the Denver and Rio Grande railroad reached the vicinity of Trinidad. Business then decreased on the route and Barlow and Sanderson closed the line in 1876. Throughout the 1870s, population in the area steadily increased. The community at Bent Canyon, founded in 1867, had a population of approximately 450 by 1874. This widespread community ranged from Lockwood Canyon north to Minnie Canyon and included both banks of the Purgatoire River along with the Chacuaco Creek drainage. This area was homesteaded by many of the early settlers because of its many permanent water sources.

Beginning in the late 1870s, a change occurred; population in the area began to decline. By 1882 the population of Bent Canyon had decreased to 200. One explanation was that the land was unable to sustain many of the homesteaders. The early settlers had taken up the best land and later arrivals in the area had only marginal land from which to choose. These late arrivals began to fail. Most of the marginal land had only intermittent water during the year. This, coupled with the fact that an individual could only claim 160 acres under the Homestead Act of 1862, brought ruin to many homesteaders. For all its promise, 160 acres of semi-arid southeastern Colorado land could not support a homesteading family. As those homesteaders began to fail, the early settlers, the ones who had permanent water sources on their land, began buying the failed or failing homesteads. As the population

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23M. Beshoar, All About Trinidad and Las Animas County, Colorado, (Denver, 1882), 74-75.
decreased in the area, land holdings by individuals increased. Weather proved to be another factor that hurried the demise of many homesteads. In 1886, an extremely dry summer was followed by a harsh winter. The conditions not only hurt the small homesteads, but some of the larger homesteads as well.

By the late 1880s, the Hispanic population had decreased and Anglos had become the dominant group. This occurred not through Anglo population growth, but by the departure of many Hispanics. The above mentioned factors devastated the Hispanics, who were essentially subsistence farmers, allowing the Anglo cattle and sheep ranchers to aggressively acquire land. Several historic Anglo homesteads were founded during this period. Underwood Rogers (HABS No. CO-90), Asa T. Haines (HABS NO. CO-92), and Moses Stevens (HABS No. CO-94) were all single stock-ranchers who established homesteads in the 1880s. These men constructed stables for their cattle and horses in addition to the residences typically built by homesteaders as improvements to their claim.

Ironically, while many homesteads west of the Purgatoire River were failing, new settlers began pouring into the area east of the River. The settlement was promoted by several railroads, including the Colorado and Southern, the Ft. Worth and Denver, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, and others who were considering running new lines through the area. Several new

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25 Maurice W. Frink, W. Turrentine Jackson, and Agnes Wright Spring, When Grass Was King, (Boulder, 1956), 96-100.

26 Las Animas County Assessment Rolls 1880, 1882, 1884, 1886, 1888 and 1890. Las Animas County Courthouse, Trinidad, Colorado.

27 Roger's homestead is located at the east end of the Hogback, on the same site as the Barlow and Sanderson stage stop known as the Hogback Stage Station. Haines's ranch is found at the head of Lockwood Arroyo, and Steven's site is perched above Red Rocks Canyon.

28 See Underwood Rogers, previous cite; Certificate No. 3651 filed by Asa T. Haines of Bent Canyon, Colorado, and patented on March 29, 1889 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office; Certificate No. 4107 filed by Moses B. Stevens of Las Animas County, Colorado in 1886 and patented on March 5, 1890 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office.
towns were founded in Las Animas County in 1887 and land speculation was rampant. Unfortunately, the agricultural utopia that the railroads promoted did not exist in southern Colorado. Many of the new homesteads began leaving the area after 1888, and 1889 proved to be an extremely dry year. The end of the boom came with the national depression of the early 1890s.  

It was apparent that survival in the area depended on raising stock on extensive ranches. The last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century, saw the large ranches, both sheep and cattle, acquire more and more land. As the ranches expanded, more stock was grazed on the open range, deterring new homesteaders. Small Anglo homesteads were purchased by larger-scale ranchers seeking to expand their operations. Ranchers Samuel Brown, Kelsey Cross, and Lewis Swink purchased the Rogers' (HABS No CO-90), Haines' (HABS No. CO-92), and Stevens' homesteads (HABS No. CO-94), respectively. Brown, Cross, and Swink would eventually own several hundred acres each by the turn of the century.

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Land could be obtained in other ways. Eugene Rourke (HABS NO. CO-91), one of the earliest settlers in Pinon Canyon, purchased land from his Hispanic

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30 Las Animas County Assessment Rolls 1890, 1900 and 1916. Las Animas County Courthouse, Trinidad, Colorado.

31 Underwood Rogers sold the NW 1/4 section of the SW 1/4 of Section 27, T30S, R60W, to Samuel Brown three days after he had purchased it in 1882. Las Animas County Records, Book 16, page 540. Asa Haines sold his property, known locally as the Bar VI Ranch, to Daniel Taylor, a Trinidad merchant and rancher, in 1888. The Bar VI Ranch was purchased from W.W. Taylor (the two were probably partners, but it is not known if they were related) by Kelsey Cross in 1899. Las Animas County Records, Book 108, page 64. Lewis Swink acquired Moses Steven's property in 1890. Las Animas County Records, Book 111, page 5. Las Animas County Courthouse, Trinidad, Colorado.

32 Samuel Taylor Brown, who began with a 40 acre tract of land in 1882, expanded his holdings to 3,100 acres by 1900 and owned 6,000 sheep. Las Animas County Assessment Rolls 1880, 1882, 1900, and 1910. Las Animas County Courthouse, Trinidad, Colorado.
laborers. He also acquired land by having various family members, including his son Harry, daughter Frances, and sister Mary Doyle (HABS No. CO-95) patent property. The Rourke family, which only owned 40 acres in 1880, had accumulated 3,900 acres by 1910, and possessed 395 head of cattle. Eugene Rourke's claim was distinctive in that it was filed under the Desert Land Act, which required the homesteader to irrigate his property.

