

Colorado State Register of Historic Properties

South Fork, Colorado, Denver & Rio Grande Western  
Railroad Passenger Shelter  
Name of Property

Mineral  
County

OAHP1414 (Rev. 12/2018)

HISTORY COLORADO  
COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
NOMINATION FORM

SECTION I

Name of Property

Historic Name South Fork, Colorado, Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Passenger Shelter

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

Address of Property

[x] address not for publication

Street Address 214 Pacifico Drive

City South Fork County Mineral Zip 81154

Present Owner of Property

Name Kim and Connie Marvel

Address 214 Pacifico Drive Phone (720) 626-6244

City South Fork State Colorado Zip 81154

Preparer of Nomination

Name Amalie Hipp Date 3/25/2023

Organization Colorado College Anthropology Department (Student)

Address 624 Dorset Road Phone (610) 635-6054

City Devon State Pennsylvania Zip 19333

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5ML.797

3/21/23 Nomination Received

5/19/23 Review Board Recommendation  
 Approval  Denial

5/24/23 HC Board State Register Listing  
 Approved  Denied

Listing Criteria  A  B  C  D  E

Patrick A Edman

5/31/23  
Date

Certification of Listing: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer HISTORY COLORADO

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## COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

South Fork, Colorado Denver & Rio Grande Western  
Railroad "Waiting Shed"  
Name of Property \_\_\_\_\_

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County \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION VIII

#### COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES OWNER CONSENT FORM

*Proof of Ownership must accompany the form. Each partial owner must sign a separate form.  
Reproduce form as needed.*

Property Name South Fork, Colorado Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad "Waiting Shed"

We, Kim + Connie Marvel

\_\_\_\_\_ title

certify or affirm that we are the sole owners x; partial owners —; or the legally designated representative of the owners — of the land x and property x located at

214 Pacifico Drive

South Fork  
city

Mineral  
county

and that we hereby give our written consent and approval for this property's nomination to and inclusion in the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties.

Kim Marvel, Connie Marvel  
signature

April 12, 2022  
date

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### SECTION II

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#### Local Historic Designation

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

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

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

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

#### Use of Property

Historic: Train Passenger Shelter

Current: Storage

**Original Owner** John H. Haney

Source of Information U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records 1895

#### Year of Construction

The estimated date of construction for the passenger shelter is between 1892, when ticket stations opened in Creede (then, Jimtown) and Alamosa (South Creede), and 1912 when passengers wrote the first dated inscription (Wilkins 1974:37,96). The passenger shelter was either initially used for another purpose, such as storage, and moved near the tracks or constructed by the rails when the Denver & Rio Grande Railway (D&RG) established the Alamosa-Creede Branch. Due to Congress giving the Denver & Rio Grande the right-of-way over the public domain in 1878, the railroad was allowed to build within 100' on either side of their tracks (Stone 1918a:359-360). When the D&RG acquired the original property (T41N R2E) in 1885, the railroad company kept no records of a passenger shelter at this time (U.S. Bureau of Land Management General Land Office 1885). If the passenger shelter were built within the railroad's right-of-way land rights, it would have likely been mapped or recorded.

The first record of the South Fork Passenger Shelter is a photograph from 1917 showing it on land associated at the time with John Haney's Riverside Ranch, which he established in 1895 (Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014:34). However, of approximately 335 inscriptions on the shed, the earliest is dated 1912 and is located on the northern interior wall. Aside from the dates from the inscription and the photograph, the presence of the structure is first written down by the railroad company, albeit not in their possession yet.

According to an August 16, 1920, *ICC Valuation Report* for property belonging to the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW) (est.1920), the passenger shelter at Riverside Ranch is "not owned by [the] carrier" yet acknowledges the presence of the structure at MP 305 (Interstate Commerce Commission 1937). This report confirms that by 1920 the D&RGW did not claim the shelter as property, which it was

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required to do by the Interstate Commerce Commission for tax purposes (Interstate Commerce Commission 1937; Moore 1990). Furthermore, to claim that the structure was not theirs, a railroad employee had to explicitly tell the ICC Agent that the shelter was not their property (Interstate Commerce Commission 1937; Moore 1990).

The D&RGW likely subsumed ownership by 1923, when the South Fork Passenger Shelter appears on a D&RGW official roster as the 'Riverside Ranch' non-agency (no employee posted) station (No. 297) on the Fourth Division, Creede Branch (Colorado Railroad Museum 1923:38). The D&RGW incorporated the passenger shelter because it was located within the right-of-way, despite the rest of the land being under private ownership. Since the passenger shelter was listed as railroad property by 1936 when the D&RGW created its Valuation Map, it is the strongest evidence for the railroad owning the structure (Colorado Railroad Museum 1936).

Based on this evidence, the date of construction is between 1892 and 1912, and the railroad took ownership of the shelter between 1920 and 1923.

Source of Information: Wilkins 1974:37,96; Stone 1918a:359-360; U.S. Bureau of Land Management General Land Office 1885; Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014:34; Interstate Commerce Commission 1937; Colorado Railroad Museum 1923:38; Colorado Railroad Museum 1936.

**Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist, or Designer** Unknown

Source of Information N/A

### Locational Status

Original location of resource(s)

Resource(s) moved to current location

Date of move Estimated by the current owners to have been initiated by their parents between 1970 and 1975 based on oral histories from their deceased parents who oversaw the relocation. There are no records of the structure having moved previously to the Marvel's ownership.

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### For Office Use Only

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

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: OTHER

Period of Significance: ca. 1895-1948

Level of Significance:  Local  State  National

Multiple Property Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Acreage Less than one acre

P.M. 6 Township 40N Range 2E Section \_\_\_\_\_  
         Quarter Sections NW1/4 of NW 1/4

Reference: Zone 13N Easting 347299 Northing 4177741

### SECTION III

#### DESCRIPTION AND ALTERATIONS

##### Description

The setting of the passenger shelter was historically alongside the southwestern bank of the Rio Grande River, where the current Collier State Wildlife Area is located. It remained in this locale, in the vicinity of the town of South Fork, from 1912 to approximately 1970-1971, when the Marvels relocated it to their private property. The current placement of the passenger shelter is 0.9 miles northwest of the original location, on the eastern bank of the Rio Grande. The shelter is approximately 37' inland from the Rio Grande on the westernmost part of the Marvel property. The other two buildings on the property are situated one in front of the other and serve as residential structures. They are 70' east and 85' northeast of the passenger shelter. Pacifico Drive is located 164' due north of the shelter and 24' north of the northernmost boundary of the Marvel property.

The nomination team verified the original location using a picture of the passenger shelter published in 1917 and land ownership records (Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014:34). The passenger shelter in the photograph has its entryway facing southeast, parallel with the railroad tracks. The general

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characteristics distinguishable from this photograph are the entrance and the roof. It is not discernable in the picture, but the Marvels speculate that the original foundation was tamped dirt, whereas loose brickwork makes up the foundation today. No associated landscaping is pictured in the photograph nor other structures, making the railroad and the iron bridge the only nearby features. The wooden shelter's current appearance: a vernacular passenger shelter with a shed gabled roof, matches that of the 1917 photograph.

