

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT 10 SEPT 12

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name The Florence and John R. Pond House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1875 Highway 170 not for publication

city or town La Plata vicinity

state New Mexico code NM county San Juan code 045 zip code 87418

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register ___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register ___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

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

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

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
 (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Georgian Revival

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: Sandstone

walls: STONE: Sandstone

roof: FIBERGLASS

other: WOOD

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Florence and John R. Pond House is located at 1875 Highway 170, in rural San Juan County, New Mexico, approximately 6 miles north of the community of La Plata and .6 mile south of the Colorado-New Mexico state line. This distinguished Georgian Revival style residence was constructed c. 1890 and is situated on a 32-acre farm which is bounded by the La Plata River along its west side. There are several landscape features located between the house and Highway 170 to the east, including a lawn, a row of historic box elders, and the Pioneer Ditch, an irrigation ditch constructed c. 1877 that parallels the highway.¹

Narrative Description

Exterior – Overview

The house is rectangular in plan and is oriented along an E-W axis. The oldest section of the house includes a two-story block possessing the box shape characteristic of Georgian architecture with a single-story wing extending from the rear, west side. The structure of the oldest section is based upon a wooden frame clad with walls of sandstone ashlar masonry. The stones along the front or east façade are laid in horizontal courses; the stones that form the other walls are laid in irregular courses. The jambs of the windows and doors have a symmetrical stone placement pattern. Thick stone sills and lintels accent all of the first-floor windows in the oldest section of the house. All of the second-story windows have similar stone sills. Each corner of the house has been chiseled to create a crisp, uniform edge. The stone for the house was quarried from an outcropping a quarter mile east of the property.² The sandstone used for the foundation differs from the wall construction material in that it is a denser, darker stone; this more resilient material appears to be the capping stone exposed above the lighter sandstone in the quarry. The mortar used to construct the house includes at least two different mixtures, one comprised of adobe, and the other of sand and lime. The walls are crowned by an unornamented wooden cornice which projects from underneath the eave of the house. Each of the 22 windows in the oldest section of the house is double-hung without counterweights, locks or other hardware. All of these window openings differ slightly in size and shape, and the framing and windows were custom built to fit the openings, suggesting that they were made locally. The windows themselves are two-over-two lite, excepting a bay window along the south side, which contains four one-over-one lite sections. The enclosed porch (c. 1950) along the south of the rear, west side has a wooden structure clad with split-log siding. The design of the enclosed porch is in keeping with the style of the older section of the home. The roof of the house is composed of fiberglass shingles and varies in pitch and style. The two-story block is capped by a truncated hipped roof. A shed roof covers the one-story kitchen space at the rear, while a modified hipped roof covers the enclosed porch. Two porches with shed roofs extend from the west and south sides of the building.

¹ The date for the Pioneer Ditch was set during the adjudication of a water rights case against the Hillside Irrigating Ditch Company in 1901; a similar water rights case was adjudicated in 1910. According to the documents generated by these cases, the Pioneer Ditch was owned by D.P. Dale, J.R. (John) Pond and John Greer. See Douglas D. Dykeman and Kristin Langenfeld, with contributions by Margaret A. Powers, and Richard Paul Watson, "Prehistory and History of the La Plata Valley, New Mexico: An Overview—A Report to the State Historic Preservation Officer, State of New Mexico" (Farmington, NM: Division of Conservation Archaeology, San Juan College Cultural Resource Management Program, 1987), 130.

² Personal Communication from Dabney Ford to Lillian Makeda, January 31, 2011.

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Exterior – East (Front) Façade (Photo 1)

The eastern façade overlooks a flagstone terrace that spans the width of the house. A wooden single-leaf door with a four-lite window forms the main entrance, located at the center of the façade. The door is surmounted by a single-lite transom, above which may be found a massive stone lintel. Two four-lite double hung wood frame windows flank the main door to create three bays. The central opening in the second-story is elongated, echoing the door that is aligned directly beneath it. The perfect bilateral symmetry of the main façade is characteristic of the Georgian Revival style.

Exterior – South Elevation (Photo 2)

The flagstone terrace along the east, front façade wraps around the corner of the building and continues along the length of the south side. The south side of the house is punctuated by eleven openings, including ten double hung wood frame windows and a single-leaf, wooden door with a nine-lite window. Four of the windows form part of a large, rectangular bay window. A porch with a shed roof and stoop faces south from the wood-frame addition at the rear of the building.

