CHAPTER 6. RURAL AGRICULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The theme of this chapter covers all the farming and ranching sites across Colorado, including everything to do with agriculture dating from Spanish/Mexican settlement on land grant lands in Colorado, beginning in the 1840s, to homesteaders, farmers, and livestock growers of the twentieth century. This chapter provides some definitions, models for research in rural agricultural regions proposed by researchers inside and outside the state, and context for Colorado sites. The next section gives examples of regional studies in Colorado based largely on survey data and smaller scale studies based on excavation of specific sites. The sources for these come from various archaeological and historical contexts, cultural resource management (CRM) work, federal agency reports, and the research from academic institutions. All provide examples of the kind of research questions archaeologists have addressed in Colorado since the Buckleses wrote their historical archaeology context (Buckles and Buckles 1984). These examples are followed by a discussion of overlaps with other chapter themes, the research gaps that still exist, and suggestions for improved recording of such sites so that they are more amenable to future research.

Colorado’s rural agrarian sites represent a significant portion of historic period sites recorded in the state, but relatively few of them have been explored systematically with anthropological or historical research questions in mind. The two main varieties are farms and ranches. Even though there are fewer ranches than farms in Colorado, ranches have gotten noticeably more scholarly attention. Bernard L. Fontana defines ranches as “a type of settlement devoted to a livestock enterprise” (Fontana 1967:60), thus implicitly separating that economic goal from one tied more to crop production. Discussing ranching’s origins, he states further that “historians, bibliographers, and writers of scripts and novels have conspired in recent years to emphasize Angloamerican cattle ranching – and to glamorize it – in such a way that we have often come to think of it as a unique phenomenon of the western United States frontier,” whereas in actuality ranching in general is “derived almost wholly from Spain and from Portugal” and “most ranching traditions in what later became the United States came immediately out of Mexico” (Fontana 1967:60-61).

Terry G. Jordan, author of North-American Cattle-Ranching Frontier: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation, presents a more complex version of ranching origins, characterizing strategies as regionally diverse and the result of the mixing of pastoral traditions from diverse regions, originating in the Highlands of Britain, western and southern regions of Spain, and tropical regions of West Africa. He characterizes ranching on the western U.S. frontier as a “zone of contact between two contrasting types of land use”: a creolized form of ranching that came through coastal northern Mexico from Spain and Africa via the West Indies, and another creolized form that came variously along the Gulf Coast through French Louisiana and from the South Carolina Piedmont inland to Texas. This latter tradition he calls the Anglo-Texan ranching system (although it has some input from African and more from Cajun traditions along the way). As this latter tradition came west, ranchers came to be horse-mounted, decreased the number of pigs in ratio to cattle (related to leaving forests for grasslands), and adopted some new tools, such as lassos. Their language picked up Spanish words for many of these changes as the adaptations occurred (chaparrals or chaps, lariats, broncos, etc.). The two traditions, the Latin-American and the Anglo-Texan, carried various elements from their contributing territories as well as adaptations to new and unfamiliar ecological settings, and when they came
together in the West, they competed with each other. Jordan believes that the Anglo-Texan system won the
day in the end because it was more commercially oriented, provided better care and feeding of animals
through the winter months, and had types of animals better adapted to the colder as well as more arid climates
as they moved north onto the central and northern Plains (Jordan 1993).

Both Fontana and Jordan contextualize ranching in larger pastoral traditions of various global origins,
and so Fontana suggests a broadly comparative approach to the archaeology of ranches, looking at
pastoralism, transhumance, and species and varieties of livestock and their individual physiological
requirements as they affect ranching behavior, and he advocates developing typologies based on this kind of
information. To address these topics, Hardesty argues that one cannot look at ranches the way archaeologists
traditionally record them on surveys, as a nucleated buildings, yard, and corral areas (Hardesty 1982).
Fontana prefers a landscape approach, saying that “locations of driving trails, railheads, auction yards, feed
pens, slaughter houses, and wool and hide markets are as much a part of the over-all story as the locations of
ranch boundaries and of ranch house settlements themselves” (Fontana 1967:61). Building functions, spatial
relationships between buildings, and “spatial relationships of ranches to one another” must be used to
recognize settlement patterns (Fontana 1967:61).

This multiscalar landscape approach to collecting data on the built environment that Fontana outlined
almost 40 years ago seems prescient in light of more current research approaches. Donald Hardesty has
presented research problem domains that he suggests are pertinent to ranching and farming sites, including
changes through time in agricultural societies. These include looking at various historical and
anthropological frontier models, human/animal/environmental interactions, ethnic interaction, and site
formation processes (Hardesty 1982:216-217). He further suggests using variables such as soil properties,
altitude, time period, geographic zones, and livestock type to develop predictive models. He advocates
looking at buildings and other features as interconnected “systems” in a manner not unlike that suggested by
Fontana, emphasizing “the need to understand the whole system in order to understand the pieces” (Hardesty

At the scale of individual artifacts, Fontana notes that “there are few which are peculiar to ranching”
and archaeologists need to look at “total assemblages of tools which may characterize a ranching operation”
(1967:61). Frequencies of machine-made and mass-produced items versus recycled, handmade or “jerry-
rigged” goods might also be diagnostic on ranch sites (Fontana 1967). The latter kinds of artifacts may in fact
be common on rural agricultural sites in general, farms as well as ranches. As Jonathan C. Horn has noted,
“Ranching often involves farming, such as growing alfalfa or corn for feed or cutting wild hay, and farmers
often raise grazing animals for meat” (Horn 2004a:37). However, he says the two activities may still be
distinguishable in larger-scale landscape terms, as ranching leaves “a larger signature on the landscape in the
West because of the practice of grazing on the public domain” (Horn 2004a:37).

William G. Buckles suggested a typology of agricultural sites based on the degree of investment in
place, using the terms “scroungers, squatters, and settlers” to describe points along a continuum from more
ephemeral sites, occupied for only a short time, to established farmsteads or ranches (Buckles 1981, 1993a).
Scroungers are least well represented in the archival record, as they did not own the land they occupied and
were transient. Examples related to agriculture include “trail herders…itinerant cowboys and shepherders,
moonshiners, rustlers and Gypsies” (Buckles 1993a:6). Buckles suggests that the diagnostic archaeological
correlates of such itinerate folk would as often be what is not found on a site as what is: evidence of only
temporary or portable shelters, “no outhouses, no segregated trash dumps, no fences” or other boundary
markers (Buckles 1993a:6). Squatters, the next group on Buckles scale of commitment, were also not
landowners and were associated with “specialized land and resource uses and not for the long term”
(1993a:6). Examples of squatters associated with agricultural pursuits include:

persons on homesteads such as ‘hired men and their families’ employed on farms, ranches and other
ventures, who were living at ‘squatter’ sites while employed but left when the work terminated.
Squatters’ sites could also be those of speculators on homesteads as ways to acquire the lands and
resources for immediate sales to others. A common western practice related to speculations was where
cowboys and others acquired homestead or preemption rights to lands with water and other values which they then sold to a ranch which was putting together an empire from a patchwork quilt of homesteads (Buckles 1993a:6-7).

Like scroungers, squatters are unlikely to be well documented in civil records, although they may appear in manuscript census records. Sometimes, however, they were seasonal laborers and occupied sites in a cyclical pattern. Archaeological manifestations include “corrals, aspen carvings, spring developments, etc., on sites on the public domain or on large ranches. Gypsies, our research has indicated, had cyclical routes year after year and camped in the same spots at camps of squatters” (Buckles 1993a:7). Like scrounger sites, line camps and like sites tend to lack outhouses and other signs of long-term occupation, such as fences and cairns for land boundary markers. They also tend to have less specialized dump areas than the sites of more settled occupants (Buckles 1981).

The final group in Buckles’s classification is “settlers,” who are the most committed to place. They are by far the best represented in the archival records, including land claims, census, tax records, deeds and titles, and sometimes newspaper accounts and personal memoirs. Archaeologically speaking, Buckles’s “settler” sites tend to have specialized trash disposal areas, specialized outbuildings, and more substantial domestic architecture than either scroungers or squatters. In general they display more signs of investment in housing and modification to the landscape than the other two groups.

Buckles characterizes the three groups – scroungers, settlers, and squatters – as points along a continuum from completely transient and undocumented, through perhaps seasonal and indirectly documented, to permanent and well-documented (Buckles 1981, 1993a). He felt that the degree of commitment and permanence of such settlement should be discernible through the material properties of the site, whereas the correct terminology for a farm or ranch may be derived through the documents.

Although Buckles’s typology is a useful starting point, work in Colorado and throughout the West suggests that, starting in the nineteenth century, legal status and investment in place are not necessarily linked (Jackson 1980). Several examples of short-term occupations that display inordinate investments in place are in the Colorado examples of surveys and excavated sites, later in this chapter. As one example, La Placita (5LA6104), a multihousehold site in the lower Purgatoire, was a small stock-raising operation (Clark 2003). This site meets the material criteria of a “settler” site – specialized trash disposal and a high level of investment in the built environment – but the builders never legally owned the land. In fact, Clark (2003) suggests that it is inappropriate to consider the Hispanic occupants of the site as squatters precisely because they had such a strong investment in place. Likewise, many parcels legally claimed under the Homestead Act were never intended to be permanent (Church 2002) because settlers there saw the land as a commodity not as home. Thus, investigators should be careful if they use the Buckles’s typology, being especially conscious that the potential for significant historical archaeological remains exists in areas where there were no legal claims to the land or where claims were never finalized through the patent process.

Furthermore, such a typology should not be used to determine site significance in any simplistic way. In his work in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Canyons of the Ancients in Colorado, Horn notes that “failed” homesteads settled for purposes of land acquisition on the part of larger neighboring ranches, but never patented, provide clarity of data in a discrete temporal component. A large population of such sites constitutes a chronologically sensitive baseline for functional, cultural, or chronological comparisons. For this reason, “failed” homesteads may actually be more significant in terms of potential for archaeological data than “successful” long-term occupations because a shorter chronology of occupation is not as often stratigraphically mixed and muddied (Horn 2004a:38).

Horn uses the word failed carefully in these cases. The goal of these homesteads was not to create a long-term family farm. The goal was to settle long enough to satisfy federal requirements, and then sell to the adjacent rancher. It is in the latter goal that the farmers Horn discusses “failed”. Too often historians and archaeologists talk about homesteaders failing because they did not stay and farm beyond acquiring legal title to their land, when in reality the goal of the settler was, from the start, not to farm but to raise capital for some
other purpose or add land to the ranch holdings of others. The descendants of homesteaders can be understandably touchy on this point. Paul D. Friedman described a particular homestead effort as a failure in his history of the Picketwire Valley (Friedman 1988). This settler’s descendant objected that her ancestor intended all along to sell as soon as the land was patented and use the capital to start up a business in town. In this goal he was a success (Loretta Scott, personal communication 1995). This was certainly sometimes the case, as migrants to the West (and everywhere else in the country) were more drawn to urban that rural settings, a trend that only changes briefly during the Great Depression. However, it is also possible that descendants of homesteaders who did not make it in farming or ranching have revised family histories to put such episodes in a better light.

Fontana, Hardesty, and Buckles all emphasize classification systems and research agendas interpreting agricultural sites as economic units or indicative of adaptive strategies, and all discuss the potential for evolution of such strategies through time and across space in the West. Sometimes researchers frame this evolution within the context of a frontier model of some sort (Green and Perlman 1985; Limerick 1987; Turner 1993 [1893]), other times in a world system or global market dependency model (Wallerstein 1974). Either way, a look at features, buildings and landscape alterations beyond those found in the ranch or farm domestic nucleus is necessary. Hardesty classifies agriculturally-related features into types, including “management” (water, animal, or crop habitats), “manufacturing” (blacksmithing, kilns, other), “environmental impact” (erosion, salt deposits, disturbance vegetation, other), “domestic features” (houses and outbuildings, permanent and temporary), and “logistic features” (transportation routes, shipping and market nexus points, transportation route maintenance, other) (Hardesty 1982).

There are of course other nonmaterialist research agendas that archaeologists can address using farm and ranch site data. As Buckles himself noted, “Our material evidences can be viewed as symbolic systems for which we need to search for the meanings” (Buckles 1993a:8). A good example of a study that does just that, outside the state of Colorado, is Leslie Stewart Abernathy’s work “Industrial Goods in the Service of Tradition: Consumption and Cognition on an Ozark Farmstead Before the Great War”, published in The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honor of James Deetz. As appropriate in a work dedicated to James Deetz, Stewart-Abernathy’s approach goes beyond explanations grounded in a materialist concept of cultural adaptation to look at symbolism and meaning (Stewart-Abernathy 1992). All late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century sites, of all types, contain mass-produced items of the kind found in any Sears and Roebuck catalog, or what Steven Baker refers to as a “Victorian Horizon” (Baker 1978a, 1999a). However, whereas Baker sees this as a cultural horizon that dominates in an increasingly melting-pot manner, Stewart-Abernathy and those working on non-Anglo-American sites see active manipulation of Victorian period, mass-produced items, sometimes in markedly un-Victorian and locally unique ways (Carrillo 1993; R. F. Carrillo 1997; Carrillo 1999; Carrillo and Jepson 1995; Carrillo, Mehls et al. 1994; Carrillo et al. 2003; Church 2001, 2002; Clark 1996, 1997a). Stewart-Abernathy uses such ratios and spatial relationships to illustrate how rural farmers used mass-produced items according to local traditions that may have fit in with Victorian cultural values in this case but varied from what could be predicted using any purely economic or dependency model. Donald Hardesty and Barbara Little elaborate in their recent book:

The archaeological record of the recent past often contains commodities that have been globally distributed. Global distribution, however, does not necessarily take place without changing the meaning, function, or use of the commodity within local social and cultural systems. Clearly we need to construct good models of how global commodities are reinterpreted or transformed at specific localities (Hardesty and Little 2000:158-159).