The passenger shelter comprises a three-sided timber frame supported by wooden timbers that rest on loose brickwork. Wire nails hold together the entire structure. The shed is one story in height and has the following external dimensions: 15.98' x 8.14' wide, 7.28' tall from the ground to the lowest pitch of the roof, 7.97' tall from the floor to the highest pitch of the roof, and 9.64' from the floor to the external highest pitch of the roof, including the shingling.

The entryway has two interior wooden posts that trifurcate the opening to create three 'doorways,' indicating little to no change from how it looked in the photograph (see Historical Photographs and Figures). Six triangular braces that connect the top of the posts to the lintels of the doorways support each opening (Howson et al. 1921:292). A single large 'common' beam spans the length of the exterior southern side of the shed and provides a point of contact for all the triangular braces at the doorway to the roof's eaves (Howson et al. 1921:300).

The wooden roof is gabled, meaning the two opposite sides meet after spanning the eaves, creating a ridge (Howson et al. 1921:315). Unfortunately, the poor quality of the historic photograph does not lend itself to showing the roof's material. However, Kim Marvel indicated that the roofing material as of 1970-1971, when the shed came into his possession, was wooden shingling. 'Shed roof' is the official term for this type of gable, with one 'high side' covering the front of the building and a low side near the interior (Howson et al. 1921:344). However, in the case of the South Fork Passenger Shelter, the roof's eaves are reversed, with the shortest eave overhanging the south side entrance.

The exterior northern, eastern, and western walls are made from milled wooden boards. The north wall sports the letters 'D&RGW' in original red paint on the easternmost corner. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad primarily lettered freight cars, some of which turned into depots when retired, with the Roman-style lettering used on the passenger shelter (Cohen 1970:4). The lettering convention of omitting a period after the "D" has been observed on Colorado narrow gauge lines through the 1890s (Cohen 1970:4). The D&RGW likely added the lettering after 1920 when the Company took ownership of the structure (Colorado Railroad Museum 1923:38). Furthermore, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad folded in 1919 and was reorganized in 1920 as the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad; therefore, the lettering couldn't have been painted earlier (Fraser and Strand 1997:85).

Interior wood triangular brackets are fastened to the roof's eaves, and the ridge supports the ceiling's

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wooden rafters. No horizontal tie beams are coming off the north and south bearing walls. In addition, no ridge pole or main rafter is running east-west. Instead, several parallel and shorter (1" x 8") north-south running rafters meet at the ridge of the gabled roof.

The interior eastern and western walls are covered in inscriptions, and the undersides of the triangular braces of the entryway doors are dotted with writing but to a lesser extent.

The northern interior wall comprises seventeen horizontal boards, each wider than the twenty-one horizontal boards that form the western and eastern interior walls. A single vertical support post bisects the western and eastern walls, running from the ground to the roof eave with a lesser slope. Similar wooden posts trifurcate the north wall. Faded white paint covers the first five boards of the west and east walls, while green paint coats the lower three boards of the north wall behind the bench.

The northern interior wall of the passenger shelter contains several important decorative elements. It has the most inscriptions and unique architectural features, such as a built-in bench that spans the entirety of the wall and remnants of paint. The three boards closest to the ground, also obscured by the wooden bench, are painted a forest green that ends abruptly where the top of the bench stops. Someone seems to have painted the rest of the boards on the northern wall pale white, as evidenced by flakes of paint color on the wood of the top seven boards. According to the Marvels, the painting is original. The fading of the paint everywhere aside from places protected from the weather or use-wear supports this postulation.

Passengers recorded drawings, phrases, names, dates, and places using various mediums. Towns in Colorado are mentioned most frequently on the northern interior wall, specifically Alamosa, Center, Del Norte, Denver, Durango, and Monte Vista. Two visitors from Oklahoma and one from New Mexico also left their mark. The writing implements the passengers utilized vary from lead pencils, charcoal, red paint or pastels, and carvings. Cursive, block printed letters, scrawled words, all capitalized letters, initials, or a combination of the above are the writing types on the shed. Both Spanish and English languages pepper the interior. There are at least 335 different inscriptions in total.

The inscriptions are on the shed's west, east, and north walls, on the support beams of the northern wall, and on triangular braces of the entrance, roof rafters, and the posts incorporated into the interior walls. Approximately 215 inscriptions cover the north interior wall, fifty-five on the eastern interior wall, and forty-five on the western wall. In addition, there are about twenty inscriptions on various support beams, the entryway, and the shed's interior.

Forty-three of the approximately 215 inscriptions on the northern interior were written between 1912 and 1965. The exact date range holds for the eastern and western walls. The latest date on the shed is July 15, 1965, written by Jr. Byford from Hobbs, New Mexico, on the northern interior easternmost vertical support board. However, passengers wrote 40 of the 43 inscriptions from the sample between 1912 and 1942, with

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only one per year in 1944, 1948, and 1965. However, the 1965 date likely came from a passerby since people stopped regularly writing on the shelter in 1948.

Some inscriptions and drawings on the northern interior wall have been damaged through attempted erasure by a guest of Kim Marvel's parents. A devout Christian woman secretly tried to scrub away inscriptions she found offensive. Sections of the wall containing drawings of female figures show blatant smudging of what would have been the genitals and breasts. There are four definitive instances of smudging from this woman. In several areas on the northern wall, overlapping inscriptions obscure pictures and other text, making them indiscernible.

### Alterations

The Marvels only made alterations to the structure for structural support. Kim Marvel added the interior triangular roof supports in 2019 to support the original 1" x 8" rafters, which remain. The wooden shingles on the shed have been replaced twice: the first time upon the structure's relocation by Kim's brother-in-law and cousin in 1971 since the original wooden shakes were in disrepair. The second was in 2019 when Kim Marvel removed the then-rotten shakes and added plywood on top of the original 0.10" thick 10' long boards to strengthen the roof before adding new shingles. As of today, none of the authentic wood shingles remain. However, the new shake shingles are in-kind replacements made of the same material as the originals, preserving the original design's integrity (Metropolitan Planning Commission 2022).

As for alterations to the exterior western and eastern walls, Mr. Marvel added a thick wooden 2" x 6" diagonal support to each in August 2019 when the structure started leaning 6" southwards towards the Rio Grande. The northern exterior wall remains relatively untouched, save Kim's mother using a graphite pencil to outline the 'D&RGW' paint to make it more visible.

### **INTEGRITY**

#### Integrity of Setting and Location

The passenger shelter has diminished integrity of location due to the Marvel's relocation of the structure between 1970-1971. However, according to the *How to Apply the State Register Nomination Criteria* publication by the Colorado Historical Society, a nominated property requires special consideration from the State Register if it is "a resource moved from one location on its original site to another location on the property, during or after its Period of Significance" (2005:25). Therefore, since the Marvels moved the passenger shelter to their private property after its Period of Significance (in 1970-1971), and only 0.9 miles



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upstream, it meets the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties location requirements.

Despite diminished integrity of setting from the relocation, The South Fork Passenger Shelter retains some integrity because its orientation and environment are the same. Specifically, the Passenger Shelter is still in a "general environment that [is] comparable to [that] of the historic location and that [is] compatible with the property's significance" (Colorado Historical Society 2005:25). The structure remains on the bank of the Rio Grande River, and although on the opposite (northern) side of the river, it is oriented facing south, as it was during its Period of Significance. It is also worth noting that the shelter has been on the Marvel property for over fifty years.

