



A, D, & J. HILTON GULCH SCHOOLHOUSE
32405 County Road 41C, south of Steamboat Springs

One-room schools played a major role in the development of education in the United States: In 1918, approximately 200,000 one-teacher elementary schools served students living in outlying areas from the age of six to sixteen. At one time Routt County had 70 one-room schoolhouses; in 1916, the County had 58 schoolhouses and 45 school districts. Mrs. Emma Hull Peck was elected the first Superintendent of School District #26 in 1896, when less than 3,000 people lived in Routt County. The wife of a homesteader and pioneer politician and mother of four children, she also taught school throughout the year. When she retired in 1920, she could call by name more than one third of the County's more than 2,000 school children. The Hilton Gulch School, one of two rural schools that comprised District #26, opened in 1917 and consolidated with the Steamboat Springs School District at the end of the 1954 term. Prior to it becoming a private residence, the school was significant to the social and cultural development of the area by serving as a gathering place for quilting guilds, spelling bees, concerts, political caucuses, box socials, church revivals, funerals, and weekend dances. One local resident recalls, "The music was portable and local. We took up a collection, put 25 cents in a hat and danced 'til two o'clock. And then, if we wanted to go dance all night, we took up another collection. We actually wore the floor out in the Hilton Gulch School. It actually fell in when people were square dancing." In addition to the school, the site originally contained a teacherage, a shed, and an outhouse. The building continues to serve as a visual reminder of the pioneer lifestyle and the focal position that it held for the area as it sits prominently at a crossroads, still retains its bell tower and original bell, and essentially retains its architectural integrity.