Although the series of droughts and severe winters did contribute to the depopulation in the Purgatoire River area, tow other factors were also involved. In September, 1904, the Purgatoire River flooded, washing away many homesteads and communities along the river. The flood put an end to Damacio Lopez's community at the mouth of Ninne Canyon. Eugene Rourke's original homestead at the mouth of Bent Canyon was swept away, forcing him to move 3/4 of a mile up Bent Canyon to rebuild his home. The destructive flood forced many settlers to leave the areas, especially those who were just surviving.

Another factor that may have helped depopulate the area was the coal mining industry in Las Animas County. Major mining operations did not begin until the Denver and Rio Grande railroad reached the area in 1876. The Southern Colorado Coal and Town Company, a subsidiary of the Denver and Rio Grande railroad, opened several mines in the area. The company combined with the Colorado Coal and Iron Company by 1892. Along the mines, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company were also mining concerns in Las Animas County, although the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company was the largest by far. The employment opportunities that these companies offered may have been an attraction to may homesteaders on the verge of poverty in the area. Some perhaps sold out to expanding ranchers more readily with the knowledge that steady employment could be found within a short distance. By 1900, 8,000 men worked for the various mining companies in Las Animas County and many were probably failed homesteaders.

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33Friedman, History and Oral History of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area, 244, 245.

34Doyle sold the property to her brother for $200 on September 25, 1903, six months after the patent was approved. Las Animas County Records, Book 121, page 496. Las Animas County Courthouse, Trinidad, Colorado.


The period from the late 1890s to 1920 saw the Purgatoire River area used almost exclusively for open range stock raising. A few ranches dominated the industry through the years. The JJ ranch, established by Jones family in 1869, was headquartered at Nine-Mile Bottom, about 30 miles upstream from the mouth of the Purgatoire. By 1879, the ranch encompassed about 960,000 private and federal acres of rangelands in and around the Purgatoire River drainage, although only owning 180,000 acres. Possessing the deeds to the acreage that contained water allowed the ranch to control the huge parcel of land. The JJ Ranch was purchased by the Prairie Cattle Company, a group of Scottish investors in 1882. In 1890, the Prairie Cattle Company owned 7,000 head of cattle in Las Animas County alone. Another of the large cattle operations in the area was the Bloom Land and Cattle Company, headquartered in Thatcher., John and Mahlon Thatcher and Frank Bloom, prominent citizens of the area, founded the company in 1884. The Circle Diamond Ranch, owned by the Bloom Land and Cattle Company, became the major cattle operation in the Pinon Canyon area. Eugene Rourke also expanded to become one of the major cattle growers in the area. 37

Large sheep ranches also dotted the area, including the establishments of Samuel Taylor Brown, and Elisha Bell, another sheep rancher who owned 9,100 sheep in 1910. Brown, along with Edward West, a third prominent sheep rancher in Pinon Canyon, organized the Las Animas County Wool Growers Association in 1884, demonstrating the importance of the industry at that time. 38

The period from 1900 to 1910 was generally prosperous for stock raisers in the area. The populations had declined, so fewer people were vying for the open range, but events in Washington, D.C. would soon have a dramatic effect on the Purgatoire River area. Changes in the homesteading laws, permitting settlers to patent more acres, and new dry farming techniques, coincided with a tremendous influx of new homesteaders.

The people who homesteaded in the area up until 1909 utilized the Homestead Act of 1862 and the Desert Land Act of 1877 to acquire their land. A homesteader, applying for land under the Homestead Act of 1862 could receive up to 160 acres of land if residency and improvement requirements were met.


38 Las Animas County Assessment Rolls 1900 and 1910, Las Animas County Courthouse, Trinidad, Colorado; "Another Good Movement," Rocky Mountain News, February 5, 1884.
after five years. While 160 acres of land in the fertile Midwest would be enough to sustain a family, that same 160 acres in the semi-arid West would not. To correct this problem, Congress passed the Enlarged Homestead Act in 1909. This act enabled settlers in certain Western states, Colorado included, to claim up to 320 acres of non-irrigatable land for homesteads. The Enlarged Homestead Act was promoted from several quarters. The Western states and territories that would be affected but the new legislation not only wanted to increase settlement, but also wanted the new settlers to make better use of the land than the livestock growers. Railroads, land speculators, and town companies knew the potential profit of increased population and all supported the act. The introduction of dry farming techniques, which depended on rainfall, soiled moisture conservation nd the use of certain drought resistant crops, usually grasses and grains, contributed to the homesteading boom. Dry farming had proved to be successful in some Western states and was touted as a productive and efficient method of farming in the semi-arid West.  

Another piece of legislation that increased the number of settlers in to southeastern Colorado was the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916. The act stipulated that 640 acres, an entire section of land, without a known water source could be taken up by a homesteader for grazing cattle and raising fodder. Some improvements had to be made to the land, usually meaning that a fence had to be strung or a well dug. The two pieces of legislation contributed to the homesteading boom in southeastern Colorado after 1910.  

In 1910 almost 21,000 new homestead applications were filed in Colorado alone. Before 1910, the Purgatoire River area had few homesteads because of the practices employed by the livestock growers concerning water. But he status quo quickly changed. Using the Enlarged Homestead Act and later the Stock Raising Homestead Act, new settlers began pouring into the area. The open range began to be fenced for the first time. With dry farming techniques, the new settlers believed they did not need a permanent water source on their homesteads. The livestock raisers were especially hard hit with these new developments. Without open range to graze their cattle the large ranch operations were forces either to buy grazing land or curtail their operation drastically. Unable to cope with the changes, the Prairie Cattle Company shut down in 1914 and the Circle Diamond Ranch of the Bloom Land and Cattle Company stopped running cattle in the Purgatoire River area by the mid-1920s.  