Exterior – West (Rear) Elevation (Photo 3)

The flagstone terrace continues around the corner of the building and along the west side. The west side of the house possesses two double hung wood frame windows and an aluminum replacement window that illuminates a bathroom. A single-leaf door with a four-lite window opens from the west side onto an elevated porch with a shed roof. The door is located slightly north of center.

Exterior – North Elevation (Photo 4)

The north elevation of the building includes four double hung wood frame windows, three on the first-story and one on the second story. A joint in the masonry is apparent between the two-story section and the kitchen section, suggesting that the sloped roof was added sometime after the main building was completed.

Interior

All of the interior walls on the first floor of the house (excepting the enclosed porch) are constructed from 2” by 8” lumber uprights on 4’ centers and are filled in with adobe bricks. Each wall of adobe bricks is built on a sandstone foundation to provide support and carry the load of the second floor. These partition walls and the interiors of the stone walls on the first floor are plastered and painted. The plaster consists of a thin scratch coat over the interior stone and adobe bricks, over which a thicker layer of adobe has been laid.³ The first floor has been laid out on a central corridor plan. Two bedrooms adjoin the corridor along the north side, while two living rooms are disposed along the south side. The wall between the two living rooms has been partially dismantled in order to widen the opening between them. The front, east living room has a fireplace built entirely from sandstone blocks with a floor-level hearth constructed from a stone slab and a six-foot long stone slab mantel. The firebox is formed inside the structural masonry wall on the south side of the room, and the chimney flue is an unlined cavity which continues up through the wall. The house has three additional flues that appear to have vented wood-burning stoves.⁴ The one-story masonry section of the house at the rear contains a

³ In 1985, crumbling plaster was repaired by applying a coat of structolite and finished in a similar manner to the original plaster.

⁴ One of these flues is located in the north wall of the front, east bedroom, another in the east wall of the kitchen and another in the west wall of the rear, west living room.

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kitchen, while the wood-frame addition comprises a bathroom, laundry room, and a vestibule. The main corridor, back bedroom, and kitchen retain the house's original 1" by 3" pine tongue-and-groove flooring.⁵

The second floor contains an office and two storage spaces accessed by an interior staircase. The office has been insulated and sheet-rocked and a 1" by 3" pine tongue-and-groove floor has been installed. The walls of the two storage spaces have never been plastered, but have historic cutout pictures from magazines pasted onto the stone surfaces.

Modification History

- c. 1950 A bathroom with cinderblock walls was built on the porch at the southwest, rear corner of the house. The porch was framed and enclosed with pine clapboard siding soon afterwards.
- 1983 A porch was added on to the northwest, rear corner of house. The original kitchen door had been partially walled over at an earlier date and was being used as a conduit for the house's water and sewage system. The concrete blocks within the opening were removed and the water system was rerouted. An awning was constructed over the existing steps at the southwest, rear corner of the house.
- 1984 The roof was redone and three of the house's four chimneys were removed. The chimneys (which had originally vented wood-burning stoves) had not been used for many years, were in poor condition, and posed a safety hazard. The roof over the main block of the house and the kitchen extension was originally covered with wood shingles. Welded metal plates were also used to roof the bay window along the south side. Sometime prior to 1946, the wood shingles and several of the roof joists near the fireplace chimney burned; at that time, a V-groove tin roof was placed over the remaining wood shingles of the entire roof. By 1984, the tin roof was in poor condition and it was removed, the burned rafters were repaired, and a fireproof black fiberglass shingle roof was installed.
- 1980s The windows in the main block of the house were replaced with double-pane inserts that replicate the appearance of the building's original windows.
- 2010 Fiberglass architectural shingles were installed on the roof. The truncated portion of the hipped roof over the main block was given a slight pitch in order to address leakage problems, leaving the original roof timbers intact.
- 2011 All but one of the aluminum windows in the wood-frame enclosed porch were replaced with wooden double hung windows. The remaining aluminum window on the west, rear side illuminates the house's bathroom.