The integrity of setting and location for many D&RGW properties have likewise been compromised since the Company often sold off resources during and after its operation of smaller railroad branches (Fraser and Strand 1997). For example, seventy-three miles southeast of South Fork, the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad sold off their Antonito, Colorado to Chama, New Mexico narrow gauge line in 1970, specifying the removal of associated property (Colorado Railroad Museum 1970). The fact that the South Fork Passenger Shelter was relocated so close and positioned similarly to its old spot is even more extraordinary considering this practice.

Most importantly, the focus of this nomination is the potential, under Criterion E, for the South Fork Passenger Shelter to yield new information through its inscriptions. The interior of the passenger shelter and inscriptions are primarily unaltered from the relocation process or while under private ownership.

### Integrity of Material

The nominated structure maintains the integrity of materials for the paint, nails, and original milled wooden boards that create the frame, the built-in bench, and the entryway. As aforementioned, the Marvels only used in-kind materials when replacements were necessary.

The trademark feature for passenger shelters: the wooden bench and walls, have survived approximately 110 years of use. Likewise, the wire nails that hold together the shed are original and were used commonly in Colorado by 1890, partly because of the demand from the growing mining industry (Horn 2022: 2). In all, the structural integrity of the wooden materials, and their preservation of the paint and inscriptions on them is excellent for a passenger shelter of its age and exposure to the elements.

### Integrity of Design

The South Fork Passenger Shelter's characteristics, like the wooden bench, the 'shed gabled' roof, triangular braces, and remnants of paint, speak towards a distinctive style or design. Although the passenger shelter's architectural convention is commonplace, it is a vernacular architecture type that differs on regional

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scales. A popular resource during Colorado's railroad era, William Willard's 1915 *Maintenance of Way and Structures* book identifies the design aspects of a 'shelter-house' (Willard 1915:280). As seen in Figure 1, the bench, loose-brick floor, and triangular braces are identical to the South Fork Passenger Shelter. The slight differences: the addition of paint and the shed-gabled roof give the nominated structure flair. Therefore, for Mineral County, the passenger shelter's great condition and unique vernacular style retain the integrity of design.

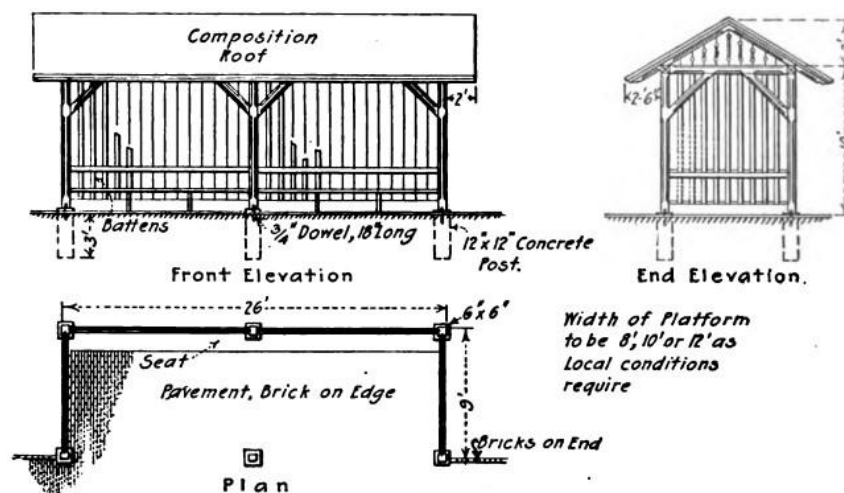


FIG. 148.—Shelter-house.

Figure 1. The Shelter-house diagram from Willard's 1915 publication of *Maintenance of Way and Structures*. Notice the similarities and differences between the South Fork Passenger Shelter and the architectural features drawn in the diagram (Willard 1915: 280).

### Integrity of Workmanship

The nomination structure retains the integrity of workmanship of its original passenger shelter architectural convention. The South Fork Passenger Shelter's frame, siding, entry posts, and braces have been unchanged by the Marvels. As mentioned, the structure retains the integrity of design and materials, which add to the shelter's quality of work. Aside from the unavoidable in-kind replacements, the survival of original aspects of the structure, such as the bench and frame, point to high-quality construction. The different paint colors that the D&RGW likely added upon ownership in the 1920s are also in good condition.

The South Fork Passenger Shelter also retains the integrity of workmanship through its inscriptions. The passenger inscriptions best express the 'crafts' of people from a specific historical period and are considered in good to excellent condition. The four or five inscriptions that Kim Marvel's late parents' guest

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damaged are an exception. Nevertheless, colloquially known as 'Aspen Porn' in the 'Passenger shelter' (Lambert 2014), the drawings represent a cultural expression of Basque and Hispano nomadic sheepherding lifestyles. Accounting for only five percent of recorded tree carvings, or arborglyphs, Basque sheepherders drew erotica on aspens and wooden structures (Lambert 2014) (U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service 2022). The presence of the drawings, inscriptions, and defacement are testaments to the cultural conventions of various groups who utilized the shed.

### Integrity of Association and Feeling

Although the property is no longer associated with any railway, the passenger shelter still provided shelter for railroad passengers for decades along the transportation route. With its setting along the Rio Grande River and near the historic transportation route, and the inscriptions passengers left behind, the resource does a good job expressing the historic feeling people would have had waiting for the train to arrive. Therefore, the integrity of feeling and the integrity of association are retained.

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### SECTION IV

#### Significance of Property

#### Nomination Criteria

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

#### Areas of Significance

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

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### SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The South Fork Passenger Shelter's inscriptions record social history that can yield new information on a local level about South Fork and the D&RGW's Alamosa-Creede Branch passenger demographics and lifestyles during 1912-1948. The *Railroads in Colorado, 1858-1948* Multiple Property Documentation Form describes passenger shelters, also called flag depots, as "the smallest passenger structures. Positioned at points where passenger traffic was sparse and intermittent, they provided a place for passengers to wait and flag down passing trains" (Fraser and Strand 1997:159). They are "in their simplest form, (flag depots) consist of platforms covered with three-sided, roofed structures. Rarely built in Colorado because freight traffic usually surpassed passengers, flag depots were small, single-pen structures built from standard plans using simple wood frame construction" (Fraser and Strand 1997: 159). The South Fork Passenger Shelter is eligible for the SRHP because of its ability to meet Significance Criterion E: "The property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history" (History Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation 2018: 10). Analysis of some of the shed's narrative inscriptions exemplify the structure's potential for knowledge creation about railroad passengers and operations. Assessing activities, names, and dates likely associated with Riverside Ranch is only the beginning of the insights this structure can provide.

Passenger shelters served as points along the railroad for passengers to facilitate their trip to the next shelter or depot. Railroad companies often constructed passenger shelters as part of flag stations with passenger traffic too small to justify having a depot or an agent (Gregg 1974a:239). A flag station (sometimes called a rural depot) is a stop along the rails that very few trains come to, often designated by a flag (Gregg 1974b:264). Passengers would then 'flag' down an oncoming train for them to stop (Howson et al. 1921:348). Using a hand, a red flag, or a lamp if no fixed signal was available, the passengers would then purchase their tickets on the train from the conductor (Howson et al. 1921:496). Passengers could request the train to stop at a specific shelter. The South Fork Passenger Shelter specifically had an agreement in which the D&RG officials were "very obliging and will stop their trains at any point along the river to allow anglers to get off or on the cars" for fishing on the Riverside Ranch property that the shelter was on (Taylor 1900:353).