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41 Frink et. al., *When Grass Was King*, 304-305; Gates, Ibid., 504.
Two more surviving historic ranches were founded in the 1910s. The children of Marguerite Arnet patented 160 acres in 1915, and claimed additional 300 acres in 1921 (HABS No. CO-89). Some of the larger section of property was utilized for farming; rye, wheat, and cane were planted. Thomas Hughes, a former Circle Diamond cowboy, patented 160 acres in 1914, and another 160 acres in 191 (HABS No. CO-93). In the 1920s, John Sanders Cross (Kelsey Cross’s son) bought the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92) from his father for the headquarters of his cattle ranch.

By 1930, 334 people lived in the Purgatoire River area, the most since 1874. The majority of new settlers homesteaded the area between 1916 and 1921, and in the beginning were relatively successful. Several new towns sprang up to help supply the new arrivals. Model City, located 30 miles northeast of Trinidad was the creation of the Trinidad Chamber of Commerce. Backed by local and Denver money, Model City was to be a planned irrigated farming community. With reservoirs and irrigation ditches in place, the sale of irrigated farmland began. Model City became a fairly prosperous town an offered a wide range of services both to townspeople and the new homesteaders. Simpson, located seven miles northeast of Model City, provided services to homesteaders as well.

The early years for the dry farmers were generally good. A few seasons of normal to high precipitation made the highly touted dry farming technique a success. The high precipitation helped ease the dry farmers need for water, since most did not have wells. The majority relied on cisterns and had to transport water to their farms from nearby springs of wells. The prosperity of the dry farmers was short-lived, however, when the above normal precipitation gave way to a drought in the late 1920s. Many, no longer able to grow crops, simply left. Enticed by the promising results of only a few dry farming studies, some had used most of their savings to make a new start.

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43 Las Animas County Records, Book 188, page 80; Las Animas County Records, Book 207, page 51. The title of the property is the John Sanders Cross Homestead. According to Cross’s daughter, he homesteaded this at site (SE 1/4 section of the NE 1/4, Section 15, T29S, R58W.) Hayes, Historical Architectural Evaluation of 49 Sites in the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, 5-49. However, no legal record of his ownership has been found.

The ones who could hold on did, usually by quickly realizing the folly of trying to farming a semi-arid region and switched to raising stock. The Trinidad Chamber of Commerce's dream of making Model City an ideal irrigated farming community was shattered when the Model reservoir began filling up with silt in 1924.

The final blow came with the Great Depression. The dry farmers who were able to hang on during the drought gave up during the Depression because of low prices and no markets for their products. Simpson was slowly abandoned between 1930 and 1940 because very few homesteaders were left that needed the town's services. The Great Depression hastened the tragedy of the dry farmers.45

The ranchers in the area were also hard hit by the Depression, but most managed to pull through and some even expanded. The Rourkes (HABS No. CO-91), who owned only 5,400 acres in 1920, possessed 29,000 acres in 1930. With the new homesteading laws and dry farming techniques, the open range began to be fenced by small farmers. Ranchers like the Rourkes realized that the rangelands that they needed to graze their livestock would now have to be owned or leased. Ranchers began buying the failed homesteads of dry farmers not only to have enough grazing land for their livestock, but also to prevent others from fencing land near their ranches.46

Some ranchers, however, did not fare as well as the Rourkes. Adam Arnet (HABS No. CO-89) was forced to sell a sizable section of his property, now known as Big Canyon. The Doherty Investment Company purchased the property; many out-of-state investors such as this one would be landowners in Pinon Canyon within the next few decades.

Overall, from 1910 through 1919, nearly 77,500 people applied for homesteads in Colorado, yet the number of farms only increased by 13,750 in that period. The telling statistic in these figures is that the number of acres per farm increased by eighty percent, meaning that the dry farmers were failing and the ranchers were buying them out, either out of necessity or as an opportunity to expand their rangelands. Dry farming proved to be an utter failure. The expanded homesteads could not support families in semi-arid regions. Prospective homesteaders were misled by private land companies,

45Friedman, History and Oral History of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area, 124-127; Gates, History of Public land Law Development, 519, 521-22, 524.

railroads, and the State Board of Immigration. The expanded homestead acts also proved to be a burden to stock raisers by reducing their rangelands and depleting the forage on the range itself. To remedy this situation, Congress passed the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934. Intended mainly to preserve rangelands for livestock growers, it established grazing districts on public land suitable for that purpose mainly in western states. The grazing districts would be withdrawn from any homestead application unless it was determined that the land had agricultural use. Thankfully, this helped to stem any new homesteading in semi-arid regions and also insured that ranches would have enough range to graze stock. By 1940, land use in the Purgatoire River area once again reverted primarily to stock raising, by far the most productive and suitable use of this semi-arid region. From the 1940s to the early 1980s, population continually declined. There were fewer ranches as the years went by, but the acreage of the existing ranches rose. In the 1950s, the Rourke family (HABS No. C0-91) had amassed 52,000 acres, including Mary Doyle Homestead (HABS No. C0-95) which had been abandoned in the 1920s. Sam Kitch owned nearly 50,000 acres. Both the Stevens Homestead (HABS No. C0-94), deserted in the 1920s, and Haines Homestead (HABS No. C0-92), vacated in the 1960s, were part of Kitch's ranch. In 1950, Tom Dillingham purchased the Big Canyon Ranch (part of HABS No. C0-89), from the Doherty Investment Company, as well as half of Brown's Sheep Camp (HABS No. C0-90). Dillingham's Ranch, known as the Big Canyon Grazing Association, encompassed the Big Canyon Grazing Association. T.G. Watkins, another newcomer, owned over 6,000 acres, including the John Sanders Cross Homestead (HABS No. C0-93).

By the mid 1950s, the Pinon Canyon ranches were devoted exclusively to cattle. Sheep ranching, an occupation that had been practiced in the region since the first settlers arrived, now proved to be uneconomical. Sheep ranchers found it hard to hire and retain herders and shearers because of the low pay and the availability of more financially secure employment nearby. The sheepmen turned to cattle ranching because it was a less labor intensive pursuit, bringing to an end the long standing tradition of sheep raising in the area.

