

# **A Historic Buildings Survey of Old Fort Lewis Hesperus, Colorado 2007**

**State Historical Fund Project Number 2007-02-019  
Deliverable No. 7  
Prepared for the Fort Lewis College Office of Community Services**



# **Historic Buildings Survey Old Fort Lewis, Hesperus, Colorado**

**2007**

Prepared for:

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As part of the Cultural Resource Survey and Preservation Plan  
Project Number 2007-02-019  
Deliverable Number 7

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October, 2007

*Cover photograph from Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies Fort Lewis Archives*

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## **Introduction**

### Purpose

The purpose of this survey project is to provide data to support the assessment of the Old Fort Lewis Campus located near Hesperus, Colorado. The Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College is developing planning documents for the site. The survey data will assist preservation planning activities for the Old Fort and will help in making decisions about development that affect the site's cultural resources.

### Funding Source

This survey project is one of three concurrent assessments that have been undertaken as part of the Office of Community Service's Cultural Resource Survey and Preservation Plan Project for the Old Fort Lewis Campus. The project is sponsored by Fort Lewis College and is partially funded by a grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund (Project Number 2007-02-019). The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the staff of the Colorado State Historical Fund.

### Project Summary

The project consists of an intensive survey of 21 resources located on the Old Fort Lewis Campus. The buildings and structures selected for survey are the remaining standing resources that were constructed before the Fort Lewis Junior College moved away from the property to Durango in 1956.

The Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College (OCS) supervised and coordinated the project under the direction of Ken Francis. *Cultural Resource Planning*, Jill Seyfarth, Principal, contracted with OCS in May of 2007 and completed the project in December 2007. Fieldwork occurred between May 23 and June 23, 2007. The survey was conducted following the guidelines of the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual*. All 21 of the selected resources were surveyed and are discussed in this report.

## **Project Area**

### General Area Description and Survey Area Boundaries

The resources included in this survey are all located within the most developed part of the Old Fort Lewis Campus. The developed area is located on the west side of the La Plata River on a relatively level expanse of ground at approximately 7,600 feet in elevation. The area receives 18.5 inches of precipitation annually. Crop varieties that thrive in the 100-day frost free growing season are limited to small grains, forage and hay crops.

The campus is organized around a large rectangle with most of the residential and/or administrative buildings facing toward the center of the rectangle and agricultural buildings and/or structures and grounds mostly located to the north of the rectangle. The closest modern town is Hesperus, Colorado, which is located about four miles to the north. Colorado State Highway 140 runs north-south and is situated to the east of the survey area.

### Legal Description

The survey targeted 21 individual resources that are all located along the edge of, or in close proximity to, the rectangle described in the above paragraph. The survey area is located within an unsectioned portion of Township 34 N, Range 11 W, New Mexico Principal Meridian. The Section is estimated to be Section 3. The relevant portion of the Kline, La Plata County, Colorado (1968) U.S.G.S. topographic quadrangle is shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 provides an aerial view of the surveyed area.

The estimated cumulative survey area encompasses approximately 5.74 acres.

Old Fort Lewis Historic Building Survey

NMPM T 34N, R11W, Section 3 (estimated: this portion of the map is not sectioned)  
U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute map, Kline, Colorado 1968  
UTM Zone 12

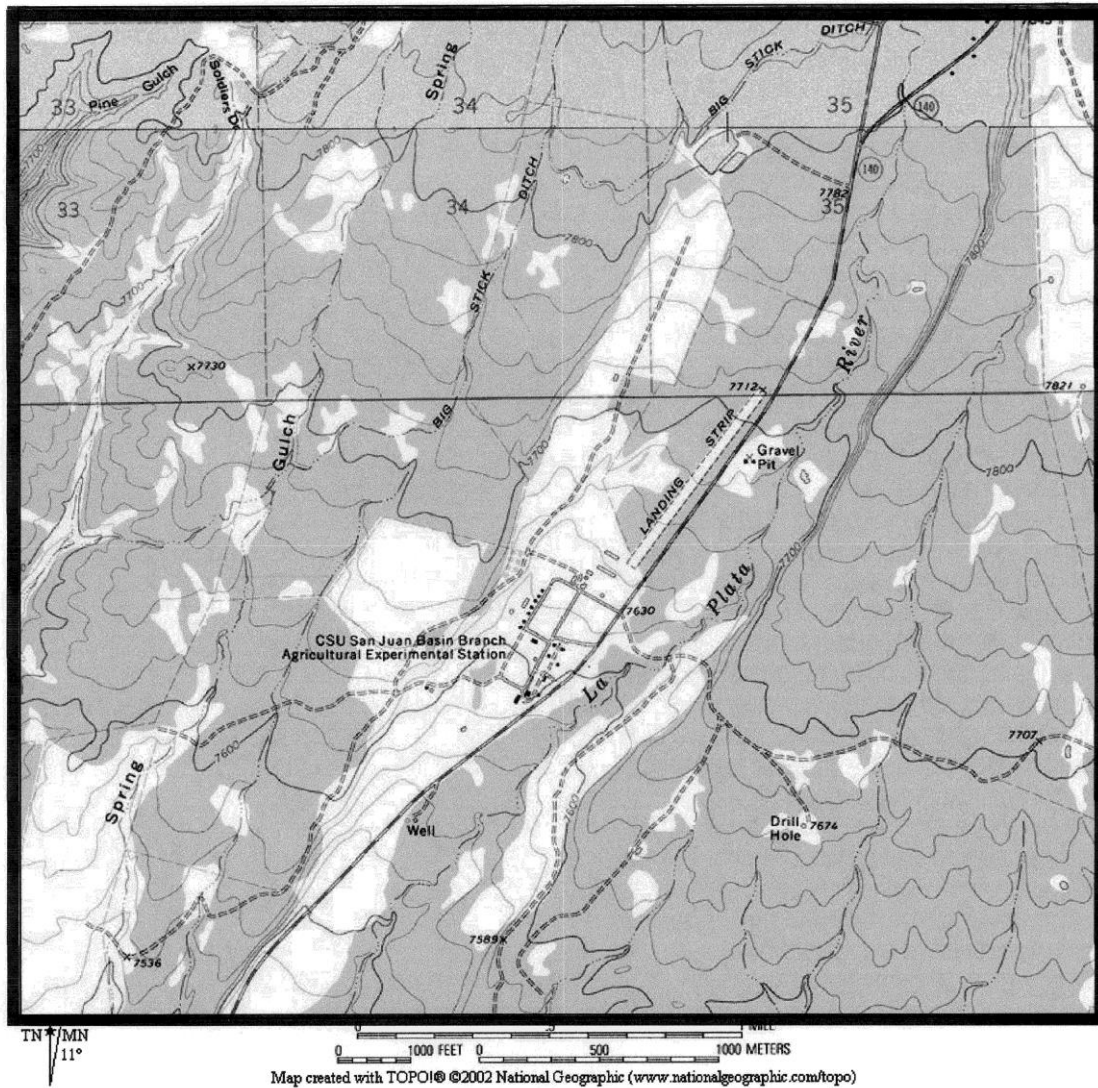
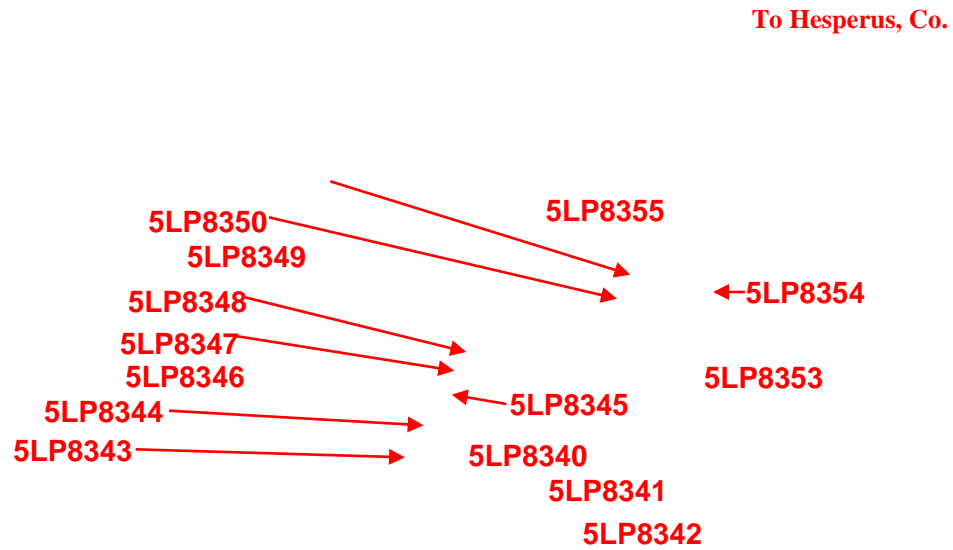
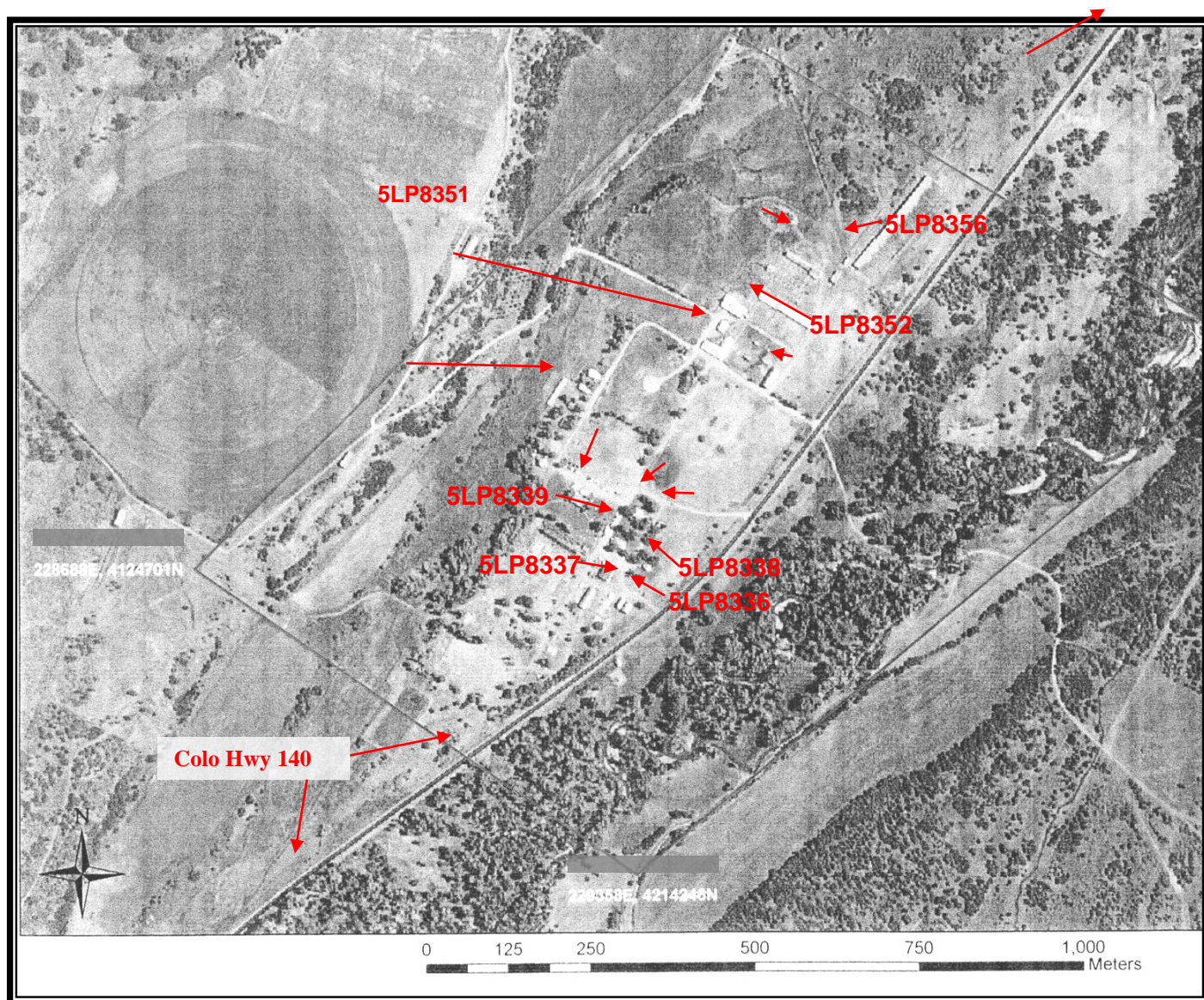