The construction date for the passenger shelter was between 1892, when the D&RG opened ticket stations in Creede and Alamosa, and 1912 when passengers added the first dated inscription to the shelter (Wilkins 1974:37,96; South Fork 2021). The people who built the structure were likely associated with the Riverside Ranch property on which it resided. By 1917, a photograph shows the building moved to or was already situated alongside the D&RG tracks (Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014:34). However, its period of significance is directly associated with its use as a railroad passenger shelter, although its builders may not have intended it to be one.

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The passenger shelter was first recorded as railroad property in 1923 as the 'Riverside Ranch Station' (Station No. B297, Mileage 53.21) when the structure and all other railroad assets were audited for tax purposes (Colorado Railroad Museum 1923). Therefore, the D&RG, which had no tax structure before the late 1800s, set about selling off taxable property to locals after the ratification of the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which established income tax (Colorado Railroad Museum 1923). The subsequent Valuation Act of 1913 established the Bureau of Valuation to determine the value of railroad properties for taxation, incidentally leading to increased record keeping by railroad companies hoping to avoid taxes by showing the money they were losing (Moore 1990). As a non-agency structure, the lack of an employee at the South Fork Passenger Shelter made it a passive resource the D&RGW listed in the 1923 roster (Colorado Railroad Museum 1923).

Although the relocation has diminished the Passenger Shelter's integrity of the setting and location, it is inconsequential when considering a nomination based on the inscriptions. Furthermore, it was typical for the D&RGW, in particular, to sell off and move properties. For the above reasons, the D&RGW actively tried to unburden themselves of taxable properties. Railcars, passenger shelters, and even rail ties from non-profitable or active rail lines were sold to the public, with well-documented bills of sale. The practice of offloading railroad infrastructure in Colorado was prolific enough throughout the railroad abandonments of the 1960s that 60 percent of D&RGW 5500-5849 series stock cars are in private ownership (Stone 1992: 200). Additionally, the structure maintains the integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association and feeling if not location and setting.

As a gathering place for the train and likely the Riverside Ranch, the passenger shelter's social nature produced its most important historical resource: the inscriptions. The names, hometowns, and activities from 1912-1948 can yield information on the social histories of South Fork and the associated Alamosa-Creede Branch, although removed from the latter. The nominator's preliminary research has already uncovered new information about local farming, tourism, and agricultural industries in Mineral County. The Riverside Ranch and railroad connections situate the structure between rural and increasingly industrial worlds. As a 36-year record, the well-preserved inscriptions can potentially expand knowledge of these two intersecting lifeways during the height and fall of the railroad period.

### Historical Overview and Cultural Context

The passenger shelter is near the town of South Fork, Colorado. Originally the ancestral lands of the Weeminuche (Ute Mountain Ute Tribe) and Capote Ute (Southern Ute Tribe) people, they were forcibly removed by the U.S. Government in 1868 onto a western Colorado reservation (Colorado Encyclopedia 2022a; South Fork 2021). The town of South Fork originated as a stage stop for northbound travelers looking to cross

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the San Luis Valley pre-1882 (South Fork 2021). Specifically, the Barlow and Sanderson Stage Company line, which stretched from Missouri to Del Norte to Lake City, Colorado, utilized South Fork as a stop (South Fork 2021).

General William Jackson Palmer established the Denver & Rio Grande Railway narrow-gauge line and company in 1871, building first from Denver to Colorado Springs (Fraser and Strand 1997:15). General Palmer's interest in a southbound rail was outlined in his first annual report to the directors in 1873, citing fertile lands, mountains for metal and timber, cattle grazing land, and tourism (Stone 1918a:348). In addition, the silver and gold strikes in the San Juan Mountains, specifically in Silverton in 1882, added to the appeal of building through western Colorado (Stone 1918a:362).

The Denver & Rio Grande Railway Company targeted Creede, the small mining town that would experience the last major silver strike in the state in 1890 (Fraser and Strand 1997). As part of the Creede Branch, the railroad reached South Fork, Colorado, in 1882 and finished the Alamosa-Wagon Wheel Gap portion in 1891 (Figure 2) (Fraser and Strand 1997). The only other SRHP-registered railroad structure in South Fork is the 1881 Water Tower, registered with the SRHP in March of 2002 (site number 5RN.352) (South Fork 2021).

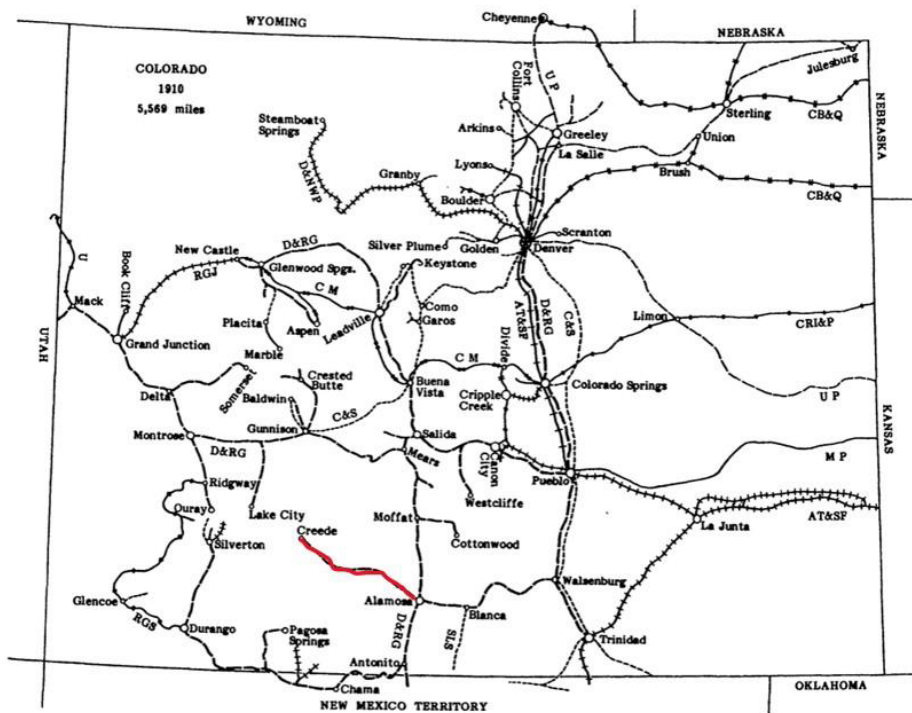


Figure 2. Map of the railroad lines in Colorado in 1910 from the Donald B. Robertson *Encyclopedia of Western Railroad History* in Fraser and Strand 1997. The Alamosa-Creede Branch is drawn in red.

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In the greater South Fork area from the 1890s, the railroad went through a time of financial ups and downs, affecting the likely abandonment of the passenger shelter in 1948, when travelers wrote the last inscription likely associated with the railroad. In addition, Mineral County and South Fork were hit hard by the low quality of the mined ores, while the price of milling surpassed the payoff in the 1890s (Stone 1918b:298). As a result, by 1893, miners and locals had moved out of the county or switched back to professions in other industries (Stone 1918b:298).