In 1983, only twelve viable cattle ranches remained in the Pinon Canyon area, including the Arnet Ranch (HABS No. C0-89), the Brown Ranch (HABS No. C0-90), and the South Fork Ranch (HABS No. C0-86).

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49 Friedman, History and Oral History of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Area, 131-132.
CO-90), and the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91). The history of the area demonstrates that livestock raising was the most prudent course to follow in order to survive economically in the semi-arid conditions of southeastern Colorado. Farming in the area was at best risky. The most successful farmers were the early Hispanic settlers who homesteaded in groups and utilized communal labor. Dry farming, the least successful form of subsistence, turned out to be an unsuccessful experiment for many would be homesteaders. The seven historic homesteads relied on livestock raising for subsistence throughout their histories. All traced their success to raising livestock which made the best use of the area's harsh environment.

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Architectural Overview

A small stone homestead stands isolated in a vast stretch of treeless prairie in Southeastern Colorado. The abandoned ranch is surrounded by wooden pickets linked by a thin strip of plastic tape. The white tape is meant to deter tanks and their associated infantry from damaging the old buildings, now part of the recently created United States Department of Army's Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, located between Trinidad and La Junta, Colorado. But the tape symbolizes something more. The ribbon acknowledges the historical and architectural importance of seven homesteads which physically represent one of Colorado's last agricultural frontiers. Determined settlers built these homesteads following long-established architectural traditions which can be traced back to their homelands in northern New Mexico and to the High Plains. Nature, as well as culture, played a large part in the construction of these homes and ranches. The architectural history of these seven homesteads shows how both nature and culture subtly shaped the built environment of the semi-arid Pinon Canyon area of Las Animas County, Colorado.

Bordered on the east by the Purgatoire River, the 380 square mile region encompasses several different geographical features. Steep arroyos and canyons cut across the prairie and drain into the river. To the south, a nine-mile long upthrust of basalt, known as the Hogback, rises dramatically from the plains. The west and north borders have hills, covered with Pinon pine. Juniper, Cholla and Prickly Pear cactus, and grasses cover the prairie. Building materials gathered locally include found sandstone, Pinon Pine logs, and adobe mixed from the clay.

The homesteads of these settlers illustrate regional variations in vernacular architecture, buildings constructed of necessity with little or no concern for current stylistic fashions. Few, if any, examples of rural domestic architecture in this corner of Colorado show detailing and morphology influenced by national trends. Most intriguing in the Pinon Canyon area is the blending of several cultural traditions, creating a landscape representative of the many different peoples who settled the area. The ranches which remain characterize the convergence of the Hispanic building tradition with that of the Plains.50

50Although remains of other Anglo and Hispanic homesteads and ranches survive, Robin Haynes's and Beverly Bastian's Historical and Architectural Evaluation of 49 Sites in the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, (Fort Carson, Colorado, 1987) determined they lacked sufficient physical or informational integrity, or historical significance, to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For a list of the ineligible sites, see pages 4-2 to 4-18.
The initial period of homesteading in Pinon Canyon lasted from approximately 1867 to 1886 and included Hispanic settlers who emigrated from northern New Mexico. The majority of these immigrants formed clustered, placita-type settlements oriented toward the raising of sheep and truck gardens along the Purgatoire River. Most settled in the northern portion of the Pinon Canyon area beside the river from Lockwood Arroyo to Minnie Canyon. The 1880 census indicated that 64 percent of the adult residents in this area came from New Mexico. The conservative cultural landscape that they sought to recreate illustrated their close relationship to the land and the emphasis on the patriarchal family structure. The type and use of local building materials, as well as the architectural features constructed by early settlers, documents the long-standing Hispanic building traditions in Pinon Canyon.

Scholars have traced the conservative Hispanic construction technique and house form at Pinon Canyon to house types built in northern New Mexico in the during the past three centuries. Through the centuries, the Hispanics chose building materials from the accessible natural resources according to their cultural traditions, technological skills, function of the structure, and level of comfort desired.


52 Ibid, 192.


54 The availability of different types of raw materials is dependent on the elevation of the homestead. At approximately 5,000 feet adobe, jacal, and stone structures are usually found. The elevations at Pinon Canyon range from 5,000 to 5,800 feet. Log buildings are characteristic of higher forested elevations. Charles Gritzner, "Construction Materials in a Folk Housing Tradition: Considerations Governing Their Selection in New Mexico," Pioneer America 6 (1974): 26; and Jerome Iowa, Ageless Adobe: History and Preservation of Southwestern Architecture, (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1985), 68. Other determining factors in the selection of materials include perceived environmental stresses, fire hazard, and status. Gritzner, 25. Gritzner argues that studies of folk housing usually attribute the selection of building material to "environmental factors" rather than man, who bestows value upon a natural resource. John Hudson presents a similar argument in "Frontier Housing in North Dakota," North Dakota History: Journal of the Northern Great Plains 42:4 (Fall 1975): 4-16.
most common building material. Molded into bricks, adobe was employed primarily in the construction of residential buildings because of its superior insulation and durability. Several surviving residences and bunkhouses in the Pinon Canyon area feature walls of adobe, including the Adam and Bessie Arnet residence (HABS No. CO-89, Structure D), the Asa T. Haines residence (HABS No. CO-92, Structure A), the residences and bunkhouse at the Samuel Taylor Brown Sheep Ranch (HABS No. CO-90, Structures A, B, and C), and the residence and bunkhouse at the Eugene Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91, Structures A and C). Two large adobe barns also survive, one at Brown's Sheep Ranch and a second at the Adam and Bessie Arnet Homestead. Plastered adobe mud covered the surfaces of other construction methods, including jical, stone masonry, and horizontal log.