⁵ The floors of the two rooms on the south side of the first floor and the hallway were covered with 3/4' by 2 1/4' oak tongue-and-groove floors during the 1990s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1890-1905

1890-1963

Significant Dates

1890; 1902

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John R. Pond

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for Criterion A begins in 1890 (the estimated date of construction of the house) and ends in 1905, the year that the first railway line was constructed along the Animas River valley between Aztec and Durango. For many years previous to 1905, the La Plata River valley served as a major transportation corridor between northwestern New Mexico and southwestern Colorado. The railroad signaled the end of the valley's importance as a link between these two regions. The period of significance for Criterion C also begins at the date of the house's construction and ends in 1963, fifty years ago.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Florence and John R. Pond House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under National Register Criteria A and C. The house is historically significant for its connection to the community of La Plata and the La Plata River valley road, the main transportation route connecting northwestern New Mexico with southwestern Colorado during the late 19th century. Florence and John R. Pond were among the earliest Euro-American settlers in the La Plata valley, arriving in 1877. John R. Pond became the first postmaster of La Plata, and the site upon which the house was built served as the community's first post office.⁶ The house was a stage stop and supported a smithy along the road connecting Farmington and Aztec with old Fort Lewis and Durango. At its height, La Plata was one of the largest communities in San Juan County but its importance had declined by the time the Pond family left in 1902. The house stands as testimony to a time when the La Plata River valley played a vital role in the development of the region. The building is architecturally significant as an excellent local example of the Georgian Revival style and remains as the oldest stone masonry house constructed by Euro-Americans in San Juan County.⁷

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

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

The La Plata River Valley

New Mexico's San Juan County possesses three major rivers – the San Juan, which flows from east to west, and its tributaries, the Animas and the La Plata, which flow south from their headwaters in Colorado. The valleys associated with these rivers offer fertile bottomlands located along some of the most favorable transportation routes in the region.⁸ The geographical advantages offered by the La Plata River valley have given rise to human settlements in the area since the Basketmaker II Period. Radiocarbon dating attests to the presence of dwellings along the banks of the La Plata from at least the 1st century BCE.⁹ The lower La Plata valley in New Mexico also includes an Anasazi great house and great kiva located at a site commonly known as Morris 41 (c. 500-1300 CE).¹⁰ Morris 41 encompasses roughly 75 acres and “forms one of the largest aggregations of prehistoric remains in northwest New Mexico.”¹¹ It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and is located roughly a mile to the southwest of the Florence and John R. Pond House.

In later years, the La Plata valley became the province of the Navajos (or Diné) and the Utes. The dates when these tribes arrived in the area have yet to be established with certainty, but the Diné were reportedly cultivating

⁶ James W. White, *The History of San Juan County Post Offices* (Farmington, NM: Self-published, 2003), 139.

⁷ During an interview on August 8, 2012, local historian Marilu Waybourn, a resident of San Juan County for over 80 years and author of *Homesteads to Boomtown: A Pictorial History of Farmington, New Mexico and Surrounding Areas* (Wadsworth Publishing, 2001) and *Aztec – Images of America* (Arcadia Publishing, 2011) stated that the Pond House is the oldest stone house in San Juan County, so far as she is aware.

⁸ Boyd C. Pratt and Dan Scurlock, *The Northwest New Mexico Regional Overview* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, 1989), 151. For more on the early days of the La Plata valley, see John Brown Arrington and Eleanor Davenport MacDonald, *The San Juan Basin: My Kingdom was a County* (Denver: Green Mountain Press, 1970), 122-29.

⁹ Dykeman, 18.

¹⁰ Robert P. Powers, Michael Marshall, and John R. Stein, National Register of Historic Places, Morris's No. 41 Archeological District, San Juan County, New Mexico, National Register #79001548 (August 1978), 2.

¹¹ Powers, Marshall, and Stein, 3. For a detailed description of Morris 41, see Earl H. Morris, *Archaeological Studies in the La Plata District, Southwestern Colorado and Northwestern New Mexico* (Washington DC: The Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1939), 85-113.

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the La Plata valley as late as 1835 and the Utes were farming in the region until the late 19th century, when they were displaced by Euro-American settlers.¹²

The earliest written record of the lower La Plata valley dates from 1829, when Antonio Armijo and his men traveled by “the springs of the Plata River” during their historic journey to California.¹³ Armijo’s expedition was soon to initiate trade relations between Euro-Americans in New Mexico and California. For the next twenty years, a steady stream of Mexican and American pack trains made their way westward through the area along varying tracks of the Old Spanish Trail bearing goods to exchange on the West Coast.¹⁴

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded the lower La Plata valley to the United States. By 1859, Euro-American prospectors were arriving in vast numbers in western Colorado, drawn by the Pike’s Peak gold rush, and within a couple of years, some of these adventurers were exploring the area around the Animas and San Juan Rivers. Another gold rush in 1869-70 lured even more people to the San Juan Mountains in southwestern Colorado.¹⁵ Some of these Euro-Americans drifted through the traditional tribal lands of the Utes and the Diné to the south. Others migrated northward from parts of New Mexico to graze their herds of cattle in the La Plata valley.