It is for this reason that a “Victorian Horizon” of artifacts introduced to the western states is just that, a material horizon. Its status as a cultural horizon in any real sense is not a given but is a potential research hypothesis that may be tested on sites. To do so requires looking not just at the presence or absence of mass-produced Victorian-era items but at their patterns of distribution and use on a site. The horizon and its associated ideology, while influential, is always locally interpreted; to what degree the associated ideology is accepted at a given site can certainly be a productive research inquiry. As Steven Baker points out (personal communication 2005), the extent to which the Victorian Horizon enfolded some individuals and subcultures
Models such as Stewart-Abernathy’s incorporate human agency, viewing patterning in the material data as the cumulative result of individual decisions and strategies changing through time and across space. Even when looking at economic functional questions, such as discerning ranching from other site functions, such an approach to the materials can be useful. As Fontana has pointed out for ranch artifacts, it is not necessarily in the style or the presence or absence of artifacts that discernible patterning lies but more often in the relative quantities of items and their spatial patterning (Fontana 1967). More and more researchers are using this kind of patterning as an alternative to the unsatisfactory “trait list” approach to address intangibles such as ethnicity, class, or gender on sites (Carrillo 1993; R. F. Carrillo 1997; Carrillo 1999; Carrillo and Jepson 1995; Carrillo, Mehls et al. 1994; Carrillo et al. 2003; Church 2001, 2002; Clark 1996, 1997a; Ferguson 1992; K. G. Lightfoot et al. 1998; Pyszczynski 1989) (cf. Buckles and Buckles 1984; Cordell 1991; McGuire 1983).

Such an approach can and often does challenge widely held American myths. In her work at Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, Audrey J. Horning uses scattered farmsteads and the materials thereon to challenge notions held by most Americans, and codified by early twentieth century sociologists, about “backwards” Appalachian occupants. She finds that investment in property and landscape among people in various hollows tells us not only about commercial and subsistence goals that vary within the region in the eighteenth through the early twentieth century but also how integrally tied to global networks of production, markets, and tourism such people were. So the material remains, from both survey and excavation, illustrate the economic and social realities of the past in this area, but Horning did not stop with such interpretations. She also gathered documentary work by scholars on the region, tax and census and other such records, and oral narratives from the people who were forcibly relocated from the area by the U.S. government in order to create the park. She makes a very convincing argument about the complicated ways local people both profited from the myth of Appalachian “folkiness,” for example, dressing up in their rattiest clothing and forgoing their automobile to show up at Skyline Resort with homemade “hooch” and baskets for sale, while simultaneously acting to resist such stereotypes (Horning 2000).

**ARCHAEOLOGY OF RURAL AGRARIAN SITES IN COLORADO: MANIFESTATION IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD**

**Settlement under Spain and Mexico**

The earliest ranches and farms in Colorado were the ranchos of the Mexican citizens in the southern third of the state. Virtually no archaeological work on the earliest phases of such farmsteads and ranches has been accomplished, although Paul Kutsche, Marianne Stoller, and John R. Van Ness have authored some relevant historical archaeology and anthropology studies from northern New Mexico (Kutsche and Ness 1981; Kutsche et al. 1976; Thomas et al. 1992; Van Ness 1979, 1980, 1991) (cf. Cordell 1991). Good historical background at the local level comes from studies by Richard Athearn, Sarah Deutsch, Janet LeCompte, Frances L. Quintana, and Marc Simmons (Deutsch 1987; LeCompte 1978; Quintana 1991 [1974]; Simmons 1969, 1991). As far as archaeological studies go, however, the earliest settlement of the large Mexican land grants in southern Colorado constitutes a research gap. Some reports on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Hispanic ranch and farmsteads exist (C. M. Carrillo 1997; Carrillo 1993, 1999; Church 2001, 2002; Clark 2003), but until there is more time depth in the archaeological observations, researchers cannot address adaptive, evolutionary, or symbolic questions of culture and behavior on a diachronic basis.

Early Hispanic settlements on land grants will look quite different from either later Hispanic settlements or those of non-Hispanic settlers. There was more than one legal way to settle under the land grant system (Table 19), and settlement occurred illegally as well, so settlement patterns can vary
accommplished accordingly. Marc Simmons, relying primarily on documentary sources, dates the settlement of grants from the first issuance of grant documents (Simmons 1969). Paul Kutsche and his colleagues, on the other hand, base their model of grant settlement on oral history and ethnographic observation as well as documents. They describe people from established villages heading north onto unclaimed lands on a seasonal basis for a few years. There they would graze cattle, sheep, or goats, build simple structures, place cairns, and build corrals before moving north on a permanent basis. Only after all that activity on the landscape did they apply to the governor for legal title to the land, either on an individual basis or, more often, as a corporate unit in the form of a communal land grant (Kutsche et al. 1976). This sequence of events is born out by narrative accounts recorded by workers during the Civil Works Administration interviews under the New Deal and also explains many undocumented early sites (cairns, walls, buildings) on the southern Colorado landscape (Church 2002).

Table 19: Chronology of Mexican public land legislation applying to roughly the southern one-third of Colorado (Briggs and Ness 1987).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>Recopilación de las Leyes de los Reynos de las Indias – This is the basis for community land grants and associated establishment and use of common lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700s</td>
<td>Mostly private grants occur during this period in New Mexico, not Colorado</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800s</td>
<td>Community grants became more common. These consisted of a house and irrigable plot for individual families. In addition, resources held in common included pasture, water access, woodland for hunting, gathering, fishing, and quarrying, etc. Grant documents did not distinguish between individual and communal grants; some individual grants, over time, became like communal grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824</td>
<td>Colonization Law – Law 1) provided cheap land and four years of tax-exemption to encourage settlement; 2) allowed foreigners to petition for grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828</td>
<td>Further regulations: 1) with Colonization Law codified the customary process of application to the governor and local alcaldes for individual or community grants, including petition, alcalde’s report, governor’s grant, and act of possession. If application was acceptable, the claimant and neighbors walked the perimeter of the grant placing monuments, including cairns or crosses, on lines and corners. Legislation expedited documented ownership; the copy for grantees was called the testamento. 2) allowed foreigners to petition for grants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840s</td>
<td>This decade was a period of huge grants to Hispanic/Anglo partnerships, granted by Governor Armijo. Several of these were in Colorado, including Beaubien-Miranda (Maxwell), Sangre de Cristo, Las Animas, etc. The huge grants had the weakest legal justification, but were the first confirmed by the U.S. after the Mexican-American War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>The Protocol of Querétaro was an agreement between U.S. and Mexico that provided that grant titles valid under Mexican law as of 13 May 1846 would be valid under U.S. law. Later, the U.S. State Department did not recognize this protocol as binding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>This California law shifted burden of proof to Mexican grant owners; rather than requiring the U.S. government or citizens to prove Mexican claims invalid, Mexicans (who were now American citizens) had to prove claims valid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>The office of Surveyor General was created for New Mexico Territory, which encompassed much of southern Colorado. Many of those who held office were land speculators.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1860s to 1885</td>
<td>This period was the heyday of the corrupt “Santa Fe Ring,” during which the biggest grants in Colorado were confirmed.</td>
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<td>1876</td>
<td>The Partition Statute passed by New Mexico Territorial Legislature allowed lawyers to “request a division of the grant among its owners and to then force the sale if the property could not be physically divided without decreasing its value” (Ebright 1987:39). This statute was usually applied to common lands in community grants. By this time, southern Colorado was part of the new state of Colorado, and the Colorado grants were generally to individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>Breakdown of surveyor general system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Court of Private Land Claims established.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>U.S. vs. Sandoval case set the precedent whereby all common lands associated with grants were rejected (but not retroactively).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Hayes vs. United States case set the precedent of rejecting claims on technical grounds in cases where the Mexican governor had had a lesser official stand in for him in grant process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Conclusion of Court of Private Land Claims. (However, court actions continue to the present.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>The Taylor vs. San Luis Land Rights Council case, re: the San Luis Valley, which went to court in 1981, was resolved in favor of the Sangre de Cristo land grant heirs, restoring them hunting, wood-gathering, grazing, recreation, and timbering rights they had been denied since 1964.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Colorado land grants actually stood up to Anglo challenges better than did most New Mexico grants, despite the fact that many of the Colorado grants exceeded the maximum size under Mexican law. The larger Colorado grants were made to cronies of Governor Armijo shortly before the Mexican-American War, and the grantees were in general better connected with Anglo commercial interests. Therefore, these grants have had more impact on who owns the land now.
Earlier Hispano sites, whether individual family farmsteads or communities, are usually completely self-contained plazas, defensively built with either few or no windows in anticipation of Native American aggression. Papers in the possession of Epifanio J. P. Valdez, grandson of Don Seladon Valdez, an original recipient of the Conejos Grant in Southern Colorado, indirectly indicate some of the characteristics that one might expect on such early sites in terms of both artifacts and architecture. On October 12, 1842, settlers agreed to the following conditions:

1. The site selected was never to be abandoned.

2. It was understood that the pasture lands were to be common to all the settlers.

3. The colonizers were to keep themselves well equipped with firearms or arrows [emphasis added], in view of the dangerous position; the weapons were to be presented on entry as well as whenever required by the ‘jues’ [sic] or Alcalde. Furthermore, two years after entry, all weapons were to be firearms, kept in condition at all times.

4. The Plaza’s construction should be well walled and fortified, in the meantime the settlers must build ‘jacales’ to shelter their families (Gibson 1934a:104).

In another such account, “the old men” are cited as saying “in the early days the Indians were a source of continual trouble and there was much fighting. The adobe houses were built under difficulties and usually ‘jacals’ of logs set vertically, or ‘fuertes,’ in which the logs were laid horizontally, were built first” (Gibson 1934b: 104). Another good source describing such early settlements is the context document available online at the Colorado Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP), entitled Culebra River Villages of Costilla County: Village Architecture and its Historical Context, 1851-1940 (Mondragon-Valdez 2000).

There were several attempts to settle some of the southern Colorado grants, which various Native groups thwarted. These should be visible and situated along permanent drainages in southern Colorado. Settlers on the outskirts of settled areas sometimes negotiated extralegally and independently with Native groups for protection (Gibson 1934b; Quintana 1991 [1974]). Some of these plazas were reoccupied seasonally, with occupants cropping during the summer months and returning with their harvest to their parent community in the winter. These plazas were only later fully occupied and legally codified (Gibson 1934a, b; Kutsche et al. 1976). Such settlements may have considerable archaeological potential to answer questions about ethnicity, adaptation and ecology, community evolution and agricultural strategies, emerging globalism, and changing national and local settlement strategies during the time that Colorado south of the Arkansas River was part of the Republic of Mexico (until 1848).

Ethnicity is complex in these settlements, including people of French, Irish, Spanish, African, and Native descent. A number of site occupants were criados or captured Indian children (often Navajo, Ute, or Plains groups) raised as servants. Technically freed after the Civil War, many of these individuals, who may or may not have known of their legal change in status, stayed on in the region. A clear separation between Hispanic and Native American material culture is usually not possible in these early settlements, as almost all aspects of life included practices and technologies originating with the various groups and shared by all, as a result of centuries of proximity, mutual captive-taking, and intermarriage (Brooks 2002; Carrillo 1993; R. F. Carrillo 1997; Carrillo 1999; Carrillo and Jepson 1995; Carrillo, Mehls et al. 1994; Carrillo et al. 2003; Church 2001, 2002). Such shared or blended artifacts include worked bottle glass and stone tools ranging from scrapers to metates (Cordell 1991). Many of these early settlements have no associated documents, including several cases where a squatter paid for land with sheep in an informal, but locally binding agreement. A useful map of early settlements in the San Luis Valley, including many long-abandoned, is in Virginia McConnell Simmons’s book The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross, 2nd Edition (Simmons 1999 [1979]:273-274). As the title suggests, however, it refers only to the San Luis Valley, whereas we know that early attempts were also made to settle both west and east of there in southern Colorado.
Although there are clearly more early settlements than are reflected in archival documents alone, most Hispanic settlement in Colorado occurred under U.S. land law, imposed south of the Arkansas River for the first time after the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Such settlements continue to be distinct from those of non-Hispanic settlers in various ways, ranging from artifact frequencies and architecture to the distribution of sites on the landscape (Carrillo 1993; R. F. Carrillo 1997; Carrillo 1999; Carrillo and Jepson 1995; Carrillo, Mehl et al. 1994; Carrillo et al. 2003; Church 2001, 2002). In fact, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic groups manipulated the system of homestead patents in various ways, sometimes to preserve comfortable and culturally conservative settlement styles and sometimes strategically to reap some wider economic advantage (Church 2002). Church proposes a pattern of Hispano settlement that is modified as little as possible by the requirements of the Homestead Act, based on post-1862 archaeological data and ethnographic and other documentation. This similarity or difference might be explored and tested archaeologically by looking at earlier settlements, but to date there has not been any extensive excavation or site recording of such sites predating 1862.

For many settlers under the Homestead Act, occupational activities included using resources well beyond the bounds of land to which they held formal title. For a time period stretching well into the twentieth century, Spanish-speaking settlers from New and Old Mexico were the majority populations in several southern Colorado counties. A diachronic look at changing ethnic relations, settlement patterns, and agricultural strategies are all questions that archaeologists studying sites in these areas might address. Such settlements might contrast in important ways archaeologically with other ethnic or religious enclaves where the group in question, for example Germans or Mormons, was not the demographic majority. Historians and anthropologists have long since rejected the melting pot as a legitimate model of interaction, and the more complex behaviors associated with Native American, Hispanic, African, Asian, and Euroamerican interactions can be addressed in part through archaeology at such sites.