Jacal, a second Hispanic construction technique found in the Pinon Canyon area, consists of upright Juniper or Pinon poles embedded in the ground as the walls of a structure.\footnote{The term is derived from the Aztec xa-calli which means "adobe house or house of straw, a humble dwelling," and should not be confused with the French method called poteaux-en-terre. In this type of construction, poles are driven into the ground, not placed in a trench, as with jical. See Allen Noble, Wood, Brick, and Stone: The North American Settlement Landscape, vol. 1, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 84.} Jacal was often the first type of construction used on a site as it was fast and easy to erect. Often these buildings were converted to sheds and barns when permanent residences were built.\footnote{Gritzner, "Construction Materials in a Folk Housing Tradition," 35; Boyd Pratt, Gone But Not Forgotten [Northeast New Mexico Regional Overview], 2 vols., (Santa Fe: The New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1986), 2:50.} Homesteaders also utilized jical in the Arnet Homestead (HABS No. CO-89), the Mary Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95), the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91), and the John Sanders Cross Homestead (HABS No. CO-93).

Former inhabitants of the Pinon Canyon area believe that Anglos, recognizing the virtues of the construction methods they observed upon arrival,\footnote{Former Pinon Canyon residents interviewed by Robin Haynes include Margaret Arnet Crowder, (November 1, 1985, Phone Interview; June 24, July 26, 1986, Taped Interview), Beatrice Cross Hill, (June 28, 1986, Taped Interview), MaryAnn and Charles Mincic, (June 27, 1986, Taped Interview), Robert Sabin, (July 8, 1986, Taped Interview), James Ward Watkins, (July 9, 1986, Taped Interview.)} adopted the Hispanic construction techniques they observed upon arrival. For example, Moses Stevens, an Anglo homesteader in Pinon Canyon in the 1880s, built a house of...
On the other hand, Eugene Rourke (HABS No. CO-91) probably relied on Hispanic labor and expertise in the construction of his ranch. This argument is strengthened by the presence of Rourke's permanent house in La Junta, a two-story brick Victorian residence with a turret. Rourke's ranch features buildings of adobe, jacal, and log.

Horizontal log construction was a third building method utilized in the Purgatoire River basin during the late nineteenth century. Although only one log structure remains standing in the Pinon Canyon area, documentary evidence suggests the Hispanic pioneers erected this type of building upon arrival. The log barn at the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91) survived as an example of a typical outbuilding constructed of logs which have been saddle notched at the corners; the bark and cambium have been removed from the logs in the Hispanic fashion.

In addition to employing local materials in the manner of all frontiersmen, the Hispanic settlers also reproduced familiar forms when constructing their homesteads and outbuildings. In New Mexico, flat roofs which were economical in the use of lumber and minimized the stress on walls

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58 National Archives, Washington, D.C. Certificate No. 4197 filed by Moses B. Stevens of Las Animas County, Colorado in 1886 and patented on March 5, 1890 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office. See HABS No. CO-94.

59 Remains of one other log building exists in the Pinon Canyon area, but was not included in the Historic American Building Survey due to lack of physical integrity. Robin Haynes and Beverly Bastian, Historical Architectural Evaluation of 49 Sites in the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, 4-5. For documentary evidence, see Adams, The Art and Architecture of Early Hispanic Colorado, 36, who notes that "a number of log cabins remain today [1974] standing along the river" and Morris Taylor, Trinidad, Colorado Territory, (Trinidad: Trinidad State Junior College, 1966), 58, who writes that "Juan Cordova built a fortified dwelling of log and adobe bricks [along the Purgatoire River.]

60 Charles Gritzner, in "Log Housing in New Mexico," Pioneer America 3 (July 1971): 54-62, writes that the bark and cambium (the layer of cells under the bark) were not removed in most Anglo-American log construction in the West. While the source of New Mexico log construction is a point of debate among scholars, Gritzner's "Log Housing in New Mexico," offers more conclusive evidence for Mexico as the origin for the types of construction in New Mexico. Hispanic log notching, one kind of evidence, differs considerably from Anglo log notching. Terry Jordan, in Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 25, concurs. John Winberry's "The Log House in Mexico," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 64:1 (March 1974): 59, 67, states that the log house diffused into New Mexico from the United States, yet offers no concrete evidence to support his claim.
topped the almost universally one-story structures. Wood, generally a scarce resource in the Southwest, was used and reused sparingly roof beams (vigas), the small peeled saplings incorporated as lath in beamed ceilings (latias), and lintels above openings. The width of the viga determined the width of the building. A frequent modification to this flat roof in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries consisted of the addition of an alto or attic, the attic space created by a gable roof when placed on top of a flat adobe or dirt roof. This area could be reached only by an exterior door in the upper gable; there is no interior access. The wooden or metal-sheeted gable roof protects the earthen structure beneath and provides a domestic storeroom. This roof type may be both a traditional Hispanic building element and the incorporation of the design elements brought to the Southwest by Anglos. Flat roofs utilizing vigas and latias can be seen at Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91) and the Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95). Altos have been incorporated into roof structures at the Rourke Ranch, the Doyle Homestead, Brown’s Sheep Ranch (HABS No. CO-90), the Cross Homestead (HABS No. CO-93), and the Moses B. Stevens Homestead (HABS No. CO-94).

The thick adobe walls and the development of Hispanic house types only one room deep mitigated the heat of summer and chill of winter in northern New Mexico. The one-story, linear house, several rooms long and one room deep, and the placita, where the dwelling and outbuildings open onto a courtyard,

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61 Adams, The Architecture and Art of Early Hispanic Colorado, 40; Boyd, Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico, 8.

62 A.W. Conway, in "A Northern New Mexico House-Type," Landscape 1:2 (1951): 20 writes: The correct Spanish name for this gable is attico. But when that word is used in New Mexico it is apparently thought of as a borrowing of the English "attic" and not as a bona fide Spanish word. The more usual term is "alto"...