Euro-American settlements would not appear in the lower La Plata valley, however until the late 1870s. When archaeologist W.H. Holmes traveled along the La Plata in 1874, he observed only Native Americans, including a village of Ute Indians at the New Mexico-Colorado boundary, as well as “Indian farms” to the south of it.¹⁶ But in the same year, a large portion of the Ute Indian reservation in western Colorado was opened up for Euro-American settlement. Cattlemen were the first to arrive with herds that in some cases numbered into the thousands. Most of these early settlers originated from Colorado, lured by the lush grasslands of the river valleys soon to be transformed into pasturage.¹⁷ The Jicarilla reservation in eastern San Juan County was ceded in 1878, further encouraging Euro-Americans to enter northwestern New Mexico and within a short period, Euro-American settlers were living amongst the Utes in the lower La Plata valley. According to Edward Thomas, an early settler, there were only three families living in the La Plata valley when he arrived in 1878, the [Florence and John R.] Ponds, the Dales, and the Millers.¹⁸ The population slowly grew, although not always peacefully. At least two families were run off from their farms in the valley by hostile Utes during the late 1870s and were forced to resettle along the Animas River.¹⁹

In 1880, Congress further restricted the Southern Ute reservation to a strip of land roughly 15 miles wide and 120 miles long located just north of the Colorado border. The following year, George W. Manypenny, the head of the Ute Commission came on an official visit to the La Plata valley. His specific mission was “to learn something reliable in relation to the disorder that was said to prevail in the region among contending elements

¹² Dykeman, 125.

¹³ Leroy R. Hafen, “Armijo’s Journal,” *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. XI (1947-48): 93.

¹⁴ Hafen, 87, and Leroy J. Hill, “The Old Spanish Trail: A Study of Spanish and Mexican Trade Northwest from New Mexico to the Great Basin and California.” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (August 1921): 464-473.

¹⁵ Duane A. Smith, *A Time for Peace: Fort Lewis, Colorado, 1878-1891* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2006), 6.

¹⁶ Dykeman, 126.

¹⁷ Hartsill Lloyd Clark, “A History of San Juan County, New Mexico” (MA Thesis, University of Tulsa, 1963), 43.

¹⁸ Mrs. John Bryce, “Edward Thomas of La Plata,” in *Pioneers of the San Juan Country*, Vol. IV (Denver:

Big Mountain Press, 1961), 160.

¹⁹ Agnes Miller Furman, *Tohta: An Early History of the Settlement of Farmington and San Juan County, New Mexico, 1875-1900* (Wichita Falls, TX: Nortex Press, 1977), 56.

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of Euro-American people, so that steps could be taken to prevent the Indians from being involved.”²⁰ The “disorder” almost certainly referred to the Stockton Cattle War, which had begun with a shooting at a dance near Farmington on Christmas night, 1880 and then culminated with the death of Ike Stockton in Durango in September 1881.²¹ The violence spurred by the War affected many settlers in the area, some of whom were frightened enough to take permanent leave of their homes.²² Mr. Manypenny visited the home of the Pond family during the late spring of 1881 and the Commission’s report reads as follows:

The first ranch on the La Plata below the southern line of the Ute Reservation is owned by Mr. Pond. He had been there for several years, and had 25 or 30 acres of land under cultivation. His claim is bounded on the north by the reservation line. He informed me that in the La Plata Valley, in New Mexico, there were twenty-three settlers. I observed but nineteen habitations, including those of Pond and Rambo [another settler visited by Manypenny]; and there was an absence of cultivation or land broken for that purpose, at many of these.²³

During his journey through the La Plata valley, Manypenny stopped at Fort Lewis, Colorado, located only 13 miles north of the Pond home.²⁴ The fort had been established in 1880 to quell conflicts between Euro-American settlers and Native Americans. The route along the La Plata valley soon became formally known as part of the Togay Trail. The Togay Trail was the major transportation corridor for troops and supply trains traveling between Fort Lewis and Fort Wingate, New Mexico, 160 miles to the south.²⁵

The La Plata valley road also served as a vital link for civilians traveling through the region. During the latter part of the 19th century, the road was “the major highway over which supplies were brought in from Colorado points” into western New Mexico.²⁶ Although the Animas River is larger and follows a more direct route to the population centers of southwestern Colorado, the Animas valley narrows near the state line, so much so that it was not developed as a transportation corridor until the early 20th century.²⁷ Joe Prewitt, who came to Farmington in 1882, was interviewed as part of an oral history project sponsored by the Works Progress Administration. He described the early days of the area, and recounted that,

