

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Maxwell Park School
Other Names/Site Number: Mount Princeton School/5CF.733
Name of related multiple property listing: Rural School Buildings in Colorado and Ornamental Concrete Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940

2. Location

Street & Number: County Road 321 at County Road 326 (northwest corner)
City or town: Buena Vista State: CO County: Chaffee
Not for Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national state local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Ally K. Norton 10/15/00
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Date
History Colorado
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting official: Date
Title: State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property

4. National Park Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public – State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public – Federal

Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Site
<input type="checkbox"/>	Structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	Object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	0	Buildings
0	0	Sites
0	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):

EDUCATION/School

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.):

VACANT/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.):

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: CONCRETE

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property

roof: WOOD/shingles
other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The 1912 Maxwell Park School is an excellent representative of a historic, one-room rural school in Chaffee County, Colorado.¹ The school is located 3.3 miles south-southwest of Buena Vista at the northwest corner of County Roads 321 and 326 (Photograph 1). County Road 321 to the east is a two-lane paved road, while County Road 326 to the south is gravel. The school is situated at an elevation of 8,104', with 14,197' Mount Princeton looming six miles southwest. The surrounding grazing land is open, treeless, and enclosed with a four-strand barbed wire fence on wood posts. The school is constructed of rock-faced ornamental concrete blocks. It stands inside a rectangular fenced area (152' x 60') enclosed with a wood post and rail fence (nonhistoric) with a pedestrian gate near the northwest corner and an opening for vehicles at the southwest corner (Photograph 2). A small gravel parking area lies west of the school on the north side of County Road 326.² The school retains historic integrity, with no additions and few alterations following the period of significance. The included Sketch Map shows the nominated area boundary and photograph locations.

Narrative Description

The Maxwell Park School (also known as the Mount Princeton School) faces east toward County Road 321. The one-room, one-story front gable-roof building consists of a large, rectangular main portion (approximately 31' x 20') and a small shed-roof projection (8' x 8') on the rear near the northwest corner, which originally served as a wood and coal storage room. The school has a poured concrete foundation and a smooth concrete block watercourse with a beveled top. The walls are composed of hollow, locally hand-made, rock-faced ornamental concrete blocks, typically measuring 24" wide, 9" high, and 12" deep. Finger and palm prints are visible in some blocks. The gable faces are clad with flat, fish-scale, and diamond-shaped wood shingles. The roof is clad with wood shingles, has slightly overhanging eaves, and features a bell tower on the ridge at the front. The open bell tower (no bell present) has a pyramidal roof supported by wood posts with cross braces. Located in a relatively rural location and not in use for decades, the school has been the target of vandals on more than one occasion. The school's windows and door were all missing by 1982. Historic wood replacement windows were installed ca. 2001-02, only to have one replacement window and the replacement door broken. Oriented strand board or plywood is now secured over all openings.³

¹ Only real property, not water rights (per 36 CFR 60.6), is the subject of this nomination. There are no water structures within the nominated area.

² The school originally had two outhouses and a barn for student horses to the west, likely in the location of the current gravel parking lot. No photographs or maps showing the location of these resources were found. Archaeological deposits may be present in these locations but the site and surrounding property have not been evaluated for archaeological significance to date.

³ This prevented in-person inspection of the interior for this project. A photograph was obtained of the interior by means of a hole in the north wall.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

Front. The front (east) contains a central entrance with transom with a concrete lintel (Photograph 3). The entrance faces a concrete stoop with three steps. The entrance is boarded up with plywood, and there is no door behind the covering.

South Wall. The south wall (adjacent to County Road 326) displays three boarded-up, rectangular, flat-headed window openings with thick concrete lintels and sills (Photographs 4 and 5). Behind the oriented strand board covering is a replacement two-over-two-light wood window.

Rear (West) Wall. The south section of the rear wall contains a single window opening of the same type as those of the south wall (Photographs 5 through 7). Behind the oriented strand board covering is a two-over-two-light wood window. To the north is a lower, one-story shed-roof projection with ornamental concrete block walls. The upper faces of the north and south walls of the projection are clad with wood shingles (the same types as used on the main part of the building). The south and west walls of the projection are unfenestrated. The north wall contains a small boarded-up window opening.

North Wall. The north exterior wall of the main part of the school is the same as the south wall (Photographs 9 and 10). There is a small hole at the foundation near the west end.

Interior. The interior of the building (not accessible during fieldwork) contained one large room with small cloakrooms flanking the entrance (see Photograph 11). Now only partial framing for the cloakrooms is extant, showing their location and size. The local historical society is presently using the school for storing wood balusters from the former Chaffee County courthouse building in Buena Vista.