Figure 1 USGS Quad Showing General Survey Area within the dashed lines.







*Figure 2 Aerial view of surveyed sites; aerial provided by the Fort Lewis College Office of Community Services.*

## Research Design and Methods

### Objectives

Three objectives were identified for this survey. They are

- To expand the database of information about the resources on the property;
- To document the identified properties; and
- To provide a preliminary evaluation of eligibility for the State or National Register of Historic Places.

The survey area was listed as a historic district on the local La Plata County Historic Register in 2006, so no further assessment of local eligibility was considered.

### File Search and Previous Work

A file search using COMPASS (the Colorado Historical Society's online database) was originally conducted by Mona Charles in 2006 and a subsequent search was done in April 2007. The search revealed two site forms, 5LP1968 and 5LP1969, had been completed for the area, addressing the military resources and the campus in general. It was determined by the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Data Management Staff that the two existing site numbers would be used for the archaeological survey to be conducted by Mona Charles. New site numbers were assigned to the resources reviewed in this survey.

In addition to the site forms, the Office of Community Services has just completed a Historic Structure Assessment for one of the buildings included in the survey. This Assessment is State Historic Fund Project No. 2006-HA-045 and addresses the library, which was constructed in 1938 and 1939 using New Deal funding. The information from this study was referenced and incorporated into the site form for the library.

### Survey Methods

The project consisted of an intensive survey of 21 resources located on the Old Fort Lewis Campus. The intensive survey method was selected to obtain a thorough record of each resource. The resources selected for survey were constructed before the Fort Lewis Junior College moved to the City of Durango in 1956. The State Historical Fund grant application originally identified 22 buildings with potential for survey, but further review of the buildings determined that 21 of the buildings were old enough to include in the survey.

Jill Seyfarth of Cultural Resource Planning and Ken Francis of the Office of Community Services visited the survey area on May 25 to field-verify the 21 buildings and to assign mutually acceptable field numbers for each building. A temporary number was assigned to each building, which was later assigned a Smithsonian site number.

The survey was conducted following the guidelines of the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual*. Each building was described, photographed, researched, and mapped. Sites were recorded on Colorado Historical Society *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Architectural Inventory* forms (#1403). USGS topographic maps and aerial photographs were used to define the project area.

At least three photographs were taken of each building. All photographs are black and white, four by six inch prints from thirty-five millimeter negatives and are printed on Fuji Color Crystal Archive paper. Photographs were labeled using archivally acceptable acid-free foil-backed labels containing site number, location, date the photograph was taken, the film roll and exposure number, and the SHF project number.

Negatives were stored in archival sleeves and accompanied by a photo log. Negatives will be filed with the Office of Community Services at Fort Lewis College. Photographs were sleeved as specified by the Colorado Historical Society.

The USGS Kline 7.5 minute quadrangle map (1968) was used to locate the survey areas. UTM data was produced via a Garmin WAAS-enabled GPS Unit, and verified through the software program *TOPO 2! -National Geographic Society*.

Jill Seyfarth of Cultural Resource Planning of Durango, Colorado, conducted the field survey and research. Field survey work occurred on June 5, 6 and 13. Research took place between May and August 2007.

Research was primarily conducted in Durango, Colorado in the archives of Fort Lewis College at the Center of Southwest Studies. The Center's collection includes historic photographs, historic plans/specifications, correspondence and records related to the various stages of development at the site. Three books on the history of the old campus have been written by Fort Lewis College history professors (Robert Delaney and Duane A. Smith), and were invaluable resources. Title and publication information for these books is included in the Bibliography section of this report. The research was supplemented by interviews with former students and employees at the old campus. Additional information was gleaned from historic photos located at the Animas Museum in Durango and the Denver Public Library Western History Collection. Paul O'Rourke's *Frontier in Transition, A History of Southwestern Colorado* (1980) provided additional historical background.

Architectural classifications were applied using the lexicon provided by the Colorado Historical Society's survey manual and guidance from the Society's *A Guide to Colorado Architecture*. Terms from the manual's various lexicons were used whenever required.

Construction dates were determined primarily using the records at the Center of Southwest Studies and historic photographs.

A separate archaeological survey is concurrently underway as part of the Office of Community Service's Cultural Resource Survey and Preservation Plan Project for the Old Fort Lewis Campus ( SHF Project Number 2007-02-019), so archaeological potential was considered only for the areas tangent to the building or structure. (The archaeological survey is being conducted under the supervision of Mona Charles of Fort Lewis College.)

## Historic Context

### Applicable Contexts

Historic contexts for the area are discussed in the Colorado Historical Society Resources Planning Protection Process *Colorado Plateau Country Historic Context* by Michael B. Husband (1984). The surveyed buildings represent contexts related to Indian relations, military forts, education, and agriculture. Themes applicable to this project as defined in Husband's study, include Federal Activity 1891-1946; Ute-Euro-American Contact 1640-1889; Ranching 1870-1934 and Farming 1867-1945; and Socio-Cultural Developments 1886-1925.

### Historic Development of Old Fort Lewis

Southwest Colorado has a rich and longstanding cultural tradition. The remains of people attributed to Archaic (7500 B.C.-500B.C.), Basketmaker (500 B.C.-750 B.C.) and Pueblo periods have all been identified in the area, followed by settlement by Utes, Europeans and Asians.

Archaeological studies theorize that the first Utes to migrate into the Mesa Verde region may have arrived as early as 1100, but the archaeological evidence is so scant that much more work needs to be done in this area before any definitive statements can be made.<sup>1</sup> More traditional theories propose that the Utes were in the area by 1500. We know from historical accounts that the Utes occupied the region by the beginning of European exploration into the area.

The region lured many explorers in search of gold, silver and other opportunities for wealth. In 1776, Fathers Dominguez and Escalante traversed the area in search of a route from Santa Fe to the California missions. Much of their route later became the Old Spanish Trail, which was used between 1830 and 1840 by Santa Fe traders on their way to California.

The area was part of Mexico until the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican War in 1848. As part of the Treaty, Mexico ceded its northern holdings, including much of what was to become Colorado. Explorers in search of gold and silver began to come to the area, but their efforts were considerably diminished in the 1860s by the Civil War.

After the Civil War, the United States Government negotiated a series of treaties with the Utes to further Federal control of lucrative minerals located on Ute land, and to open land to new settlement. The miners returned to Southwestern Colorado and were soon followed by farmers and ranchers who settled at lower elevations to the south of the mountains and provided supplies to the bustling new mining settlements.

In 1874, the Brunot Agreement with the Utes opened land to non-natives. As white settlers traveled into and across traditional Native American lands, fear of escalating conflicts with the Utes resulted in the establishment of Camp Lewis at the present day

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<sup>1</sup> Lipe et al 1999.

site of Pagosa Springs in 1878. Named for Lt Colonel William H. Lewis, who was killed in a battle against the Cheyenne in Kansas in September 1878, the camp was intended to protect settlers from the local Native Americans, and provide a safe haven along the road from Santa Fe to Silverton.

In 1880, anticipating the flush of new settlers in the brand new town of Durango and the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, the Army upgraded the camp to a post and moved from Pagosa Springs to a site along the La Plata River and south of present day Hesperus, Colorado.

Duane Smith characterizes the Fort Lewis post as typical of the time.<sup>2</sup> Faced with reduced Army budgets after the Civil War, the Federal Government embarked on a haphazard establishment of more than a hundred small military posts scattered across the west in reaction to demands for protection for the newly arrived settlers. Most of the camps held one or two companies and provided sporadic “keeping of the peace” between rapidly advancing newcomers and Native Americans. The forts also provided a profitable local commercial market, boosting the local economy.

Irish-born Lieutenant Colonel Robert Crofton, a Civil War veteran, led five companies of the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment on August 15, 1880, to the new site for the Lewis Post. By September, a sawmill and a shingle mill were running and the soldiers labored to construct their new home. A post office was established on October 5, with John G. Price as the Postmaster. The first two buildings, a storehouse and the commander’s quarters, were completed by November. The Army was quick to recognize the progress and reclassified the Post to Fort Lewis on January 21, 1881.<sup>3</sup> A February 19, 1881 article in the *Durango Record* reported that the post had 17 or 18 houses arranged around a parade ground.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry moved on to New Mexico, relieved of their duties at Fort Lewis by various army units, including the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry, commanded by General George P. Buell, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry from Texas under the command of Colonel David Stanly, who was replaced first by Colonel Peter T. Swayne (some sources say it was Swaine) and then by James W. Powell. The 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, consisting of two companies of African American soldiers, were encamped at the Fort for a few months in 1882. All of these units contributed to the Fort’s physical development.

Fort Lewis was laid out around a quadrangle with officers’ quarters on the west, stables and barracks on the east, a hospital at the south end and storehouses to the north. Large gardens were irrigated through a ditch system. Water was also piped to every building from a large reservoir on the site. New buildings replaced some of the hastily constructed first barracks that collapsed under snow loads. A new jail was built in 1888 to hold more prisoners. At its peak, the Fort had a population of about 500 people.

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<sup>2</sup> Smith 2006, page 7.

<sup>3</sup> Delaney 1977, page 14.