The mail arrived from Durango, by going first to Ft. Lewis, then to the "Johnnie Pond Ranch" on the La Plata, where the stage stayed over night—then to Pendleton, N.M., the Post Office on the La Plata, in the store of Dan Rhoads, Post Master, on to Aztec N.M. and across to Bloomfield,

²⁰ James W. Manypenny in *Report of the Secretary of the Interior, being part of the message and documents communicated to the Two Houses of Congress at the beginning of the First Session of the 47th Congress*, Vol. II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881), 391.

²¹ For more on the Stockton Cattle War see Robert W. Duke, “The Political History of San Juan County: 1876-1926,” (master’s thesis, University of New Mexico, 1947), 31-40; F. Stanley, *The Private War of Ike Stockton* (Denver: World Press, Inc., 1959); Doyce B. Noonis, Jr., ed. *Frontier Fighter: The Autobiography of George W. Coe Who Fought and Rode with Billy the Kid* (Chicago: Lakeside Press/R.R. Dannelley and Sons Co., 1984); and John Brown Arrington and Eleanor Davenport MacDonald, *The San Juan Basin: My Kingdom was a County* (Denver: Green Mountain Press, 1970).

²² Robert W. Duke, *San Juan County: The Early Years* (Flora Vista: San Juan Historical Society, 1999), 16.

²³ Manypenny in *Report*, 391.

²⁴ Fort Lewis was initially established at Pagosa Springs, Colorado in 1878, but was moved to the La Plata valley during the summer of 1880 because of the site’s ample timber and water resources, as well as its proximity to anticipated hostilities. See Smith, 38.

²⁵ Dykeman, 127, and Smith, 44.

²⁶ Duke (1999), 5.

²⁷ The railroad line between Durango and Aztec along the Animas River valley was completed in 1905.

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which was quite a town—and then down to Farmington. We got the mail twice a week, except when the water was high.²⁸

An article that appeared in the March 3, 1883 issue of *The Southwest*, published in Durango, further testified to the importance of the La Plata River valley route during the late 19th century. According to the newspaper, “it is probable that a road will be constructed from John Pond’s ranch on the La Plata river, across to the Animas river, which will save a distance of travel of five miles.” This road, which would have followed a northeast-southwest trajectory and joined the Animas River valley at a point north of the state line, was never built. But its importance was such that the citizens of La Plata County allotted \$5000 towards constructing the northern portion of the road between the state line and Durango.

The Euro-American population of northwestern New Mexico maintained a strong commercial relationship with Durango during this period. The railroad arrived in Durango in 1881 at about the same time that the Atlantic and Pacific transcontinental line reached western New Mexico. But the nearest station in New Mexico was 160 miles away at Coolidge, near Fort Wingate, a six-day journey through the desert and Navajoland.²⁹ Hence, Durango offered the best access to the railroad and points beyond. Farmington and Aztec were still little more than shantytowns. Farmington acquired its first general store in 1878 and a post office the following year. Aztec established its first post office in 1879 and John A. Koontz built the first general store there in 1880.³⁰ The best sources for supplies and the most important markets for livestock and produce were to be found north in Colorado. This was especially the case after Fort Lewis was constructed along the La Plata in 1880.³¹ As historian Duane A. Smith has written,

Economically, the residents of the northern part of New Mexico Territory had more ties to their Colorado neighbors than to the rest of their territory because they were separated by desert and native tribes from the main settlements along the Rio Grande.³²

What’s more, the people who lived high above the snow line in southwestern Colorado were dependent on northwestern New Mexico as well. An issue of *Ranch and Range* dating from November 1900 reported that between 30 and 50 thousand cattle were spending the winter along the lower La Plata.³³ The primary agricultural products in the La Plata valley were alfalfa and grain to feed livestock, but also included fruit that was brought to market in Durango. The miners who worked along the slopes of the San Juan Mountains were subject to weather extremes that made them reliant upon the residents of lower climes for food, forage, and supplies.³⁴ But even people living at lower elevations were sometimes caught out by the wintery conditions along the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Historic documents relate that heavy snow shut down the railroad to Durango for several months during the winter of 1883-84. During this period, the town of Durango was

²⁸ “Reminiscences of Mr. Joe Prewitt” interviewed by Mrs. R.T.F. Simpson. WPA New Mexico Collection, 1936-1940. New Mexico History Museum, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Transcript accessed online at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/wpa/20030304.html> on September 29, 2011.