Alterations. The school was abandoned for many years after it closed in 1933. A 1982 photograph shows empty window openings and no fence present. Efforts to restore the school began in 1989, when the building received new wood shingle roofing. According to local residents who participated in the re-roofing, the bell tower was removed and then replaced. Circa 2000-01 the gable faces were re-shingled replicating the original shingle shapes, and the windows were replaced with historic wood windows that came from the Cogan Ranch 4.5 miles south of Buena Vista on US Highway 285.⁴ The replacement windows and door were covered with oriented strand board or plywood after new vandalism occurred and a chain link fence around the school was installed. The brick chimney shown on the north roof slope in a historic picture is no longer present (see Figure 2). In 2020 the chain link fence was removed, a wood post and board fence was constructed, enclosing a somewhat larger area, and a gravel parking area installed to the west. Interpretive signs and benches are planned to the east.⁵

Integrity

The Maxwell Park School retains historic integrity. The school's *location* is unchanged since the building's construction. It is the place where local ranch children were educated and played. The *setting* at the intersection of two county roads retains the open grazing lands and spectacular scenery present during the building's operation. The school's *design* displays a high level of integrity through retention of the building's plan without additions. The one-room layout reflects the historic size of the local school population and the multi-grade teaching approach necessary in rural areas. The spacing of tall windows on the long sides of the building was a typical design, bringing light into the school's

⁴ Suzy Kelly, Buena Vista, Colorado, telephone interview by Thomas H. Simmons, September 27, 2019. The new windows were not in place when a survey form was completed in 1998, but notes in the History Colorado file for the resource state they were present in 2003. Suzy Kelly believes the window rehabilitation occurred ca. 2001-02.

⁵ Kristin Kemp, Outreach and Communications Officer, Colorado State Land Board, emails to Thomas H. Simmons, April 20 and 21, 2020.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

interior. The fenestration is unchanged, although the original two-over-two wood windows have been replaced with historic two-over-two-light wood windows salvaged from a nearby ranch. The iconic bell tower is still present and importantly identifies the building's historic function.⁶

The dominant concrete block *material* composing the school is quite intact; the wood roof and gable face shingles have been replaced with like materials. The integrity of *workmanship* is evidenced principally in the masonry of the ornamental concrete block walls, the decorative detail added by the varied shingles of the gable faces, and the soaring pyramidal bell tower. The building no longer is directly *associated* with education in Chaffee County, as declining rural population led to its closure in 1933. The building serves as a direct link to the educational history of the area, its intact appearance conveying its function to passersby. Plans by the Buena Vista Heritage Museum to bring student groups to the site to explore the area's history would return an educational function to the building. Standing at a rural crossroads in an isolated rural location, the school retains a very high level of integrity of *feeling*, bearing testimony to the importance of education to rural ranch families and with its appearance conveying a functional time-tested aesthetic for such buildings in the early twentieth-century.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

Criteria Considerations:

	A	Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
	B	Removed from its original location
	C	A birthplace or grave
	D	A cemetery
	E	A reconstructed building, object, or structure
	F	A commemorative property
	G	Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions.):

EDUCATION
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance: 1912-33

Significant Dates: 1912

⁶ The present bell tower is historic but differs somewhat from the original design shown in Figure 2. The bell from the tower is now at the Kelly Ranch southwest of Buena Vista.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion D is marked above): N/A

Architect/Builder (last name, first name): Unknown

Period of Significance (justification): The period of significance for Education and Social History extends from the completion of the school in 1912 until its closure 1933. The period of significance for Architecture is 1912, the year of the school's construction.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary): None

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Built by the Mount Princeton School District (School District 26) in 1912, the Maxwell Park School is locally significant in the area of Education in Chaffee County, Colorado. The school served as the district's only facility in an area southwest of Buena Vista for more than two decades. The building also played a locally significant role in the Social History of the surrounding area as a venue for community events. The school is further locally significant in the area of Architecture as an example of a one-room rural school and as an example of ornamental concrete block construction. The school meets the registration requirements of two Multiple Property Documentation Forms: *Rural School Buildings in Colorado* and *Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900 to 1940*.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A. The Maxwell Park School is locally significant in the area of Education, serving as Chaffee County School District No. 26's only school from 1912 to 1933. The building meets the registration requirements of the *Rural School Buildings in Colorado* MPDF, having been erected as a public school building in Colorado more than 50 years ago and possessing significance and integrity. The one-teacher, one-room school provided classes for pupils from ranches and farms in the agricultural area southwest of Buena Vista. The building exemplifies the importance Maxwell Park area farmers and ranchers saw in securing public education for their children, as they created and administered a school district and planned the construction of this building. In his book assessing country schools, historian Andrew Gulliford judged that "no single building type in American architecture more vividly represents the communal efforts of the settlers, who donated time, labor and materials to provide places of learning for their children."⁷

The Maxwell Park School is further locally significant in the area of Social History, serving as a gathering place for a variety of community functions. The *Rural School Buildings in Colorado* MPDF described country schools as "social and cultural centers" for their surrounding agrarian communities. Local historian Suzy Kelly noted the school reportedly hosted similar community events.⁸

Criterion C. The Maxwell Park School is locally significant in the area of Architecture as a well-preserved example of a one-room rural schoolhouse. The school meets the registration requirements of the *Rural School Buildings in Colorado* MPDF as an example of the "schoolhouse" property type.⁹

⁷ Andrew Gulliford, *America's Country Schools*, 3rd ed. (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1996), 160.

⁸ Suzanne Kelly, Buena Vista, Colorado, to Barbara Norgren, National and State Register Coordinator, Colorado Historical Society, March 5, 1990, on file History Colorado, Denver, Colorado.