63 The pitched frame roof came to rural New Mexico with the introduction of commercial sawmills and the advent of a permanent Anglo population. J.B. Jackson, in "First Comes the House," Landscape 9:2 (Winter 1959-60): 30. Jackson notes that the addition of an alto does not alter the basic house or expand its boundaries, and finds this to be evidence of the conservatism in Spanish-American building tradition of New Mexico. The purpose of the gabled roof was to protect the real [author’s emphasis] roof from the rain and snow.

64 The original dirt roof provided insulation for the residence; it was usually left intact underneath the later gable roof. Iowa, Ageless Adobe, 34; Beverly Spears, American Adobes: Rural Houses of Northern New Mexico, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 70.

usually expanded from a single room.\textsuperscript{66} Rather than becoming specialized spaces with a residence, the additional rooms remained multipurpose shelters, little houses in themselves.\textsuperscript{67} Maintaining the room as the basic unit of construction within a practical additive process created extended facades with multiple entrances, an asymmetrical arrangement of bays, and uneven rooflines. These fronts masked a string of rooms, some without interior access, whose interior walls were originally built as exterior structures.\textsuperscript{68} Several residences in the Pinon Canyon area were constructed as a single-file line of rooms or executed with additions that maintained the linear plan. Examples include the Arnet residence (HABS No. CO-89), the residences at Brown's Sheep Ranch (HABS No. CO-90), the residence and bunkhouse at the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91), the residence at the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92), and the jadal residence at the Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95).

Many of these rooms possessed a colonial New Mexican fireplace (fogon). Features of the standard form, which was built into a corner, included a quarter round plan, a narrow parabola-shaped opening, a shallow firebox, a pronounced mantel, and a square projecting flue in the corner.\textsuperscript{69} Pinon Canyon homesteaders constructed two such fireplaces, one each at the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91) and at the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92). Residences at the Mary Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95, Structures B and E) have quarter round fireplaces although the openings are not parabola-shaped. In the second half of the nineteenth century, fireplaces, which retained their traditional parabola-shaped opening, were cased in wooden chimney breasts and more frequently placed flat against the wall instead of in a corner.\textsuperscript{70} Two examples of these fireplaces survive at the Eugene Rourke residence.

About mid-nineteenth century an architectural style known as the Territorial style developed in the Southwest, the result of the application of classical motifs from the Greek Revival style to the traditional Hispanic


\textsuperscript{67}Boyd, \textit{Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico}, 7.

\textsuperscript{68}Jackson, "First Comes the House," 28-29.

\textsuperscript{69}Bainbridge Bunting, \textit{Early New Mexico Architecture}, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 72.

\textsuperscript{70}Ibid., 94.
forms. The simple raked blocking of doors and windows, and the use of shutters, paneled doors, and classical entries of the hybrid style were adopted enthusiastically into the Hispanic building tradition. The most common detailing, the raked blocking, recurs in the Southwest well into the twentieth century. However, few Territorial style structures have survived within Colorado. Two sites within the Pinon Canyon area feature simple Territorial styling. The original single room of the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92) displays raked blocking over the door surrounds. The main residence at the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91) presents a more sophisticated interpretation, with raked blocking on the doorways, windows, and pass-throughs for firewood.

Barns and storage sheds were usually not physically incorporated into the main residence. Spatial separation between residences and outbuildings is evident at the Rourke Ranch (HABS No. CO-91). Outbuildings employed wood (jacal or log) or stone masonry construction. At the Rourke Ranch, for example, a jacal shed and log barn survive. In addition to barns, sheds, and garages, root cellars (dispensas) were commonly found at a homestead. Several Pinon Canyon sites feature dugout cellars, including the Arnet Homestead (HABS No. CO-89), the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92), and the Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95).

Anglo as well as Hispanic pioneers contributed to the built environment at Pinon Canyon. Anglos from the Mississippi valley region as well as European settlers settled in the Pinon Canyon area in the last few decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries. For example, the

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72 Sarah J. Pearce, Guide to Colorado Architecture, (Denver: The State Historical Society of Colorado, 1983). Other features of the Territorial style, such as central hall plans and symmetrical facades, are not present in the Pinon Canon structures.

73 Boyd, Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico, 21; Jackson, "First Comes the House," 29-30.

74 Bunting, in Early Architecture of New Mexico, 35, notes that even where logs were abundant [in the mountains of northern New Mexico], adobe was preferred for dwellings and timber was utilized only for service structures, including barns, shelters, corrals, storage sheds, and grist mills. The two adobe barns, mentioned earlier, are an exception in the Hispanic-influenced architecture of Pinon Canyon.

75 Spears, American Adobes, 28.
Rourke family (see HABS No. CO-91) immigrated from County Wicklon, Ireland. A sizeable number of Americans left their architectural imprint on the buildings which remain. The late nineteenth-century wave of Anglo homesteaders were principally from the Upland South region and Texas, while the second wave of pioneers were predominantly from the Great Plains.76 Unlike the early Hispanic settlers who preferred the Purpatoire River bottom lands, the Anglos homesteaded in the plains above the arroyos.

Houses characteristic of the Upland South cultural region were single rooms of log construction, enlarged by the addition of a similar unit. These created a family of common variations, the saddlebag, double-pen, and dog-trot houses. All house types featured a single-story, usually linear form topped by a gable roof with eaves to the front. Shed-roofed porches often covered the front, echoed by shed-roofed additions to the rear. Small outbuildings commonly appeared in log construction. With abundant lumber available in the Upland South, snake or "Virginia" fences, with their zigzags of wooden rails, were used widely for their ease of construction despite the large amount of space and wood required. These elements in the Upland South cultural repertoire may have predisposed the waves of settlers from this area to accept Hispanic morphology, such as a single room structures with a gable roof, not as a foreign arrangement but as a variant on a familiar form.

