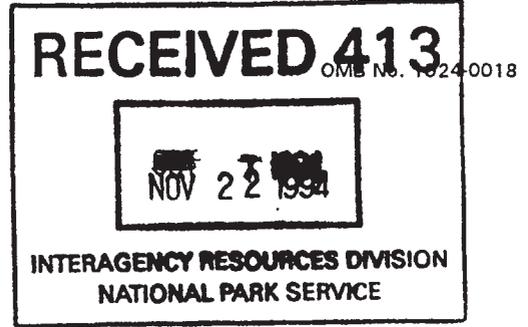


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(Rev. 8/86)  
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(Approved 03/88)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16).

Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name The Desert View Watchtower Historic District  
other names/site number Desert View

#### 2. Location

street & number Grand Canyon National Park  
city, town Grand Canyon x vicinity

state Arizona code AZ county Coconino code 005 zip code 86023

#### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	—	— sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	—	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	—	— objects
		<u>4</u>	<u>7</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

See continuation sheet.

Benjamin Levy  
Signature of certifying official

11/21/94  
Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
 See continuation sheet.

James W. Gorman A-ESTADO  
Signature of commenting or other official

8 SEPT 1994  
Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register  
 See continuation sheet

Antoinette Allee

1/3/95

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

for Signature of the Keeper

Date

**6. Functions or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture: Other  
Domestic: Single Dwelling  
Domestic: Secondary Structure  
Government: Other

Recreation and Culture: Other  
Domestic: Single Dwelling  
Domestic: Secondary Structure  
Government: Other

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rustic style

Other: NPS Rustic style

### Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

foundations	<u>Stone</u>
walls	<u>Stone; Wood</u>
roof	<u>Asphalt</u>
other	<u>Stone</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The group of buildings which form the historic complex around the Desert View Watchtower stand on Navajo Point near the eastern edge of Grand Canyon National Park. The view from the Watchtower itself is of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River at a point where the river makes a great bend to the north; Marble Canyon and the Painted Desert south of the Colorado to the east; and the pine, pinyon and juniper of the Tusayan Forest to the west and south toward the hazy blue cones of the San Francisco Peaks on the horizon north of Flagstaff roughly seventy miles away.

### Desert View Watchtower<sup>1</sup>

Built in 1932, the Desert View Watchtower consists of three principal sections: a lounge on the east end of the building modeled after an above-ground, single-story kiva, roughly circular and approximately forty feet in diameter inside; a five-story circular tower on the west end of the building, approximately 30 feet in diameter at the ground floor, tapering upwards to a diameter of 24 feet at the roof; and a connecting section, consisting of a circle interrupted in part by the circles of the other two structures and a rectangular section to the south housing two restrooms.

The lounge, unlike most prehistoric and historic kivas which were built partially or wholly underground, stands several steps above the surface, and unlike genuine Native American kivas, has broad view windows around its exterior walls. The interior has a flagstone floor, concrete and steel walls veneered with stone, built-in stone benches around the walls, and a cribbed, peeled-log roof which forms a flattened dome. On the northern interior is a large stone fireplace and hearth, whereas genuine kivas had a fireplace in the center. Originally, a small portion of the intermediate structure between the tower and the lounge served as gift and souvenir shop, while the lounge was solely for visitor use. In more recent years, the gift shop has taken over the lounge. Visitors can go on the roof of the "kiva" to enjoy the view. There are mirrors there which have been set into the parapet so visitors can see the reflected canyon vista from optimal viewing points. The mirrors are painted black to cut the haze and improve the clarity of the reflected view, and are believed to be original.

The first level of the tower is used for storage and is inaccessible to visitors. The second level (the first one with exhibits) is the Hopi Room, which features a large circular painting depicting the Hopi "Snake legend" on one wall, and numerous other wall paintings including Muyingwa, or the god of germination; "Lalakuntu," a Hopi wedding scene; the little war god

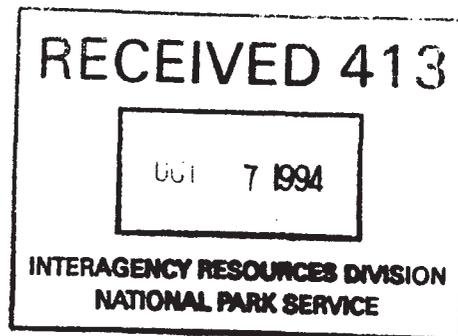
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<sup>1</sup>The best description of the Desert View Watchtower is a 123-page manual for Fred Harvey tour guides written in 1933 by the Watchtower's architect, Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter. This description is based upon the observations of the authors of this form, which include present condition, as well as some of the material in Colter's mimeographed manual, although the description in this form will not explore all of the details of the Native American legends embodied in the tower's architecture and interior decoration. The best technical architectural and engineering data on construction of the Watchtower may be found in Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Contract [Secretary's] Number 33721 and its accompanying 66 pages of detailed specifications for construction.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**



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Pookongahoya; and Baloongahoya, the god of echo. In the center of the room is a snake altar with a sand painting, religious crooks and wands, carved wood figures of kachinas, snake whips, and a tray of sacred corn meal.

The sand painting, along with the other exhibit items encased in a circular concrete case with a glass top, was painted by Fred Kabotie, a noted Hopi artist, when he was a young man. The Hopi tribe gave permission for it to remain, although sand paintings usually are destroyed immediately after the ceremony of which they were a part; in this instance, the sand painting was changed slightly after the ceremony, rather than destroyed. Around the wall of the room is a continuous stone bench, except where interrupted by the stairway. This stairway climbs in a semicircle following the outer wall from the floor below, and another climbs to the level above. A total of twenty-two steps lead to this level from the floor below, and twenty-one steps lead from this level to the one above. Near the ceiling around the walls are seven stone shelves at an eight foot level, six of which have Native American pots, probably prehistoric, on them; one is missing its pot. This level has ten windows of various sizes, as well as a door to the roof of the kiva just off the stairwell. The walls, which have Kabotie paintings, are smooth concrete, as are the floor and ceiling. The ceiling, which features an opening in the center to the room above, has concrete-encased beams which radiate to the outer walls from the opening.