Settlement under U.S. Law

Early settlers in Colorado, notably Hispanic settlers, engaged in mixed agriculture, growing both crops (intensive agriculture) and livestock (pastoralism) for both domestic use and for market sale. In 1848, U.S. land legislation replaced that of Mexico (Table 20). Table 20 outlines federal law relating to land use. Colorado law related to ranching, in particular, is outlined in a 1937 book by Ora Brooks Peake entitled The Colorado Range Cattle Industry (1937). This book suggests that the separation often made between rural agricultural and urban settings in the late nineteenth century might not have existed. Peake notes that “cattlemen were such important citizens in early Colorado cities that it was difficult to secure ordinances to keep bovines off the streets” (Peake 1937:171), a problem which lead to headlines such as “Denver – A Municipal Cow Pasture” (Denver Mirror, April 26, 1874) and “A Bovine Outrage – Cow in Denver Destroys General Lessig’s Place” (Denver Mirror, October 13, 1877, both cited in Peake 1937).

By about 1880, farming and ranching were becoming distinct endeavors on all agrarian sites, and tensions arose between sheep and cattle ranchers, as well as between stockmen and farmers. A better understanding of the cultural, logistical, and strategic differences between these economic choices, as well as the role played by ethnicity and prejudice, might illuminate some of the reasons for recurring violence, including who participated and the forms that violence and resistance took (ranging from fence-cutting to property damage and occasionally bodily injury and death) (Carrillo et al. 2003; Loendorf and Clise 1997).

Agricultural features related specifically to farming as distinct from ranching might include Grange halls (1867 onwards), mills, water towers, check dams, ditches and other forms of water control, granaries, cribs, and equipment sheds. Ranching properties might have associated corrals, cairns, sheep or cow camps, silos, walls and fences, rock shelters, aspen art, rock art, sheep sorting or lambing pens, stables, tack rooms, stock yards, and feed stores. There are further differences between cattle and sheep ranches, or between, say, beet farms and those growing alfalfa. Agricultural features run the gamut of Buckles’s ephemeral and substantial sites (Buckles 1981, 1993a). Of course many features, such as windmills and stock tanks may be common to both ranches and farms, and some site occupants may have mixed these occupations. On such
sites, it is well to remember Fontana’s admonition to look at complete assemblages of tools for patterns characteristic of ranching and farming rather than looking for particular diagnostic items (Fontana 1967:61).

Table 20. Chronology of U.S. public land legislation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>The Land Ordinance of 1785 established the township and range survey system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841</td>
<td>Pre-emption Act (repealed 1891) allowed settlers to stake a claim to 160 acres of public land, establish residency, and pay cash for it before it was made available in public auction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>Homestead Act made surveyed land available in 160-acre parcels, either after five years residency and nominal payment, or after a six-month period and cash payment of $1.25 per acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>The Pacific Railroad Act provided lands as a subsidy for Transcontinental Railroad and telegraph lines between Missouri and California. The railroad got alternating sections for 10 miles on either side of the track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>The Morrill Act provided land grants by federal to state governments (excepting Confederate states), which states could sell to fund higher education in engineering, agriculture, and military science. This act was the basis for the state school section withdrawals from the public domain, and State Trust lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Pacific Railroad Act modified to reduce the alternating sections provided the railroads from 10 to five miles on either side of the track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>The Timber Culture Act (repealed 1891) provided 160 acres provided the settler would plant a quarter of the land in trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>The Desert Land Act provided 640 acres for $1.25 per acre, with $0.25 down, if the settler irrigated it within three years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>The Timber and Stone Act allowed people to buy 160 acres of nonagricultural land for $2.50 per acre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>Timber Culture Act modified to require 10 acres planted with trees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>John Wesley Powell’s <em>A Report on the Arid Regions of the United States</em> explained why land legislation as it stood would not work in the arid West and suggested alternatives. It was politically unpopular and widely ignored, and as a result Powell moved into the position of head of the newly created federal Bureau of Ethnography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>The Homestead Act was extended to unsurveyed lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>The government moved against large ranchers who were illegally fencing public lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>The Dawes Severalty Act, which was intended to end the reservation system through allotting land to individual tribal members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>The Pre-emption Act and Timber Culture Act are both repealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>The Hunter Act was a follow-up to the Dawes Act, and gave Southern Utes the rights to land allotments anywhere on the reservation. It was again intended, once all had taken up such allotments, to end the &quot;special status&quot; of the reservation and open remaining land for homesteading. The act was opposed by the Weeminuche Band and resulted in separation of Ute Mountain and Southern Ute Reservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>The Newlands Act provided government help for irrigation of land. The federal government would plan, construct, and manage irrigation projects for the purpose of reclaiming marginal lands. Money for these projects would be generated by the sale of public lands. The lands to be sold were identified as being irrigable by the reclamation project, so were withdrawn and then earmarked for entry specifically keyed to the project. The ongoing expenses of the projects would be supported by fees paid by farmers and ranchers using the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>The Reclamation Act set aside federal money to irrigate lands in the West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>The Enlarged Homestead Act doubled the available land for homesteads to 320 acres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>The Borah Act reduced the residency requirement from five years to three, and to seven months of each year. It facilitated homesteading of upland and forested areas so was clearly important to expanding Colorado settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>The Stock-Raising Homestead Act increased the grants to 640 acres, without the cropping and residency requirements of the original Homestead Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>The Taylor Grazing Act established grazing allotments, permitting and fee system to regulate and manage grazing on public lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>The Depression-era Resettlement Administration, later known as the Farm Security Administration, resettled displaced farmers and ranchers from the areas hit hard by the Dust Bowl onto productive lands elsewhere. Some were resettled in western Colorado.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>The Bankhead-Jones Land Utilization Act was a government buy-back of marginal farmland (established the Comanche and Cimarron, and Pawnee National Grasslands in Colorado). This act took lands most adversely affected by the Dust Bowl out of production.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The picture for farmsteads and ranches in Colorado as a whole from the mid-nineteenth century onwards is ethnically very complex. People came from virtually every state, Canada, Mexico, and many European countries to farm or ranch in the state, either at the scale of family farm or on a larger commercial basis. There is also variation between regions based on soils, topography, and altitude. Homesteading in the mountains or intermountain valleys was a much different proposition than doing so either in the desert Southwest, the Uncompahgre Plateau, Southern Plains, or northeastern Plains. Ranching cattle was a different undertaking than ranching sheep. The archaeological footprints of agriculturalists who settled irrigated valleys will differ from those who were on dryland farms. Some contexts available online from the state OAHP are: *Weld County, Colorado, Historic Agriculture Context* (Mehls and Mehls 1988); *Historic Farms and Ranches of Weld County* (Whitacre and Simmons 1990); and *Ranching Resources of South Park, Colorado, 1859-1949* (Simmons and Simmons 1999).
For such sites in Nevada, Hardesty has suggested that we could develop predictive models based on geographical zones “that have distinctive archaeological expectations” and that an “inventory of sites within each zone” could be used to test such models (Hardesty 1982). Steven G. Baker has advocated a similar agenda for Colorado homesteads (Baker and Horvath 1985) and began research like this for sheep ranching and associated ephemeral campsites on the Western Slope, dividing shepherds’ camps (the scroungers of Buckles’s typology) into further types based on spatial location, features, and artifacts (Baker 1991a). However, the opportunity to amass the kind of data necessary to look at this kind of patterning has been spotty, at best, and such models are only a first step. The next research steps would be determining what such patterns tell us about the past cultures and culture change. Cycles of dry and wet years, climate, and physiographic zone, as well as infrastructure, technological developments, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and class, all affected settlement decisions, migration patterns, and consumer choice in various areas from the nineteenth century into and beyond the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s.

It is also important to remember that all structures related to dispersed agricultural communities in rural areas do not necessarily relate directly to domesticity, crops, or livestock. In his report on work in Gunnison, Steven Horvath takes account of an important rural site type, only indirectly associated with ranching and farming. Rural schools were an important part of early settlement, because parents were very interested in seeing their children receive at least an elementary education. A historical context document available online at the state OAHP is entitled Rural School Buildings in Colorado (Doggett and Wilson 1999).

Most of these kinds of schools were one-room schoolhouses, and they played important roles considerably beyond education in dispersed rural communities. Horvath notes:

Schools became a focus for local feeling and the district boundaries came to represent the boundaries of neighborhoods… The school district became one of the most important spheres of social interaction for adults in the district as well as for children (Horvath 1981:79).

Thus schoolhouses, in addition to bearing artifacts and features indicative of the changing nature of nineteenth and early twentieth century educational practices in rural settings, may also retain artifacts reflecting use as community meeting places. Horn notes this for southwestern Colorado, near Canyons of the Ancients, indicating that, between the 1910s and the 1940s, dances attended by entire families were often held in rural school buildings. School house dances provided

probably the most important social venues for young adults and resulted in introductions and courting of couples that frequently lead to marriages. Dances also had a darker side that included arguments and fights, and opportunities for drinking during Prohibition (Horn 2004a:18).

Oral narratives emphasizing the importance of such dances in the lives of early twentieth-century inhabitants of what is now the Piñon Canyon Maneuver site occur in the works of Lawrence Loendorf and Dianna Clise, and Hadley Harper (Harper 1996; Loendorf and Clise 1997).

Advocates of school consolidation tend to downplay the quality of rural education, but the descendant community of rural school alumni is proud of and will defend the education received (Horvath 1981). Such sites are characterized not only by the school itself but often by associated horse sheds and privies. Teachers often boarded with local families, who were also often the ones to donate land and money to build schools. Sometimes schools were held in private homes until a schoolhouse could be built. This was the case at the rancho of Domacio Lopez in the Purgatoire River Valley on the Comanche National Grassland of southeastern Colorado (Church and Clark 2008; Reed and Horn 1995b), and it is notable that in donating money and land to build a school, he provided a secular education for his children very different than the parochial education he in all likelihood received earlier in nineteenth century New Mexico. He also sent his daughters to school alongside his sons, a privilege his wife, Loretta, never had. He further built a small Catholic church on the property. Other religious structures associated with rural farming and ranching communities in southern Colorado are moradas, which are the meeting places of the religious brotherhood
Pious Confraternity of Our Lord Jesus Nazarene, or *Hermanos Penitentes*, a religious and mutual aid society among southern Colorado Hispanos.

Finally, a historic period site type associated with ranching and farming that is often maligned as graffiti is the rock carvings of individuals who became intimate with the landscape in the course of farming or ranching it. Often these carvings include proper names and dates, and such people can (and should) be traced in census or other civil documents.

**Examples of Regional Settlement Studies in Colorado**

Much of what we know about rural agriculture sites in Colorado comes from large-scale CRM survey projects. In many cases these sites are not excavated and often not even tested. Yet even from surface data, especially with a large population on which to base conclusions, such projects can contribute to what we know about the historical archaeology of the state. The surveys and sites described in this section and the next do not constitute a complete list of sites recorded and excavated in Colorado. These are only the sites from reports provided by co-authors or from reports the co-authors thought to ask for from others. Our sample is unsystematic, to say the least, but may at least serve to provide an idea of the diversity and number of research questions asked regarding the post-contact sites and landscapes in the state, and therefore their preservation value.

**HIGH ALTITUDE**

**Upper Gunnison Basin: Comparative Settlement Strategies**

Steven Baker and Steven Horvath did a study that serves as a good example of how one might address research questions about settlement strategies diachronically at high altitude sites in the Upper Gunnison Basin, focusing on environmental zones, site chronology, and economic goals. Their data include a random sample of sites (stratified by township and range, but they could also have been usefully stratified by environmental zones or soil conservation districts) and illustrate how settlers manipulated federal land laws to achieve economic ends outside the intent of those laws. Such manipulation was driven by both environmental and historical factors. Because Baker had some data for the Dolores Reservoir area, they were able, to an extent, to compare settlement in these two areas and other areas that vary environmentally (Baker 1978b; Baker and Horvath 1985; Dishman 1981); see also Horvath (1981).

**White River, Western Slope: Sheep Ranching, Ephemeral Sites, and Historic Period Rock Art**

Baker took a landscape approach to sheep camps on BLM land managed by the White River Field Office on the Western Slope (Baker 1991a). He found that there had been a 1986 programmatic agreement between the SHPO and the BLM setting the policy that ephemeral campsites were not individually eligible to the NRHP (Baker 1991a:32). (If such an agreement is still in effect, it may well need to be revisited in light of more current research agendas and potentials.) Despite this agreement, Baker recognized the importance of such sites for looking at land use and pastoralism. The occupations were short term, giving them considerable “clarity” in terms of discrete occupations, and there were not a lot of ephemeral camps with alternate functions, such as hunting, to muddy the picture. Given that there would be no excavation at such sites, he proposed a “project-specific standard of inventory,” which would allow for “inventory level research” (Baker 1991a:32). This he could combine with oral narratives and documentary data to address particular research questions about the “nature, range and character of shepherding activities” (Baker 1991a:52). In the process, he came up with a typology for the sheep camps: Type 1, very small camps at some distance from lines of transportation, usually located at high points with good views of surrounding pasture areas and limited, ephemeral architectural features and Type 2, larger camps nearer to transportation routes, mostly post-WWII (Baker 1991a:33-34) In addition to the campsites themselves, Baker also considered “sheep sorting and lambing pens, stock dams and ponds, bedding grounds, stockroads, and extensive and often elaborate rock art sites attributable to shepherds” (Baker 1991a:31).
Of particular note is his individual recognition of the contribution to the local rock and aspen tree art tradition of Pacomio Chacon, on whom Baker is completing a case study. Baker spoke about Pacomio at the annual meeting of the Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists in Durango in 2003 in a paper entitled “Pacomio Chacon, Colorado’s Master Sheepherder Artist” (Baker 2003d).