⁹ Suzanne Doggett and Holly Wilson, *Rural School Buildings in Colorado*, Multiple Property Documentation Form, March 1999, on file with History Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Denver, Colorado. By August 2020, forty-seven schools were listed in the National and State Register under the "Rural School Buildings in Colorado" MPDF.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

The building displays many of the attributes of rural schools identified in the MPDF: one-room, one-story, rectangular plan, symmetrical façade, and front-gable roof with belfry.¹⁰ Most Colorado one-room schools exhibit frame construction, with only about 25 percent of buildings identified by the MPDF as being of brick, stone, or concrete. The MPDF observed that “schoolhouses constructed of concrete are rare in Colorado,” noting that in a statewide study “one ornamental concrete block rural schoolhouse has emerged—the Maxwell Creek [sic] Schoolhouse (5CF733) south of Buena Vista.”¹¹

The building is also significant as an example of ornamental concrete block construction applied to a school. It meets the registration requirements of the *Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900 to 1940* as an example of the “public building” property type. During the early decades of the twentieth century, techniques for the onsite or local production of concrete blocks using hand-operated metal machines were developed by various manufacturers.¹² Companies claimed a possible daily output of three hundred blocks per laborer using a manually operated concrete block machine.¹³ The blocks saw their most widespread use in the first two decades of the century before declining by 1940. Historian and MPDF author Dale Heckendorn explained that the material’s popularity stemmed from their “decorative surface designs to be used in visible exterior applications. ... Wreaths, scrolls, or cobblestone faces could easily be formed by changing the face plate in the block machines. The most popular surface treatment was rockface and the pattern was standard with most machines sold.”¹⁴ Since the blocks averaged fifteen to twenty-five cents per unit and were larger than bricks, they were less expensive and faster to install in wall construction. Made from widely available cement, sand, and gravel, the blocks were fireproof and provided a strong, attractive, and durable alternative to brick and wood.

To meet the MPDF’s registration requirements, public buildings (including schools) “must have been primarily built of concrete block as the exterior wall surface. ... The buildings must have integrity of design, materials, and workmanship.”¹⁵ The exterior walls of the Maxwell Park School are constructed of rock-faced ornamental concrete blocks, and the building retains historic integrity.

Developmental History/Additional Historic Context Information

Maxwell Park

The school takes its name from Maxwell Park, an open, slightly sloping expanse lying east of the Sawatch (Collegiate) Range and southwest of the town of Buena Vista in Chaffee County, Colorado.¹⁶ Maxwell Creek flows west to east about 0.75 miles south of the school. The vicinity developed as a farming and ranching area. Noting the shorter growing season in the Buena Vista

An additional four were listed only in the State Register.

¹⁰ Doggett and Wilson, *Rural School Buildings in Colorado*, MPDF, 22.

¹¹ Doggett and Wilson, *Rural School Buildings in Colorado*, MPDF, 24; Suzanne Kelly, Maxwell Park School, 5CF.733, Historic Building Inventory Form, November 19, 1998, on file History Colorado, Denver, Colorado. A History Colorado Compass search undertaken in April 2020 identified no other surveyed schools employing ornamental concrete block construction. Kelly stated that the Centerville School, twelve miles south of Buena Vista, was also composed of “cement blocks”; it was demolished for highway construction.

¹² Pamela H. Simpson, Harry J. Hunderman, and Deborah Slayton, “Concrete Block,” in *Twentieth-Century Building Materials*, ed. Thomas C. Jester (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 80.

¹³ J. Randall Cotton, “Return to the Concrete Block House,” *Old House Journal* (March/April 1995): 39.

¹⁴ Dale Heckendorn, *Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940*, National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, 4 April 1996, 3.

¹⁵ Heckendorn, *Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado*, 22.

¹⁶ The Collegiate Range or Collegiate Peaks is part of the Sawatch Range of the Rocky Mountains.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

area compared with Salida, Virginia McConnell Simmons explained that “horses, cattle, and some hogs were raised, but the usual crops were hay, oats, and some potatoes.”¹⁷

Several farms and ranches within the boundaries of the school district were surveyed in recent years. German native Charles Nachtrieb established the Nachtrieb/Kelly Ranch (5CF.2876; NRIS.100000785) in the eastern part of the area in 1876. His widow, Margaret, and their children, continued the operation of the cattle and hay ranch following his death in 1881. In the northern part of the district, Illinois Civil War veteran Marshall G. DeLaunay settled on land irrigated by water from Middle Cottonwood Creek (5CF.2875). By 1891 he cultivated fifty-one acres of land, including forty in grain, ten in potatoes, and one in vegetables.

Ernest Wilber of Michigan and his family settled on the north side of Middle Cottonwood Creek in the late 1880s (5CF.2878; NRIS. 15000464). Wilber homesteaded 160 acres, of which forty were cultivated, with twenty-three for grain, two for peas, three for potatoes, two for vegetables, and ten for hay. The Wilbers also raised fifty head of cattle and twenty hogs. In 1908 German immigrants Gustav A. “Gus” and Marie (Baier) Franzel acquired the property.