The third level, like the one below, features smooth concrete walls, floor, and ceiling finish. In the center of the floor is the circular opening mentioned above, which is aligned over the sand painting and is surrounded by a waist-high solid concrete railing. Instead of a continuous stone bench against the outer wall, this level has intermittent stone benches. The room has four large windows, all trapezoidal, being narrower at the top than at the bottom. Each window is about two by three feet but each is a different shape. There are seven smaller windows roughly six to eight inches square each. On the walls are four protruding stone shelves for pots. Twenty-one steps lead to the fourth level.

The fourth level is like the one below. Its walls feature replicas of petroglyphs, pictographs, and designs from: Mimbres pottery; ruins in the Painted Desert; and Betatakin, Keet Seel, and other cliff dwellings and pueblo ruins in the Southwest. This level has intermittent stone benches backed against the outer wall. It features two large windows, one square and one tapered (so that it is smaller at the top than at the bottom), two windows about a foot square, five windows roughly six to eight inches square, and two windows measuring about one foot by two feet. The room has five stone pot shelves and a white painted, irregular wainscot with sections of serrated top edge. Pictographs on the walls are mostly black and white, although one features red and another red and yellow. The ceiling is painted.

Twenty-one steps lead to the top level, the "Eagle's Nest," which has eleven trapezoidal windows of uniform size and spacing, all tapered to be smaller at top than bottom, plus thirteen small one-foot-square windows which have been closed with plywood. The walls and ceiling of this room are painted indigo, and there is no Native American decoration. A locked double door hatch leads to the roof, approached on a steep stair built of planks affixed to peeled logs. The stair has a metal railing wrapped in leather which is peeling away from the metal. The room features four coin telescopes. Though it provides the best view of all from the Watchtower, the parapet roof is

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no longer open to the public. Air quality monitoring equipment and the park's radio repeater have been installed on the roof, one of the reasons access to it is restricted.

Patterned after no particular Native American structure, nevertheless the Watchtower did derive individual elements from a number of particular prehistoric Native American ruins. Architect Mary Colter derived the shape of the tower from the round tower in the Cliff Palace at Mesa Verde in southwestern Colorado. But the character of the stonework at Mesa Verde was unlike that of the Grand Canyon region — the character of the stone itself was different — so Colter searched elsewhere for a pattern for the stonework and found it in the patterns of stonework in towers and other ruins at Hovenweep. The use of massive boulders as a foundation for the kiva and Watchtower was inspired by ruins at Wupatki, as was the unfinished pattern of triangular stones near the parapet of the tower. The pattern of three stone diamonds near the main entrance, however, was inspired by a detail at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. In various places such as near the main entrance door, in the outside stairway wall, in the outdoor fireplace on the kiva room, and in the tower itself, Colter employed genuine petroglyphs which came from the vicinity of Ash Fork, Arizona. The stones built into the interior stairway leading from the lounge to the tower came from Joseph City, near Winslow. Reflecting Native American use of oddly shaped rocks as fetishes, Colter included one large stone whose shape suggested the head of a snake as a representation of the mythological Pueblo "Balolookong," or Great Plumed serpent, as well as various other stones which protrude from the exterior walls. The lounge's log ceiling was inspired by ruins at Aztec, New Mexico.

In terms of size, the Watchtower is roughly seventy feet tall, much taller than any known Native American tower, though of the same general proportions. The Desert View Watchtower is five stories high; the ruin of one tower at Hovenweep was four stories high. While most kivas were smaller than the lounge at Desert View, a few great kivas were larger.

Inspired by originals at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, Colter provided for some T-shaped openings in the walls of the tower which later were filled in with stone, as if hastily closed off for protection against enemies, a deliberate architectural effect.

Thousands of park visitors each year climb the tower to see the view, and the structure is beginning to show signs of wear. The Desert View Watchtower is in deteriorated condition and has been listed as a Level II endangered landmark for 1994. It is, however, slated for major restoration work in the coming year.

Around the base of the Watchtower on the exterior are a number of small rooms used for storage and other purposes.

### The Ruin

Immediately west of the Watchtower, but separated from it by several feet, stands a "ruin" which serves as a storage facility and as a bin for firewood. This structure was designed to appear to be a ruin, to show the condition in which most prehistoric buildings are found, yet it is a "ruin" adapted to modern uses. Like the

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watchtower, its exterior is of stone. It was built in 1932 at the same time as the Desert View Watchtower and generally is considered a part of it, although it is a separate, free-standing structure.

#### The Store Room

Built by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway in 1941 of concrete with a stone veneer which matched the irregular and banded character of the stone on the Watchtower, this ten-by-thirteen-foot building is eight feet high and has log vigas and a parapet roof finished in asbestos and felt. It has a single wood door and two small windows, placed high in the rear and north walls. It stands about 170 feet southwest of the tower. It is in fair condition; the roof is in need of repair or replacement.