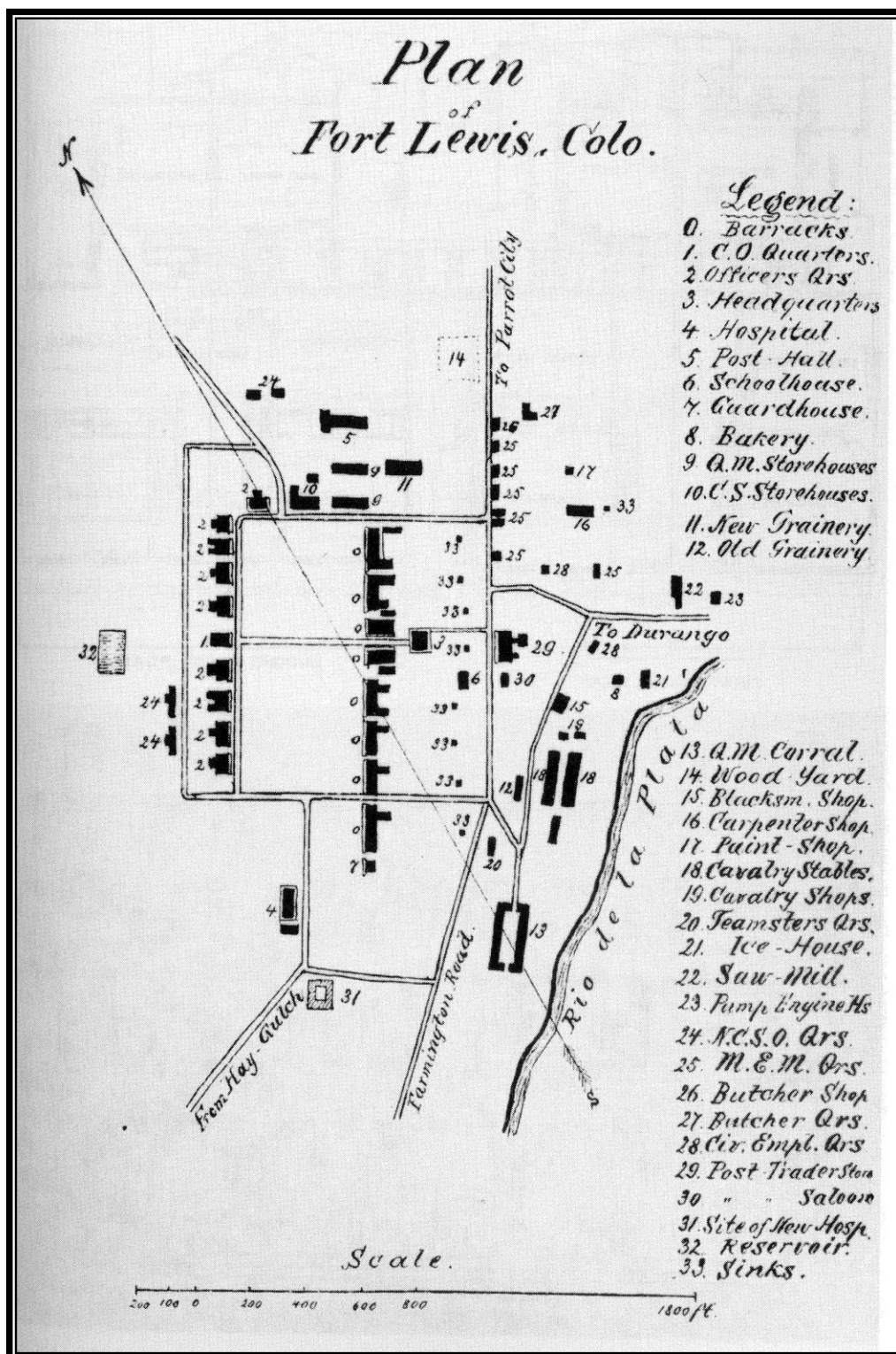
Figure 3 shows the layout of the Fort. The Federal Government was a little bit slow to claim an area of land for the new installation, but in February 1882, they created a military reservation with exemptions for school sections and for a single homesteader who had proved up on some land within the boundary of the reservation.

Although it was located in a remote area, the Fort had a strategic location along supply routes. It served the north-south road between Santa Fe and the thriving La Plata Mining District community of Parrott City, and various east-west routes between Durango and Bluff, Utah. Supplies arrived via mule and ox. In at least one case, the Fort became the supplier. In the winter of 1884, heavy blizzards kept the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad from traveling to Durango for 70 days. Soldiers freighted supplies from the Fort to Durango to help their isolated neighbors.

Soldiers occupied the Fort for ten years, quelling an occasional disagreement between settlers, Utes and Navajos and providing a very good market for local retailers. Soldiers taught a school for locals and participated in social activities with settlers and in nearby Durango. The Fort had at least two military bands and fielded baseball teams for local tournaments. The Fort's presence justified a number of modernizations that would probably not have made it to such a rural area for quite a while longer. A telegraph line was connected in 1881. The Fort also communicated via the Heliograph, a large reflective disk that sent reflections up to 40 miles. Soldiers used Morse code to send about 10 words a minute to other outposts.

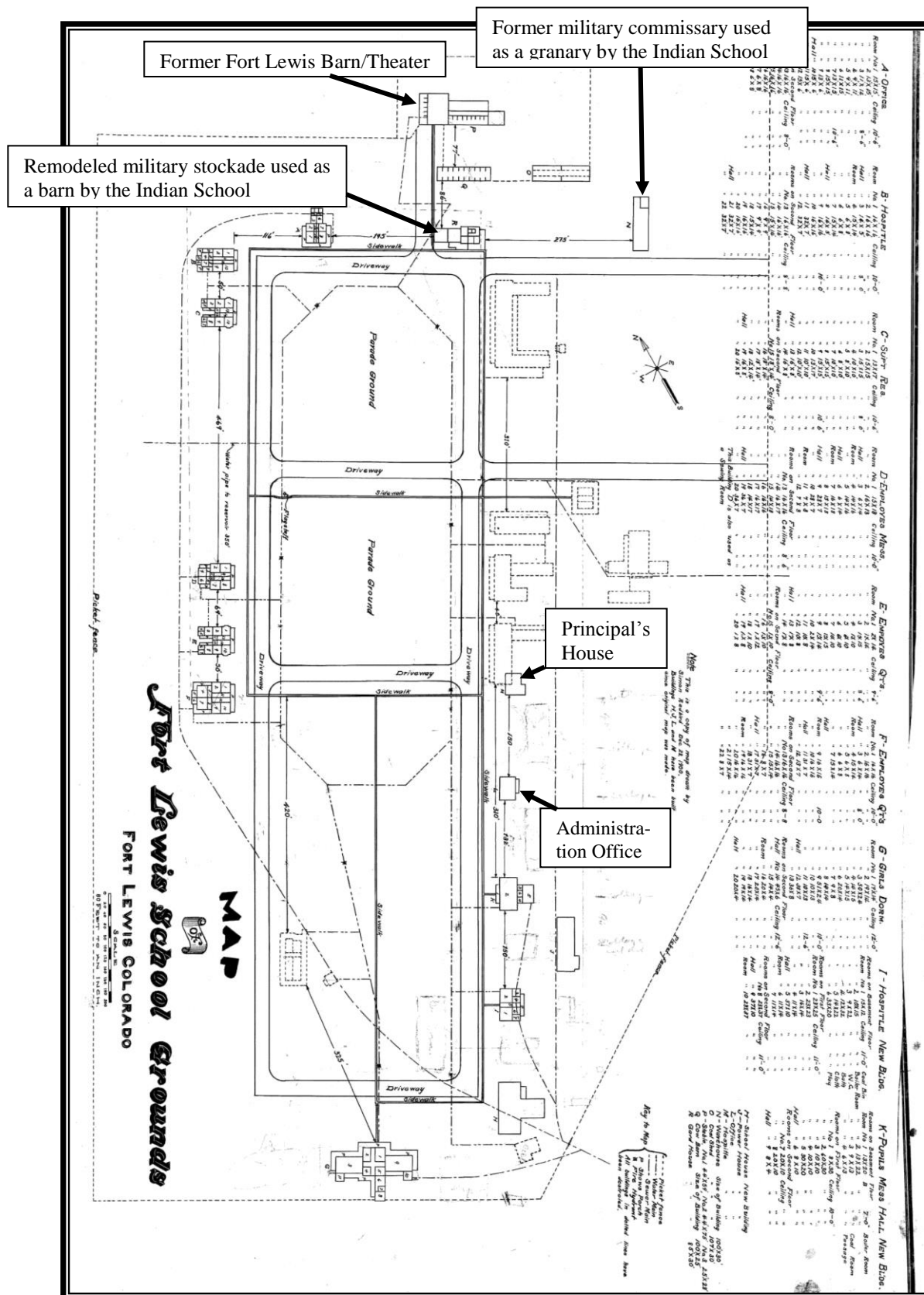
By 1890, the numbers of conflicts had slowed to a trickle and Fort Lewis, like many similar posts, could assert very few reasons to continue to operate. On May 28, 1891, the Secretary of War approved an Army recommendation to abandon the Fort with a final departure date of September 18. In spite of outcries from Colorado Congressmen the Secretary of War signed General Order Number 50, which closed Fort Lewis, along with Fort Shaw in Montana and Fort Abraham Lincoln in North Dakota.

Supplies were carted out as the last residents packed to leave in September. Some of the buildings were sold to nearby residents. The post office moved north to the town of Hesperus. In their zeal to remove the military from the site, the Army disinterred the bodies in the local military cemetery and had them reburied in an active Army cemetery at Fort McPherson, Kansas.



*Figure 3 Fort Lewis layout, undated but estimated at pre-1887; from A Time For Peace: Fort Lewis Colorado 1878-1891, by Duane A Smith. Building #5 at the north end is now a barn and was recorded as site 5LP8351.*





*Figure 4 Indian School layout; from the Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies Fort Lewis Archives. The arrows point to the five buildings on the map that remain from the Fort and the Indian School and were included in the survey.*

### *Indian School*

The military's complete removal from the property came on the heels of a plan to convert the post into an Indian School. General Order 189 was signed on November 12, 1891, stating that the Fort would be set aside for an Indian School. The property transferred ownership to the Department of the Interior in 1895. The Army had left at least six large officers' quarters, the hospital, three sheds and barns, the old jail building and a commissary building. The buildings were renovated to serve as an Indian School and new buildings were added (see Figure 4).

The old Fort's transformation into an Indian boarding school was part of a Federal Government policy to assimilate the younger Indians into mainstream America by removing the children from their native culture and teaching them life skills related to white society. By 1897, the Federal Government had established 23 Indian Schools with strong vocational orientations. Fort Lewis was one of two government-established Indian Schools in Colorado (the other was the Teller Indian School near Grand Junction).