**Rocky Mountain National Park: Inventory and Assessment, With and Without Architecture**

At Rocky Mountain National Park, William Butler is currently wrapping up a project to inventory and discuss the archaeological potential of all the historic sites in the park. Unfortunately, park policy in the 1930s resulted in the loss of much of the material record and its context. Such operations “included moving a structure, if possible, or tearing down the building by removing roofs, logs, wall boards, etc., bulldozing and burying, or burning the structure in place” (Butler 2005:9-240) and the ground surfaces were almost always recontoured and revegetated” (Butler 2005:9-240). Clearly bulldozing, burying, and recontouring would have an adverse effect on archaeological integrity, but moving the architecture or burning it in place might not have, since subsurface deposits might remain intact. He finds there are some sites that do have potential, and divides them into site types separating out, for example, ranches that functioned as dude ranches from those that were homesteads.

Butler does an admirable job of citing the relevant historical work by others, and clearly explains the archival work that was necessary even where sites were no longer extant. There would be no way to address landscape scale questions in the future had he only talked about sites where there were intact surface remains. He includes ranches and homesteads dating from the 1870s through the early twentieth century, including some areas that were homesteaded but not “proved up,” so that these are represented only by scanty material remains or brief mention in the documentary record. He includes a handy table that has site names, site numbers of those sites that have been recorded with the OAHP (those that still exist, archaeologically speaking), pertinent references, and a brief description of material remains, if any (Butler 2005:9-244). Some of these ranches have several site numbers, indicating ranching features recorded as individual sites rather than as features contributing to the site of a single ranch operation. This pattern of recording, say, a corral, fence line, or irrigation ditch distant from the home ranch as a separate site from that ranch is very common and sometimes necessary and unavoidable. So such a table linking related site numbers together is very useful if one wants to look at ranch operations from a holistic perspective, using a landscape scale beyond the home ranch buildings.

In his “Summary and Recommendations” section Butler acknowledges the fact that the 1930s removal of buildings and disturbance of deposits makes many of his initial research questions impossible to address. However, whereas before his work only 19 historic sites and 1 isolated find were recorded, there are now 542 sites and 149 isolated finds (which include mining and nonagricultural sites as well). And he has presented archival information and references on several more. He refers to a recently developed “removed structure” Geographic Information System (GIS) database that can guide further field efforts. Butler concludes that many questions based on ranching may not be answerable because of their removal, but information about “site layout, feature identification, feature functions, and structure” may be available through use of remote sensing techniques (2005:12-383). In conclusion, he notes the sites with the most archaeological potential: the Sam Stone Cabin and Barn, where buildings remain extant, and the foundation for the Hondius Ranch and area of the Hupp Homestead, where the buildings are gone, but there may be intact deposits remaining (2005:12-385).

**SOUTHERN COLORADO PLAINS**

**Lower Purgatoire River: Ethnicity, Economic Strategies, Dispersed Rural Communities**

Another good study of homesteading on a regional scale in Colorado is that by Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc., in the Comanche National Grassland, along the lower Purgatoire River (Reed and Horn 1995b). Their study, in many ways, builds on the work of Richard F. Carrillo on the U.S. Army’s Pinon Canyon Maneuver site, adjacent to the grassland (Andrefsky 1990a, b, c). In this earlier work, Carrillo laid
out hypotheses related in large part to determining ethnic composition of households from the archaeological materials on sites in this area. In the course of formulating those hypotheses, Carrillo amassed an impressive quantity of ethnographic and archaeological data from nineteenth century documents written by Hispanic and non-Hispanic observers who described not only the artifacts that settlers used in New Mexico and Colorado, but also their patterns of acquisition and use. Of special note are observations and accounts of Hispanic villagers and settlers making and using stone tools, including arrowheads (of metal and stone), and grinding stones, as well as chipped glass tools. This work also provided the basis for Minette C. Church’s dissertation and Bonnie Clark’s dissertation work on the Maneuver site, discussed further on in this chapter (Church 2001; Clark 2003).

Of particular interest in Reed and Horn’s study in the adjacent national grassland is the transition from smaller and more ethnically Hispanic ranching to larger scale ranching around 1880, the processes by which this occurred, and its archaeological signature. In this work Reed and Horn submit that on historical sites in the arid and semiarid West, archaeologists can use Energy Theory as advocated by Stanley South (South 1988) to look at how humans map onto energy and other resources on the landscape. They note that “the more uneven the distribution of resources, the more constraints are placed upon time and energy and the greater the importance for efficient use of limited resources” (Reed and Horn 1995b:41). They also include a caveat acknowledging that people “must balance a number of competing goals, so maximum efficiency in use of energy may be seldom actualized, but support the model in general” (Reed and Horn 1995b:41).

They use this model to account for settlement patterns in the valley whereby more and more land is aggregated in the hands of fewer and fewer individuals. They feel that this process is structured not only by resources on the landscape, but by “world system” processes. However, to look at such processes, it is necessary to create the baseline groundwork, that is, to create “historical ethnographies” (Schuyler 1988) at the local site and community level. They argue that, contrary to some perception within the field, this does not constitute undue “historical particularism” in that the baseline data on local systems is necessary to see how such processes are nested within regional, national, and global systems (Reed and Horn 1995b; Schuyler 1988); see also Church (2001). (It has of course also been argued that historical particularism is not in itself a bad research agenda, and a historical ethnography is a perfectly acceptable research goal.) Notably, they do not use Immanuel Wallerstein’s formulation of World Systems, with its emphasis on the formation of cores and peripheries in post-colonial settings, although this formulation of the model might well apply to this area after the Mexican-American War.

Importantly, Reed and Horn recognize that in many cases scattered rural farm and ranch sites can be seen as components of dispersed rural communities. They lay out hypotheses that build on Carrillo’s work on ethnic attribution of sites. In addition, they also look at site and regional responses to catastrophic flooding (in 1904), differences in community-building by Hispanic and non-Hispanic residents, Anglo acculturation and adoption of Hispanic artifacts and building styles, and chronological changes in assemblages on Hispanic and non-Hispanic sites related to economic roles and relative poverty. Although their work relied primarily on sites they could identify both on the ground and through documents, they acknowledged Carrillo’s point that there may well have been undocumented Hispanic occupation pre-1860 (Andrefsky 1990a, b, c; Carrillo et al. 2003; Church 2001, 2002). Bonnie J. Clark, in her dissertation, confronts the issue of undocumented Hispanic sites occurring later, in the 1880s and 1890s (Clark 2003).

Reed and Horn’s assessment of the Picketwire sites took into account not only research potential but also potential for public interpretation. As researchers increasingly have to justify their work to the taxpayer, such values are becoming more important, especially on public land. As Reed and Horn note, such interpretation, historical ethnographies nested within World Systems approaches, has the potential for generating “constructive social commentary and deeper cultural awareness by individuals and the public at large, which it is hoped will result in a more responsible and far-seeing society” (Reed and Horn 1995b:49). Lamentable gaps exist in popular knowledge of, in particular, the Hispanic history of the Colorado Plains, as is attested to in local historical works such as Bent County, Colorado History (Bent County History Book Committee Members 1993; Church 2001).
**Upper Purgatoire River: Ethnicity, Multidisciplinary Approaches, Frontier Human Ecology**

The upper Purgatoire River, above Trinidad, is well represented in the recent work by Richard F. Carrillo and his colleagues (Carrillo et al. 2003). In this work, a team including archaeologists, a historian, an architectural historian, an oral historian, and local historians, all compiled a remarkably complete report of sites in this “Hispanic Cultural Landscape,” with a focus on ethnicity and diachronic change. In his section particularly dedicated to archaeology, Carrillo uses a “frontier system” model based on work by Don Hardesty and Kenneth Lewis (Hardesty 1981; Lewis 1985), particularly Hardesty’s approach using individual households as units of adaptation in an ecological framework. Problem domains are threefold: investment in facilities; subsistence and economy; and settlement patterns. To look at these, the authors formulate two main hypotheses, one of which continues the focus of his earlier work, and that of others, on differentiating ethnic households based on “contrast economic orientations.” The other hypothesis proposes a diachronic shift from subsistence to market, wage-labor economy on the part of Hispanic residents.

In this work, Carrillo and his colleagues incorporate important and, in part, unpublished work (field notes) by Herbert W. Dick on the Trinidad Reservoir Project (Dick 1957, 1963, 1968), and work by Michael Nowak and his Colorado College students (Kingsbury and Nowak 1980; Nowak and Jones 1984, 1985). Dick, as well as others, attempted to impose the Midwest Taxonomic System on the historic sites of the region, defining a “Baca Phase” of a “Ranchero Complex” (Hand et al. 1977; Wood and Bair 1980). Because the Midwest Taxonomic System was originally designed in part as an organizational tool for pre-contact sites in the days before the advent of refined dating techniques, its application to well-dated and culturally distinct historic sites seems unwieldy. Although they reference it (Carrillo et al. 2003), the authors do not continue the nomenclature in their report.

Of the many sites identified on survey, the authors chose to describe 12 in detail, ranging from individual farmsteads to plazas. One of these is Bonnie J. Clark’s dissertation site, which saw some excavation and is described in more detail further along in this chapter (Clark 2003). Carrillo and his colleagues combine documents, oral narratives, and architectural and excavated evidence to accomplish the archaeological evaluation of these sites, thereby explicitly including architecture and the built environment in their discussion of the archaeological data. No excavation occurred. Local descendant communities involved themselves in the current dispositions of the sites, especially responding to the unfortunate vandalism of a local morada. Here, and in Carrillo’s work elsewhere, the role of the Fraternidad Piojoso de Nuestro Padre Jesus (commonly known as Penitentes) is highlighted in Hispanic community structure (Carrillo 1999; Carrillo et al. 2003; Clark et al. 2002), and such moradas were, and in some cases still are, central to such places.

As the authors point out in their summary of the historical archaeology, this is one of the most comprehensive attempts to look at a large body of data by harnessing the expertise of historians, architectural historians, ethnographers, and historical archaeologists. When combined with the data amassed for the lower Purgatoire River, a baseline of good data exists for this entire river basin in southeastern Colorado, with particular attention to chronology, economy, land use, gender, and ethnicity.

**CENTRAL COLORADO PLAINS**

**Rocky Mountain Arsenal: Ethnicity, Gender, Twentieth-Century Rural/Suburban Transitions**

A good look at the chronology and relationship between rural agricultural sites and emerging urban and suburban development around World War II is in the report by Clark and her colleagues documenting 70 historic farm sites in the area of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal (Clark et al. 1997). This is a great example of the importance of twentieth century sites to historical archaeology in Colorado. Work at the arsenal highlights several issues important to understanding the archaeology of rural agriculture on the Central Plains. First, detailed archival history performed in conjunction with the project points to the complex nature of settlement on the Plains. Although the Plains are often considered a stronghold of unhyphenated Americans, in fact ethnicity is as much a research concern here as in urban settings. Many of the farmers living in what
would become the arsenal were immigrants from throughout Northern and Central Europe. Second, the remains at the arsenal speak to the important contributions of women to the survival of family farms. Around half of sites investigated at the arsenal contained definitive evidence of home canning in the form of canning jar lid and liner fragments, and many of the other sites contain jar fragments that likely were from canning jars (Clark et al. 1997). This activity, almost always associated with women’s labor, was a critical contribution to subsistence at these sites, particularly during the Depression. Third, the arsenal points to the important contributions historical archaeology can make to the study of cultural landscapes. As part of its takeover of the land, the army removed most of the standing structures on the parcel. Yet what the army left behind—remnant landscaping, roadways, irrigation features, and archaeological features—was visible to archaeologists, trained to overlook the absence of buildings. Even without aboveground architecture, the arsenal provides for us a fossil landscape of 5-10-acre truck farms on the edge of an urban zone. This is a once-common landscape that is disappearing in the face of suburbanization.

A wide-ranging approach to agricultural landscapes is also potentially available for Weld County, regionally distinct in terms of crops (e.g., beets), ethnicity (German-Russians, Japanese-Americans, and Mexicans) and other factors. Carol and Steven Mehls have laid a good historical and architectural history groundwork to which archaeological work could and should contribute (Mehls and Mehls 1988).

SOUTHWEST

Ute Reservation: Ethnicity, Gender, Contradictory Documentary and Archaeological Data

SWCA surveyed 6,020 acres in La Plata County in southwestern Colorado and outlined a number of patterns of settlement. The land surveyed had once been part of the Southern Ute reservation until the implementation of the allotment acts of the 1880s and 1890s, when some Indian lands were opened up to general homesteading. Bonnie Clark and her colleagues used patterning of the built environment as well as in surface artifacts to talk about Ute versus non-Ute settlement, single men versus single women versus couples or family homesteads, changes in homesteading patterns through time, and site functional differences (Mabry et al. 2002). The authors use General Land Office (GLO) records, legislative history, and census data to talk about the chronology and nature of settlement (gradual, rather than a land rush), and address seeming contradictions between those records and the material data. This work includes an excellent example of why the archival research must occur with the archaeological research. For example, the authors explain the inordinate amount of investment in property at a site that was occupied for only two years according to the records. This example runs counter to Buckles’s scale of investment (settler versus squatter) and is also counterintuitive; one expects the most remains and landscape alteration at a site that has been occupied for some time. In this case the authors suggest that it was the very behavior of rapid overinvestment in nonessentials, and the concomitant failure of the family to adapt to the exigencies of the environment, that account for the short stay documented and the abundance of material remains and landscaping. In this interesting case, the length of occupation does not explain the amount of material culture and landscaping. Rather, the material record may explain the length of occupation (Mabry et al. 2002).