#### The Comfort Station/Visitor Contact Station — Building No. 41

Also built in 1941 by the railway, this "Comfort Station" is a concrete building, approximately thirty by thirty-three feet in size, with a rubble stone veneer and a parapet roof finished in felt. The building's floor plan included a Men's Room, a Women's Room, and a storeroom, all entered separately from the exterior. The building features a mixture of four-lite, six-lite, and ten-lite metal sash windows. In the 1980s the National Park Service converted the building into a visitor contact station. The interior was gutted and divided into two rooms. The exterior was unchanged except to replace the frosted glass with clear glass to allow more light in. The exterior has maintained its integrity, so much so that the National Park Service has had to install a sign indicating that the building is, in fact, not a rest room.

#### Fred Harvey Caretaker's Residence — AT&SFR Building No. 4 — Building No. 914

The oldest extant building at Desert View, this picket-log-slab, wood frame, hip-roofed building was erected in 1930 by The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway for the Fred Harvey firm to use as a temporary lounge for its Harveycar motor tours. It featured an odd clipped corner and had large picture windows for viewing the canyon and stood near the rim. However, after its temporary function was superseded by the construction of the Desert View Watchtower, the railway moved the structure to the south, across the road in November 1934, and converted it into a caretaker's residence for use by the Fred Harvey company. Fred Kaboutie is believed to have been one of its occupants some years later when he worked for Fred Harvey as caretaker for the Desert View Watchtower. This building was originally forty by twenty feet, with one clipped corner, and comprised of three rooms. However, in the 1934 remodeling two shed-roofed additions were built, one on the west side and one on the south end, and a stone-veneered concrete foundation and a tall stone-veneered chimney were added. The picture windows were changed to double-hung windows. The building has been on its present site and in its present form for more than fifty years.

#### Shed — Building 912 or 913

Located just west of the Caretaker's Residence is a small shed. It is approximately eight by ten feet with shiplap siding and a gable roof, recently covered with wood shakes, with overhanging eaves. There is a board and batten door on the south side and one window, now boarded, on the north side. With the exception of the fact that the

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building appears to not have a foundation, it is in good condition. There were originally two outbuildings which served the Caretaker's Residence, a toilet and a coal house. They were both built in 1940. The toilet was removed at an undetermined date. It is not clear how the NPS building numbers were assigned or, therefore, which building number remains.

### National Park Service Residence — Building No. 83

Located east of the Comfort Station, this building is twenty-four by fourteen feet with a gable roof finished in shingles, stone foundation, and exterior walls of horizontal lap siding, with the same material applied vertically with shallow points at the bottom of the gable ends. At the very top, the gable ends feature a louvered ventilator. The building has a door in each end, and there is a small stone stoop, or porch, at one end. Originally, the building had a combination living room-bedroom ten feet four inches by fifteen feet nine inches, a kitchen seven feet ten inches by thirteen feet, and a small bathroom. The chimney is of native stone, at least above the roof line. Built in 1936 at a cost of \$750.00, the residence is now used as a Search and Rescue cache. It is typical of NPS Rustic design and, in fact, similar to many other Ranger Residences at Grand Canyon National Park.

### Other Structures and Features

The parking lot at Desert View is laid out with limestone curbstones which contribute to the overall feeling of the setting. They are harmonious, whereas concrete curbs would be intrusive. The use of limestone in construction was typical of pre-WWII construction by the National Park Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Examples are found throughout Grand Canyon National Park. The parking lot's original plan dates from 1933. It was redesigned in 1961 and the present curbs date from that period and are therefore non-contributing features.

The entire Desert View area has the potential for significance as a cultural landscape. The landscape elements such as the roads, walkways and overlooks, particularly their placement and materials, are elements which should be further evaluated. Such a landscape could encompass the area from the entrance station to the rim, i.e., all the development at the end of East Rim Drive.

Also in the vicinity are several recently built buildings. The Fred Harvey Deli was constructed in the 1960s. It will likely be removed from the scene under the park's new General Management Plan. Babbitt's Store and the new comfort station were both built in the mid-1980s. Across the road, near the Caretaker's Residence are two houses, number 149, which at one time was identical to Building 83, and number 915. They have been significantly modified over time and no longer retain historic or architectural integrity and are therefore considered non-contributing. A list of contributing and non-contributing features follows. The district boundary has been drawn to exclude most of the non-significant, and therefore non-contributing structures.

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### Contributing Buildings

Desert View Watchtower\*  
The Ruin\*  
The Store Room\*  
Comfort Station/Visitor Contact Station  
Fred Harvey Caretaker's Residence  
Shed  
National Park Service Residence

### Non-Contributing Buildings and Features

Fred Harvey Deli  
Babbitt's Store  
Building 149  
Building 915  
New comfort station  
Other tanks and outbuildings  
Limestone Curbs

\* Part of Desert View National Historic Landmark (previously listed on the National Register)

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture

1930-1941

1932

Entertainment/Recreation

1930

1941

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person(s)

Architect/Builder

Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter

Fred Kabotie

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Known variously as "The Indian Watchtower at Desert View," "The Watchtower," and "The Desert View Watchtower," this concrete structure with a stone veneer and a log ceiling in the "kiva" room was constructed in 1932 by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway for the allied Fred Harvey firm to use as a souvenir and gift shop, viewing platform, and lounge.

Its purpose was to serve as a rest stop at the eastern end of the South Rim for sight-seeing tours brought out by Fred Harvey Transportation Department touring cars and buses from Grand Canyon Village, twenty-five miles to the west. The Watchtower is the principal focus and the most significant element of a group of buildings near the east entrance to Grand Canyon National Park. The Desert View Historic District represents the development of national parks and the tourism which often paralleled the creation of such parks. The structures in the district illustrate the Rustic style of architecture adapted with elements of Native American architecture as well as the NPS Rustic architecture developed by the National Park Service and used throughout national parks by both the NPS and its concessioners. Rustic architecture was designed to harmonize with its natural environment to the extent that use of native materials would permit, but more important, at Desert View it was used to harmonize with the cultural environment of prehistoric Native American architecture as expressed in Anasazi ruins in the American Southwest.