When the school opened in 1892, the first 51 school enrollees included Mescalero Apache, Ute and Navajo children. Lewis Morgan transferred from the school in Fort Defiance, Arizona, to become the first superintendent. Curriculum included a half a day of academic study and a half a day of vocational topics. The boys were taught carpentry, shoe-making, blacksmithing and agricultural skills such as how to operate horse drawn machinery and to tend livestock. The girls learned domestic skills including laundry, kitchen work, baking and sewing.

In 1893, Indian Inspector C.C. Duncan reported there were 128 pupils of which 41 had transferred from Santa Fe. Duncan noted 65 acres were under cultivation and that the school owned seven horses, four swine and thirty-six domestic fowls.<sup>4</sup> The school raised much of its own food, as well as commercial crops, as part of the vocational education program. The school taught kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Historic photographs show Indian School students who look much older than a modern day 6<sup>th</sup> grader.

The Indian School prospered in the 1890s and peaked at 345 enrolled students in 1900-01 with 200 acres in cultivation. History leaves us a mixed impression of a well run school in terms of curriculum, but also a school with many resentful students and parents. When an epidemic closed the school in 1894, the buildings were looted and burned. Indian students and their parents were blamed for the devastation, although the historical record is not totally clear about this.<sup>5</sup> The school reopened in 1895, with only a few buildings.

In 1894, after a short stint by O.H. Parker, Thomas Breen became the superintendent. Breen served until 1903, when he was replaced by William Peterson. Superintendent Peterson also briefly served concurrently as the Ute agent, a position that took much of his time as he negotiated with the Ute Mountain Utes (Weeminuche Band) over the

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<sup>4</sup> Delaney 1977, page 26.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Ayres, in her "History of Fort Lewis Colorado", in the Colorado History Magazine (Volume VIII, No. 3, May 1931) claims that some of the family members of Indian students burned some of the buildings on the campus out of anger about the school. Other accounts specific to this school could not be located.

creation of Mesa Verde National Park. A vigorous advocate for the School, Peterson left in 1906 and was replaced by John Spear who came from Yuma, Arizona.

Federal policy changed in the first decade of the 1900s to encourage construction of schools closer to home in the local Indian communities. When the Federal Government built new facilities on reservations, attendance at the far flung Indian Schools plummeted. A new school located in nearby Ignacio drew on the Fort Lewis student population, reducing the numbers of students to 127 in 1903. Enrollment dropped to 40 in 1908 and the Department of the Interior considered other ways to use the property.

### *A State School*

Both the State and Federal Governments were supportive of the development of a public school at the site. Progressive reformer Governor John Shafroth championed an agricultural and mechanical arts school that would be controlled by the Colorado State Board of Agriculture and the State Agriculture College (now Colorado State University). In 1910, with support from the Department of the Interior, Congress offered the Fort Lewis military reservation to the State if Colorado agreed to maintain the facility as a school. The congressional act contained two additional caveats. First, the school had to continue the tradition of free tuition for Native Americans and second, the State of Colorado had until July 1, 1911, to formally accept the transfer of property.<sup>6</sup> State Senator George “Smoothie” West responded on April 4, 1910, with Senate Bill No.1 to establish a school of agricultural and mechanical arts and household arts.

When Colorado’s State Legislators failed to act promptly on this federal generosity, a delegation of concerned Durangoans voiced their concerns. It took until January 11, 1911, for the Legislature to approve a bill accepting the property and terms. One reason for the delay was Governor Shafroth’s concern that there would not be adequate funds to create a school from the remains of the deteriorated Indian School campus. Although \$60,000 was allocated to the effort from the general fund, the allocation was supposed to cover two years and to be drawn out of any money not already appropriated. The actual state support for the school’s first two years came in at \$27,500. Thanks to the Durango businessmen who made up the Durango Board of Trade, an additional \$10,000 was raised from private entities to supplement a very lean budget.

Undaunted by the budget battles, Charles Lory, the president of the State Board of Agriculture, prepared a curriculum and hired George Snyder as the first principal. An experienced 37 year-old public school administrator from Wonewoc, Wisconsin, George Franklin Snyder dove right into his new job. He faced many challenges wrought from operating a public school in an isolated rural setting with deteriorated facilities and a severe lack of funding. In 1913-1914, Snyder requested \$100,000 for the school but the legislature appropriated \$40,500 of which Snyder only saw \$30,500. The thrifty Snyder was still able to have a concrete silo erected in 1914 to supplement the agricultural activities that provided food and a small income stream for the school.

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<sup>6</sup> The Federal Government used this same strategy when it closed the Morris Industrial School for American Indians and turned the facility over to the University of Minnesota in 1909, which also still offers tuition-free educations to Native Americans.

The school's approach, which allowed students to pay for a third of their expenses by working on the campus, was one of many of Snyder's cost-cutting measures. In 1915, after Herculean lobbying and letter-writing campaigns from supporters in southwest Colorado, the State Legislature approved a mill levy to help pay for the school. The levy, although tiny, provided a reliable source of funding, allowing Snyder to anticipate and budget for improvements.

The small size of the school reflected its financial condition, but there was a demand from the very beginning. The first graduating class in 1914 had just two boys. By the 1923-24 school year, a respectable 41 boys and 32 girls were enrolled. Passage of the Federal Smith Levy Act in 1914 formalized federal funding of the agricultural extension programs throughout the United States and reinforced the new school's position as an agricultural extension school under the Colorado Board of Agriculture.

The high school played a pivotal role for the rural population of southwest Colorado. Duane Smith noted in his history of the old Fort Campus that not only did the School prepare students to work as homemakers, agriculturalists or to enter college, but "...in 1924 fully 40% of the rural schoolteachers in La Plata County and maybe as high a figure in Montezuma, had attended Fort Lewis".<sup>7</sup> Smith also notes, "In 1916 the State Board approved Lory's recommendation to establish a branch experiment station, specializing in high-altitude agricultural research".<sup>8</sup> The School initiated agricultural extension programs to the surrounding community in 1912 with a "farmer's short course".

A number of new buildings and improvements were added to the campus during Snyder's tenure. An electric light plant, incorporating a sawmill engine and two sawmill boilers, generated 440 volts beginning in 1914. The plant was replaced by a connection to the Western Colorado Power Company lines in 1927. A central heating and power plant was installed in 1919. Durango Natural Gas connected to the campus in 1930.

As a vocational/agriculture high school with no local school district to fund it, the school's financial support relied on a distant legislature and support from Colorado's State Board of Agriculture. The school survived only via very creative use of its own resources, including raising and keeping the crops that fed the staff and students. Old buildings were improved and remodeled. New buildings included a boys dormitory, faculty residences, numerous agricultural buildings, a machinery shed, a slaughterhouse, a greenhouse and an icehouse. The Enyert Sawmill located in Pine Hollow (also referred to as Pine Gulch) provided lumber in 1925. The school also had brick kilns and produced bricks with varying amounts of success.

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<sup>7</sup> Smith 1991, page 54.

<sup>8</sup>Smith 1991, page 44.



*Photograph 1 Dean Snyder (right end of center row) with faculty in 1922.  
Photo Source Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies; Fort Lewis Archives.*

### *College*

While the high school was serving an increasing number of pre-college candidates, Colorado saw the expansion of the junior college movement. Trinidad and Mesa Colleges were opened in 1925. New high schools were constructed in the towns in the Four Corners region and Fort Lewis shifted its offerings to attract older students. In 1927 Fort Lewis began to offer some college-level courses along with high school studies, and called itself “a branch of the Colorado State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts”. By 1933, all of the high school level courses had been replaced with college-level courses.

Improvements continued on the grounds, including the completion of a new girls’ dormitory (Lory Hall) and the Library. Figure 5 is an aerial photograph taken some time between 1932 and 1938, illustrating the campus configuration. The school continued the original layout of the old Fort Lewis, with the agriculture buildings at the north end, housing on the west and administration and classrooms to the east and south. Snyder oversaw upgrades to academics, agriculture and athletics. Fort Lewis had baseball, tennis, basketball and even miniature golf. Football was added in 1931.



*Figure 5 Aerial view of campus looking south and taken some time between 1932 and 1938. Photograph provided by the Fort Lewis College Office of Community Services.*

Dean Snyder suffered a fall in 1934 and died from complications on November 20 of that year. A long-time coworker and Farm Manager at the school, Ernest Bader, took over the reins to lead the school into a fully developed junior college curriculum. Bader faced the economic challenges of a nation wracked by the Great Depression.

Colorado shared the national devastation of the Great Depression. The 1930s began on a short-lived optimistic note when Colorado's farmers produced a record harvest in 1930. The excess supply ultimately contributed to a surplus that helped to drive prices even lower. In 1931, statewide farm income dropped to \$125.9 million representing about two-thirds of the previous year's return.<sup>9</sup> In southwestern Colorado, the economic impacts were particularly hard on agriculture. From 1930-1940, the value of livestock products on southwestern Colorado farms decreased from \$13,076, 817 to \$9,298,005 and the value of harvested crops dropped from \$8,046,340 to \$6,139,973.<sup>10</sup> A record drought struck in

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<sup>9</sup> Wickens 1979.

<sup>10</sup> O'Rourke 1982.

1934 and was hailed at the time as the driest year experienced since the first settlers arrived.

Dean Bader faced the financial realities of running a school on an even tighter shoestring budget than his predecessor. He made ample use of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs with a primary goal of putting the students to work while improving the campus. One of Roosevelt's first programs, the Federal Emergency Relief Act with the accompanying Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), was tapped in 1934 to pay workers to tear down old buildings, build a 200 foot ski run just west of the campus and erect a new fence along the highway. The FERA program ended in November, 1935 and most projects were transferred to the newly created Works Progress Administration (WPA). Bader received WPA funds to construct a new water pipeline. Bader also drew upon the Civilian Conservation Corps to address soil erosion problems and to partially rebuild the fence around the huge reserve.

Perhaps the largest lasting impact of the New Deal programs came from the library, which was built in 1939 using Public Works Administration (PWA) funds and supplemented by a three year grant from the Carnegie fund to add books to the school's collection. The PWA was created by the National Industrial Recovery Act on June 16, 1933, to help fund public buildings and projects.

Designed by renowned Colorado architect Eugene Groves, the library held over six thousand volumes. The total cost for the project was just under \$41,000 with \$18,365 from the PWA program. Bader also tapped the PWA program to construct two faculty cottages.

The onset of World War II brought new enrollment challenges to the school. In 1945 the student roster included 9 men and 45 women. "There weren't any men out there. It was just girls!" remembered Barbara Cummins a student at the school. Like other Americans of the era, the school adapted to the demands of war, including new classes in the curriculum such as "pre-military" and a defense course in radio. A new mascot, the Cavalryman, riding a horse with sword held high, was added. With faculty, staff and students all gone to the war, Dean Bader and his remaining faculty took over the farming chores.