Others living in the area included Andrew J. Smith, an Indiana native, who settled on 160 acres in the late 1880s in the west-center area of the school district in the foothills on Silver Prince Creek (5CF.2879; NRIS.100000786). Gustave R. “Gus” Friskey, the son of German immigrants, purchased the land in 1900 and pursued cattle ranching. Henry Fehling, a Union army veteran and Ohio native, came to Chaffee County in 1886 and raised cattle and hay. He served as the first treasurer of the school district.¹⁸

Creation of Chaffee County School District 26

In May 1889, residents of the rural area southwest of Buena Vista petitioned the County Superintendent of Schools to create a new school district from parts of existing School Districts 6 and 9. In an ensuing election, residents voted ten to nothing in favor of the proposition, and the area was recognized by the County Superintendent of Schools as Chaffee County School District 26. The district was generally referred to as the Mount Princeton School District, after the peak to the southwest. The new district lay south and west of Buena Vista and northwest of Nathrop, comprising a long, narrow area extending from today’s US 285 west to the county line (see Figure 1). The district encompassed the Maxwell Park area on the east and the mountainous area to the west, including the Middle and South Cottonwood Creek drainages. The following persons were elected as officers of the new district: R. Campbell, president; Samuel Calhoun, secretary; and Henry Fehling, treasurer.

An existing wood frame building initially functioned as the district’s school. Blanche Smith served as the first teacher in 1889. At least thirteen teachers, nearly all of them women, taught at the school in the 1890s and 1900s, reflecting the high turnover often noted for rural schools.¹⁹ Teacher R.D. McClelland reported in July 1893 that “The school district is very small, though every pupil of school age in the district is attending and some that are not school age attend. No one during the month has

¹⁷ Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Upper Arkansas: A Mountain River Valley* (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1990), 282-83. The Collegiate Peaks are prominent summits in the range, and some residents allude to the “Collegiate Range.”

¹⁸ R. Laurie Simmons and Thomas H. Simmons, Nachtrieb Ranch, 5CF.2876, March 2012, DeLaunay Homestead, 5CF.2875, August 2012; Wilber Homestead/Franzel Farm, 5CF.2878, March 2012; and Smith-Friskey Ranch, 5CF.2879, October 2011, Architectural Inventory forms, on file History Colorado, Denver, Colorado; June Shaputis and Suzanne Kelly, comps. and eds., *A History of Chaffee County*, 2nd. ed. (Buena Vista, Colorado: Buena Vista Heritage, 2015), 418.

¹⁹ Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, Western Fremont County Homemakers, and Chaffee County Extension Clubs, *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986* (N.p.: n.p., ca. 1986), on file Salida Regional Library, Salida, Colorado.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

been absent or tardy, and all have been above 97 per cent in class exercises and deportment.”²⁰
Between 1898 and 1911 enrollment averaged twelve pupils, varying between five and twenty-one.

Construction of the Current School

The school district erected this school building in 1912 and operated it until 1933.²¹ It was known both as the Maxwell Park School and as the Mount Princeton School (see Figure 2). The State of Colorado acquired the land on which the school is located in December 1877, as provided by the 1875 Enabling Act for Colorado statehood. The state permitted the district to erect a school, but retained ownership of the land. In May 1912, the school board approved a proposal to build a new school on the same site as the old school. In October, the district called for bids to erect the new building, and in December disbursed payments totaling at least \$936 for cement, lumber, bricks, and labor for hauling concrete blocks and erecting the building.²² The main house at the Nachtrieb/Kelly Ranch has a ca. 1910s rear addition made of similar concrete blocks. According to Suzy Kelly her mother-in-law told her the blocks “were made at a place on the Arkansas river.”²³

School Activities and Community Events

Students from surrounding farms and ranches attended classes at the school. Louise Winters Steele recalled that she and her siblings rode donkeys to school when they did not walk (see Figure 2).²⁴ Local historian and nearby resident Suzy Kelly reports the interior of the school contained coat closets flanking the entrance, slate blackboards, a pot-bellied stove, wood desks, an Edna pump organ, and pull-down maps.²⁵ The school grounds included a small barn (for student horses) and two outhouses to the west and a well to the south. These resources are no longer extant.

The first teacher holding class in the new building was Wisconsin native Ermel Bunbury (1893-1989) (see Figure 3). A school publication asserted that Miss Bunbury’s “greatest pleasure is to invent startling opinions.” She was about nineteen years old when she taught at Maxwell Park. Rural schools frequently were staffed by young women having little, if any, teaching experience. Ermel Bunbury married in October 1913 and was succeeded by Margaret Ahern.²⁶

The school did not have a teacherage; instructors lived at the homes of local ranchers.²⁷ Later teachers serving in the new building included: Maude Woll (1914); Charlotte Avery (1915); Elizabeth Esser (1916-17); Marie Kennison (1919); Mary Taylor (1919); Mrs. E.F. Johnson (1920); Abby Patton (1922); Ruthella Dodge (1927); Eunice Sage (1928); Hattie McCloud (1929); Marie Christian (1930); Dorothy Allen (1931); and Esther Vaughn (1933). During the 1927-28 term, Ms. Dodge taught nine pupils and earned \$100 per month for nine months. Ms. Sage earned \$810 during the 1928-29 school year.²⁸

²⁰ *Salida Mail*, July 7, 1893.

²¹ Earlier survey forms and local lore provide an 1889 year of construction for the school, apparently assuming the building dated to the year the school district organized.

²² Chaffee County School District 26, Chaffee County, Colorado, District Record for the Use of the District Secretary and Record of School Districts for the Years 1892 through 1958, Box 12729, on file Colorado State Archives, Denver, Colorado.

²³ Kelly to Norgren, 1990.

²⁴ Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986*.

²⁵ Kelly, Maxwell Park School, Historic Building Inventory Form, 1998.

²⁶ Ermel Bunbury, US Census manuscript returns and marriage records, www.Ancestry.com; and Ermel B. Bunbury Rupp, Find A Grave, www.findagrave.com.