The most significant structures at Desert View are the Desert View Watchtower and the attendant structures such as the separate semicircular "ruin" a few feet to the west used for firewood storage, an attached small storage room, and a separate small stone storage building a short distance farther west which shares the Watchtower's stylized banded stonework. These three structures were designated a National Historic Landmark in 1987 as part of a nomination for Mary Colter-designed buildings at Grand Canyon National Park.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The other buildings included in that nomination are Hopi House, the Lookout, and Hermit's Rest.

X See continuation sheet.

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The Desert View Watchtower and its attendant structures are also significant as the work of Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter and represent one of three principal categories of Rustic architecture in which she specialized: rustic architecture inspired by indigenous prehistoric stone Native American architecture. The Desert View Watchtower was a major contribution of the Fred Harvey Company Architect to the architectural history of the southwestern United States during the first half of the 20th Century, and the other Rustic buildings in the district constructed by the National Park Service and by the Santa Fe for Fred Harvey are contributing elements.

Although the principal qualities of significance are expressed in exterior architecture in all of the buildings, in the Watchtower and particularly the kiva-inspired lounge, the significance extends to the interior architecture, interior decoration (especially the prehistoric pottery in the Watchtower), and the painted designs, particularly the Hopi symbols painted on the concrete walls of the Hopi Room by the distinguished Hopi artist, a master in his own field, Fred Kabotie. Kabotie's work gives the Watchtower additional significance, potentially national, in the field of art.

In addition to having nationally significant architectural components, the Desert View complex is significant locally for its role in the railway's development of tourist facilities in Grand Canyon National Park and National Park Service response to facility development in the park. The railway developed Desert View in order to establish permanent facilities at what had been a temporary recreational tourist development at Desert View housed in tents since the early years of the 20th Century. Attendant with such permanent development was the presence of the National Park Service which first constructed a caretaker's cabin in 1926. An entrance station for Grand Canyon National Park and contact and ranger station at Desert View were also built early on.

### **Development of Tourist Facilities in National Parks in the West, the Southwest, and Arizona, 1892-1941.**

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway came to Grand Canyon in 1901 by acquisition and completion of what had begun as an independent mining and tourist railroad which ran out of money after completing 58 miles of track, coming within about six miles of the south rim of the Grand Canyon. In 1905, at its Canyon terminus, the Santa Fe erected a major Rustic log hotel (El Tovar), a stone souvenir shop known as Hopi House; and other ancillary facilities (a powerhouse, employees' quarters, barns for horses and mules, and corrals). In subsequent years the railroad added a Rustic log depot, a stone observation building (the Lookout), and began construction of facilities eastward and westward along the rim of the Grand Canyon. Westward, the railway constructed eight miles of road for use by buggies and coaches and horseback parties. In 1914, they built a stone rest and lounge facility known as "Hermit's Rest" at the end of the road. They also built a trail from there down into the Grand Canyon (The Hermit Trail) as well as a tourist camp in the Canyon (Hermit Creek Camp). To the east, the railway improved the existing section of old stagecoach road from El Tovar to Grandview Point and Hance's Ranch, and built beyond that point eight miles of new road to Navajo Point, which the railroad began to refer to in its tourist literature as "Painted Desert View" and eventually simply as "Desert View." At that time, preoccupied with other developments, the railroad did not build a permanent lounge facility at Navajo Point, instead leasing an acre of land from the U.S. Forest Service on which it erected a tent camp to accommodate tourists overnight. In those days before use of the automobile became common and horses provided the principal means of transportation, the trip from El Tovar to Painted Desert View required the better part of the day, and the advertised purpose of visiting that point east of El Tovar was to watch the often-spectacular sunrise over the Painted Desert to the east,

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requiring overnight accommodations. With the advent of motor vehicles and the disappearance of horses as transportation along the rim, the character of visits to Desert View changed from overnight trips to visits within a single day, and the objective of watching the sunrise disappeared. By 1930, when the railroad had caught up with other development needs in what was now Grand Canyon National Park and was prepared at last to build a permanent facility at Desert View, it was no longer necessary to provide overnight accommodation for tourists, but desirable instead to build a lounge and rest stop facility whose function was comparable to that of Hermit's Rest at the end of the West Rim Drive. Desert View facilities would also serve another function, for the National Park Service undertook extension of the road the railroad had built, eastward to Cameron to connect with Highway 64, making Desert View an eastern entrance point to Grand Canyon National Park. In 1934 a stone entrance station was built, and the wood ranger residence was built in 1936. (The entrance station was razed in 1962.) Thus the Desert View Watchtower and its ancillary structures were historically the climax of development along the South Rim of the Grand Canyon beyond Grand Canyon Village.

In a larger sense, the entire railway development within Grand Canyon National Park of which Desert View was a part, filled a particular niche in railway expansion in the West and particularly of the Southwest. Going back to the 1870s Fred Harvey had forged an alliance with the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad which he served by operating restaurants ("eating houses") and hotels at points along the railroad in the days before dining cars. Fred Harvey restaurants and hotels soon became nationally distinguished for the quality of service, the freshness of food, the cleanliness, the efficiency of operation, the moderation of price, and the appeal of its young waitresses uniformed in black and white, all of which stood in stark contrast to the greasy-spoon, ptomaine-tavern character of the eating houses usually encountered on western railroads, even on the Santa Fe before the advent of Fred Harvey. When dining cars came into service on the Santa Fe, the railway eventually invited Fred Harvey to operate them also. In time the depot-restaurant or depot-hotel-restaurant operated by Fred Harvey spread across the Santa Fe System from Chicago to Los Angeles, and from Fresno to Galveston, covering nearly a quarter of the nation. The facilities were always built, owned and maintained by the railway company, but operated by the Fred Harvey firm. In a sense, the Grand Canyon tourist facilities were a part of this Fred Harvey-Santa Fe alliance and its history. But they were a very particular part.