In the mid-1890s, the silver boom slowed, and the post-Spanish-American war economic depression contributed to a demonetization of silver mined throughout the state (Fraser and Strand 1997). The result was railroad company consolidation, which greatly affected the D&RG Railway as it shifted to non-silver cargo and changed owners to try and stay afloat (Fraser and Strand 1997).

The D&RG was rebranded in 1920 as the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad (D&RGW) and absorbed the Rio Grande Western (RGW), which ran from Utah to California (Fraser and Strand 1997:85). Yet the Company struggled to compete with the automobile for the next two decades (Fraser and Strand 1997). Eventually, the D&RGW came out of receivership in 1948 by owning stock in Moffat Road, one of the most challenging railroad crossings of the Continental Divide (Fraser and Strand 1997).

By the end of the Colorado railroad abandonments of 1915-1967, the Company had decommissioned the Creede Line and several more minor routes (Fraser and Strand 1997). The rise of the automobile boom in the 1910s influenced the decommissions when Wolf Creek Pass Road became the newest form of local transport (South Fork 2021). The passenger shelter owners, the Marvels, then received permission to purchase and relocate the passenger shelter from the head of the D&RGW between 1970-1971.

### Chronology of the Property

The original location of the passenger shelter is on a property historically known as the Riverside Ranch in Mineral County. The owner of the 160-acre property, John H. Haney, purchased the land in Township 40N Range 2E Section 11, aliquots NE ¼ SE ¼. on April 24, 1820 (U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management General Land Office Records 1895). Previously, a *U.S. Bureau of Land Management General Land Office 1885 Right of Way* document indicated the D&RG owned part of the property under Congress' 1878 ruling, which gave the railroad land within 100' of the tracks (U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management General Land Office 1885; Stone 1918a:359-360). Therefore, when Mr. Haney



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sold the ranch and all its animals to Mrs. Mary L. Waller of Kansas City, Missouri, in 1914 for \$15,000, the railroad still controlled the land the passenger shelter would be on (The Creede Candle, 8 April 1916).

The shed's construction date can be estimated as between 1892 when the Alamosa and Creede stations began selling tickets, and 1912, when the first dated inscription on the shed was written (Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014; U.S. Bureau of Land Management General Land Office 1885). The first documental proof of the shed is from a 1917 photograph published in Mike Butler and the Monte Vista Historical Societies' book, *Images of America, Southern Colorado, O.T. Davis Collection* (Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014). The first map to show the passenger shelter is from 1936 and shows the structure as a rural depot marked at mile marker 305 within the Riverside Ranch Section (Figure 3) (Colorado Railroad Museum 1936). Passengers wrote the latest dated inscription in 1948, although there is an inscription as late as 1965, which was likely a passerby. The Marvels relocated the passenger shelter sometime between 1970 and 1971, but the last use of the shed was likely before 1967 when many of Colorado's smaller standard gauge lines were decommissioned (Fraser and Strand 1997).

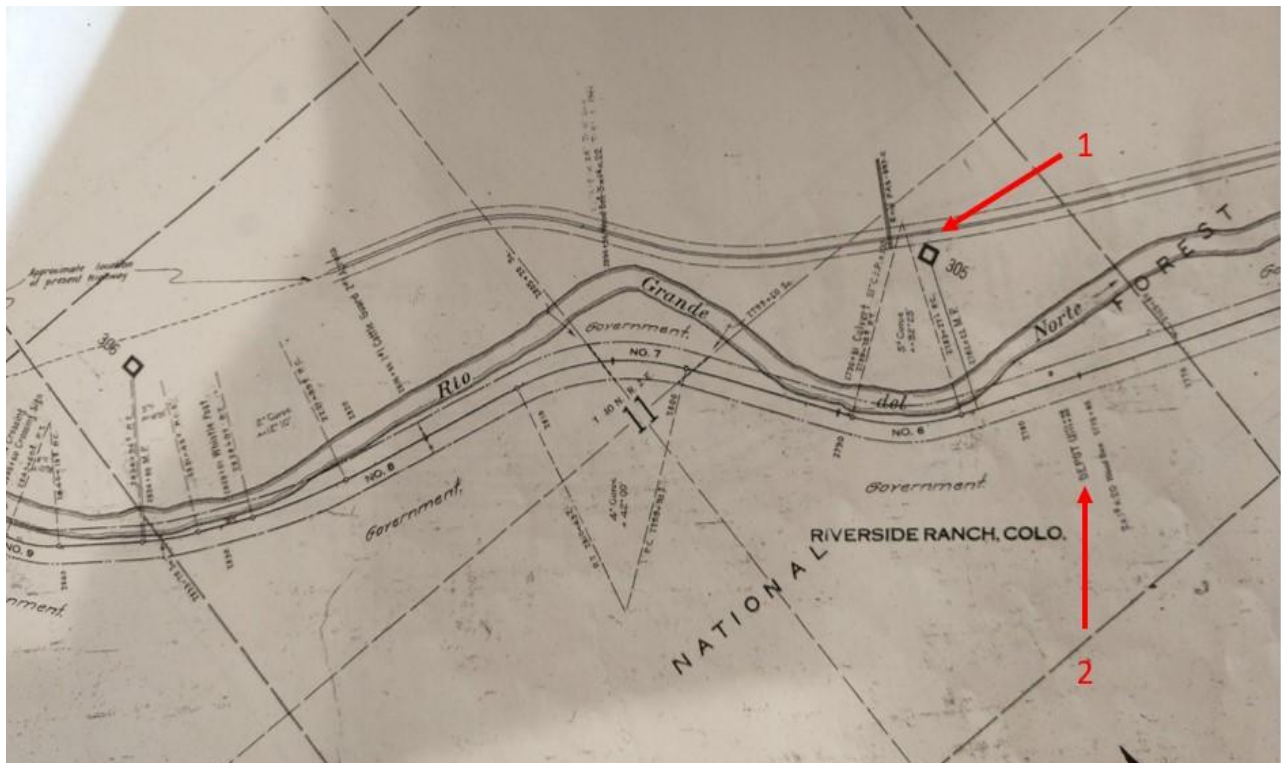


Figure 3. A 1936 map of the Riverside Ranch in Section 11 of T40N R2E. The South Fork Passenger Shelter was included on this map sometime between the ICC Valuation Report of 1919-1920 and 1936 when the map and its preceding edits were incorporated into this final version.

- 1) The black box labeled 305 indicates mile marker 305.

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- 2) The Passenger Shelter is labeled as a depot near the easternmost corner of the Section (Colorado Railroad Museum 1936).

There are no records of the history of the passenger shelter from 1967 to 1975. However, the Marvels received oral permission from a representative of the D&RGW to place the shed on a flatbed truck and move it, without disassembly, to their private property on Pacifico Drive. Since the 1970s, the Marvels and their friends and family have used the shed recreationally and for storing antiques.

The Coller State Wildlife Area has subsumed the original Riverside Ranch property, and the spot on which the shed sat is now vacant. No excavations have been conducted in this moderately-trafficked area where locals and tourists come to fish, hunt, and camp. The Marvel's relocation of the structure onto private property and use of in-kind alterations only as needed are why the inscriptions and architectural features are in excellent condition and maintain historical integrity. Therefore, the passenger shed offers an unparalleled opportunity to yield important information about local and regional history.