Canyons of the Ancients: Irrigated-to-Dry-Farming Transition, Human Ecology, Diversified Subsistence Strategies

Jonathon C. Horn has compiled a comprehensive “landscape-level history” of the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument for the BLM (Horn 2004a). Of note in this work is his exploration of the movement toward dry farming versus irrigated farming that affected this area starting around 1910, the conflicts between these farmers and cattlemen, and the activities engaged in by farmers to supplement income and diet.

The latter activities highlight the fact that even though they are not strictly agricultural (e.g., schoolhouses) other functional sites can be aligned with the general theme of rural agriculture. Such sites found in Horn’s project included illegal stills used for supplemental income and consumption) during Prohibition; hunting camps, often from poachers (farmers supplementing their diet by hunting deer); and
trapping locations and related debris on farmsteads (farmers supplementing income by selling furs) (Horn 2004a). Such activities also occurred in southeastern Colorado on the ranch that served as the Bent Canyon Stage Station, where Erica Hill analyzed faunal remains from a well that was filled with late or postoccupation mammals from fur-trapping (Church and Cowen 2005).

Horn describes the different footprints ranches can have on the landscape depending on the period of occupation and whether cattlemen had legal access to open range or not. He then correlated these periods in part to different iterations of land legislation such as the Taylor Grazing Act. This approach also holds to a degree for dryland farms and irrigated ones, and the Desert Land Act. However, overall, Horn argues that “no real pattern can be seen to this agricultural settlement, only that it was extensive” (Horn 2004a:36).

**Examples of Excavated Rural Agricultural Sites in Colorado**

It is worth noting that many of the studies mentioned above (though not the Mehls’) addressed evolutionary, chronological, ecological, ethnic, and gender research questions using survey data only. This data is a good beginning for those questions that can be answered at the landscape settlement scale. Testing and excavation of individual sites within these samples could test models or address questions at a smaller scale of human activity complimentary to the regional survey. Some excavation work has occurred in the course of Centuries Research, Inc.,-sponsored work on the Uncompahgre Valley Historic Ute Project (Baker 1991c), including identification of historic Ute sites dating prior to their removal to reservations in 1881. Excavated sites include Chief Ouray’s Ranch (5MN847, interestingly, built as a placita), or small, enclosed plaza site, and his home in Ouray (5OR965), which are of course interesting and informative, but not representative of the majority of Ute residential sites.

**SOUTHERN COLORADO PLAINS**

**The Wilford Riley (5LA5310) and Roybal Family (5LA4388) Homesteads: Ethnicity, Landscape Approaches, Land-Use and Cultural Identity**

Excavations complementary to the Piñon Canyon Maneuver site and Comanche National Grassland surveys described above can be found as well (Charles et al. 1996; Church 2001; Clark 2003). Excavation in 1995 of the homestead of Wilford Riley and that of José Roybal’s family at Fort Carson’s Pinon Canyon Maneuver site (PCMS) illustrated the potential of even minimally documented sites to be informative about ethnic preferences in material culture and built environments of the High Plains in the Victorian period (Church 2001, 2002). Both homesteads were occupied in the late 1870s, both sets of occupants were of similar economic means, and the physiographic areas they chose to settle in were comparable. Located near the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail, their homesteads had access to a similar segment of the local and national markets. Yet the decisions they made about architectural spaces, consumer goods, and subsistence strategies were quite different in many of the ways that Richard Carrillo has suggested (Carrillo 1993; R. F. Carrillo 1997; Carrillo and Petersen 2002a; Carrillo et al. 1996; Church 2001, 2002). Patterns of land use and consumer choice were as much structured by cultural/ethnic perception of the potential resources and landscape as they were structured by the resources themselves.

The fact that Spanish-speaking New Mexicans by the 1870s had been living next to, trading with, and intermarrying with both Plains and Puebloan Native Americans for nigh on 300 years does not mean that ethnic identities were any less defined. However, they were fluid, and the porosity of ethnic boundaries showed in the material culture on the sites including tools, architecture, and landscape modifications. The fact that Riley was part of a less than nine percent minority along the Purgatoire Valley in the 1870s meant that he and the few other non-Hispanic Americans there adopted some cultural mores as well as material and architectural conventions more familiar in the Southwest than in the East, his place of origin.

Work in this area also clearly demonstrated the pitfalls of relying solely on documentary records for information on such sites. Paul Friedman did the documentary research and oversaw the collection of oral narratives for this some of this work. The work suffers from his insistence that only sites that are
accompanied by archival information are significant (Andrefsky 1990c; P. D. Friedman 1983; Friedman 1985, personal communication 1995). His historical research is also flawed. During his historical study of the PCMS he made a decision, perhaps due to time and financial constraints, to confine his search of county records to the tax records and not address the deeds (P. D. Friedman 1983; Friedman 1985, 1988). The result was that, of the three sites I checked into from his sample – Riley, Roybal, and Mosby Lee – Friedman records inaccurate dates of occupation for all three. Land was changing hands so fast in the area around 1880 that the tax assessor could not keep up with the transfers, and apparently in many cases assessed taxes against landowners who had sold their land up to three years before (although in the case of Mosby Lee, Friedman’s date is a year too early) (Church 2001). It is possible that given the pace and volume of land transfers at the time, deeds were not filed in a timely manner, and the county tax assessor may not have had accurate information with which to work. Friedmdan would have been well advised to check. Jon Horn points out that it would be interesting to compare the date of instrument to the date of filing in these instances (personal communication 2005). As a result of his methods, Friedman spells Lee’s first name as Mosely, as it is in the tax records, rather than Mosby, as it is in deeds. It seems more likely that the correct spelling of Lee’s name is in the legal documents of the land transaction and that the tax assessor spelled it incorrectly in the tax rolls. The failure to cross-check tax records completely with land transfers recorded in the deeds calls all of Friedman’s data into question. Furthermore, his data led directly to assessments of significance, which are likewise now called into question.

Mosby Lee Homestead (5LA5360) (testing): Assessment of Research Potential

Mona Charles, Randy Nathan, and Phil Duke of Fort Lewis College have investigated the homestead of a neighbor and contemporary of Wilford Riley in the PCMS (Charles et al. 1996). Mosby Lee, a Civil War veteran, apparently patented his homestead in 1887 (Friedman 1985--but see caveat about this research in preceding discussion), several years later than Riley and the Roybals, and owned it until he and his ranching partners, J. M. Taylor and Thomas G. Stevenson, sold it to S. T. Brown of Brown’s Sheep Camp in 1891 (Church 2001). Like the Riley house, Lee’s also had a corner fireplace. Given that over 90 percent of their neighbors were Spanish-speaking people from New Mexico, any labor they got to help build these houses would probably have been people familiar with New Mexico building conventions, including corner as opposed to center-wall fireplaces. These neighbors also constituted much of the local expertise in stone masonry (Clark 2003; Corbett 2003).

Although this report deals with the site in the context of testing for significance recommendations and, therefore, is primarily descriptive, the recorders assessed the site as potentially eligible based on the research potential of both pre- and post-contact components. The historical archaeology portion of the assessment stemmed from the observation that there was “a well-defined historic occupation surface, discrete historic and prehistoric activity areas” and artifacts indicating a relatively narrow range of occupation from c. 1860 to 1890 (Charles et al. 1996:13-24). This is a good example of a site assessment that is not tied to any particular research agenda or sampling strategy but was instead considered on its own in terms, not in comparison to others, in light of its archaeological integrity and the amount of information potential in general.

Brown Sheep Camp (5LA5824) (geophysical testing and architectural recording): Archaeology to Answer a Particular Historical Question

William J. Hunt and colleagues explored the vicinity of Brown Sheep Camp at the PCMS in an attempt to look for the Hogback Stage Station, which was purported to be either on the property or nearby. The attempt was not successful because the stage station in all probability (given the descriptions) is farther south in a break in the hogback formation. Other research goals seem to have been more in line with architectural recording and significance – archaeology in the service of historical architecture – rather than anthropological in nature. The report includes a substantial amount of information on architectural styles on the site (Hunt 1998). (Another source for architectural information on sites in the PCMS is Robin Haynes and Beverly Bastion’s work [1986]).
This work contains little contextual information on the historical background particular to the site; the pertinent section consists of three paragraphs. The buildings built during the tenure of S.T. Brown are quite distinct from those built during the tenure of Benjamin Gutierrez, whose father had been a foreman there, a character who is well documented in the archives (Church 2001). Such differences may relate to ethnicity, class, time period, or some combination of these. This report, however, does not give a complete chain of ownership information within which to situate the differences described.

Remote sensing and geophysical survey including aerial photographs, ground penetrating radar, magnetometry, resistivity, and conductivity were all employed on this project, and during ground-truthing the researchers found an adobe building that they would not otherwise have discovered. Work such as this by Steven DeVore, Larry Conyers, Mona Charles, and Donald Heimer has demonstrated the value of geophysical work on historic sites.

What little information we have from this work on the actual behaviors of the people who lived on the site (versus architectural information) is a result of ground-truthing geophysical anomalies, which led to the analysis of a single deposit of faunal remains. Apparently occupants were buying beef and pork, but, not surprisingly on a sheep ranch, were butchering their own sheep. The problem with this conclusion is that, because of the lack of documentary research and anthropological research questions at this stage of investigation, there is no way of knowing which owner’s tenure is represented by this one feature – the only one that saw intensive analysis. (Since the 1998 report on this site, further field work at Brown’s Sheep Camp has resulted in a more complete report including more a more thorough historical and cultural context [Bringelson 2005]) As an aside, an interview with a local informant revealed that the camp cook, known as “Uncle”, who may have prepared this meat, turned out to be a woman who had disguised herself as a man for years (Friedman 1988).

La Placita (5LA6104) (dissertation work): Ethnicity, Gender, Land-use and Cultural Identity

Recent work at La Placita (5LA6104), a site in Las Animas County, highlights the archaeological potential of rural agricultural sites that lack archival documentation (Clark 2003). This multihousehold site centers on a series of standing native stone structures surrounding a small plaza. Bonnie Clark investigated this site for her dissertation (Clark 2003). The architectural elements and spatial patterning strongly suggests that the inhabitants of the site were Hispanic, and analysis of recovered artifacts revealed that the site was occupied for about a decade in the 1880s-1890s. In a pattern contrasting with that at the Brown Sheep Camp, residents at La Placita raised sheep and chickens, yet relied for their daily subsistence on wild foods, particularly cottontail rabbits. There is evidence for the occasional butchery of a lamb or older sheep, but on the whole the residents, who were trying to establish a stock-raising facility, did not eat the animals they raised. Several constructed garden terraces indicate another way the economic strategies of the site’s inhabitants were diversified.

In this study Clark combined an analysis of the social, spatial and material relations within the site with that of a broader landscape and regional scale in order to examine gender, Hispanic patterns of subsistence, and creation of identity. The historical context we have for the last two decades of the nineteenth century was that Hispanic men and boys over the age of 10 often went to work for larger, often Anglo-owned cattle ranches, returning home intermittently to build up their own family-run livestock operations. In some instances, this was a successful strategy (Louden 1998). The quantity and wide range of purchased goods recovered, as well as the presence of cattle feet and vertebrae (but few other elements), suggest that someone connected to the site worked as a wage-laborer on one of the larger cattle ranches in the region.

Counter to Buckles’s typology the attempt to settle at La Placita was aborted and no legal claim was ever made on the land. However, the intensive landscape modification, the construction of well-engineered houses, and external features such as a curbstone-lined walkway, speak to an investment in and hope for the future of this settlement. This example similarly runs counter to Friedman’s contention that material and labor investment in place is positively correlated with seeking legal title to the land. Such a correlation probably does hold generally, but researchers on the ground should not assume as much in individual cases.
There are many reasons that people might not have made formal legal claim to lands, including fear of entanglements with government entities or actual disdain of federal authority. Similar extensive improvements on lands never officially acquired from the public domain are known in Brown’s Park, where outlaws did not want to draw attention to themselves but also were outwardly defiant of any governmental authority (Jonathan Horn, personal communication 2005). The Hispanic settlers may have had similar fears or animosities, but perhaps growing out of ethnic or racial discrimination rather than personal lawlessness.

The Leplatt Homestead (5LA3421) (testing): Family Farm to Commercial Ranch Transition, Remote Sensing

Fort Lewis College personnel directed by Mona Charles investigated yet another site on PCMS. It was a homestead patented by Harry Leplatt in 1921 (Charles et al. 2004). Given the later date of this homestead, his original claim was 320 acres and, in 1926, he was able to add another 320 acres under the Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916, all adjacent to the equally large homestead of his brother, Amile Leplatt. In contrast to the smaller claims of earlier settlers, Leplatt’s claim is representative of a qualitatively different kind of homesteading in terms of ethnicity, economy, and era.

Historical research on the Leplatt family indicates it was composed of several members, but is also complicated by the fact that these Frenchmen have their names recorded several different ways (LePlatte, Le Plat, Leplatt, Liplat) (Charles et al. 2004:6-12). Given the diverse immigrant and Hispanic origins of many settlers in Colorado, it is necessary to keep in mind alternative spellings of names when researching contexts on historic sites in the archives. The Fort Lewis researchers were able to find current local residents with whom to conduct phone interviews, greatly enriching their knowledge of the family and its history at PCMS.