The usual depot-hotel or depot-restaurant served tourists traveling from one point to another and needing overnight accommodations or food service en route while awaiting trains, changing trains, or otherwise in the course of their travels. In the early 1880s, however, the Santa Fe took over and developed, for Fred Harvey to operate, a different kind of depot-hotel-restaurant, a resort designed to be a tourist destination in and of itself. This was not merely a handy facility to accommodate tourists en route between other destinations, but a resort designed to generate traffic of its own and was located at Montezuma Hot Springs about six miles north of Las Vegas, New Mexico. The railroad laid a spur track to the springs and built a massive resort hotel and, after that one burned, built a second one which still stands. The attraction was not merely the hotel and or scenery, but the hot springs-fed "baths" in the ancient tradition of hot springs resorts such as "Spa" in Belgium, Baden-Baden in Germany, and Bath in England which dated from Roman times. Bathing in hot springs waters, particularly those with a mineral content, served not only as recreation but also supposedly offered medical benefits curative of an elastic list of ailments and diseases. Resorts such as these partook of the characteristics both of recreational

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facilities and medical sanitariums. However, by the 1890s, they had begun to pass out of fashion, particularly as a consequence of advances in medicine which called into question their alleged medical and curative benefits.

By the late 1890s, Santa Fe management was forced by increasing losses in the operation of the Montezuma Hotel to seek an alternative "destination-resort" facility to replace the Montezuma. At that point the Santa Fe & Grand Canyon Railroad fell from bankruptcy into the hands of the Santa Fe System, and the Santa Fe adopted the long-standing idea of building a massive rustic resort hotel on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon as a destination resort. Thus the entire Grand Canyon development by the railway was part of the Fred Harvey System at large, but also part of a particular phase of Fred Harvey development which existed only at Montezuma Hot Springs and at Grand Canyon. And, of course, in the larger sense it was part of the overall development of rustic tourist facilities in the western United States, especially in national parks, by the Northern Pacific Railway in Yellowstone, by the Great Northern Railway in Glacier, by the Yosemite Valley Railway near the entrance to Yosemite, by the Union Pacific Railroad on the north rim of the Grand Canyon and at Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Cedar Breaks, and others. Like these many facilities, the Desert View Watchtower is a remnant of an age which has vanished with the discontinuance of the operation of passenger trains by American railroads (with the exception of a Congressionally chartered and government-subsidized passenger operation called Amtrak), and the sale by these railroads of their tourist facilities to other companies to operate.<sup>3</sup>

### **Rustic Architecture in the National Parks of the Southwest, 1902-1941**

The buildings in Desert View Watchtower District are good examples of the variety within the Rustic architectural style, which featured native materials used in such manner as to enable a building or structure to blend and harmonize with its environment. That environment may be, and most often is, a natural environment, but it may also be a cultural environment, either prehistoric or historic, and it may be both. Rustic architecture in this sense of the word has been used all the way from the Adirondacks to the Pacific coast, and thus is national in scope.

The Desert View Watchtower is a part of the architectural history of resort facilities constructed by western railroads, and of resort facilities constructed in the great western national parks often referred to as the "crown jewels" of the National Park System. The early examples of this architectural style influenced, and the later ones paralleled, the development of Rustic styles by the National Park Service itself as appropriate for government buildings within national parks. Thus a style pioneered by the railroads in the national parks before the National Park Service existed was embraced by the later National Park Service as well as by park concessioners which were not associated with the railroads.

Many architects were involved in developing this style for the railroads, including Louis Hill who designed the Great Northern hotels in Glacier, Robert Reamer who designed Rustic buildings in Yellowstone for the Northern Pacific, and Gilbert Stanley Underwood who designed the rather later Rustic hotels for the Union Pacific. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway relied on three architects in particular for the design of its Rustic facilities at Grand Canyon: Charles Whittlesey who designed El Tovar in the European tradition of a grand log structure

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<sup>3</sup>Fred Harvey still operates the Desert View Watchtower and the other tourist facilities on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, but is no longer allied with the railway.

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deriving originally from Norwegian and Swiss inspirations; Francis Wilson, who designed the depot to match El Tovar; and Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, foremost among those at Grand Canyon, who designed a wide range of Rustic structures drawing on both natural and cultural inspirations and both historic and prehistoric precedents.

Colter, employed by the Fred Harvey firm, did both architectural design and interior decoration, and her architecture featured either Pueblo-style or Spanish Colonial designs, or a mixture of the two. The single greatest concentration of her work, located in Grand Canyon National Park, though begun many years before the park existed, ignored Spanish inspirations and focused on natural, prehistoric Native American, and historic Southwestern designs (though some Spanish elements were evident in designs for structures at Grand Canyon that were never built).

Within the context of Grand Canyon development, some of Mary Colter's buildings were inspired by natural forms. The Lookout, near Bright Angel Lodge, and Hermit's Rest, at the west end of the West Rim Drive, were both designed to appear as natural outcroppings of rock. Other buildings drew from cultural inspirations to combine elements of historic pioneer frontier buildings built of native materials such as logs, stone, board and batten, picket log construction, (imitation) adobe, and the like. Finally, there were two structures which Mary Colter designed on the basis of inspirations from prehistoric Native American architecture. They were Hopi House, built in 1905, whose design was derived from stone buildings at the Hopi Pueblo of old Oraibi whose origins lay in prehistoric times, and the Desert View Watchtower, whose inspirations were prehistoric Anasazi ruins. The "Indian watchtower at Desert View" provides a relatively rare example of a functional modern building whose Rustic design was inspired by pre-historic Native American architecture. Whatever the inspirations, cultural or natural, historic or prehistoric, Rustic buildings were intended to be harmonious with their environment through careful scaling and siting and the use of native stone, lumber, sometimes logs, and other building materials indigenous to the site, painted or stained in colors which blended with the surroundings.