### Area of Significance

*Social History:* For the South Fork Passenger Shelter, the social history conveyed through the inscriptions is that of people moving through space over time using the railroad. The National Park Service defines social history as "the history of efforts to promote the welfare of society; the history of society and the lifeways of its social groups" (U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service 1997). The passenger shelter exemplifies how various demographics of people traveled through the South Fork area during Colorado's railroad era. D&RGW Railroad passengers or affiliates of the Riverside Ranch property before the railroad's assimilation of the shelter between 1920 and 1936 left their mark via historic graffiti. The researcher's initial attempts to classify these arborglyphs uncovered that people of different genders, hometowns, and who were linked to various occupations and past times utilized the structure from 1912-1948. The structure's function as a right-of-way railroad structure- officially and unofficially—positions it as a prime resource for tracking and analyzing human traffic through time.

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## Criterion E

The South Fork Passenger Shelter's most compelling and unique feature is its record of hundreds of passenger inscriptions. Figure 4 is a histogram displaying the frequency of when passengers wrote the forty-three dated inscriptions on the northern wall, showing occupation patterns. The sample used is forty-three dated inscriptions out of all the northern interior inscriptions. A specific timespan from 1912 to 1948 is established due to the sample inscriptions.

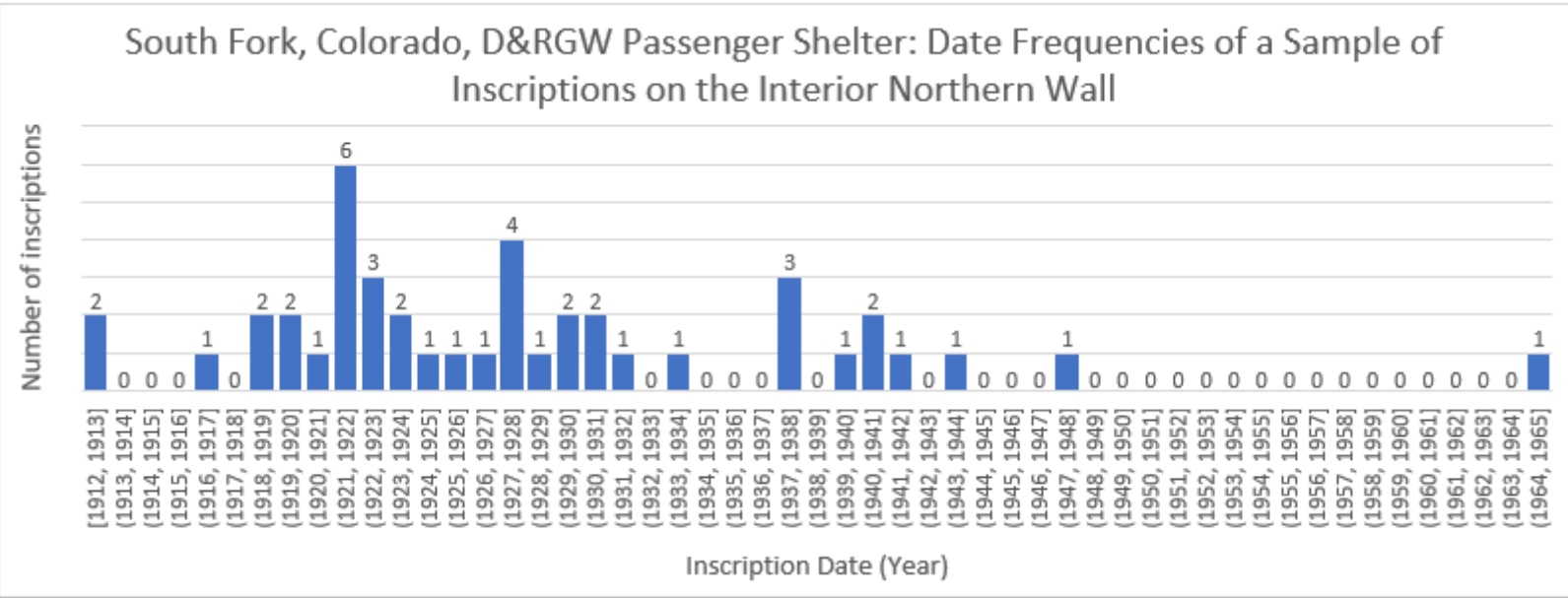


Figure 4. Histogram of the frequencies of 43 dates written by passengers on the northern interior wall of the 'Passenger shelter.' The dates span from 1912 to 1965, with consecutive years of inscriptions written in 1918-1932. The passenger shelter saw its most inscriptions being written in 1921. Passengers stopped regularly writing on the passenger shelter northern wall in 1948. The 1965 date is a statistical outlier since the upper limit of the interquartile range is 1949.5. This date likely came from a passerby who decided to write on the shed, and is not associated with the railroad.

Beyond this insight, the information accompanying the dates, which range from names and phrases to 'diary-like' entries, supports the argument for SRHP nomination under Criterion E. Finally, the author analyzed several inscriptions as a case study to prove the further potential for new insights about history, specifically South Fork, Colorado Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad passenger demographics.

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### The Connection between Inscriptions and Local Themes

The passenger shelter is directly related to the railroad history of South Fork and the Creede Branch of the D&RGW and is likely affiliated with the agrarian and tourist economy of South Fork with its Riverside Ranch connection. Of the 215 total inscriptions on the interior north wall of the shed, nine were dated and mentioned sheep shearing, fishing, and lettuce hoeing.

Activities inscribed on the shed ranged from 'hoboing' to fishing. The most frequently mentioned tasks were sheep shearing and hoeing lettuce, which would have occurred at the nearby Riverside Ranch—photographs 18 through 20 display the inscriptions referring to fishing in detail. The height (length) and weight of a fish caught by two men ("Nuts"), the preference of both Mr. Schree and Mr. H.J. Hyde to fish in July, albeit eight years apart, and a woman named Vera who reeled in 10 fish with Mr. Hyde in 1928 are all relayed.

Recreational fishing occurred at Riverside Ranch, supported by first-hand testimonies in a 1900 publication in *Forest and Stream* (Taylor 1900:353) and likely the inscriptions. From a first-hand account by Edward Taylor from 1900, we can confirm that the Riverside Ranch was involved in the local fishing scene (Taylor 1900:353). In an issue of *Forest and Stream*, Taylor remarked that John Haney used the four miles of the Rio Grande associated with the ranch for recreational fishing, for which he charged twenty-five cents a day (Taylor 1900:353). The Riverside Ranch fishing was connected to the D&RG, as officials were "very obliging and will stop their trains at any point along the river to allow anglers to get off or on the cars" (Taylor 1900:353). Maybe Vera, Mr. Hyde, and Mr. Schree did just that, as Taylor praised the trouts' large size in Haney's river section (Taylor 1900:353).

Photographs 21 through 23 contribute information and pose more questions about South Fork's livestock numbers in 1919 and 1920. Mr. P. Walters sheared the sheep in July of 1920 and possibly returned to the passenger shelter to document another year's work which took him four days. Frank M. Gray worked from June 25 through July 2, 1919. From the inventory of sales for the Riverside Ranch in 1914, we know that there were four sheep on the farm, but there may have been a possible increase in the number indicated by the time spent shearing in 1919-1920 (The Creede Candle, 8 April 1916).