The school survived the Depression and low attendance during World War II, to be swamped by returning veterans. Enrollment soared from 54 in 1945 to 266 in 1947. A federally funded "Veterans On the Farm" program began in 1947 with 361 attendees. A temporary housing camp called "Veterans Village" was constructed on the east side of the campus.<sup>11</sup>

The new post-war activities on campus ushered in major changes to how the two-year college would be run. Dean Bader left his position in 1948 amid questions over financial

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<sup>11</sup> The Village was demolished in 1958 in a contract given to Roy J. Curtis of Aztec, New Mexico. Mr. Curtis paid \$300 to demo and salvage the structures and buildings.

reporting. Fort Lewis was still considered a branch of Colorado A & M (now Colorado State University), and Bader's administration, like Snyder's before him, was required to send all invoices to the main school offices in Fort Collins for approval. This complicated situation led to lengthy delays in payments and many misunderstandings with the very far off-site college finance department. The long distance management approach changed on July 1, 1948, when the State Board of Agriculture voted to establish the school as a stand-alone institution. The newly named Fort Lewis A & M School would be separate from Colorado A & M but would still be under the administration of the State Board of Agriculture.

A new president, thirty-six year old Dale Rea, was hired in 1949. An alumnus of Colorado A & M, Rea took on many battles that culminated in the school's move to the City of Durango in 1956 and expansion to a four year college. Under Rea's administration the American Association of Collegiate Registrars granted accreditation, allowing a student to transfer credit from their junior college years to a four year college. In 1951 regular bus service from Durango made it easier to commute to school and reduced the isolation of the campus. Home football games were held in Durango to encourage the crowds.

When he returned in 1952 from a year of service in the Korean War, Rea led the campaign to move the college into Durango. He received approval from the State Board of Agriculture followed by a bill passed by the State in February of 1954 to authorize the move. The last year at the Hesperus campus saw 199 enrolled students. Some rural residents resented the perceived abandonment of the campus and some Durango residents were wary of this new presence in their town. Although controversial and emotionally charged, the move was accomplished in the summer of 1956. The college opened the Fall semester of the 1956-57 school year as a four year institution.

With the departure of the college, the former Fort returned to agriculture projects, including a high elevation agriculture research station managed by Colorado State University with emphasis on beef cattle breeding research and agronomy projects. On November 1, 1961 the campus was placed under the administration of the Colorado Agricultural Experimental Station.<sup>12</sup> A new barn, a 40-pen bull-testing facility and associated buildings were constructed in 1975.

Many of the buildings on the old campus were no longer used and sat vacant and deteriorating. In 1960, Roy Zufelt contracted with the College to demolish the Science Building. 1967-68 saw the demolition of Snyder Hall, the Dining Hall, the Greenhouse, the Science Building, the Arts Building, Lory Hall and the Chicken House. According to the contract specifications, the unsalvageable material was to be deposited at the far south end of the campus.<sup>13</sup>

Other programs at the historic Fort have come and gone. Some of the buildings were used as a primary school for the local public school district. The rural schools of La Plata

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<sup>12</sup> Memo in the records of Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies Archives 20.D.3 Box 1.

<sup>13</sup> Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies Archives 20.D.3 Box 1.



County were consolidated into Durango School District 9R in 1959, resulting in construction of Fort Lewis Mesa School in 1961.

The San Juan Basin Agriculture Center continues its work at the Hesperus campus. Since 2002 the former Fort buildings have also served as a public meeting space for a multitude of community meetings and social events. It is also home to an interagency (federal) fire fighting crew and a garage for the Fort Lewis Mesa Fire District.

## Survey Results

Three objectives were identified for this survey. They are

- To document the identified properties;
- To expand the database of information about the resources on the property; and
- To provide a preliminary evaluation of eligibility for the State or National Register of Historic Places.<sup>14</sup>

All of the identified 21 buildings and structures were documented. The Colorado Historical Society standardized forms and terminology were used to develop a database of information pertaining to the identified properties. Survey forms, photographs, maps and this survey report will all be available on file at the Office of Community Services, at the Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College and at the Colorado Historical Society.

### Summary of Buildings Surveyed

The survey recorded 20 permanent structures and/or buildings and a railroad car. Tables enumerating each site and indicating site name and site number, the site's eligibility for a State or National Register listing, and it's potential as a contributing resource within a historic district are included in the Appendix.

The following table summarizes the construction date and materials of the twenty one surveyed properties in relationship to the different uses of the property as outlined in the Historic Development of Fort Lewis. See Figures 2 and 6 for relative locations of each building.

**Table 1 Construction Era and Construction Material of Properties Surveyed**

<b>Period of Construction</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Construction Material</b>	<b>Site Number</b>
<b><i>Military Fort 1880-1890</i></b>	Stockade/Barn*	Stone/Brick	5LP8349
	Horse Barn	Wood	5LP8351
	Commissary/Granary	Stone	5LP8353
	<i>*Stockade part only</i>		
<b><i>Indian School 1890-1910</i></b>	Administration	Brick	5LP8339
	Principal's House	Wood	5LP8341

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<sup>14</sup> All of the surveyed resources are already included within the Fort Lewis Historic District that was placed on the local, La Plata County Historic Register, in 2006, precluding further discussion of local eligibility.

**Table 1 Construction Era and Construction Material of Properties Surveyed (continued)**

Period of Construction	Name	Construction Material	Site Number
<i>High School</i>			
<i>1911-1932</i>			
	Root Cellar	Concrete	5LP8336
	Garage	Brick	5LP8337
	Faculty House A	Brick	5LP8338
	Doll House	Wood	5LP8342
	President's House	Brick	5LP8343
	Faculty House B	Brick	5LP8344
	Faculty House C	Brick	5LP8345
	Carriage House	Brick	5LP8346
	Stockade/Barn*	Brick	5LP8349
	Farm Shop	Brick	5LP8350
	Silo	Concrete, wood	5LP8352
	South Barn	Wood	5LP8354
	<i>*Barn Addition only</i>		
<i>Two Year College</i>			
<i>1933-1956</i>			
	Library	Brick	5LP8340
	Faculty House D	Brick	5LP8347
	Faculty House E	Brick	5LP8348
<i>Post College</i>			
<i>1957-present</i>			
	North Barn	Wood	5LP8355
	Cookie Box	Metal	5LP8356

***Military Fort Buildings (1880-1890)***

Three buildings surveyed during this project were constructed as part of Fort Lewis. These three buildings are located in close proximity to each other at the north end of the old quadrangle. They are visible in Figure 4. Military records indicate the buildings were constructed by soldiers at the Fort and that a sawmill located on the site provided the finished lumber. The stockade and the commissary are built of shaped indigenous sandstone blocks and are whitewashed, while the barn is wood frame. All three have long, rectangular floor plans and side gable roofs. The stockade was constructed in 1888 to replace the original jail. The commissary was constructed in 1887. The barn was built as part of the original Fort but no specific construction date could be determined. The barn was apparently originally used both as a barn and for dances and theater productions. Articles from the 1880s Durango newspapers reference productions and dances at the Fort and in 1915, Hans Aspaas wrote in a letter about the entertainment held

in this building while the Fort was a military operation. Aspaas added in the next sentence in his letter, “There was a good bowling alley and shooting gallery.”<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately the sentence does not clearly state if these two activities were also held in the building or somewhere else at the Fort.

All three buildings were reused by the schools that occupied the campus after the Fort was decommissioned. The barn is still in use as a barn. Its original wood siding was covered in 1944 by asphalt shingles and metal siding. At some point after 1944, the interior was remodeled to accommodate a show ring and livestock sales. The stockade was used for livestock-related purposes after the military era. During the Indian School era, the building was used to store butter made on the site and as a slaughterhouse for hogs. In 1923 and 1924, during the High School era, the large brick addition was constructed and used as a dairy (see additional discussion of the addition in the following High School section). The building has been used since 1991 for the Fort Lewis Market Pig program. The commissary was converted into a granary and appears to have been in use for grain storage until the last few years. Students from the Indian School literally left their mark on the old commissary in the form of their initials, names and dates scratched into the stone wall of the building.

As would be expected from 100-plus year-old buildings constructed at above 7,000 feet in elevation, none of the original roofs are present. Corrugated metal roofs are on all three buildings.

#### *Indian School Buildings (1890-1910)*

While the Indian School reused the old buildings from the military Fort, new buildings were also constructed during the School’s tenure on the property. Only two buildings survive from the Indian School era—the Administration Building and the Principal’s House. Both are located on the east side of the old military quadrangle. They are visible in Figure 4. Built in 1900, the Administration Building has continued in the same function from its inception to the present. The Administration Building is the oldest brick building on the grounds. Originally a 32 foot square building, the administrative offices were doubled and a basement vault was added in 1925 during the High School era. Photographs dating to the late 1940s show that the front porch was made of wood, and that the window configuration was the same as the present one. The replacement of wood with brick on the porch must have occurred in the late 1940s (during the junior college era) or early 1950s. The current metal roof replaced a roof made of metal shingles some time in the 1990s. It is not likely that the metal shingle roof was the original roof material on the smaller building.

The Principal’s House has served as a residence since it was first constructed in 1900. This building housed the Superintendent of the Indian School. By the time this building was constructed Thomas Breen had been the School Superintendent for six years. Breen served until 1903, when he was replaced by William Peterson. Superintendent Peterson also briefly served concurrently as the Ute agent, a position that took much of his time as he negotiated with the Ute Mountain Utes (Weeminuche Band) over the creation of Mesa

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<sup>15</sup> Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies FLC Campus files RG 11 Ser.A Box 1; Aspaas letter.

Verde National Park. A vigorous advocate for the School, Peterson left in 1906 and was replaced by John Spear who came from Yuma, Arizona.

The residence became the home of Dean Snyder when the facility changed from an Indian School to a public high school. An experienced 37 year-old public school administrator from Wonewoc, Wisconsin, George Franklin Snyder served as the Principal of the school from 1911 until his death in 1934 from complications of a leg injury. The Snyder family lived in the home until the death of Mrs. Snyder in 1935. The building then became residences for faculty because the succeeding Dean, Ernest Bader, already had quarters in a different building on the campus. The building has continued to serve as a residence and is currently the home of the Manager of the San Juan Basin Research Center.

The Principal's house is wood frame and has been remodeled over the years. Documents in the Fort Lewis College Archives refer to an addition and remodel that was completed in 1923 during the High School era to add a new dining room, kitchen and bath.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately no plans have been located to correlate the 1923 work with the various additions to the building. The balustrades on the porch and the addition of the large picture window appear to have occurred after 1948, based on an undated photograph in the Fort Lewis College Archives. The photo has a penciled notation estimating 1948 as the date the photo was taken. The current metal roof appears to be a recent replacement from within the past 10 years.