When in 1930 the Fred Harvey company at last decided, at the urging of its vice president, V.F. Huckel, to build a permanent rest stop, view station, and souvenir shop near the eastern edge of Grand Canyon National Park on the South Rim, it assigned its veteran architect, Mary Colter, then nearly 61, to the problem of designing a building which would serve the specified purposes. The rim at that location is on a slope descending from slightly higher land to the south, rather than descending toward the south as at Grand Canyon Village. At Desert View also, the Colorado River and its canyon make a sharp bend, revealing Marble Gorge. The Fred Harvey Company wanted a view platform which would enable visitors to see into the canyon in both directions from this bend, look out over the dramatic Painted Desert east of the Colorado River, and also look out over the rise to the south and the vast Tusayan forest of pinyon, juniper and ponderosa pine stretching away to the southwest toward the distant blue cones of the San Francisco Peaks on the horizon. All of this required a tall structure which could not possibly be made to appear an outcropping of native rock, could not emulate most traditional or historic architectural forms of the Southwest and still be rendered rustic by mere use of native materials, and could not draw from precedents in pioneer frontier or historic Puebloan architecture. What was needed was a view tower as well as a lounge, along with some way to make such a tower seem to belong in this landscape.

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Towers of varying sizes, both round and square or rectangular, existed among many prehistoric Anasazi ruins throughout the Southwest. Colter found her model for a tower of a type which belonged in the Southwest in the towers of prehistoric Native American architecture such as those built by the Anasazi. Of stone with log beams, built centuries before, such tower ruins still could be examined at Mesa Verde (especially the Round Tower of the Cliff Palace), at Canyon de Chelly, at Wupatki, at Montezuma Castle, at Betatakin, and especially in Hovenweep. Colter seems to have been influenced most heavily by the towers at Hovenweep, although her resulting design was intended to replicate no particular building while drawing on the architectural elements of many. She termed her tower a "re-creation," not a reconstruction, not a restoration, but a re-creation of the prehistoric form.

As the initial step of the development, the railway built for use by the Fred Harvey firm in 1930 a small Rustic lounge building. This building, constructed under Santa Fe Railway Authority X-26-30, was moved in November 1934 to a new location farther back from the rim and remodeled into a caretaker's residence, assigned thereafter Santa Fe Building No.4 for Desert View. (It should be noted that the Fred Harvey firm built, owned, and maintained no buildings; all the buildings it used, at Grand Canyon and elsewhere along the railway, were built, owned and maintained by the railway and simply operated and used by Fred Harvey under the various contracts between the two firms.)

Meanwhile, proceeding with her concept for an observation tower, Colter chartered a small plane and searched the yet little-known ruins of northern Arizona, New Mexico, and the Four Corners area for specimens, then visiting those deemed especially worthwhile by Harvey motor car. She photographed them, and dispatched Fred Harvey photographers hither and yon to photograph them some more. Even 16mm Kodacolor motion pictures were made to provide her with information. At the proposed site of the watchtower, Colter had a wooden tower with a platform on top erected to a specified height proposed for the top of the permanent structure to ensure that the height was adequate to provide the desired view in all directions. Colter then created a clay model of the effect she wished to achieve in both the building and its environment. She then had an architectural treatment drawn showing floor plans and an elevation. Finally, construction of the tower was turned over to the architectural and engineering departments of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway. It was to be principally a structure of steel-reinforced concrete, with a stone veneer on the exterior and some of the interior, with a massive foundation and with the use of some logs, especially in the ceiling of the kiva room. The stones were to be carefully selected and placed in patterns found in prehistoric stone ruins, again especially those at Hovenweep. The logs used for the ceiling in the kiva room, and perhaps elsewhere, Colter salvaged for their historic value and their weathered look from the 1895 pioneer Grandview Hotel located at Grandview Point, some miles to the west, which was being demolished at that time. Colter also included some rocks bearing genuine petroglyphs in the tower's construction. It was reported that Colter supervised the placement of nearly every stone, and all of the elements of the stonework have some particular importance or prehistoric derivation. With plans drawn in 1931, the railway issued a contract to S.C. Hichborn of Los Angeles, who had done other work at Grand Canyon for the Santa Fe during the 1920s. The contract was signed on September 9, 1931, with an initial completion date of December 31, 1931, the latter date having to be modified by extensions to July 1, 1932, September 1, 1932, October 25, 1932, and finally several more times until November 30, 1932. The Santa Fe Magazine for November 1932 reported, "The new Indian Watch tower at Desert View is due to open very soon. The construction of this building and the kiva have occupied most of Miss Colter's time for many months, and she

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has achieved a masterpiece," and twenty-five months later referred to her building as "an outstanding and authentic reproduction of the original watchtowers that were constructed by the Indians in the Southwest hundreds of years ago." The Fred Harvey company dedicated the building in ceremonies held on May 13, 1933, which included participation by many Hopi Indians. The dedication provided excellent publicity for the Fred Harvey Company and the Grand Canyon, appearing in 620 newspapers from forty-five states, radio broadcasts, and in film on Paramount News.