Finally, the agricultural inscriptions confined to hoeing lettuce point to a possible mono-crop specialization at Riverside Ranch. Prior to the 1882 arrival of the railroad, South Fork was a primarily agricultural community whose products were diversified by the onset of the trains (South Fork 2021). Rio Grande County's agricultural productivity grew with the Homestead Act of 1862, bringing more settlers and

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demand for food crops (Colorado Encyclopedia 2022b). Cauliflower, lettuce, potato, and peas were common crops (South Fork 2021).

Photographs 24 through 26 are three descriptions of lettuce farming, with one written by Mr. Caldwell and the other by Orville Schall. Both men felt obliged to record that they hoed lettuce on June 23, 1922. Perhaps they were colleagues at Riverside Ranch or friends catching the train to find other work. At the end of the lettuce harvesting season in July, Robert Cornell narrowly missed running into the two at the passenger shelter by a month and a day.

The nine inscriptions highlighted in this section show that Criterion E applies on a Riverside Ranch, South Fork, and Creede Branch scale. The local and regional insights above surpass that of just informing existing quantitative data on occupations, crop yields, and popular pastimes to tell stories about relationships and hardships.

### Possibility for Important Discoveries

The implications of identifying the passenger shelter occupants' names, dates of use, and activities warrant the protection and state recognition offered by a Colorado SRHP nomination. Analyzing nine activity-based inscriptions related to Riverside Ranch supports the researcher's assertion that the passenger shelter is eligible for SRHP nomination under Criterion E. More importantly, this assessment process can catalyze research into a myriad of Creede Branch, D&RGW, and South Fork histories.

The researchers suggest a continued study into the association of the inscriptions with the Riverside Ranch. While thematically, the inscriptions detailing agricultural and recreational activities lend themselves to a connection with the ranch, this connection has yet to be verified by a search of local records. Unfortunately, the research timeline and logistics of getting a hold of records during COVID-19 made this task unfeasible for the researcher.

Avenues for further research necessitate that another interested party searches for census records about the names in the Riverside Ranch inscriptions. In addition, the passenger shelter contains inscriptions denoting that passengers traveled from places as far away as Central America, necessitating future research into the contexts which brought them to South Fork, Colorado.

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Potential research questions for the future could include the following:

- Why are there fewer or more inscriptions during specific periods, such as the Great Depression or World War I or II? Is there a trend in associated activities within each tumultuous event?
- Based on the historical inscriptions, what ethnic groups used the structure, and did the use by different ethnic groups change over time?
- Did the frequency of Spanish and English languages change over time? Is there a connection between if the authors are colonial Hispanics or post-World War I Hispanic immigrants?
- Did the ratio of male to female authors change over time, or is there insufficient data to address this? How often are the female names paired with a male's versus solo? In what years does each occur?
- Are any of the 'authors' registered Masons suggesting a connection with the nearby Masonic Park? If so, what percent of the authors? Was there a change in the number of Masons using the passenger shelter after the Masonic Park passenger shelter was retired in 1937?

These specific research questions about the shed expand past historical research into Colorado railroad history, including information on passenger demographics. Asking questions about who these passengers were, where they came from, their jobs and their relationship to the railroad is currently missing in railroad town histories with limited documentary or archival records. Additionally, the uniquely cosmopolitan nature of the passenger shelter and its potential use by non-railroad passengers records a different subculture of railroad town life than in train passenger logs.

The date range of the inscriptions (1912 to 1948) lends the passenger shelter to provide a localized history of patterns in the frequency of railroad passengers, manual labor jobs, and vacationing during a turbulent period in history. The inscription dates coincide with the Great Depression, World War I, and most of World War II. The passenger shelter, therefore, contains a record of how Coloradans in a small railroad town interacted with the railroad during national and international events.

The frequency of the use of Spanish in the shelter and the background information found on the authors may expand our knowledge of how South Fork was impacted by the post-World War I shifting immigration demographics from that of Europeans to Hispanics. Future researchers can consult census records and other sources to determine if these Spanish-speaking authors were immigrants or descendants of Hispanic colonizers. In conjunction with inscription dates and the number of authors per group, the research

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results can potentially contribute to information about social status in the San Luis Valley. With the non-immigrant Hispanic population historically more privileged in the early 1900s, their access to the railroad may differ from that of the disenfranchised Hispanic immigrant population (Wei 2020). Trends towards who is in the area for vacation rather than work may also arise.

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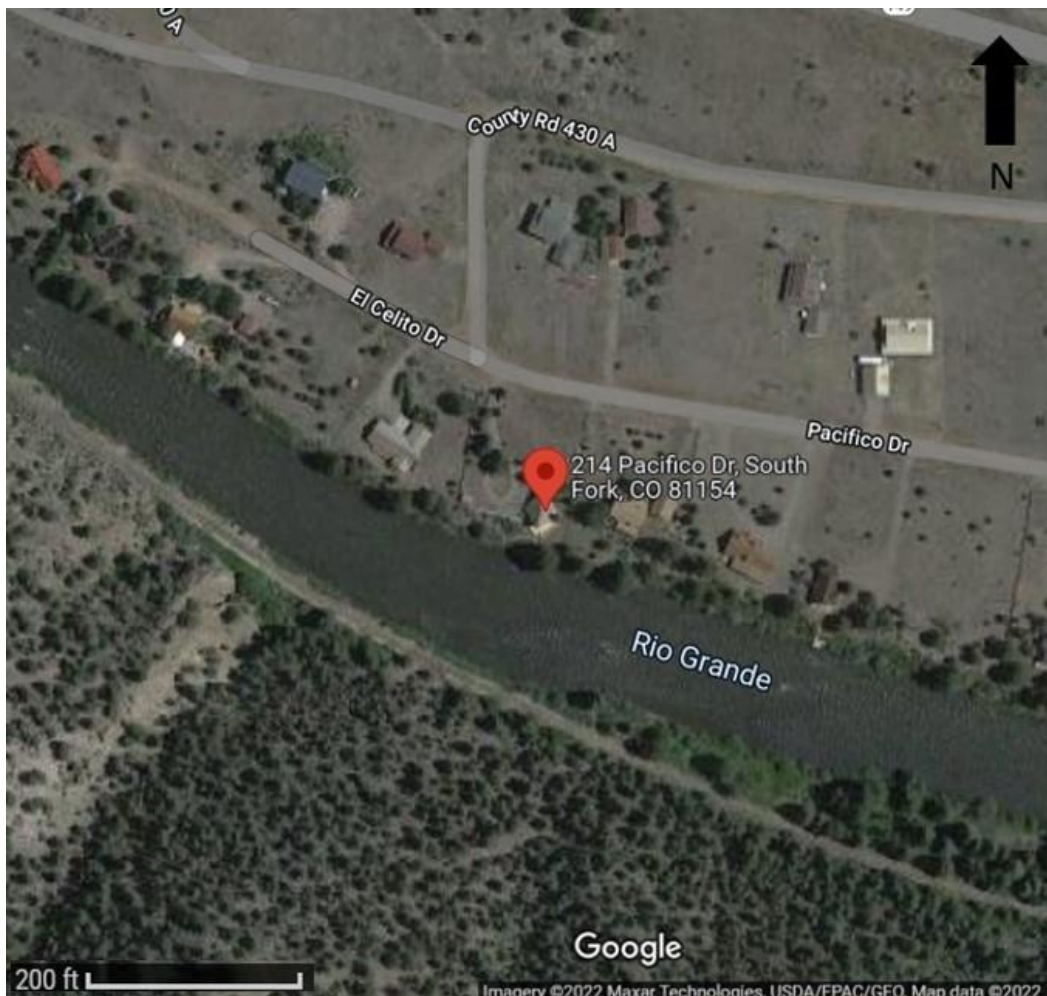
## SECTION V

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property

Due to the removal of the structure from its original location on the Riverside Ranch property, the researcher determined that the boundary for this nomination is the passenger shelter itself. Expressly, the boundary is limited to the dimensions of the passenger shelter: the 15.98' x 8.14' wide footprint, as recommended by the National Park Service for moved properties (U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service 1997). A sketch map showing the nominated property within the Marvel's 0.96-acre plot is attached to this nomination form.