The Leplatt family (the spelling chosen by Charles et al. 2004) first homesteaded in the area in 1913, and their tenure in the area is represented by a period of expanding cattle ranching and consolidating land into the hands of fewer and fewer, primarily non-Hispanic ranchers (Charles et al. 2004; Church 2002; Reed and Horn 1995b). They seem to represent the transition to ranching because the Fort Lewis researchers note that only the post-1920 Leplatt settlers, Amile and Harry, set their minds to raising cattle. The others may have been trying to dry farm. Ultimately, even Harry and Amile sold their lands to move to Trinidad and California, respectively. Harry went on to work for the owner of one of the large cattle companies into whose hands all these early twentieth-century farmsteads were falling at the time. The chronology of Harry’s work life is typical for the transitional period.

The value of remote sensing on sites such as this is increasingly demonstrated by the work of Mona Charles and her students at Fort Lewis College, as well as students of Lawrence Conyers at the University of Denver. A program of remote sensing, auger probes, and five one-by-one-meter test units on the Leplatt site provided information about the livestock activities at the site, though less evidence was recovered of the possible initial dry farming attempt. Judging from the faunal assemblage, sheep were a large part of both the subsistence and livestock-raising functions on the site (Charles et al. 2004:6-64). This activity is significant, given the general dearth of archaeological work on sheep ranching in Colorado to date. Functional differences between site features, notably the dugout and the domicile, also became clearer through the testing program. Dugout features seem to have served different purposes for different settlers, based on factors such as ethnicity and time period (Church 2001). In this case, refuse pertaining to livestock, such as barbed wire, seems to indicate its use as a tack room/storage area. In the case of the Roybal site, in contrast, what few artifacts recovered indicated some kind of larder or food storage function, in line with dugouts in northern New Mexican villages (Church 2001; Kutsche and Ness 1981). Hispanic dugouts tended to be exclusively larders. Dugouts on non-Hispanic sites were also often larders and, in some cases, temporary domestic spaces while the main house was under construction. On the Plains, such features sometimes served as combination storage facilities and tornado shelters. While these functions sometimes overlapped, it might be possible to tease them out through differences in artifact assemblages and patterning.
Four Homesteads along the TransColorado Pipeline (mitigation): Sampling Strategies, What Constitutes “Success” in Ranching/Farming

Alpine Archaeological Consultants undertook mitigation of sites for a natural gas pipeline project spanning from the northwestern part of Colorado down into New Mexico. Faced with 120 sites recommended for mitigation, Alan Reed and colleagues had choices as to how to proceed. They considered sites along the main pipeline corridor and those along access roads and temporary use areas. Those sites in the latter situations could often be avoided. In the main corridor they conducted data recovery on all significant sites. Following an approach used initially in the Fruitland Coal Gas Development project in northwestern New Mexico, Alpine chose a sample of the significant sites along the corridor for extensive investigation, and such investigation was not confined to the limits of the right-of-way. “Sites not selected for extensive archaeological work but planned for disturbance are either uninvestigated or investigated to a limited extent” (Reed and Horn 2001:3-18). The main advantage of this approach is that it allows researchers to actually address research questions drawing data from all appropriate segments of the entire site, rather than from a limited right-of-way strip through it.

The downside is that not all eligible sites that will be impacted get investigated, but importantly, the “sampling approach does not assume that less archaeological work is conducted on a project; it simply distributes that work at fewer sites that can be researched more fruitfully and intensively (Reed and Horn 2001:3-18). In such cases, it is particularly important to explain and justify the selection criteria in the sampling strategy, as Horn and his colleagues do. Because this strategy involves excavation outside the right-of-way, private landowner permissions are a consideration. In this case six historic period sites were chosen for extensive excavation, four being homesteads. This report is a very good example of combining research questions addressed at individual sites with larger scale comparisons between sites. What follows are summaries of some of their work on these sites.

The Barry/Stewart Place (5ME6642): Archaeological Versus Architectural Significance

The Barry/Stewart Place was a farmstead claim filed by Harry Harrison in 1890. This property passed through several owners with occupations ranging from at least 1907 to the 1950s. This is a good example of lack of the kind of “clarity” William Lees talks about when determining site significance (Lees 1988). In fact, on an archaeological basis, it was clear to Reed and Horn at the outset that such a site would have stratigraphy too mixed by extensive and sequential occupations to yield good information, but because there was a standing structure, they were encouraged to excavate it anyway (Jonathan Horn, personal communication 2005). Indeed, the results confirmed that such long-term occupation by such a range of owners meant that none of the occupations were distinct, mixing was heavy, and therefore the research potential of the site was compromised. This is an excellent example of why archaeological investigation and significance should be determined independently of architectural integrity. Researchers deemed the site architecturally eligible but archaeological ineligible.

The Orr Osborn Homestead (5ME6825): Depression Era Diversified Subsistence

The Orr Osborn Homestead was another farmstead that saw several owners come and go. William Ray Ball was the first, in 1907, and he filed a desert land claim in 1913, which he relinquished just two years later. In 1915, Orr F. Osborn planted 18 acres in hay, corn, potatoes, beans, watermelons, and a vegetable garden. His brother homesteaded 120 acres adjacent to his land; adjoining claims by siblings and in-laws is a common pattern in this period, seen also in the Leplatte case from southeastern Colorado, discussed previously (Charles et al. 2004). Osborn made water supply improvements in line with the requirements of the Desert Land Act and grew strawberries, dewberries, and raspberries. This diversity of production, in contrast to later, larger monocropping farms, is also not uncommon in this period. He diversified further by establishing a Stock Raising homestead in 1939, exemplifying the Depression era transition from farming to livestock rearing that was taking place across large portions of the arid West. He sold the place in 1940.
This site is a good example of a relatively self-sufficient and successful truck farm during the Depression. The Depression, according to historian Richard White, was the only time in American history when migration from urban to rural outstripped the rate of migration from rural to urban areas (White 1991). This site also had good data resolution with a single owner/occupant.

**The Stitz Place (5ME6826): Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century Diversified Farming, Gender, Ethnicity, Class**

The Stitz Place was a 160-acre homestead claim by Isaac Harvey dating to 1896, but almost all artifacts and architecture on the site are associated with the occupation of Karl E. and Anna E. Stitz. Furthermore, Karl is listed in the census as an engineer who worked away from home. Anna is listed as “farmer,” and the farming activities on this site are all attributable to Anna, making this an interesting site at which to address questions about gender.

As at the Orr place, there were irrigation improvements. Like other homesteaders of this period, theirs was a diversified subsistence; they raised livestock as well as farmed and used the site as a winter residence, summering elsewhere with their livestock. Irrigated crops included alfalfa, wheat, corn, rye, sorghum, and potatoes. Unlike the Orr homestead, the Stitz family seems to have been quite poor. There are, for example, no sign of toys despite documented presence of children, and not even any remnants from canning which one might expect of those trying to save cash. There seems to have been little disposable income available to this family. The family seems to represent the same diversified rural subsistence approach as the Orrs, but a much less successful one.

Ethnicity was a part of the research agenda for mitigation of this site. Originally, investigators thought the site might represent Italian settlement because there was a stone bread oven on the site similar to types often attributed to Italian, Greek, or Hispanic settlers; documentary investigation revealed the place to be in fact the result of German occupation. The stone oven turned out, upon further investigation, to be similar to Bavarian styles, as well as to another oven on a site nearby that was used to provide bread for convicts. The authors propose that Anna may have had a sideline of providing food for the convicts as well.

**The Dosher/Ripley Homestead: Irrigation Agriculture, Domestic Life**

This site is in San Juan County, New Mexico (LA36,652). At this site there were three homestead attempts, on 160 acres in 1910 and 1912, and under the Desert Land Act in 1917 by Edward E. Dosher. In 1919 Reuben Ripley began the process of filing a claim but later canceled it. The documentary record is sketchy because all claims were relinquished, but the researchers concluded that Dosher was at the site between 1912 and 1916, and Ripley from 1919 into the 1920s. This site, like others filed under the Desert Land Act, is a good candidate for addressing research questions surrounding water systems in the west. Horn and his colleagues interpreted the repeated failures to patent this land as evidence of inadequate irrigation from the La Plata River, and thus it contrasts with the Orr homestead where irrigation was successful.

Since Ripley’s time, the land has been part of the public domain. Thus the site has good clarity in that all the archaeological data from the site is attributable to Dosher and possibly Ripley. Crops included hay and corn, but most of the archaeological evidence came from domestic spaces, and reflected domestic rather than agricultural activities. This report has excellent photographs of representative artifacts and tables showing artifact frequencies and analytical categories.

**Two Homesteads along the Mid-America Pipeline (mitigation)**

The Stanfield (5GF1561) and the William Cowling (5DL318) Homesteads: Early Twentieth-Century Dryland Farming to Commercial Livestock Transition, Human Ecology, Diversified Rural Subsistence
As part of the extensive linear Mid-America Pipeline Project, personnel associated with Alpine Archaeological Consultants, Inc, excavated two different homesteads on Colorado’s Western Slope (Horn, Fetterman et al. 2003). Again, faced with a mitigation rather than a testing project, and with 233 prehistoric and historic sites having potential significance, Horn and his colleagues once again chose to sample the significant sites for extensive mitigation, including portions outside of the project right-of-way. Of the eight historic period sites selected for extensive research, two were homesteads.

The Stanfield Homestead (5GF1561), in the vicinity of Grand Junction, and the William Cowling Homestead (5DL318), just north of Dove Creek, were both established in the early twentieth century as part of that era’s dryland farming boom. The Stanfield Homestead was situated in a region poorly suited to dry farming. Artifacts recovered from the excavation demonstrate the inability of the residents to pursue farming and they document their change to raising cattle in a pattern perhaps parallel to that on the Leplatt site. The Stanfield’s 160-acre parcel was too small for long-term cattle ranching, and so, after proving up their homestead, they sold out to a larger cattle outfit, a move that appears to be common throughout Colorado (Church 2002; Reed and Horn 1995b). William Cowling and his family chose a much more suitable location for dryland farming. Supported by a successful farm, and supplemented by William’s occasional employment as a miner in Telluride, the family was able to invest in a number of improvements on their homestead, including the construction of a blacksmith shop. Excavations on the site show that, based on their successful farm and smithing operations, the family remained economically stable during the Depression. Not only did they have a diverse and healthy diet, they also acquired a considerable number of luxury goods (Horn, Fetterman et al. 2003).

HIGH ALTITUDE

Koenig Homestead/Ranch (5LR734) (limited testing of Feature 24): Diversified Farming/Ranching, Archaeology for Preservation (Not Salvage) of Sites

Richard F. Carrillo led work on the Pingree Park Mountain Campus of Colorado State University (CSU), Fort Collins, which combined a survey of 100 acres with test excavations of a tool shed on one homestead site. The homestead is on the National Register of Historic Places and lies on land that was originally patented in 1893 by brothers Hugh and Charles Ramsey, where they built a sawmill. The first family to live and ranch on the property was Hugh Ramsey’s son-in-law and daughter, Frank and Hazel Koenig, who raised five children on the place. As with the other cases described so far, they diversified their subsistence, growing hay in irrigated fields and raising horses, cattle and goats, as well as trapping furs. The site has a wide assortment of vernacular “hand-crafted” structures further testifying to the diversification of this enterprise, including a barn, corral, chicken coop, smoke house, tack house, tool shed, dugout root cellar, storage sheds, spring house, school house, outhouses, living quarters, and rental cabins. The original Koenig Ditch and hand-dug feeder ditches are extant.

In 1913 the land adjacent to the Koenig property became part of a forestry camp for Colorado Agricultural College (later CSU). In 1974 the college purchased the homestead property and appended it to its Pingree Park campus and this CRM project was the result of new plans to build a conference center at the site. Preservation of the historic structures was part of this plan, and so this was a case of archaeology serving to test impacted areas, find unrecorded features, and determine feature function.

SUMMARY OF COLORADO RESEARCH PRESENTED HERE

A brief list of the kinds of issues addressed by the survey (landscape and site scales) and excavation data collected so far on post-contact rural agricultural sites in Colorado are representative of those addressed by anthropological archaeologists everywhere and would include (but are not exclusive to)

- Subsistence and ecology
- Settlement adaptation and evolution
- Creation and maintenance of ethnic identity
• Relationships with state systems
• Ethnic interactions
• Gender relations
• Class relations
• Economic exchange and World Systems
• Any combination of the above

The data from rural agricultural sites have at times also served more limited research ends relating to architectural history (e.g., early Boggsville work and Brown Sheep Camp). The broader anthropological questions have, so far, been explored on very few sites that represent a very narrow range of decades of Colorado history. In most cases, archaeologists are left with preliminary hypotheses and models derived from one or two sites at best. These hypotheses and models still need to be tested on other sites occupied by different groups or in different time periods. Generalizing about subsistence or ethnicity from excavations and associated documents from 10 or 12 late nineteenth century ranch sites is no more valid than doing so for the pre-contact agricultural Southwest after excavating 10 or 12 Pueblo II period Ancestral Puebloan sites.

RESEARCH GAPS AND OVERLAP WITH OTHER THEMES

There is an infinite number of possible historical and anthropological research questions that can be addressed on rural agricultural sites, and given the variety of economic and subsistence strategies, ethnic and class origins, and gender compositions, the Colorado studies described previously address a remarkable number of issues. No doubt all those issues could bear further hypothesis-building and exploration. And new issues will arise. For example, one notable commonality on many homesteads and ranches is the presence of children, and yet the only research mentioned above that systematically addresses the roles that children played in agricultural sites or the differences their presence made in agricultural activities relates to schools. Children on agricultural sites have always provided labor, as well as having generated interesting material culture. Jonathan Horn uses the presence or absence of toys on sites where children are documented to talk about socioeconomic status (Reed and Horn 2001). There are many sources available on the material culture of childhood in the past, and archaeology addressing specifically the status of childhood is growing (Baxter 2005). Historians and anthropologists have noted that rural agricultural economies have relied historically on a high birth rate to support child labor. Children form a substantial portion of the rural population and no doubt have had significant influence on decisions relating to consumption and production on farms and ranches in Colorado.