From the standpoint of its design borrowing from prehistoric Anasazi designs, from the standpoint of its exterior featuring native materials, the Desert View Watchtower blends and harmonizes with both its natural and cultural environments. From the more extreme standpoint of naturalists, any building or structure erected in a natural environment may be considered intrusive. Thus the building was controversial in some quarters from the beginning. Whether it harmonizes with its environment or is intrusive depends upon the point of view of the individual. Equally controversial was reference to the structure initially in Santa Fe and Fred Harvey literature as "The Indian Watchtower at Desert View," since it was not truly a structure built by Native Americans. Controversy over this point resulted in the change in the structure's name to "The Desert View Watchtower". Yet the inspiration for the architecture was in prehistoric Native American designs; it is not unlikely that the contractor employed Navajo, Hopi or Havasupai as common laborers in its construction; Hopi artist Fred Kabotie had a free hand in interior decoration of the Hopi Room in the tower and later worked and lived at Desert View as tower caretaker; and the dedication ceremonies were dominated by Hopi and Navajo Indian rituals and dances. The controversies which swirled around the Watchtower were the proverbial tempests in teapots. With the passage of time, the Watchtower has been accepted by many if not most as an architecturally attractive and historic structure.

Shortly after the initiation of Harveycar tours to the new structure, Colter found herself swamped with questions from the drivers of the touring cars and buses, eager for information about the structure and the significance of each element in its design and decoration. To escape this quagmire of questions, she wrote, before the end of 1933, a 123-page mimeographed *Manual for Drivers and Guides description of the Indian Watchtower at Desert View and its Relation, architecturally, to the Prehistoric Ruins of the Southwest*. Few notable buildings or structures have been as thoroughly described by their architects as was this watchtower by Colter, and this manual is the largest example of her writing, few of her letters or other writings having survived.

In addition to the Watchtower itself, Colter designed the ruin behind it (to the west) for storing firewood for the tower's fireplace. She is believed also to have designed, still farther west, the small storeroom which shares the tower's banded stonework, though the railway's building record indicated that this building was not completed until 1941. That same year, the railway constructed the concrete restroom building veneered with rubble stone and featuring a parapet roof. Colter probably did not design this structure, though there is no solid evidence regarding the architect of either the storeroom or the restroom. The Fred Harvey caretaker's residence, the oldest surviving building at Desert View, though not moved to its present site until 1934 or converted to its present use as a residence until then, stands south of the road, nearby. The small, wood-frame, gable-roofed two-room residence of Rustic design was built by the National Park Service itself in 1936. Though not designed by Colter, the choice of Rustic style for the residences, though of a different variation, reflects the same desire to harmonize with the setting expressed by Colter's work.

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### Architect and Artist as "Masters" in Their Fields

Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter may be regarded as a "master" in her fields of both architecture and interior decoration, and her status has been recognized by publication in 1980 of the biography Mary Colter, Builder on the Red Earth. Colter's works stretched geographically from Chicago to Los Angeles along the Santa Fe and Fred Harvey Systems, with the heaviest concentration in Arizona and New Mexico. Virtually all of her works were for buildings such as hotels and restaurants and other tourist facilities which served the public at large, so that her work received wide exposure to the traveling public. Chronologically, her work stretched from 1902 to 1949, just short of half a century, and so highly regarded were her talents, she was called out of retirement for her last project.

Similarly, Fred Kabotie, the Hopi artist whom Colter hired to decorate the Hopi Room in the Desert View Watchtower, may be considered a master in the field of Native American art. At the time he did the work in 1933, Colter wrote, "This young man, Kabotie, who painted the decorations on the walls and ceilings of this Hopi Room is counted one of the three greatest modern Indian artists." Kabotie's talent was recognized by publication in 1977 of his autobiography, illustrated with many of his paintings in full color, by the museum of Northern Arizona in association with Northland Press under a grant from the Weatherhead Foundation. This autobiography provides extensive contextual data on his career and his many exhibitions, a career which has included a Guggenheim Fellowship. Like Colter, he may be considered a master in his field, and his interior decoration of the Hopi Room of the Watchtower is of national significance.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other

Specify Repository:  
Grand Canyon National Park Library & Study Collection, Grand Canyon, Arizona

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 16 acres

UTM References

A	<u>1/2</u> Zone	<u>4/2/5/5/8/2</u> Easting	<u>3/9/8/9/1/5/0</u> Northing	B	<u>1/2</u> Zone	<u>4/2/5/5/5/6</u> Easting	<u>3/9/8/9/0/9/9</u> Northing
C	<u>1/2</u> Zone	<u>4/2/5/6/6/7</u> Easting	<u>3/9/8/9/0/7/1</u> Northing	D	<u>1/2</u> Zone	<u>4/2/5/5/2/9</u> Easting	<u>3/9/8/8/9/3/3</u> Northing

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

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date August 29, 1994

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Division Offices, Albuquerque Division, La Posada Building, Winslow, Arizona: Operation Authority card file. (These offices are believed to have moved to Las Vegas, New Mexico.)

Part of Desert View map attached to Supplement D, Subdivision VIII" in letter-agreement dated April 14, 1941, between The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and Fred Harvey, with reference to adding to list of facilities covered by "El Tovar" agreement of September 1, 1906.

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Saunders, Sallie, "Indian Watchtower at Grand Canon is Dedicated by Hopi Indians," The Santa Fe Magazine, Vol. XXVII, No. 8, July 1933, pp. 27-31.

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Waters, L.L. Steel Trails to Santa Fe. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1950.

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#### UTM References, continued:

The four UTM points given were generated using GPS (Global Positioning System) during field work conducted in October 1993. Readings for the Manager's House and the Comfort Station were invalid, but good data was collected for the remaining structures. No data was collected for the ruin because it is so close to the Watchtower that, given the margin of error in GPS, the two locations are, for all intents and purposes, the same. Those points are as indicated below.