²⁷ Kelly, Maxwell Park School, Historic Building Inventory Form, 1998.

²⁸ Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986*.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
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Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property

The school was the only public building in a large area southwest of Buena Vista. As such it was used for various community functions in addition to educational activities. Based on discussions with former students, Suzy Kelly reports the building hosted “social gatherings, such as box suppers, dances and school related events.”²⁹

Closure of the School and Later Developments

The new school only operated for about two decades before it ceased to be used. Declining enrollment was likely a factor in its closure, as only five pupils were in attendance in 1928-29. Various local accounts state the school district stopped using the building in 1933, and School District 26 is not shown on a 1935 map of Chaffee County school district.³⁰ Based on records in the Colorado State Archives, the district continued to formally exist through at least 1949, but it is not known if classes still were conducted. An election held in February 1954 resulted in the dissolution of School District 26, which merged into the Buena Vista district (Chaffee County School District 9).³¹

Located on state land, the building remained vacant and abandoned for many years and became a target for vandals. Early 1980s photographs show the schoolhouse standing vacant with no windows in place (see Figures 4 and 5). In 1989 Buena Vista Heritage, a local group that operates a historical museum in that town, began efforts to rehabilitate the school. The building received a new roof that year. Members of the Buena Vista Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, led by Bryan and Orrey Randal, replaced the windows and performed other repairs ca. 2001-02 (see Figures 6 and 7). The building is currently used by Buena Vista Heritage for storage; the State of Colorado owns the school property and leases the surrounding land for grazing.

In 2020 an existing chain link fence around the property was replaced with a wood post and rail fence. Kristin Kemp with the Colorado State Land Board explained the changes also included a gravel lot for school bus parking to the west. Planned bench seating, and interpretive signage to the east of the building will accommodate visits from school groups under the auspices of the Buena Vista Heritage Museum.³²

9. Major Bibliographical Resources

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Backus, A.A. “Rural School-Houses and Their Equipment.” *Sessional Papers, Province of Ontario, 2nd Session of the 13th Legislature of the Province of Ontario, Session 1913*. Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1913.

Buena Vista Democrat.

Chaffee County Assessor. Real property information, and appraisal cards. Salida, Colorado.

Chaffee County Clerk and Recorder. General records and deeds. Salida, Colorado.

²⁹ Kelly to Norgren, 1990.

³⁰ Suzy Kelly, “The Maxwell Park School,” *Colorado Central Magazine*, August 2011, www.cozine.com; Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986*.

³¹ Chaffee County School District 26, District Record for the Use of the District Secretary and Record of School Districts for the Years.

³² Kristin Kemp, Outreach and Communications Officer, Colorado State Land Board, email to Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, November 19, 2019. Public Access Program signs also were added near the parking area on the west for hunters accessing public land.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

Chaffee County Extension Homemakers, Western Fremont County Homemakers, and Chaffee County Extension Clubs. *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986*. N.p.: n.p., ca. 1986. In collection of the Salida Regional Library, Salida, Colorado.

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Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

___ previously listed in the National Register

___ previously determined eligible by the National Register

___ designated a National Historic Landmark

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

___ Other State agency

___ Federal agency

___ Local government

___ University

___ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 5CF.733

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.2

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.796200

Longitude: -106.147179

UTM Coordinates

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

1. Zone: 13 Easting: 400378 Northing: 4294786

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated area is located in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 30, Township 14 South, Range 78 West, 6th Principal Meridian. The school stands on a much larger tract of state land that does not contain legal subdivisions. The nominated area consists of a rectangle corresponding to the fenced area containing the school, measuring approximately 60' north-south and 152' east west.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary contains the school and land historically associated with its operation. This includes land to the west where it is believed that two outhouses and a small barn once stood.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, Architectural Historians (for the property owner)

organization: Front Range Research Associates, Inc.

street & number: 3635 West 46th Avenue

city or town: Denver state: CO zip code: 80211

e-mail: fraden@msn.com www.frhistory.com

telephone: 303-477-7597

date: April 29, 2020 (revised October 1, 2020)

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and does not need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Maxwell Park School

City or Vicinity: Buena Vista vicinity

County: Chaffee

State: Colorado

Name of Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons

Date of Photographs: July 2020

1 of 11, Overview of the property from County Road 321 with the Sawatch (Collegiate) Range to the right. View southwest.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO

Name of Property

County and State

2 of 11, Overview of the property with the Sawatch (Collegiate) Range in the distance. View northwest.

3 of 11, Front of school. View west.

4 of 11, South wall. View north.

5 of 11, South wall and rear (west) wall. View east-northeast.

6 of 11, Rear (west) wall. View east.

7 of 11, Rear (west) and north walls. View southeast.

8 of 11, North wall. View south.

9 of 11, Front and north wall with Mount Princeton in the distance. View southwest.

10 of 11, Detail view of concrete blocks on north wall. View south.

11 of 11, Interior, Detail view of south wall showing replacement wood windows, joists, and framing for cloakrooms (at left). View southeast.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Name of Property

Chaffee, CO

County and State

List of Maps and Historic Figures

Location Map

Sketch Map

Historic Figures

1 of 7, The approximate boundary of Chaffee County School District 26 is displayed here over a USGS topographic mosaic. The boundary is denoted by the solid black line, while a star identifies the Maxwell Park School. Mapped using school district boundaries for 1927 in *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986* (ca. 1986).