²⁹ Smith, 7.

³⁰ Duke (1999), 7-8.

³¹ The fort typically garrisoned several hundred soldiers. For example, 344 troops were stationed at Fort Lewis in 1887 and 439 in 1888. See Smith, 93.

³² Smith, 6.

³³ Dykeman, 131.

³⁴ Smith, 6.

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sustained by supplies from Fort Lewis, which in turn were transported on the Togay Trail along the La Plata valley from Fort Wingate.³⁵

By 1890, the community of La Plata was the fourth largest in San Juan County, with 212 people. Largo, Aztec, and Farmington were more sizable, but not by much, with 468, 439, and 336 residents, respectively.³⁶ The valley of the La Plata River had played a crucial role in the Euro-American settlement of northwestern New Mexico and the size of its population reflected its importance. But the heyday of the La Plata valley was soon to come to a close. Fort Lewis was decommissioned in 1891 and then reopened as a boarding school for Native American students in 1892. In previous years, the presence of the military had energized the area economically and validated the use of the La Plata valley as a major transportation route. When the soldiers departed, the La Plata valley lost its significance at the regional level and became little more than an indirect link between Durango and northwestern New Mexico. Efforts were thenceforth directed towards developing the Animas River valley as a transportation corridor, and with the opening of the railroad line along the Animas between Aztec and Durango in 1905, the La Plata valley road became primarily a route for local traffic.

SOCIAL HISTORY

Florence and John R. Pond

John R. (or Johnny) Pond was born in 1852 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The family history related by his grandchildren characterizes him as a horseman and a jockey in his youth.³⁷ He was small in stature (Figure 8-1), and contemporary newspaper accounts substantiate a long-standing interest in horses. Future research may reveal why he made his way to Lake City, Colorado where he met and married Florence Gotto in 1876 (Figure 8-2). Florence was born in 1860 in Wisconsin and had come to Silverton, Colorado in 1875 with her father and mother, Joseph and Josephine. Both parents were Belgian immigrants and within a few years they had returned to Green Bay.³⁸

According to the homestead proof filed by John R. Pond in 1900, the Ponds established a residence at La Plata on October 12, 1877. The river valley appears to have been especially beautiful during the early years. Mary Dicus, a settler who arrived in 1879, told historian Robert W. Duke that she moved to the valley because “it was like a garden with native grasses belly deep to a horse.”³⁹ The Ponds constructed the first residence on their property in November 1877.⁴⁰ The homestead proof also describes the house that is the subject of this nomination (“a 2-story stone 28 x 34 house”) but does not provide a date for when it was built. Mr. Pond claimed to have kept his acreage under cultivation continuously since 1878, with 70 acres producing crops in 1900. A Durango newspaper from the same period reported that Mr. Pond brought 150 turkeys to market in 1898 and that the apple orchards at the Pond ranch produced four wagonloads of apples in October 1901.⁴¹

³⁵ Smith, 121.

³⁶ *Twelfth Census of the United States*, Vol. I (Washington: US Census, 1901), 271.

³⁷ Personal communication from James Pond [grandson of Florence and John Pond] to Lillian Makeda, January 27, 2011.

³⁸ There is a detailed biography of the Gottos in *History of Brown County, Wisconsin: Past and Present*, Vol. II (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), 298-302.

³⁹ Duke (1999), 5.

⁴⁰ The late date of the proof is probably related to disputes over the location of the state line which were not settled until 1899. See Dykeman, 131.

⁴¹ *Durango Democrat*, 22 December 1898 and 23 October 1901.

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Although the Ponds farmed their homestead, John R. Pond's primary occupation, according to the 1880 census, was as a blacksmith. The present owners of the Florence and John R. Pond House have found hundreds of horseshoes on the property and it is almost certain that the family supported themselves in part through Mr. Pond's skill as a farrier. Mr. Pond was also the first postmaster of La Plata. On June 9, 1881, he opened the town of La Plata's first post office at the family's residence.⁴² The house also served as a stage stop on the route between Farmington and Durango.⁴³