Potential research questions about rural agricultural communities overlaps with the theme of the chapter on communities, yet these questions are relevant. Richard Carrillo has also worked for years doing archaeology at the early rural community of Boggsville. Many small communities in Colorado were and are agriculturally based, and in fact, on larger ranches with many employees, a bunkhouse might represent a multiethnic community in microcosm (Chapter 3, Settlements). A research agenda that speaks directly to the “rugged individualism” mythology that so strongly reinforces the Western ethos would involve a comparison between individual farmsteads, larger ranching enterprises, and utopian agricultural colonies, the latter an “attempt to challenge the typical American pattern of individualism by having an entire group or colony settle an area in a cooperative manner” (Mehls and Mehls 1988:10). Such cooperative colonies might be usefully compared with Mormon and Hispanic settlements, which also contrasted with or actively resisted some of the currents within nineteenth century ideas of “progress” and individualism in favor of more communal agrarian ideals. It is well established that such communal and religious ideologies are reflected in land use and the built environment (see, for example, Leone 1973). Such sites provide an opportunity to explore the success and failure of such settlements, established in the midst of active and heated debate during the nineteenth century about contrasting agricultural and settlement strategies (Powell 1878; Stegner 1953). Similar forms of resistance to Anglo-Victorian modes of land use manifested themselves in the 1960s and 1970s counterculture at sites such as Drop City, a hippie commune established near Trinidad and described by Richard Carrillo and his coauthors (Carrillo et al. 2003).
Agricultural themes overlap with those of ethnicity in Colorado as well. This overlap would be the case for Dearfield, a nineteenth-century African-American settlement east of Denver. According to historian Quintard Taylor, in 1900 there were 58 African-American farms in Colorado, valued at $150,359, and in 1910 there were 81, valued at $505,135. These numbers may seem startlingly paltry when compared with neighboring Kansas and Oklahoma (Taylor 1998:152), but are less so in light of the fact that by the 1920s “the Klan [Ku Klux Klan] dominated Oregon and Colorado politics” for a short time, with Colorado electing “a Klan governor and a majority of Klansmen in the lower house of the legislature in 1924” (White 1991). African-American stock raisers, herders, and drovers (owners or laborers) are also poorly represented at the height of the cattle industry in 1890, totaling 21 (Taylor 1998:157). The majority of blacks, however, like all other ethnicities, settled primarily in urban areas (Taylor 1998). “Sixty-one thousand ranchers, herders, and drovers worked in the range cattle industry in 1890. However, they comprised only two percent of the three million workers in western states and territories (Taylor 1998:156).” Taylor argues that “historians have exaggerated the number and influence of western cowboys” in general, and agrees with Jordan that they have “erred in their estimates of African-Americans in the industry” (Jordan 1993; Taylor 1998:157).

Communities and ethnicity are not the only themes in this volume with which this agricultural theme overlaps. Linear features such as irrigation ditches and railroad access are clearly closely associated with any settlement, landscape, or economically based approach to agricultural settlement in the state. Ranches were sometimes also post offices, stagecoach stations, and stores. Some became dude ranches, thus overlapping with the recreation theme of this volume. Although the Civilian Conservation Corps was responsible for obliterating the archaeological record of many sites at Rocky Mountain National Park (Butler 2005), in doing so they left their own material signatures on the landscape that are pertinent to federal government involvement in the Western past. Many individual farms and ranches provided food to mining towns or urban markets, thus overlapping with mining and other themes in this volume (Clark et al. 1997).

REGIONAL AND TEMPORAL GAPS

Figure 18, Figure 19, and Table 21 (below) illustrate the uneven coverage of historical agricultural sites through time and across the state in general. Figure 18 displays the relative density of archaeological sites recorded by county, and Figure 19 the density of those sites that are deemed Officially Eligible. These maps document where CRM work has concentrated in the state, of course, not a real distribution of rural sites in Colorado. As such they illustrate areas where more archaeological research on any such sites would be a valuable contribution. There were some problems searching for this data in the site files data to generate these tables; these problems are discussed below, but they are generally illustrative.

Temporal Gaps

No Colorado counties display a real chronological cross-section of “Early Dates” representing sites in decades starting with the 1850s (Table 21). Having fewer sites in earlier decades represents the reality of sparser settlement in early years, while tapering numbers for the mid-twentieth century probably reflects the fact that such sites are only recently reaching the 50-year age threshold for recording. Representation in general is best at the turn of the twentieth century, but overall is spotty.

Regionally, most of the exploration of agricultural sites has occurred where private industry has required CRM work. In this sense, glimpses of regional patterns in agricultural settlements have been opportunistic rather than systematic. For example, although Northern Colorado seems to be moderately well represented in the state database research data, Weld County figures largely in the Centennial Farm projects and among National Register agricultural sites recorded primarily on the basis of architecture (Mehls and Mehls 1988). So the representation of sites does not necessarily represent archaeological research potential. Judging by the date ranges of excavated sites that could be searched on in the state database, data is also short from sites pre-dating about 1870 (Table 21), which would include virtually all the earliest Hispanic settlement in southern Colorado, but also some early Irish, English, French, and German occupations.
Figure 18. Colorado agricultural archaeological sites by county.

In the case of early Hispanic settlement, the reason for underrepresentation probably has something to do with where survey data exist for Colorado (for example, agricultural sites in Costilla County are completely unrepresented in the state database) and even more to do with how we recognize such sites. Richard Carrillo has an excellent synopsis of the changes in architecture and material culture for such sites through time, and early Hispanic sites are often characterized by “European” (non-Indian) types of architecture, for example, square stone-built, jacial or adobe structures or foundations, and only lithic and possibly worked-glass artifacts, including groundstone and various types of chipped stone (Carrillo et al. 2003). Rather than identifying these as single component early Hispanic sites, many such sites have been recorded incorrectly as multicomponent sites, the assumption being that all lithic production of any kind must, by definition, be of strictly Native American origin. Building on this erroneous assumption, those recording such sites have judged them to have mixed context and poor site integrity, and therefore the overall misinterpretation has had ramifications on site evaluations. This problem is compounded further by the fact that, especially on survey projects, archaeological practice often has not included adequate background archival research in the census or GLO records to document ethnic settlement.

Artifact assemblages are distinctive mainly in their simplicity; items of Angloamerican derivation are scarce, and aboriginal-type artifacts – groundstone and chipped stone tools and manufacturing byproducts – may occur. Identification of such traits, and establishment through archival and other historical sources of the presence of New Mexican Hispanics in the nineteenth century in southeastern
Colorado, goes a long way to explain seemingly enigmatic architecture-artifact combinations at many sites (Carrillo et al. 2003:128).

![Map of Colorado with county boundaries and numbers indicating agricultural sites](image)

**Figure 19.** Officially eligible agricultural sites by county.

Although Carrillo here is describing sites in southeastern Colorado, an even greater potential for such early sites exists in the San Luis Valley, as well as to the west of the San Juan Mountains. Such sites in the state database should be reevaluated based on the work of Carrillo whenever they are encountered. It is entirely possible that our sample of recorded Hispanic agricultural sites predating 1870 in southern Colorado is much better than is thought at present but also that those sites are largely misevaluated and therefore at risk, because no sample of them is protected.

It is not surprising that the counties with the best chronological representation of sites are those that contain urban areas or military bases. Liberal and conservative political attitudes toward development and resulting municipal and county policies regarding historic site recording and preservation may also be reflected in the data (for example, note the difference between Boulder County and El Paso County – Boulder and Colorado Springs – representations). Boulder (liberal) has been historically much friendlier to preservation projects than Colorado Springs (conservative). In contrast, a skew towards later-dated sites in, for example, Eagle County may reflect the reality of chronologically later agricultural settlements at higher altitudes.
Regional Gaps

Much more glaring are the regional gaps in sites recorded overall (Figure 18, above) and in those deemed officially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (Figure 19, above). It is, at first glance, startling to see that eastern Colorado, where, arguably, the most agricultural development has occurred through time, is, in general, the least well represented in the recorded site database. However, this pattern is a result of federal land ownership and requirements necessitating CRM work. Few agricultural sites on private land have been recorded anywhere in the state, and most agricultural sites have been found on federal lands. Many such sites may be unpatented or “failed” attempts and are erroneously considered insignificant because of that status.

Figure 20 shows which counties have sites where the site database field “condition” shows them to have been either tested or excavated. Some of these are no doubt pre-contact period sites that were tested and happened to have a historic component that may or may not have been explored in the process, such as those at Mesa Verde. So again, the sample is probably deceptive in terms of addressing research geared primarily to historical sites but is the best that can be gleaned with a database search.

Table 21: Number of officially eligible archaeological agricultural sites by county and “early date” by decade.

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These figures and tables are generated from site files data from the Colorado OAHP. However, a word of caution is in order concerning the problem of how agricultural sites are represented in the database. The problem is a complicated one and may well be impossible to fix retroactively. Database technicians have understandably preferred to stick to exactly what people put on site forms rather than edit as they go. As a result, there is no standardization within fields, and the information in fields frequently overlaps, so that, for example, a corral may occur on some forms under “Archaeology Type,” “Feature,” “Architecture Site Type,” “Architectural Features,” “Original Use,” or “Present Use.”

This problem reflects the unstandardized recording practices in the field, and as a result there is no set of search terms that will select all the agricultural sites of any type out of the database. One might retrieve an unsystematic and possibly unrepresentative sample of pertinent sites by using the following keywords: homestead, agricultural, barn, bunkhouse, farm, dugout, ranch, corral, tank, windmill, sheep, livestock, cattle, silo, water tower, pen, (aspen art and graffiti will also return agriculturally related sites, but these terms were excluded from this sample). Because of the variation within the fields (e.g., school, schoolhouse, school house) one must also enter search terms to exclude records from the search. There are also keywords that may select rural agricultural sites but are somewhat ambiguous, such as mill (also gets sawmills or stamp mills), cairns, fence lines, check dams, and the like. Other keywords are extremely ambiguous, as they also describe features on nonagricultural sites: foundation, habitation, building, dwelling, house, residential, architecture, rock art, ponds. By the time the search is at all comprehensive enough to cover most agricultural sites, yet exclusive enough to exclude mining camps, hunting camps, target ranges, trash dumps, and innumerable other site types, the search is so complicated that, as often as not, Microsoft Access will return a “query too complex” message with any attempt to run it.

For the purposes of search data presented above, we used the following search terms outlined in Table 22, below, generated by trying different search terms and viewing results until we got the sample of agricultural sites with the least “noise.” The sample excludes aspen art and graffiti because they are a large
proportion of sites but are ones that would skew the numbers when we want to know how many sites have been excavated or tested. The search identified 2,683 sites in the OAHP database (with aspen art and graffiti, the total is 2,969), out of a total of 30,255. For the reasons given, the result is undoubtedly incomplete and possibly not representative but not bad under the circumstances. Of these 2,683 sites, 265 have only “Historic” listed under resource type, and no listings under artifact fields, suggesting that these may have been recorded without any regard to archaeological potential whatsoever. Perhaps they were evaluated only on architectural integrity. The repercussions of this practice are discussed below.

Because of the difficulties in searching by term and field in the state database, it is entirely possible that the data upon which the graphics here are based are missing some sites entirely or that some sites are represented twice because, for example, there are several eligibility evaluations listed in a single field in the database, and there is no way to sort by only the most recent. Furthermore, regarding Table 21, page 283, there often multiple dates listed in the field “Early Date” for any given site. As historical archaeologists use the TPQ (terminus post quem) concept, multiple dates in this field defeat the purpose of having such a field at all. It is unclear whether these multiple dates represent different dated features within the site (in which case they are not clearly related to any particular feature described in the other database fields), or different site
visits with different professional opinions as to the latest TPQ dated artifact on the site, or different TPQs for individual artifacts on the site. The multiple listings under “Early Date” mean that many sites are thus represented in multiple decades in Table 21. So, in short, the sample of sites is problematic. However, for purposes of very broad comparison it should give an extremely general sense of where research gaps exist regionally and chronologically.

Overall, archaeologists have excavated relatively few agricultural sites in the state of Colorado. More have been tested, and the pattern here, as might be expected, mirrors somewhat the data shown in Table 21. Las Animas County, with the work done at the Piñon Canyon Maneuver site, has hosted a lot of testing and a small amount of excavation. Several sites in Montezuma County have also been excavated and tested, although this is also an area where sites with both prehistoric and historic components are frequent. Again, a question might arise as to whether the research was geared to the historic component.

**Table 22.** List of search terms included and excluded in attempt at comprehensive search of agrarian sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms searched under fields “Archaeology Type,” “Feature,” “Architecture Site Type,” and/or “Architectural Feature”</th>
<th>Terms excluded from search under field “Original Use”</th>
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<td>Barn</td>
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<td>Bunkhouse</td>
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<td>Corral</td>
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**SITE SIGNIFICANCE**

Of the 2,683 historic sites identified in the OAHP database using the limited search terms, 270 are deemed officially eligible to the National Register, 898 are officially not eligible, 134 officially need data, and 1,266 are not officially evaluated. There is overlap as many sites have been evaluated several different ways over several site visits. Unfortunately, there is no information in the database regarding what criteria people are using to base their estimation of eligibility in either field or official assessments, nor which of the several assessments listed is the most recent. As stated in the introduction to this volume, we suspect that the criteria vary, and it would be very interesting to know how people are applying them to these agricultural sites. Unfortunately, there is no way to do so.