#### *High School Buildings (1911-1932)*

The campus functioned primarily as a public high school during this period, but college level courses were also taught beginning in 1927. The school transitioned to a junior college in 1933. The surviving buildings surveyed from this period consist of five residences, four farming-related buildings and a substantial addition to the dairy (former stockade), and two auto garages. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the bricks and lumber for these buildings were produced on site. A sawmill that processed timber cut from the surrounding state land and brick kilns were located on the property. Correspondence from Dean Snyder notes the firing of brick to be used as building material. Archival research did not reveal any documents making a specific connection between these activities and a particular building, but the processing of timber and brick firing (or "burning" as Dean Snyder described it) was clearly in evidence in the archival record and on the site. The brick on the various buildings from this era is prolific and similar in size and material.

The surviving buildings from the High School era are scattered across the campus, with most of the residences located on the east side of the old military quadrangle on the former sites of the officers' quarters, and most of the agricultural-associated buildings located at the north end of the quadrangle where other agricultural buildings and fields were already established.

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<sup>16</sup> Center of Southwest Studies Fort Lewis Collection R.G. 4 Sec. 4.2.

In the agricultural area, the poured concrete silo was among the first new buildings to be built for the High School. The silo contributed to the overall operation of the school by providing grain and food storage for the staff and students. The silo was constructed in 1914, under the supervision of a Mr. Portner of Colorado Agricultural College. Historic photographs show corn was stored in the silo. Remnants of the conical wood shingle roof remain on the silo.

Other agricultural buildings located at the north end include a wood barn constructed in approximately 1920 and located to the north of the historic Fort's original barn, a brick farm shop (1928) and a substantial brick addition to the old stone stockade (see also the previously discussed Military Fort section) that was constructed in 1923 and 1924 to convert the building into a dairy.

The wood frame barn is a simple long rectangular building with gable roof dormers and a corrugated metal roof. Very few specific references to this building were found in the archives. It was apparently remodeled on the interior in 1926. The exterior has corrugated metal siding but there may be wood siding under parts of the metal siding. The barn is still in use.

The two brick buildings share some similar design features. The most prominent similarity is that the brick walls of both buildings are on tall poured concrete foundations. A brick water table is located at the top of the concrete foundation and runs around the entire building. The water table also serves as the sill course for the windows. Doorways are arched and have three courses of brick forming the arch. The dairy building has a little bit more elaborate detailing, including triangular knee braces in both gable ends and a tall narrow wood louvered vent placed within an arched opening in the north gable end. The farm shop has pressed metal rectangle shingles on its roof. The dairy addition to the stockade has a corrugated metal roof.

Another farming-related improvement was the root cellar that was completed in 1931 for \$4,000. Apparently other root cellars were also in use at the time, but did not survive to the present. This root cellar is located to the southeast of the old quadrangle. It has a partially below-grade story constructed of poured concrete. A wood frame first floor was constructed above the cellar level. A low (pent) roof is located at the top of the exposed concrete walls at about a 135 degree angle from the walls, presumably to direct moisture away from the foundation and to discourage vermin. The walls and the roofs are clad with rectangular pressed metal shingles.

One wood frame house and four brick residences were constructed during this era. The housing reflected the need for on-site facilities at this remote school. The wood frame house, commonly referred to as the Doll House, was an anomaly among the predominantly brick residences on the campus. It is very small and has served various purposes, such as a garage (early 1940s) and a concession stand in the late 1940s, but the building was originally intended to be used as a residence when it was constructed in approximately 1927.

A review of the archives of Fort Lewis College at the College's Center of Southwest Studies did not reveal any documents that would identify which faculty members lived in which particular house on the campus. Sometimes the records would refer to a teacher by name in one of the brick cottages, but it was not clear which building housed which staff member. Research of the brick houses provided a further challenge in that no map containing individual identification of the houses was made of the post-Indian School campus until well into the 1940s.

Consequently very little information can be offered as to the residents of the various houses. It is clear that the residents were teachers or staff and that all of the buildings were continually occupied throughout the tenancy of the high school and college at this campus.

The brick houses from the high school era bear some similarity in style and design features. The simplest of the four, Faculty House A, is located at the east edge of the campus. The other three houses are located on the west side of the old military quadrangle on the former sites of the officers' quarters. All are constructed of the same red brick that was probably created on site. All are simple bungalows. All have front projecting gable roofed porches of which three are enclosed. Given the extremity of the winter weather at the site and materials employed, it is likely the porches were originally constructed as enclosed porches. Three of the four have a band of decorative brickwork located at the top of the poured concrete foundation. Some exhibit slightly more elaborate architectural details, such as half timbering in the gable ends and knee braces. The following table compares some of the similarities.

**Table 2 Similar Architectural Features on High School Era Brick Houses**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Faculty House A</b>	<b>Faculty House B</b>	<b>Faculty House C</b>	<b>President's House</b>
Side gable roof	X	X		X
Enclosed front gable porch	Open porch	X	X	X
Knee braces		Porch pediment Gable ends	Gable ends	Gable ends
Half Timbering		Porch pediment	Gable ends Porch pediment	Gable ends
Decorative brickwork at foundation		X	X	X
Basement windows		X	X	X
Extensions from main footprint	Enclosed shed roof extension at rear	Vestibule entry at side	Front gable extension at front	Front gable extension at rear; flat roof addition to side

Faculty House A is the smallest of the houses. The house has an estimated construction date range of 1926-1929. It is likely that this was first the home of Paul Snyder, one of the Farm employees. The property has served as a residence up to the present time. It is currently occupied by an employee of the San Juan Basin Research Center.

Faculty House B was one of two “cottages” built in 1926. This house was slated for “Mr. Brooks” and cost \$7,521 to build. Charles C. Brooks was one of the faculty members at the school from 1921 to 1938. The house is currently empty and has been fenced off due to safety concerns about the building’s stability. The exterior shows signs of deterioration, but original features remain. Faculty House B and the President’s House were built under the same budget allocation in 1926. The two buildings are referred to as the “two brick cottages” in the annual reports and correspondence from 1926-1927.

The President’s House was constructed in 1926 for Ernest Bader who was the Farm Manager at the time. The building cost about \$8,300 to construct. Bader came to the school from Loveland, Colorado, in 1915 with a new degree from the Colorado Agricultural College as a teacher and Farm Manager. He became the Dean upon Snyder’s death in 1934 and continued as the Dean of the School until 1948. The building continued as a residence and was a residence/office for the San Juan Hotshots, (the public agency firefighting crew for the region) until October 2007.

Faculty House C was probably first the home of Professor McLain who taught physics. On July 22, 1949, Charles W. McLain was appointed vice president of Fort Lewis A & M College. In addition to teaching a course load, the professor was also responsible for administrative duties, serving as the registrar and director of admissions. The house was built in 1931 for \$7,521. The residence is now occupied by an employee of the San Juan Basin Research Center.

Two brick auto garages from the High School era were also surveyed. A ten-stall auto garage was constructed behind (west of) the faculty cottage row in 1925 and rented out to staff or students at \$2 per month. Five additional stalls were added in 1930 at a cost of \$4,000. The garage now stands vacant and unaltered. A two bay brick garage was constructed in approximately 1930 at the southeast portion of the campus, next to the root cellar. This garage now serves as a Fort Lewis Mesa Fire District Station.

### *Eugene Groves Buildings*

Well-known Colorado architect Eugene Groves had a long term relationship with Colorado State University, where he designed numerous buildings and facilities from the 1920s through 1950.

A Groves biography is provided by the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, and is available on their website at [www.coloradohistory-oahp.org](http://www.coloradohistory-oahp.org). The biography includes the following excerpt:

Born in Dana, Indiana, Eugene G. Groves (1882-1967) won a scholarship to Harvard. Poor health brought him to Denver in 1914. He maintained an active



practice for five decades and was responsible for the design of numerous educational and municipal facilities throughout Colorado. In Golden, he also designed the 1936, Art Deco style Mitchell Elementary school. Groves exhibited his design talent through a variety of architectural styles. For example, his 1927, Moderne style, Cañon City Municipal Building (5FN596) and his 1922, Italian Renaissance Revival, Ammons Hall (5LR472), located on the Colorado State University campus in Fort Collins, are listed in the National Register. His 1929, Colonial Revival, Lowell School (5ME4001.1), located in Grand Junction, is a contributing building within a National Register District. Groves was recognized for his expertise in the use of poured, cast, and reinforced concrete, and Golden High School is an excellent example of his efforts.

The archival collection at Fort Lewis College's Center of Southwest Studies includes documents illustrating that Mr. Groves was frequently called upon to design improvements for the campus at Fort Lewis, including the two faculty houses (D and E) and the Library which were all built in 1938 and 1939 during the Junior College era; two dormitories that are no longer standing (Snyder and Lory Halls—late 1920s); remodeling of a community hall in 1937; and a new septic tank and system (1928).

The surviving documentation from the High School era provides partial clues about the design and influences of Groves. No plans or blueprints survived for any of the buildings from the High School era that were surveyed, but other documents and the designs of the buildings give some clues about Groves' involvement.

It is very likely that Faculty House C is a Eugene Groves design. An identical building, (Faculty House D) attributed to Groves was constructed next door to and seven years after Faculty House C. Correspondence in the Center of Southwest Studies archives at Fort Lewis College includes a complaint from Dean Snyder to Groves regarding construction of House C indicating that Groves could not continue to select the same contractor (W.D. Ewing) over other local builders because it raised ire in the community.<sup>17</sup> No house plans have been found that provide the direct tie between Faculty House C and Groves, but the circumstantial data is very strong.

The design of Faculty House C incorporates many of the same design features as Faculty House B and the President's House, including half timbering, triangular braces, decorative brick work, and basement windows. The common design features and the period of construction for these buildings (1926-1931) strongly suggest that Eugene Groves was involved in their design. Most of the non-residential structures and/or buildings including the dairy addition to the stockade, the auto garages, the farm shop and the root cellar may also have been designed or influenced by Groves. The dairy addition has noticeably elaborate architectural ornamentation for an agricultural building such as knee braces, arched brick openings and a brick water table.

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<sup>17</sup> The contract for Faculty House C went to R. C. Taylor, who Snyder discovered had submitted the bid on behalf of Ewing so Ewing's name would not be on the documents.

### *Two Year College Buildings (1933-1956)*

All three of the buildings surveyed from this period were New Deal-financed and designed by Eugene Groves. The buildings are two Faculty Houses and a library. The houses were located on the west side of the quadrangle, in line with the other residences that had been constructed during the High School Era. Completed as Public Works Administration (PWA) Project #1255-F, the two brick residences referred to as Faculty Houses D and E were included in one contract. The total costs for both, including architects fees, were \$16,888. PWA funding paid for \$8,100 of the total. Apparently, Mr. Groves acquiesced to Dean Snyder's earlier complaint about selecting contractors because the selected general contractor was Hoskinson & Sturtevant of Cortez.

Faculty House D is the same design as Faculty House C. Faculty House E is a slightly simpler version. Both houses have decorative brickwork above the foundation, half timbering and decorative knee braces. The homes were completed in 1939.