But if the reportage in local newspapers is to be relied upon, John R. Pond was truly distinguished by his aptitude for trading horses. A notice in the Personals section of the December 1, 1883 issue of *The Southwest* described Mr. Pond not as a blacksmith, but as "a ranchman from the lower La Plata." An article in the September 14, 1900 issue of the *Durango Democrat* called him "a horseman" with three "blooded colts" that he had brought up to exhibit and race at the Colorado-New Mexico Fair. During the same year, Mr. Pond advertised horses that he kept corralled in Durango ("well broke drivers, gaited saddlers, kind, gentle, and speeded").⁴⁴ A similar ad was placed in the *Durango Democrat* in 1908 ("John Pond's string, now at People's corral, embraces drivers, saddlers, and work horses").⁴⁵ A short humorous piece in the February 9, 1909 issue of the *Durango Democrat* read "Johnny Pond is up from Farmington. He doesn't know whether to trade horses or what to do, just so there is something doing." In 1909, Mr. Pond was heading up the Livestock and Poultry committee for the Farmington Fair and Fruit Carnival.⁴⁶ The descendants of John and Florence Pond relate that Mr. Pond traded horses with the Utes and that a Ute chief concluded a bargain for a particularly handsome stallion by having his men dig a trench and build a fence and cross-fence on the Pond property.⁴⁷

During the years that Fort Lewis was in operation, it is likely that there would have been a booming business for horses along the La Plata. In *A Time for Peace: Fort Lewis, 1878-1891*, Duane A. Smith writes,

Managing the number of animals at Fort Lewis was another problem. Horses were always in demand by the military. When the initial construction of the post took place, a shortage of draft horses caused some problems and frustrations. And the practice of each troop using horses of only one particular color complicated matters. When Troop B of the Sixth Cavalry realized that they had only thirty-eight, Capt. George Anderson requested enough black horses to increase that "number to at least 60." The Seventh Cavalry rode white horses, and other companies had black, gray, or sorrel. Acquiring specific colors of horses proved costly, time-consuming, and often impractical, but it remained a common practice for years past Fort Lewis's demise.⁴⁸

Not only would the fort have provided a robust market for horses—it would also have required the various skills that John R. Pond could offer, for according to Smith, "Fort Lewis seems to have had a recurrent shortage of

⁴² James W. White, *The History of San Juan County Post Offices* (Farmington, NM: Self-published, 2003), 139. Mr. Pond resigned from the position on October 31, 1881.

⁴³ Marilu Waybourn. *Homesteads to Boomtown: A Pictorial History of Farmington, New Mexico and Surrounding Area*. (Virginia Beach, VA: Donning Company Publishers, 2001), 23.

⁴⁴ *Durango Democrat*, 27 September 1900.

⁴⁵ *Durango Democrat*, 30 June 1908.

⁴⁶ *Durango Democrat*, 28 August 1909.

⁴⁷ Personal communication from James Pond [grandson of Florence and John Pond] to Lillian Makeda, January 27, 2011. An old fence that fits the description provided by the grandchildren of Florence and John Pond may still be found on the property.

⁴⁸ Smith, 91. The post was also chronically short of blacksmiths and on page 161, Smith writes "the fort offered excellent wages for people with a variety of skills, from herders to blacksmiths, to painters to construction superintendents. Bricklayers received a daily wage of \$4; blacksmiths, \$2-\$5; and carpenters, \$2-\$2.80...Corresponding wages in town were lower: a daily wage for bricklayers was \$1.75-\$2.50, for blacksmiths, \$2.00-\$4.00; and for carpenters, \$2.00-\$2.25."

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blacksmiths.”⁴⁹ The proximity of the Pond home (located only 13 miles away) further increased the likelihood that the Pond family derived some of their income from the presence of the US military nearby.

The Ponds had their first child in September 1877, during the same year they settled in the La Plata valley. Over the course of the next 24 years, Florence Pond gave birth to ten more children. Two died in infancy, leaving six boys and three girls who lived to adulthood: Frank R. (1877); John B., “Ben” (1879); Ellanora, “Ella” (1881); Arthur R. (1883); Lillian J. (1885); Murriel (also spelled as Morill, Myrl, and Meriel, 1889); Earl C. (1891); Florence G. (1897); and John R. (1901).