2 of 7, This ca. 1910 or 1920s photograph of the Maxwell Park School (view northeast) shows children and horses (and possibly the teacher) in front of the rear and south walls of the building. Note that the shed roof rear projection is present, as well as the two-over-two-light windows and chimney. SOURCE: Buena Vista Heritage Museum, Buena Vista, Colorado.

3 of 7, This school photograph shows Ermel Bunbury, the first teacher in the new Maxwell Park School. Her gravestone and other records reflect the Ermel spelling rather than the Ermil shown here. SOURCE: Ermel B. Bunbury Rupp memorial, www.findagrave.com.

4 of 7, The school is unfenced in this ca. 1998 view of the front and south wall. SOURCE: Kelly, Mount Princeton School, survey form, 1998.

5 of 7, The rear and north wall of the school is shown in this ca. 1998 view. SOURCE: Kelly, Mount Princeton School, survey form, 1998.

6 of 7, A local effort to rehabilitate the school is underway in this ca. 2001-02 photograph (view southeast). The project included replacing the windows and shingling gable faces. SOURCE: Colorado State Land Board.

7 of 7, This view northwest taken at the time of the ca. 2001-02 rehabilitation project shows the two-over-two-light wood replacement windows. SOURCE: Colorado State Land Board.

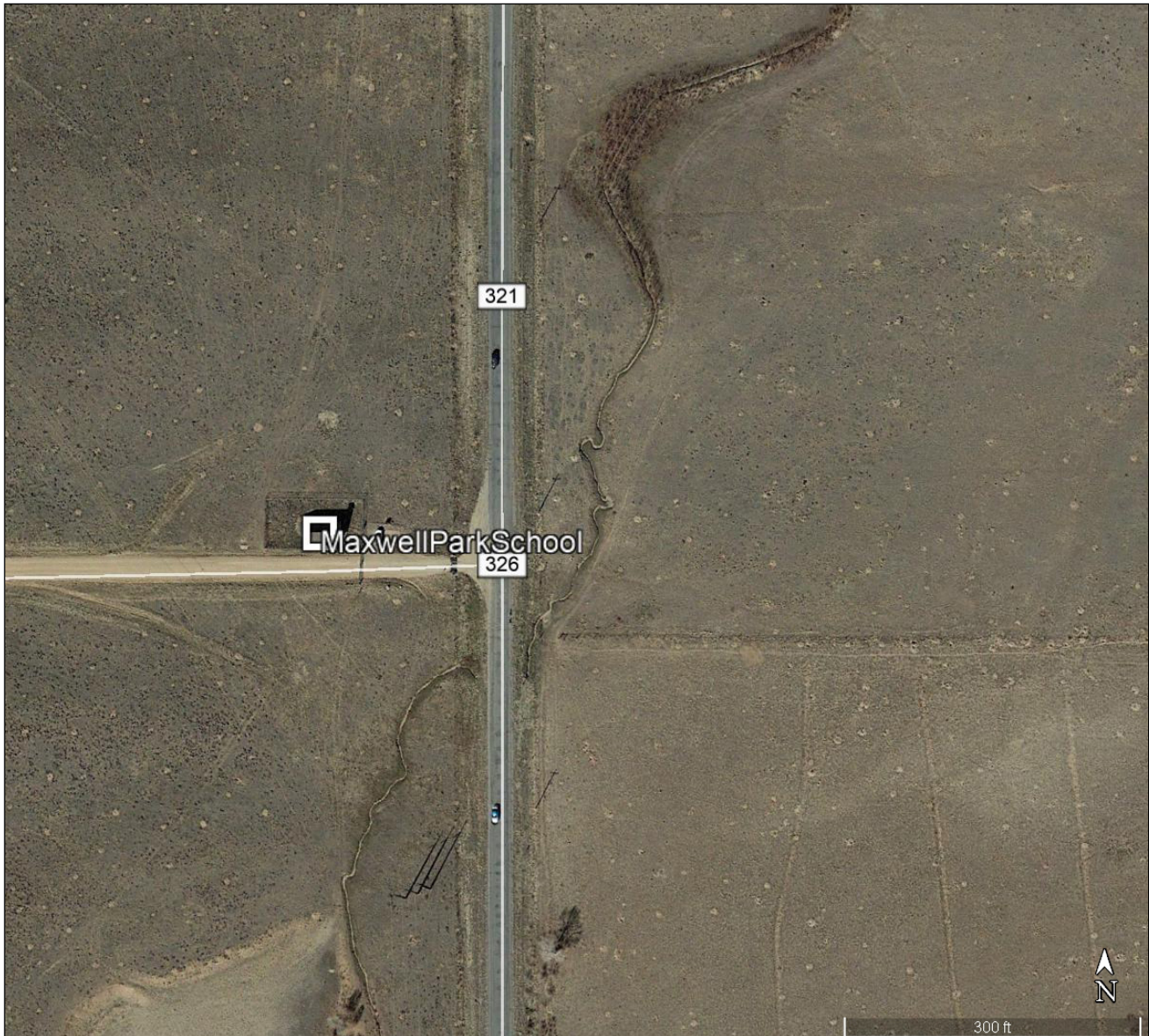
**Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)**