The library was also completed in 1939. Fort Lewis Dean Ernest Bader obtained a Public Works Administration grant for \$18,365. The total cost for the project was just under \$41,000. The library was assigned number Colorado 1169-F and work began in late 1938. Groves designed the library, Robert L. Pennock of Denver secured the construction bid for \$28,482 and Yukon Plumbing and Heating of Durango (James Jakino) did the mechanical work for \$3,727.95. According to the construction specifications (on file at the Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies), the allowed minimum wage scale was \$1.10 an hour for skilled labor, 75 cents an hour for semi-skilled labor and 50 cents an hour for unskilled workers. The building served as the library until the College moved to Durango in 1956. For a brief time, the library building was used as a school before the rural schools were consolidated into Durango School District 9R (1959) resulting in construction of Fort Lewis Mesa School in 1961. After 1961, the building was used as a dormitory for students working at the agriculture experiment station. Since 2002 the building has served as a public meeting space.

A complete departure from the pitched roof brick cottages and administration buildings on the campus, the flat-roofed Library is built of blonde brick and using Modern architectural elements. Groves incorporated smooth concrete surfaces as decorative elements.

### *Post College (1957-present)*

A barn and a boxcar dating to the post college years were included in the survey. Both are located north of the other buildings on the campus and were included in the survey to determine the date of their construction and /or placement on the campus. The barn, referred to as the North Barn, is the northernmost barn. It was constructed in the mid 1970s for the bull testing activities of the San Juan Basin Research Center. It is still in use as a barn. The boxcar was moved onto the grounds at about the same time as the North Barn was constructed and was used to store grain. The boxcar had been converted by the railroad into an insulated car that carried baking supplies for the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. Known as a "Cookie Box", the standard gauge car would not have

been used on any of the railroads in Southwest Colorado as there were only narrow gauge lines in the region at the time the boxcar was in service for the Railroad.

#### Potential Historic District

A local historic district was recognized and placed on La Plata County's Historic Register in 2006. The local district includes 247 acres of the 6,318 acre original military reservation and encompasses "the core campus of the Old Fort Lewis and several adjacent acres containing archaeological sites."<sup>18</sup> The La Plata County Register system does not differentiate between contributing and non-contributing buildings.

The Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation Survey Manual (page 43) provides a definition of a historic district as follows:

#### Definition of a District

Districts are defined as groups of sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are significant as a single, identifiable entity although their individual components may lack distinction or merit. After the survey has been completed and the individual resources have been recorded, the resources and their geographic distribution should be assessed for district potential. The resources within a district have related characteristics — visual, geographical, or historical — that link them together as related resources. Historic districts may be downtown commercial areas, residential neighborhoods, rural agricultural areas, whole towns, or a grouping of archaeological sites.

Keeping this definition in mind, the Old Fort Lewis National Register Historic District would be eligible under National Register Criterion A, contributing to the broad patterns of our history, in the areas of Military, Education and Government. The District encompasses a rare surviving example of the post-Civil War movement to establish military posts to protect settlers and to encourage settlement in the western frontier. Buildings from the original Fort Lewis, combined with the quadrangle's layout and orientation, established the character of the campus and guided subsequent physical development of the site as a unified entity of buildings, structures and uses. The evolution of the military facility into one of 23 federally managed Indian Schools and the transformation from an Indian to a public agricultural high school and ultimately to a junior college as part of the Colorado State Board of Agriculture extension program illustrate significant trends in our history related to Government Relations and Education. A brief survey of Government-established Indian Schools already listed on the National Register suggests that the two surviving buildings from the Indian School era at Fort Lewis are rare extant examples from that movement.

The boundary for the proposed district encompasses an area within the 6,318 acre military reservation that was established for Fort Lewis. The boundary of the district would include the formal campus as it was organized around the original military

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<sup>18</sup> Page 2, La Plata County Historic Properties Nomination Form, 2006.

quadrangle, and associated activity areas such as the former football field at the south end of the campus, as well as the associated agricultural buildings located to the north of the quadrangle that were established by the Fort and expanded upon by the schools. The period of significance extends from the establishment of the Fort in 1880 to the departure of the junior college from the site in 1956.

The research verified that 19 of the 21 surveyed resources were constructed in the period spanning from the establishment of the military fort in 1880 to the departure of the Fort Lewis College for Durango in 1956. All 19 would be contributing to the district. As can be seen on the map of the proposed historic district in Figure 6, two resources (the North Barn-5LP8355 and the Cookie Box railroad car -5LP8356) were located on the property in the 1970s as part of the Agricultural Experiment Station and would not be considered contributing. Three other non-contributing resources were not included in the survey because they were clearly constructed after 1956. They are metal agricultural buildings. None of these structures detract from the overall character and layout of the campus. Four small unenclosed animal pens are also noted on the map.

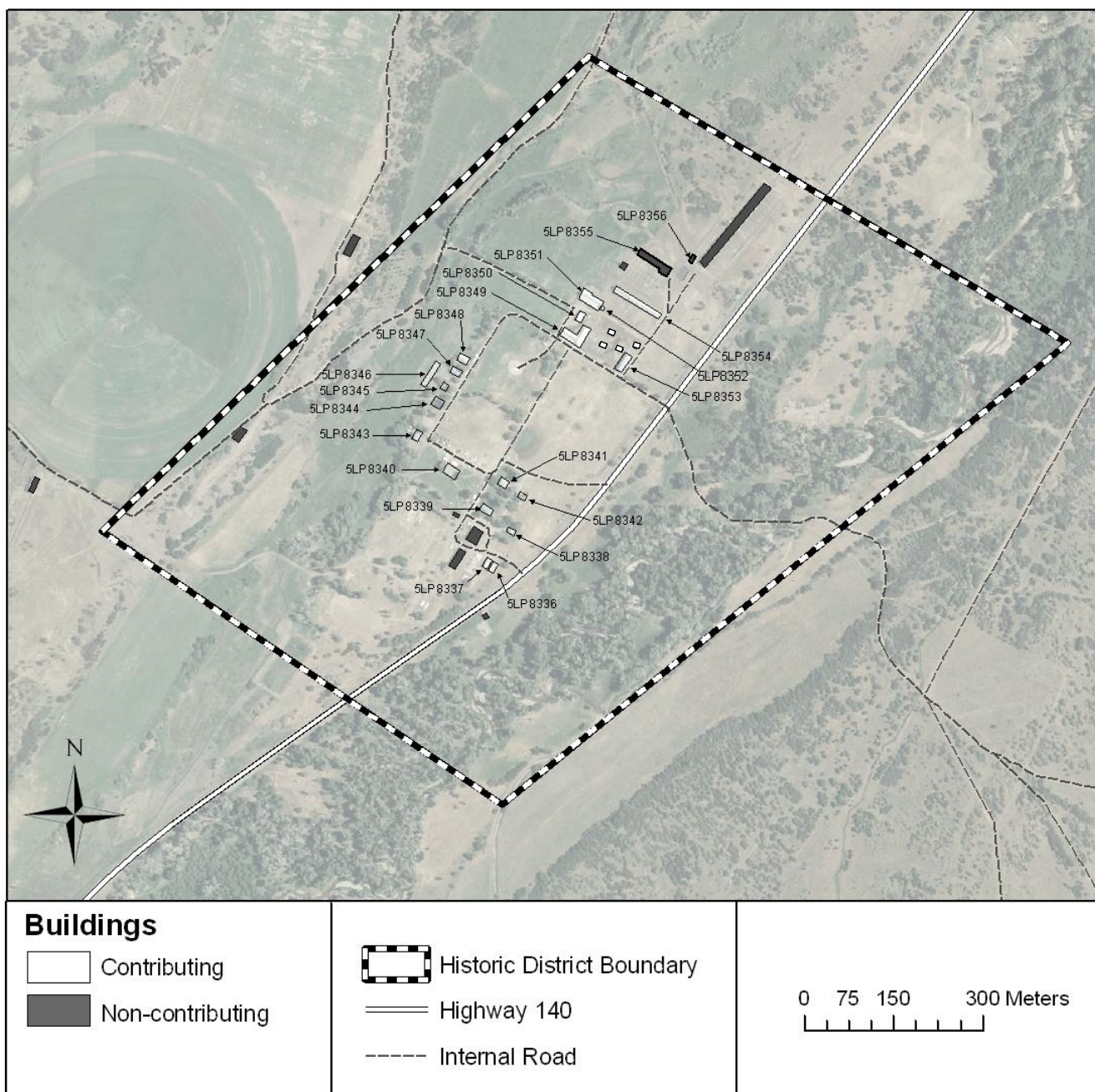
A concurrent archaeological survey noted on page 6 and completed as part of the Office of Community Services' Cultural Resource Survey and Preservation Plan Project for the Old Fort Lewis Campus ( SHF Project Number 2007-02-019), has located numerous foundations and historical archaeological features that support the use of the boundary currently in place for the locally designated historic district. This boundary would define the smallest potential area for the historic district. Mona Charles, Principal Investigator of the archaeological survey, has determined it is highly likely that additional historic features would be located if an archaeological survey were to be conducted in all directions beyond the currently designated boundary of the local district.<sup>19</sup>

It is probable that an archaeological survey for historic resources outside of the proposed boundary may uncover other features associated with the campus in its evolution from military post to junior college, which would necessitate a reconsideration of the recommended boundary. Given the information available from the survey work to date, the recommended historic district boundary is the existing boundary with the understanding that the boundary may change as more information is recovered from future archaeological survey work. Figure 6 illustrates the potential historic district.

The Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation National Register Staff have slightly different opinions about the characterization of the potential National Register Historic District. The Staff believes that the district is not eligible under Criterion A in the area of Military. With only three surviving standing military structures or buildings, they question whether there is enough remaining from the Fort period to convey the military presence. The Staff suggests that the Fort's significance might better be recognized through Criterion D and the historical archaeological potential.

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<sup>19</sup> Oral communication with Ms Charles. The archaeological survey report will be published concurrently with this report and provides a detailed summary of the archaeological survey results.