- A. Desert View Watchtower
- B. The Store Room
- C. National Park Service Residence
- D. Shed

#### Verbal Boundary Description, continued:

Beginning at the Desert View Watchtower, set on the rim of the canyon, the boundary follows the rim of the canyon north and then east along the 7440' contour line to a point where the rim turns southeastward. From that point, proceed in a straight line almost due south, to the 7462' contour line. At that point, proceed WSW in a straight line until intersecting with the junction of park maintenance roads, just south of Building 149. Follow the north edge of the maintenance road to the 7488' contour line. From that point proceed N in a straight line to the rim of the canyon at the 7460' contour line, then along the rim of the canyon back to the Desert View Watchtower.

#### Boundary Justification, continued:

The boundary includes the seven contributing buildings and the adjacent area along the canyon rim. The vistas from the rim were the reason for the original development at Desert View. The other developed areas have been excluded in this nomination, but may be eligible as part of a cultural landscape.

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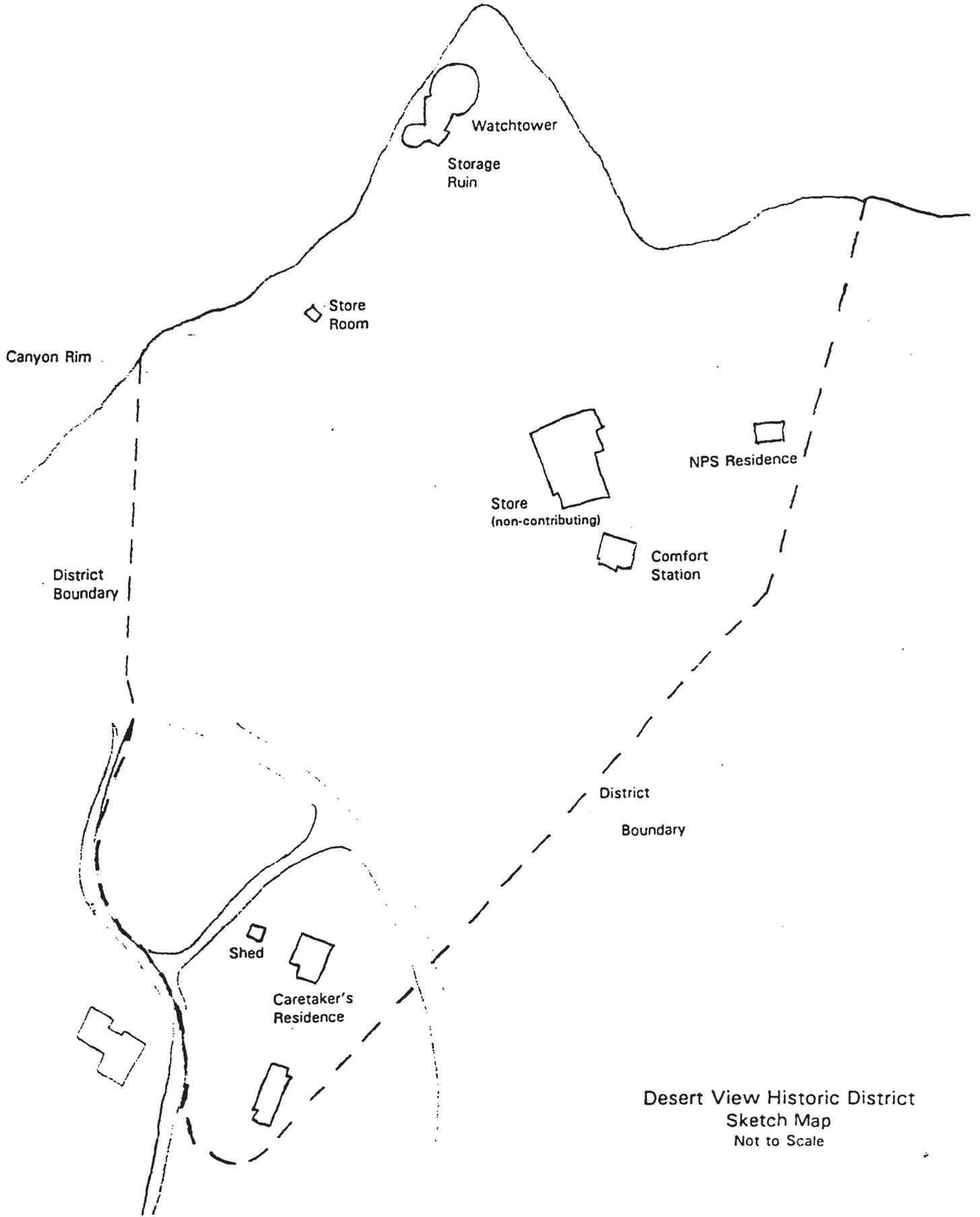
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This form is a revision of a form researched and prepared by Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian, National Park Service, Western Regional Office, San Francisco in August 1985. Considerable assistance was also provided by Doug Brown, Division of Professional Services, Grand Canyon National Park.



Desert View Historic District  
Sketch Map  
Not to Scale

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 94001503 Date Listed: 1/3/95

Desert View Watchtower Historic District  
Property Name

Coconino County AZ State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*Antoniella Alsea*  
Signature of the Keeper

1/3/95  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Statement of Significance:** The level of significance is national for the Desert View National Historic Landmark and local for the Desert View Watchtower Historic District.

This information was confirmed with Jamie M. Donahoe, Historian, Western Regional Office, National Park Service.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)