Name of Property

Chaffee, CO

County and State

Location Map

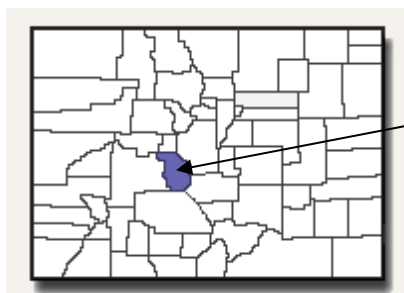


The labeled point indicates the location of the nominated resource, which has the following coordinates:

Latitude: 38.796200

Longitude: -106.147179

Image Date: October 14, 2017



State Perspective:
Maxwell Park School

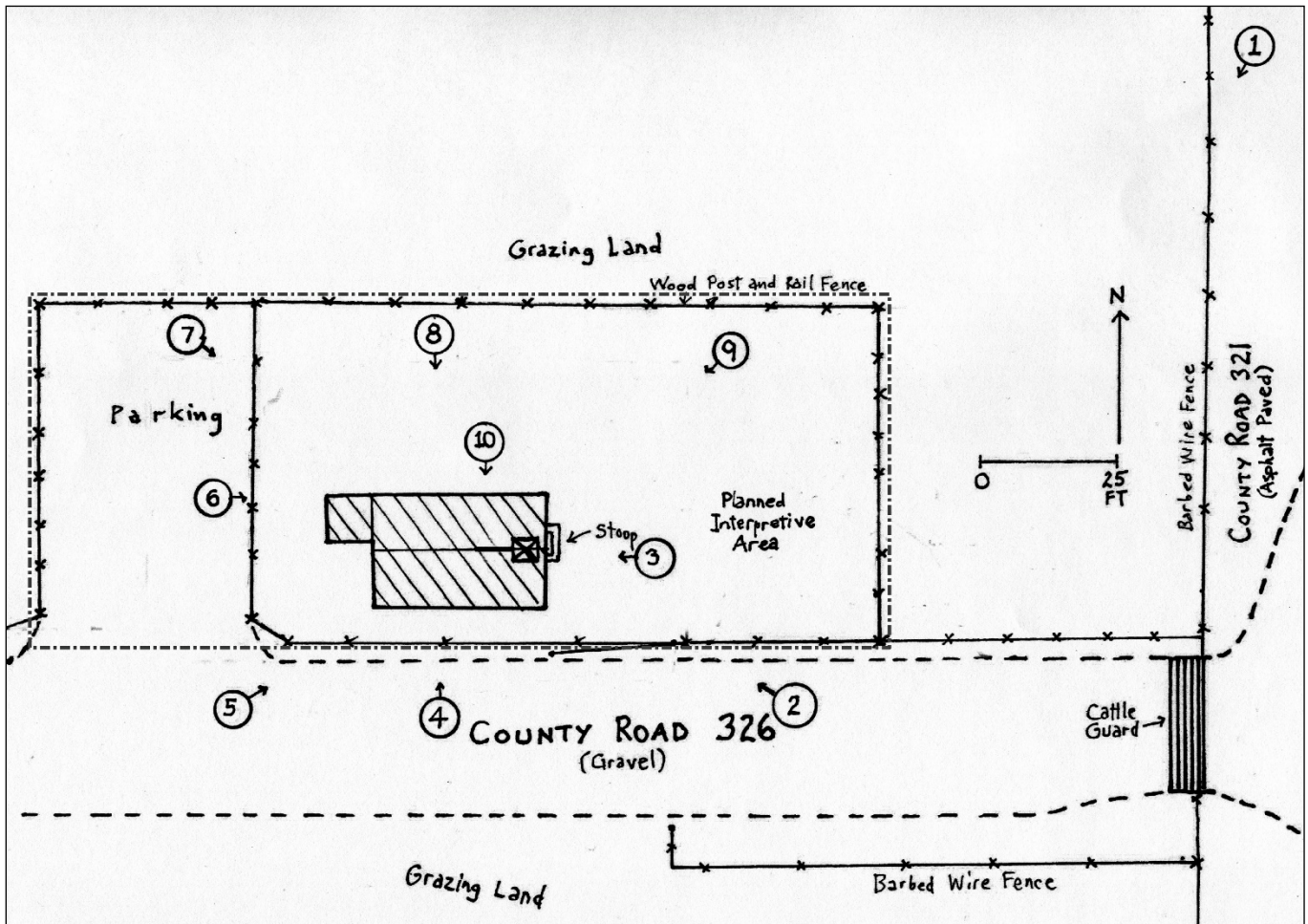
Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Name of Property

Chaffee, CO

County and State

Sketch Map



The dashed and dotted line indicates the nominated area boundary. Numbers in circles show photograph locations and camera directions.

Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)

Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property

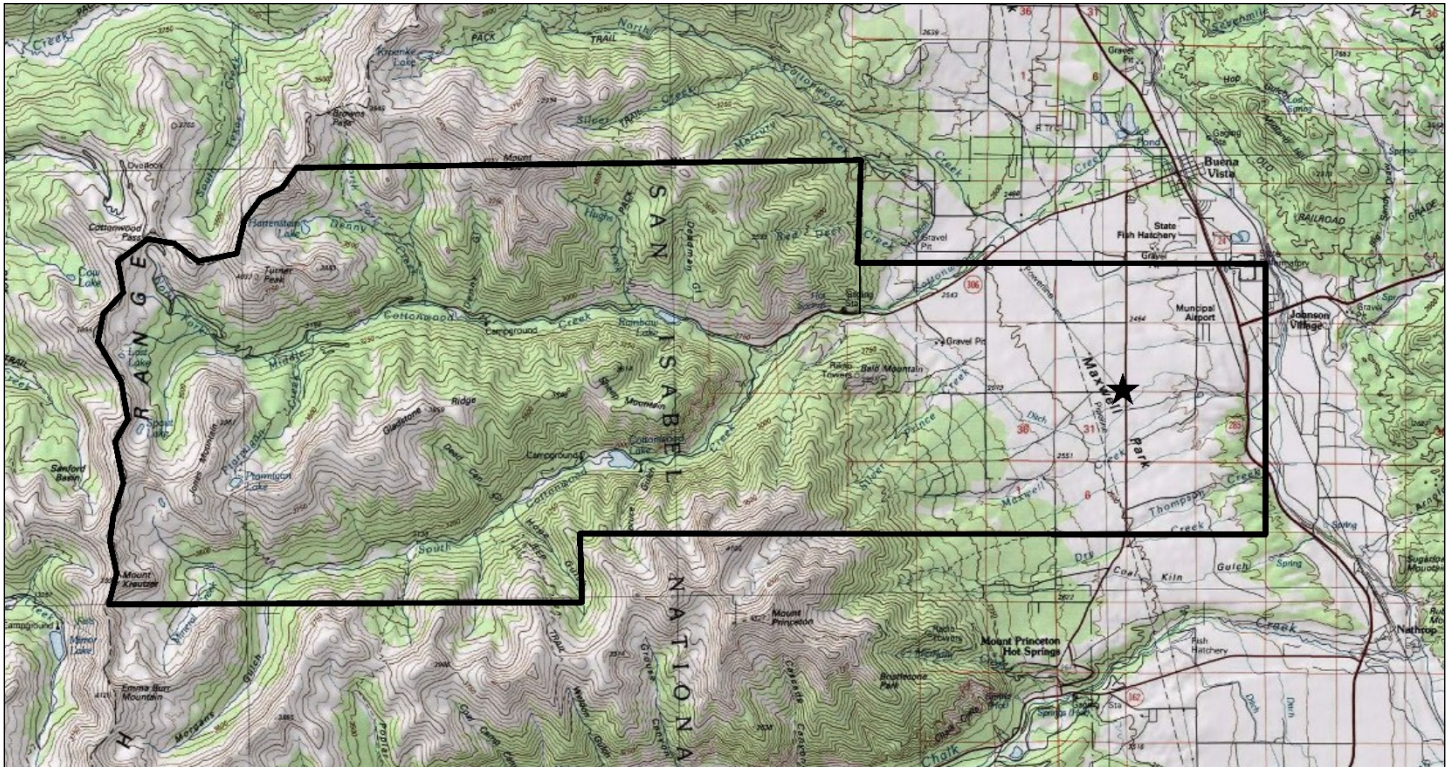


Figure 1. The approximate boundary of Chaffee County School District 26 is displayed here over a USGS topographic mosaic. The boundary is denoted by the solid black line, while a star identifies the Maxwell Park School. Mapped using school district boundaries for 1927 in *A History of Chaffee County Schools, 1860-1986* (ca. 1986).



Figure 2. This ca. 1910 or 1920s photograph of the Maxwell Park School (view northeast) shows children and horses (and possibly the teacher) in front of the rear and south walls of the building. Note that the shed roof rear projection is present, as well as the two-over-two-light windows and chimney. SOURCE: Buena Vista Heritage Museum, Buena Vista, Colorado.

**Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)**

Name of Property

Chaffee, CO

County and State

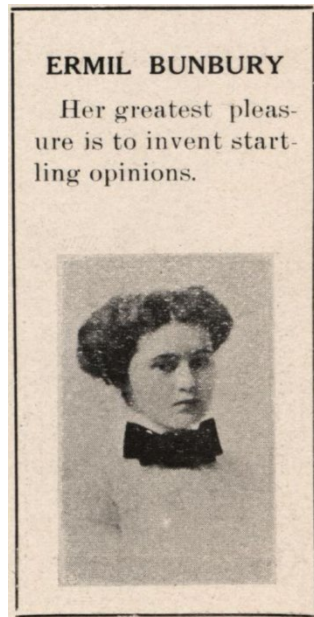


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Figure 4. The school is unfenced in this ca. 1998 view of the front and south wall. SOURCE: Kelly, Mount Princeton School, survey form, 1998.

**Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
Ornamental Concrete Block Buildings in Colorado, 1900-1940 MPDF)**

Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property



Figure 5. The rear and north wall of the school is shown in this ca. 1998 view. SOURCE: Kelly, Mount Princeton School, survey form, 1998.



Figure 6. A local effort to rehabilitate the school is underway in this ca. 2001-02 photograph (view southeast). The project included replacing the windows and shingling gable faces. SOURCE: Colorado State Land Board.

**Maxwell Park School (Rural School Buildings in Colorado MPDF and
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Chaffee, CO
County and State

Name of Property



Figure 7. This view northwest taken at the time of the ca. 2001-02 rehabilitation project and shows the two-over-two-light wood replacement windows. SOURCE: Colorado State Land Board.