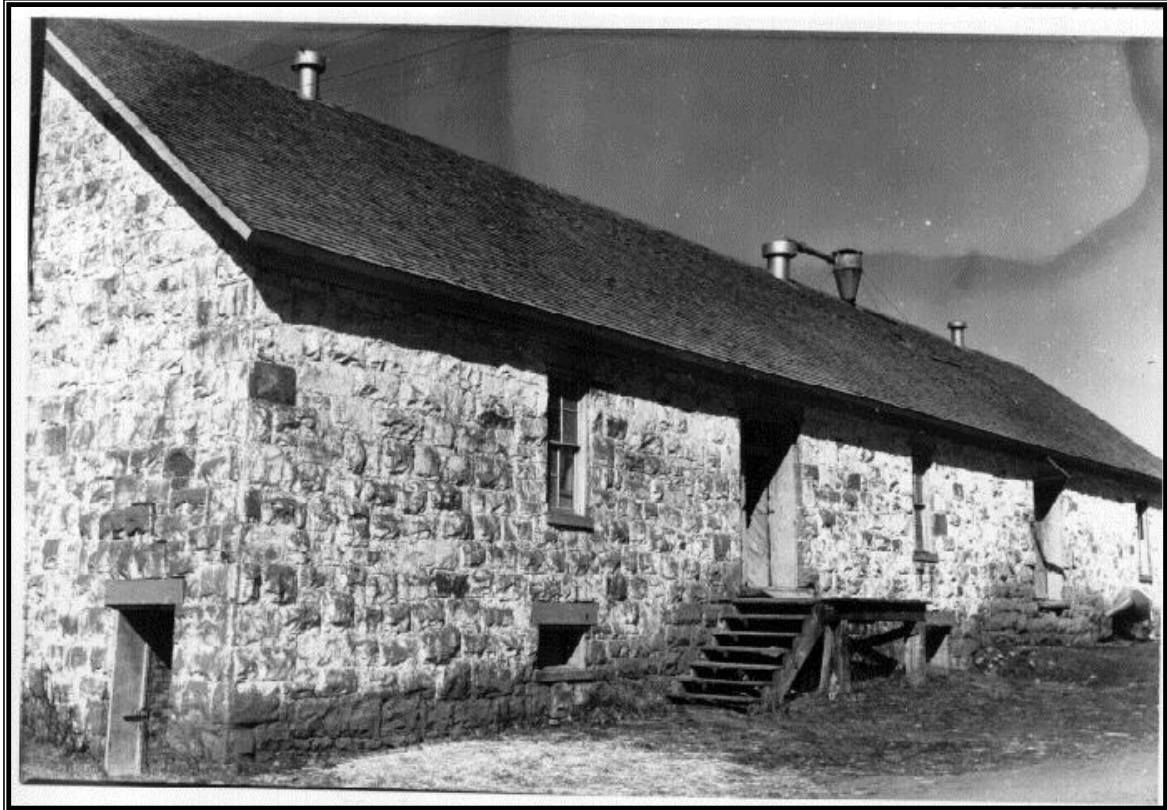
*Figure 6 Proposed Boundaries for a Historic District. The resources with site numbers were surveyed as part of this project. A few very small open animal shelters are located on the property and are also visible on this map. They are shaded to indicate contributing status*

The Staff has also recommended the following periods of significance:

Criterion A, area of Education	1892-1956, representing the time from the opening of the Indian School to Fort Lewis College's move to Durango
Criterion A, area of Government	1935-1939, representing the period the PWA was active in the construction of buildings
Criterion D, area of Military	1880-1891, representing the period of establishment and occupation by Fort Lewis

### National Register Eligibility

Three resources within the survey area are potentially eligible to the National Register. They are discussed below in chronological order.



*Photograph 2 This undated photo was taken while the building was used as a commissary. (Source Old Fort Lewis Website)*

*Commissary 5LP8353 1887*

The commissary is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of local stone construction on a military building by soldiers. The period of significance is the year the building was constructed by Fort Lewis. The commissary possesses sufficient physical integrity to convey its significance in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association. The building is in the original location and setting. The original design, materials, and workmanship are present. The only noticeable alteration is the metal roof. Historic photographs indicate the original roof was shingled, but photographs from the 1940s show a corrugated metal roof like the one on the building today.





*Photograph 3 The Stockade on the left with the 1924 addition on the right. (Source Old Fort Lewis Website)*

*Stockade/Dairy Barn                      5LP8349                      1887 with a 1924 addition*

The Stockade is eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an excellent example of local stone construction on a military building by soldiers. The period of significance is the year the building was constructed by Fort Lewis. The stockade possesses sufficient physical integrity to convey its significance in terms of location, setting, feeling, and association. It is in the original location and setting. The original design, materials, and workmanship are present. Original construction materials and evidence of original workmanship are present. The addition was constructed after the Period of Significance, but does not obscure the majority of the original material and workmanship.





*Photograph 4 was taken of the library in the 1940s. (Source Fort Lewis College Center of Southwest Studies)*

*Library            5LP8340            1938*

The Library is significant under Criterion A at the state level in the area of education for its association with the extension education work of Colorado State University and the development of educational facilities in Colorado. As one of the three junior colleges in Colorado at the time (the other two were Trinidad and Mesa Colleges), Fort Lewis provided advanced education in a remote area of Colorado. The library was the crown jewel of the campus and appeared frequently in public relations material as an example of the progressive facilities at this rural college. The period of significance represents the period the building was in use as part of the college (1938-1956).

The Library is also significant under Criterion A at the state level in the area of Government for its association with the New Deal Program-funded project enacted under President Franklin Roosevelt during the Depression. The Public Works Administration (PWA) was created by the National Industrial Recovery Act on June 16, 1933. It primarily supported construction of public buildings using skilled labor. The project was partially funded by a Public Works Administration (PWA) grant, providing work to local laborers during the Depression. It is one of three buildings (5LP 8347 and 5LP 8348 are the other two) on the campus that received PWA funding and is the only non-residential building of the three. The period of the significance is the construction date of the building.

The Library is also significant under Criterion C at the local level in the area of Architecture as a good example of the Moderne Style. The building incorporates elements of the Moderne style such as a flat roof with a small ledge (created by the coping) at the roof line and the exposed poured concrete foundation that wraps around the

building creating a strong horizontal emphasis. The building possesses high artistic values in the fenestration, the detailed decorative brickwork, and the decorative concrete panels. The period of the significance is the construction date of the building.

The Library possesses sufficient physical integrity to convey its significance in terms of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

## **Recommendations**

The survey confirmed that an important historic resource is located on the grounds of the old Fort Lewis Military Reservation. While three resources appear to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the relationship between all of the buildings and structures surveyed on the site provides a much greater collective historic significance than any one of the individual resources. This site is better suited to designation as a historic district that considers the layout and relationship between the historic buildings resulting in the character of the quadrangle and campus. The district designation has already been applied at the local level La Plata County Historic Register. The property should also be nominated as a historic district on the State and National Registers.

Fort Lewis College is encouraged to contact the National Register Staff at the Colorado Historical Society to discuss eligibility and the nomination process.

Further survey is encouraged to determine the extent of both historic and prehistoric archaeological sites within the Military Reservation, with particular emphasis on the ultimate location of the historic district boundaries.

Data from this report should be included in the development of a master plan for the Fort Lewis Campus. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic buildings are encouraged. The surviving buildings on the campus have great potential to continue their original functions as the providers of housing and education for specialized educational programs in a unique and remote setting.

Public education and outreach activities that could be based on the information in this report include additions to the Old Fort website, expansions of the walking tour and interpretive signs on the campus.

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## **Interviews**

Campion, Tom. Retired employee of the Fort Lewis Agricultural Research Station. May 16, 2007, conversation with Jill Seyfarth, Durango.

Denham, Al. Retired manager of the Fort Lewis Agricultural Research Station.

September 26, 2006 telephone conversation with Jill Seyfarth, Durango.

Isgar, Jim. La Plata County native who attended the Fort Lewis Mesa Elementary School.

September 27, 2006 telephone conversation with Jill Seyfarth, Durango.

LaShell, Beth. Current employee of the San Juan Agriculture Research Station.

September 26, 2006 telephone conversation with Jill Seyfarth, Durango. And on-site conversations during June, 2007.

## **Appendix**

Survey Log-List of All Properties Surveyed Organized by State Site Number  
Survey Log-List of All Properties Surveyed Organized by Resource Name  
List of All Properties Recommended to be Included in a Historic District

Appendix Table 1. Survey Log

**A List of All Properties Surveyed Organized by State Site Number**

*Note-These sites are all already included in the local La Plata County Historic Property Register as part of the Fort Lewis Historic District.*

*All of these properties have the same address: 18683 Colorado State Highway 140, Hesperus, Colorado 81326*

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>National Register Eligibility</b>	<b>State Register Eligibility</b>
5LP8336	Root Cellar		
5LP8337	Garage		
5LP8338	Faculty House A		
5LP8339	Administration		
5LP8340	Library	A,C	A,C
5LP8341	Principal's House		
5LP8342	Doll House		
5LP8343	Presidents House		
5LP8344	Faculty House B		
5LP8345	Faculty House C		
5LP8346	Carriage House		
5LP8347	Faculty House D		
5LP8348	Faculty House E		
5LP8349	Stockade/Barn	C	C
5LP8350	Farm Shop		
5LP8351	Horse Barn/Sale Barn		
5LP8352	Silo		
5LP8353	Commissary/Granary	C	C
5LP8354	South Barn		
5LP8355	North Barn		
5LP8356	Cookie Box		

A= Criterion A

C= Criterion C

Appendix Table 2. **List of All Properties Surveyed Organized by Resource Name**

*Notes-These sites are all already included in the local La Plata County Historic Property Register as part of the Fort Lewis Historic District.*

*All of these properties have the same address: 18683 Colorado State Highway 140, Hesperus, Colorado 81326*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Site Number</b>	<b>National Register Eligibility</b>	<b>State Register Eligibility</b>
Administration	5LP8339		
Carriage House	5LP8346		
Commissary/Granary	5LP8353	C	C
Cookie Box	5LP8356		
Doll House	5LP8342		
Faculty House A	5LP8338		
Faculty House B	5LP8344		
Faculty House C	5LP8345		
Faculty House D	5LP8347		
Faculty House E	5LP8348		
Farm Shop	5LP8350		
Garage	5LP8337		
Horse Barn/Sale Barn	5LP8351		
Library	5LP8340	A,C	A,C
North Barn	5LP8355		
Presidents House	5LP8343		
Principal's House	5LP8341		
Root Cellar	5LP8336		
Silo	5LP8352		
South Barn	5LP8354		
Stockade/Barn	5LP8349	C	C

A= Criterion A

C= Criterion C



**Appendix Table 3 List of Surveyed Properties Recommended to be Included in a National or State Register Historic District**

*Note-These sites are all already included in the local La Plata County Historic Property Register as part of the Fort Lewis Historic District. La Plata County does not distinguish between contributing and not contributing.*

<b>Site Number</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contributing To District</b>	<b>Not Contributing</b>
5LP8336	Root Cellar	X	
5LP8337	Garage	X	
5LP8338	Faculty House A	X	
5LP8339	Administration	X	
5LP8340	Library	X	
5LP8341	Principal's House	X	
5LP8342	Doll House	X	
5LP8343	Presidents House	X	
5LP8344	Faculty House B	X	
5LP8345	Faculty House C	X	
5LP8346	Carriage House	X	
5LP8347	Faculty House D	X	
5LP8348	Faculty House E	X	
5LP8349	Stockade/Barn	X	
5LP8350	Farm Shop	X	
5LP8351	Horse/Sale Barn	X	
5LP8352	Silo	X	
5LP8353	Commissary/Granary	X	
5LP8354	South Barn	X	
5LP8355	North Barn		X
5LP8356	Cookie Box		X