The Pinon Canyon settlers from the Southern region were influenced by two other major forces. Although a large portion of the South remained isolated and continued to adhere to its building traditions, architectural regionalism was dissolving during the last half of the nineteenth century.77 Inexpensively printed magazines and books showing the newest fashions, the accessibility of the nation by railroads, and the prosperity of boom times contributed to the rise of a more national style. Parts of the South, crippled by poverty and poor communication, did not join this mainstream of architectural change, but individuals traveling west would have observed the shifting urban scene and the metamorphosis outside of the South proper.

Although both architectural traditions must be considered, the Plains heritage provided a more useful model for the homesteaders as Pinon Canyon more closely resembled the windswept, semi-arid Great Plains than the humid


Upland South. The open, treeless prairie denied the pioneers their preferred building material, wood, but expedient substitutes were quickly found. They turned to the readily available materials, sandstone and earth. Sandstone walls were composed of randomly-coursed undressed slabs. It was employed widely in the construction of residences, outbuildings, fences, and foundations for adobe buildings in Pinon Canyon. Builders at one historic site, the Stevens Homestead (HABS No. CO-94), constructed the residence, several outbuildings, and extensive fences exclusively of stone. More typically, other sites, including the Arnet Homestead (HABS No. CO-89) and the Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95), utilize sandstone in only some of the structures.

Since local stone could not always be quarried with ease, sod blocks became the standard construction material for most High Plains homesteaders. The origin of the sod-block building technique has been attributed to both the Mormons in the westward migration from Nauvoo, Illinois, and the immigrating Russian-Germans who had employed similar methods in their homeland. The concept spread, regardless of its beginnings, and sod dwellings extended from Canada to northern Texas, built primarily in the Plains region where grasses were the dominant vegetation.

Time and money were of the essence for the pioneer immigrant. A sod house could be put up in about a week of hard labor; a sod dugout in just a few days. The sod house would cost considerably less than five dollars, excluding labor costs; the dugout even less.

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78 While the technology of fired bricks was widely understood and the necessary clay was available on the plains, the homesteaders lacked the fuel for kilns. See David Murphy's "Building with Clay on the Central Plains," in Thomas Carter's and Bernie Herman's Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, III (Columbia, 1989), 74-85, for his discussion of the utilization of unfired clay by different ethnic groups.

79 Railroad ties were used when available. See Roger Welsch's "Railroad-Tie Construction on the Pioneer Plains," Western Folklore 35 (1976): 149-156. Railroad ties employed in outbuildings at two of the sites in Pinon Canyon, the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92) and the Cross Homestead (HABS No. CO-93). The source for the railroad ties is unknown.

80 Only one of the seven HABS sites, Brown's Sheep Ranch (HABS No. CO-90) does not utilize stone masonry in its buildings or fences. The sandstone was found stone, and not quarried.

81 Noble, Wood, Brick, and Stone, 71.

82 Ibid., 72-73.
While the dugout cellars at the Arnet Homestead (HABS No. CO-89), the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92), and the Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95) in the Pinon Canyon area were built of stone masonry and wood (logs or railroad ties) rather than sod, these structures are reminiscent of the dugouts found on the Plains.

These small initial structures of stone or earth, whether dugout or house, usually consisted of one rectangular room and were rarely more than one story. With wood at a premium, little was available as rafters to frame the roof or to reinforce the roof-wall juncture. The weight of the dirt roof also needed to be considered; a pitched roof helped eliminate dangerous additional weight. This type of roof also shed moisture in the form of snow and rain and decreased interior leakage. Yet a steep pitch demanded wooden reinforcement and soon lost its earthen covering. 83 For all these reasons, the pioneers who traveled to southeastern Colorado built a variety of shallowly pitched roofs, usually with the eaves to the front. 84

Settlers commonly constructed a modification of the gabled roof, a rounded roof which, in addition to compensating for the above factors, was more wind resistant than a steeply pitched roof. One author commented on this importance of this quality:

the shack my father built was an ugly tarpaper-covered box on the face of the prairie, and not even its low rounded roof, built low and round to give the wind less grip on it, could bind it into the horizontal wind. 85

This roof used a number of purlins and was covered with boards that curved gently from one eave over the purlins to the other eave. Tarpaper and a layer of earth were then placed over the boards.

83 Roger Welsch, Sod Walls: The Story of the Nebraska Sod House, (Broken Bow, Nebraska: Purcells, 1968), 49, 69.

84 The origin of this type of roof is discussed in John Hudson’s "Frontier Housing in North Dakota," 7. The author writes that the arched roof, first used on cook cars on the bonanza farms of the Red River Valley, was adopted for shacks and temporary shelters due to the ease with which it could be assembled and disassembled as homesteaders moved from one location to another. The arched roof also offered less wind resistance than a peaked-roof building.

This segmentally arched roof appeared on both sod and stone structures during the last few decades of the nineteenth century. 87

The segmentally arched roof was also constructed into the twentieth century in several neighboring states, including Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. 88 This roof type can be seen on numerous structures of stone masonry, adobe, jacal, and frame construction within the Pinon Canyon area. They can be observed unaltered or with the addition of an alto at the Arnet Homestead (HABS No. CO-89), Brown's Sheep Ranch (HABS No. CO-90), the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92), the Cross Homestead (HABS No. CO-93), the


88 David Murphy, Architectural Historian for the state of Nebraska, has identified this type of roof over claim or beet shacks built by a variety of European immigrants. Terry Jordan, in Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture, 84, includes this type of roof in his discussion of low-pitched roofs over log buildings. Jordan labels the roof an "Anglo western roof" and notes that it lacks a true gable structure as the unhewn ridge pole rests directly on the top logs of the pen. It is found mainly in the Rocky Mountains but also in west Texas. Architectural Historian Boyd Pratt has noted segmentally arched roofs on Anglo full- and half- dugouts in east central New Mexico. Pratt has also identified this type of roof on shotgun shacks in southeast New Mexico. Sylvia Grider has written about the presence of this roof in Texas in an article called "The Shotgun House in Oil Boomtowns of the Texas Panhandle," Pioneer America 7 (July 1975): 47-55.
Stevens Homestead (HABS No. CO-94), and the Doyle Homestead (HABS No. CO-95). 89