**Site Recording Prior to Assessment**

Richard Carrillo’s work on the Koenig Ranch was limited to testing in the area of proposed disturbance, so research questions were narrow and functionally oriented, and goals included recording previously unrecorded features. In fact, Carrillo identified fully 29 more features and some isolated finds, all previously unrecorded and some lying outside the present 80-acre historic site boundary. Such features included everything from a barn and cabin perhaps associated with tie-hacking in the 1860s to privy pits (five), to the Koenig era trash dump. After consultation with the OAHP, Carrillo notes in his report that “if there were more features than could be recorded in the allowed field and post-field time, the features would be recorded by using a priority system that took into account the allowed field and post-field time” (Carrillo 2002:13). This is one accommodation to a common dilemma faced (not exclusively) by historical archaeologists when they bid on a site based on information about recorded site extent, and then find that the sites are more extensive than that information had predicted. Faced with this problem, Carrillo finished the contracted work and made several recommendations for further work, including more complete recording of
the 29 additional features and 5 isolated finds, testing on 11 of the 44 total features to assess eligibility, and, of course, additional testing in the case of any further ground-disturbing activity.

It is also frequently the case that a pre-contact site is recorded with minimal or even complete lack of mention of historic features. Then when the hapless CRM personnel responsible for testing or mitigation head out to do the work, they find they are responsible for more than they had expected.

In the course of work in Canyons of the Ancients, Jonathan Horn was confronted with the problem of using site forms generated by archaeologists who, it would seem, were not thorough or clear in their recording practices. Overall there were 209 sites with some degree of historic period activity. 44 were excluded because the historic component was only a rock cairn or the like. Of the 164 sites remaining, many had multiple components, and the relative importance of the historic component is unclear. Eighteen are officially eligible for the NRHP, yet Horn notes

It is often unclear if the eligibility determination pertains to both the prehistoric and historic components, or was intended to apply just to the prehistoric component. Clarification of eligibility status by temporal component at the multicomponent sites within the monument is important for future management (Horn 2004a:41).

It is a certainty that Horn is not the only one to have run into this particular problem in attempting to interpret the significance assessments proposed by others, using their site forms.

Of the 164 historic sites or site components, only 36 have any dating information attached to them. Three of these indicate dates or date ranges more recent than 50 years ago. The lack of dating information for most of the historic sites indicates an inability to adequately analyze historic artifacts by recorders and/or an absence of research about individual sites and their artifacts (Horn 2004a:41).

It seems clear that recorders did not accomplish the basic minimum of archival research. The problem is a serious one, as he notes that “in general, a lack of concrete data leads to faulty National Register evaluations, usually resulting in evaluations of insignificance” (Horn 2004a:41).

To make a reliable assessment of the significance of a post-contact period site, the first step is to base it on a solid footing of good information, both archival and archaeological. Therefore, a trained historical archaeologist should be a part of any general survey crew, or excavation crew on a post-contact site. That person should be relied upon to keep in mind the following procedures. Some of these points are important for all historic period sites, some are specifically important for agricultural ones.

1. Always do archival research on the area before you go to survey it, or at least well before the stage at which you determine site significance (see Chapter 1, Introduction, for suggested archival sources).
2. That said, it is best not to rely solely on the documentary (or oral) information to give complete or even necessarily correct dates of site occupation(s) or identification of site occupants; derive information independently from documents and from the site’s artifact assemblage.
3. When filling out the site type field, do not list all the features on the site. Give the general site type, and leave the feature types to the fields for feature descriptions.
4. When filling out “cultural affiliation,” do not say Euroamerican or Anglo-American unless you are positive that the primary site occupants were in fact of European or English descent. If you cannot determine probable descent from the archival record, oral narratives, or patterns of architecture and artifacts, then use a more general term such as “unknown historic.”
5. When filling out the “early date” field for a site, specify whether you are using only documentary information, artifact information, or both. Always use both where both are available, even if they do not agree. Do not enter the early date (TPQ) for every datable artifact in every individual feature or artifact concentration in the blank on the site form that is provided for noting the early date for the entire site. If you are lucky enough to have such a rich dataset, give one early date for the site, representing the latest TPQ available in the earliest feature or concentration. If the features or
concentrations within the site are individually datable, then that dating information can go in the
individual feature and artifact descriptions.

6. When recording artifacts, be specific. Descriptions like “Tin can” or “nails” are not informative,
whereas “Sanitary cans,” “hole-in-cap cans,” “common cut nails,” “furniture tacks,” or “wire nails,”
along with an estimated quantity of each, are.

7. Note the potential integrity of subsurface deposits and surface scatters. Do not base assessments of
archaeological significance or integrity on the presence, absence, or derelict state of architecture.
Architecture is part of the material record of a site but not the only determinative one.

8. If it is necessary to record widely dispersed ranching features as separate sites, even though they are
associated with the same ranching operation, then cross-reference the site numbers on the various site
forms. In many cases, having done the necessary archival research, you will know the original ranch
boundaries and will have a good idea of which features are associated with the property in question.

9. When you designate a site as “eligible,” “not eligible,” or “needs data” in the field, it is critical that
you explain the criteria you are using to make that determination. Furthermore, when it is a
multicomponent site (e.g., a homestead that sits on a Late Prehistoric site), it is equally critical that
you explain on the form whether one or both components are eligible, and if both, whether they
eligible for the same reasons or different ones.

10. Finally, it is just as important to explain why you think a site is not eligible as why you think it is.
This means noting what archival sources are or are not available, and the state of site integrity (by
which is meant the entire site, above and below ground).

General Points to Consider for Site Evaluation

There is a general discussion of significance evaluations in the introduction to this volume. What
follows is a list of suggested criteria to think about when evaluating site significance on farming and ranching
sites, loosely based on a list by Donald Hardesty (Hardesty 1982), and on input from Jonathan Horn (personal
communication 2005). The first issue is, of course, the relationship of the site to the criteria for nomination to
the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This question requires consideration of all the possible
criteria, and the following questions can help.

1. Does the site have unusual aspects that can serve as a comparison with other sites? Or…

2. Does the site provide archaeological information about a documented event, or new information
about or perspectives on an underdocumented one? Or…

3. Is the site representative of a statistical population, such as the Post-WWI “veterans’ bonus”
homesteading population? This is probably the area of greatest difficulty in field evaluation. People
tend to look around them and see that there are thousands of homesteads, farms, and ranches in the
state of Colorado and are thus tempted to evaluate them, in a knee-jerk fashion, as “not eligible.” The
question to ask oneself, however, is not only how many such sites exist, but what subset of such sites
this particular site represents in terms of potential information (time period, environmental zone,
functional category, or ethnic group?), and whether or not other sites from this particular subset have
been preserved/avoided and/or tested or mitigated. In other words, it does not matter if there are half
a million identical sites in the county if none of the others have been recorded, deemed potentially
eligible, or are protected. The emphasis should be on what new information about the statistical
population the site can contribute and how many such sites have been recorded and protected, not
how many similar sites exist.

4. Does the site have the ability to yield unambiguous data sets? For example:
   o Sites of short duration with good historical context
   o A complex where function may be determined for individual components
   o A long-occupied site where elements that are discrete, for example, with remains of
     outbuildings of specific or short-term use
   o Outhouses that can provide discrete data sets from short time periods.

5. Does the site represent a complex for which patterning of use or layout can be determined or be
readily understood? This consideration is particularly important for comparative studies of regional
land use, ethnic characteristics of site use and layout, or transplants of design and layout brought from
other regions of the United States or foreign lands. Such an approach may facilitate use of a site for interpretive purposes.

6. Can archaeology at the site assist in providing information on construction sequencing and modification to layout through additions, abandonment, and function changes through time?

7. Does the site contribute to a larger historic district or cultural landscape? In this case, the site characteristics must be considered not just in terms of the individual site’s research potential, but in the context of the overall view-shed and land-use issues at the district scale.

**Site Attributes to Consider for Evaluation**

Specific site attributes can tell one whether a particular site can provide useful information.

1. Does the site potentially provide information about changes in homesteading, ranching or farming patterns over time or across space?
   a. Are site features archaeologically visible and reasonably undisturbed?
   b. Does the site contain features that can be dated rather precisely? Sometimes a site that has a clear, short occupation is more potentially informative than one where multiple occupations may muddy the picture (see previous discussion of Berry/Stewart site in “Examples of excavated rural agricultural sites in Colorado: Western Slope” as an example).
   c. Are the site features vertically stratified or horizontally discrete so that studies of cultural or ecological change can take place?
   d. Does the site have a multiethnic occupation? If so, does it potentially provide new information about ethnic interaction?
   e. Does the site have features that can be used for the study of environmental change or people’s changing attitudes toward or knowledge of the local environment?

2. Does the site have public interpretive potential? This consideration may apply especially where the lead agency is in the business of interpreting the past to the public, such as the National Park Service, or where State Historical Funds are involved in the project. For much of CRM work in the private sector, it might apply to a lesser extent.

3. Does the site contribute in some way to the more general context of a historic district or cultural landscape?

Given the fact that the BLM now has the GLO records of homestead patent information available online for free, searchable by name, section, patent number, and/or township and range, there is really no excuse for anyone conducting survey, testing, or mitigation of archaeological sites on rural tracts not to consult these records, at least. There are still some glitches and gaps in the online data (William Butler, personal communication 2004), so researchers will need to coordinate consultation with the hard paper trail. Online data also do not include information about relinquished or cancelled claims, only those that went to patent. Files on relinquished and cancelled claims are on file at the Denver Branch of the National Archives, and it is possible that files for some of the land offices may still be on hand at the BLM state office in Lakewood. It is also possible to get additional basic information about cancelled and relinquished claims at the BLM state office in the Public Room, but the files are really good and it is not always necessary to send away for them to the National Archives in Washington. If it is necessary to do so, the process of getting patented claim files from the National Archives is greatly simplified now, and researchers can now order patent documents online.

This effort should be only the beginning of the archival research. If a name is associated with a domestic site, then researchers should, at minimum, also consult deeds and titles, tax records, and local census documents. Also available are Soil Conservation Service maps of land use by county, and Civil Works Administration interviews with old settlers collected in the 1930s (which were conducted county by county, but not for all counties). It is at the archival stage of research that one can discover whether or not a site is, in fact, correctly termed a “homestead,” i.e., established under the Homestead Act of 1862 or successive related laws dispersing public lands into private hands. Although the term *homestead* predates this legislation, usage of the term by historians has come to be more specific. If it was not patented under the 1862 or subsequent acts, the site is a farmstead or ranch but not a homestead (Buckles 1993a). It is also important to be aware
that some portions of Colorado remain unsurveyed by either the GLO or, later, the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Some areas have been resurveyed and section lines subsequently altered somewhat. So a homestead that was established in a particular quarter section may now lie just outside that section’s or quarter section’s boundaries on current USGS maps.

Another specific problem confronting researchers when evaluating rural agricultural sites is the widespread, wholesale relocation of buildings. This activity is, in some ways, part of a larger human behavioral trend of heavy recycling of all kinds of materials at such sites. Although potentially interesting to track as a means of looking at changing landscape and architecture use, it also wreaks havoc with archaeological integrity. Furthermore, the movement and reuse of buildings can be very difficult to unravel and interpret. It can be easy to overlook a much more recent foundation under a house, much less recognize that one may have already recorded the original foundation several miles away. The problem is compounded, as Mehls and Mehls point out, by an unfortunate institutional incentive for landowners to completely destroy abandoned and potentially eligible historic buildings; Colorado property tax law requires that these buildings stay on the tax rolls until actually torn down (Mehls and Mehls 1988:38).

**SUMMARY**

It is apparent from the data above that the majority of work on historic agricultural sites has been accomplished during the course of survey projects. Although these kinds of projects are especially amenable to a landscape approach, there is often an emphasis on site-by-site recording, and not on sites’ and features’ relationships to each other and to the surrounding terrain.

In terms of the southern counties of Colorado, where Spanish-speaking settlers were in the majority from the 1860s well into the twentieth century, good data exist for later Hispanic sites, but much less for early ones, perhaps because researchers are not recognizing them. Finding research that presents models of what such sites will look like, such as that done by Richard Carrillo, can aid with this goal (Carrillo et al. 2003:128). The dearth of early settlement sites is not restricted to Hispanic sites but is a general gap. It is easier to recognize farms and ranches established during the period that the Homestead Act was in sway than those before it, mostly because the documentary record of such later sites is more complete. That simply means archaeologists may have to dig a little more, in the archives as well as in the ground, to find them.

On agricultural sites in Colorado in general, researchers need to make better use of archival sources that are available and increasingly easy to use. They should be used critically, however. For example, while the GLO homestead patent records are available on the BLM website now, there are sites that are missing from the database for various reasons, and it covers only successfully patented homesteads. Not only are incomplete attempts at homesteading not represented, but the database does not give chain of title information about land use after the initial homestead. Furthermore, some homesteads were patented before resurveys of the land that potentially changed section boundaries. If the site lies near the edge of a section, section lines may have moved, and the current locational information and USGS maps may not match those from the initial settlement. The GLO database is a very useful start, but it is not the final word or an appropriate final step in gathering the archival materials available on land use. It is best to go to the paper archives, and while you are there, the survey plats at the Federal Archives in Denver, especially the “dirty” plat maps with notes by the surveyors on them.

Several studies of Colorado’s agricultural sites, such as those described above, are good examples of how several archaeologists are using the archival, oral narrative, aboveground and excavated materials to begin to fill in the research gaps. Furthermore, researchers are applying a larger variety of research questions to such sites than they did back in the 1980s, when the Buckleses wrote the first historical archaeology context (Buckles and Buckles 1984). This is a promising trend, and one that can continue with improved site recording and preservation decisions informed by a sense of the diverse potentials for research.
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