#### Official Map



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## SECTION VI

### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photographs numbers 1-26, except as noted:

Name of Property: South Fork, Colorado, Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad 'Passenger Shelter'  
Location: South Fork, Mineral County  
Photographer: Amalie Hipp  
Date of Photographs: October 24, 2020

Photo No.	Description of View and Direction of Camera
1	Shed entryway, view to the north
2	Eastern side, view to the west
3	Western side, view to the southeast
4	Northern side, view to the south
5	Relation of the shed to the rest of the property, view to the east
6	Location of the shed on the northern bank of the Rio Grande, view to the south
7	Roof with the 2019 in-kind replaced wooden shake shingles and 2 x 6 diagonal support beam on the eastern and western (not pictured) walls, view from the east
8	Historic red painted "D&RGW" lettering on the northern side of the shed, outlined in lead pencil in 1971 by Kim Marvel's mother, view from the north
9	Remnants of original green paint on the lowest three boards behind the built-in bench on the northern interior wall, view from the southwest
10	Interior roof structure showing the shed gabling and the triangular supports added in 2019, view from the east
11	Original wire nail in the easternmost board of the bench, view from the east
12	'Aspen porn' on the eastern side of the northern interior wall showing deliberate charcoal smudging from the 1980s, view from the south
13	Interior northern wall inscriptions, view from the south
14	Interior eastern wall inscriptions, view from the west
15	Interior western wall inscriptions, view from the east
16	Original location of the shed pre-1970s relocation to the Marvel property, view from the south
17	A triangular brace in the northern entryway, view from the north
18	Inscription on the northern interior wall "Mr. Schree July 13, 1920, fishing" in the Riverside Ranch area, view from the south
19	Inscription on the northern interior wall: "Mr. H.J. Hyde and Vera came fishing and caught 10. July 25, 1928," view from the south
20	Inscription on the northern interior wall: "Two Nuts Went Fishing Here (Oct. 19-1917)." They wrote the height and weight of one fish: 51 cm and 15 pounds," view from the south
21	Inscription on the northern interior wall: "(illegible) (possibly P. Walters) sheared sheep here July 2nd finished July 6th," view from the south
22	Inscription on the northern interior wall: "Frank M. Gray sheared sheep here June 25-July 2, 1919," view from the south
23	Inscription on the northern interior wall: "P. Walters sheared sheep July 6, 1920," view from the south
24	Inscription on the northern interior wall: "(illegible) Caldwell hoed lettuce here

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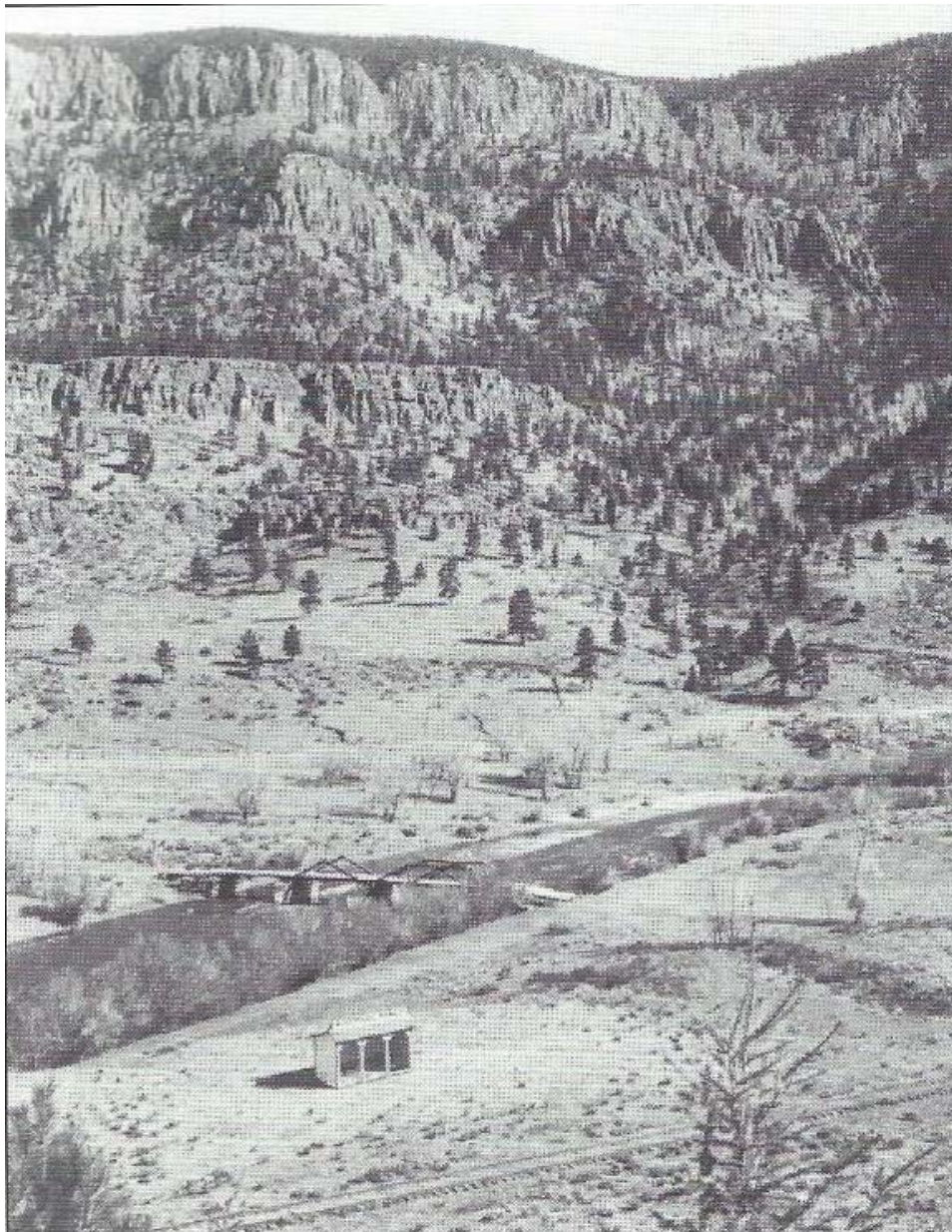
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- 25 June 23, 1922," view from the south  
Inscription on the northern interior wall: "Robert Cornell hoed lettuce here July 22,  
1922," view from the south
- 26 Inscription on the northern interior wall: "Orville Schall hoed lettuce here June 23,  
1922," view from the south.

### HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS & FIGURES



Picture of the passenger shelter from 1917 in its original location next to the Collier State Wildlife Area Bridge (Butler and Monte Vista Historical Society 2014).