The Enlarged Homestead Act of 1909 and the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916 coincided with the most active period of settlement history at the Pinon Canyon area. Anglo-Americans from adjacent Plains states came to southeastern Colorado, enticed by the extravagant promises of dry-farming literature and the homesteading acts. 90 Still aware of the useful sod or stone dugouts and houses found throughout the Plains, these settlers had more building materials at their disposal than earlier homesteaders. The growth of towns, roads, and railroads provided access to manufactured and milled building supplies not available prior to the 1880s. As a consequence, national architectural styles could be more readily reproduced in the area. The double-pen, or hall-and-parlor house persisted and the pyramidal roofed Classical Cottage, a one-story house type of square proportions and hipped roof, and even the Four-Square, a two-story cube, began to interrupt the flatness of the plains. Aspects of these latter house types, particularly the rectangular, double-pile proportions and hipped roofs, influenced twentieth-century construction in the Pinon Canyon area. The later residences at the Arnet Homestead (HABS No. CO-89) illustrate this form of architecture. Stylistic detailings from one of several architectural fashions, including Queen Anne, could be applied when finances permitted. For example, the Cross Homestead (HABS No. CO-93) has shaped wooden shingles on the gable ends.

Colorado Interstate Gas provided additional impetus in the homesteading boom when it decided to construct a compressor plant and company village in the late 1920s to service the natural gas pipeline that sliced through the Pinon Canyon from Texas to the Denver area. A cluster of white frame buildings, primarily of one story, incorporating simple interpretations of the Bungalow or Craftsman style, constituted the company town, called Canyon Station. The town was dismantled and the buildings were sold to Pinon Canyon residents in the 1960s. 91

Fate decreed, however, that this period of prosperity was not to last. A calamitous drought in the mid 1920s followed by an economic depression ruined many of the Pinon Canyon newcomers. The Great Depression forced more people out and presented another opportunity for the few prosperous ranchers

89 The segmental arch was created by placing the log purlins or planks in an arch shape in the wall, or varying the size of the beams, with the largest in the center, to create an arch. Boards were nailed across the purlins or planks, and dirt was placed over the bowed boards.

90 Friedman, History and Oral History of the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site, 3.

91 Ibid.
to increase their holdings by purchasing property from their less-successful neighbors.\textsuperscript{92} The population of the study area waned. The abandoned homes of the dry farmers became architectural junk yards for their new owners.\textsuperscript{93}

The architecture in the Pinon Canyon area vividly illustrates the shifting fortunes and history of southeastern Colorado. The vernacular buildings represent the blending of two cultural landscapes, that of Hispanic New Mexico and the Anglo High Plains. The architecture reflects the reciprocating influences of the two building traditions, often within the same homestead or even within the same building. For example, several residences have adobe walls, a Hispanic construction technique, topped by a segmentally arched roof, an Anglo feature.\textsuperscript{94} The construction materials, stone, adobe, and less often, wood, document the dependence of both groups on their natural resources. The evolution of the homesteads and perhaps more often their abandonment speaks to the periods of boom and depression, the need for conservation and reuse, to family history and the southeastern Colorado frontier region.

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{93}Former Pinon Canyon residents interviewed by Robin Haynes include the Mincics and James Watkins, page 6, and Vidal Martinez, (July 11, July 13, 1986, Taped Interview), and Ben Gutierrez, (June 25, 1986, Taped Interview.)

\textsuperscript{94}Three examples include the residence and bunkhouse at Brown’s Sheep Ranch (HABS No. CO-90) and the residence at the Haines Homestead (HABS No. CO-92).
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COUNTY RECORDS

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MANUSCRIPTS


National Archives, Washington D.C.


Certificate No. 8492, Homestead Application No. 11200, filed by Mary Doyle of La Junta, Colorado on September 8, 1900, and patented on March 12, 1903 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office.

Certificate No. 4107 filed by Moses B. Stevens of las Animas County, Colorado in 1886 and patented on March 5, 1890 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office.

Certificate No. 2563 filed by Underwood Rogers of Trinidad, Colorado in 1882 and patented on March 19, 1887, by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office.

Patent No. 465459, Desert Land Entry No. 07703 filed by the Mary E. Rourke on April 21, 1908 and patented March 9, 1915 by the Pueblo, Colorado Land Office.
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INTERVIEWS


Gritzner, Charles F, Professor of Geography at the University of North Dakota. Interview by Robin Haynes, August 29, 1986. Phone Interview.
Gutierrez, Ben, former resident of Pinon Canyon. Interview by Robin Haynes, June 25, 1986. Taped Interview.


Henderson, Arn, Professor at the University of Oklahoma. Interview by Robin Haynes, January 31, 1986. Telephone Call.


Mincic, MaryAnn and Charles Mincic, former residents of Pinon Canyon. Interview by Robin Haynes, June 27, 1986. Taped Interview.


Sabin, Robert, former resident of Pinon Canyon. Interview by Robin Haynes, July 8, 1986. Taped Interview.


Wilson, Christopher. Architectural Historian and Private Consultant in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Interview by Michelle McFadden, July 11, 1989. Telephone Call.111
This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Team of the Rocky Mountain Regional Office, National Park Service, under the direction of the Historical Architect Thomas G. Keohan, and Historian Greg Kendrick. Documentation was completed during the summer of 1989 at the HABS Field Office in Pinon Canyon, Colorado, by Project Supervisor Alfonso Narvaez, and Architectural Technicians Jim Duran, John Kirkpatrick and Eric Miller. Project Historian Michelle McFadden prepared the Architectural Overview while Project Historian, Al Wiatr prepared the Historical Overview. Funding for this project was provided by the U. S. Army, Fort Carson, Colorado.