By the turn of the century, the *Durango Democrat* was following the activities of the Pond family, and the August 26, 1900 issue made mention of a dance at the Pond home celebrating the birthday of daughter Ella and a trip by son Frank to Durango with a load of apples. But the Ponds were soon to leave their house in La Plata and they moved to Farmington in 1902 after renting the property to George Stone.⁵⁰ By 1904, the Ponds owned a livery stable in Farmington that was offering teams of horses for hire.⁵¹ Unfortunately, the family home in Farmington burned down on March 31, 1904, with an estimated loss of \$1500.⁵² In 1907, the *Silverton [CO] Standard* reported that Florence Pond, along with her youngest children Florence and John, Jr. were returning to Green Bay, Wisconsin for the golden anniversary celebration of her parents Joseph and Josephine Gotto, “who were among the earliest settlers at Silverton.”⁵³ According to census records, John R. Pond owned a livery stable in Farmington in 1910 and was living with Florence and four of their children, Lillian, Murriel, Florence, and John, Jr. In Farmington, Florence was a Worthy Matron of the Order of the Eastern Star and John R. was a Warden of the Animas Lodge #15 of the New Mexico Masons.⁵⁴ In 1920, Florence and John R. Pond moved to Ajo, Arizona, and then the following year to Redlands, California where Florence died in 1924, followed by John in 1931.⁵⁵ The Johnny Pond Arroyo, which flows into the La Plata River just north of the New Mexico-Colorado state line attests to the importance of the Pond family during the early years of Euro-American settlement in northwestern New Mexico.

The ownership of the Florence and John R. Pond House, located on the W ½ NE ¼ of Section 15 in Township 32 North of Range 13 West, passed to Charles T. and John M. Payne in 1904. The Paynes sold the house to Graden Mercantile, a large dry goods business based in Durango, in 1906. The founder of Graden Mercantile, Thomas C. Graden purchased the home in 1914, although there is no evidence to indicate that he resided there. In 1920, Thomas C. Graden sold the house to Walter J. Dickerson, and Dickerson and his wife Maude owned the house for the next 20 years. According to census records, Dickerson was working the property as a farm in 1930 and employing Andrew C. Riordan as a laborer. Riordan lived on the property with his wife Minnie, who was Walter Dickerson’s sister.⁵⁶ In 1940, Walter Dickerson died and the property was sold to W.G. Thompson. According to the 1940 census, Thompson lived at the house with his wife Myral, their seven children, and

⁴⁹ Smith, 91.

⁵⁰ *Durango Democrat*, 1 March 1902. Stone was described as “recently from the San Luis valley.”

⁵¹ *Durango Democrat*, 23 January 1904; also *Durango Democrat*, 10 March 1904.

⁵² *Durango Democrat*, 1 April 1904.

⁵³ *Silverton Standard*, 26 January 1907.

⁵⁴ Personal communication from Georgia Morphis, September 10, 2012 and George B. Anderson, *History of New Mexico: Its Resources and People*, Vol. I (Los Angeles: Pacific States Publishing, 1907), 497. Animas Lodge #15 still retains a file for John R. Pond (personal communication from Neil Sherman to Lillian Makeda, February 12, 2012).

⁵⁵ Personal communication from James Pond [grandson of Florence and John Pond] to Lillian Makeda, January 27, 2011.

⁵⁶ History Committee of the Fort Lewis Mesa Reunion. *Pioneers of Southwest La Plata County, Colorado*, fourth printing (Bountiful, UT: Family History Publishers, 2010), 286.

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W.G.'s brother John. Thompson listed himself as a patrol foreman working for highway maintenance. His brother John worked as a farm laborer. In 1943, Thompson sold the property to W.L. McNierney, who in turn sold the property to M.T. Meyer in 1946. Meyer owned the house until 1982, when the present owners, Scott Andrae and Dabney Ford purchased it.

ARCHITECTURE

The Florence and John R. Pond House

The two-story stone house that John and Florence Pond built in the La Plata valley represents an exceptional example of 19th-century Georgian Revival style architecture in New Mexico (Figure 8-3). The masonry is not only beautifully executed; it is also distinctive. Although a firm date for the house has not yet been established, the style of the stonework, in particular the size of the blocks, the irregular coursing, and the carefully finished corners closely resembles the style of two stone buildings, the quartermaster's storehouse and the guardhouse, at old Fort Lewis, Colorado. Both of these buildings date from 1887 and are located 13 miles to the north of the Pond House (Figures 8-4 and 8-5).

The masonry of the stone buildings at Fort Lewis was almost certainly constructed under the direction of the same person who worked on the Florence and John R. Pond House. A comparison of the size, finish, and arrangement of a wall from the quartermaster's storehouse with a wall from the Pond House illustrates that the shaping and chiseling of the blocks is very similar (cf. Figure 8-6 and Photo 5). Square blocks are interspersed with wide rectangular blocks and the proportion of square to rectangular blocks is generally consistent across the three buildings. Blocks with a flat finish also alternate with blocks that have a more rustic finish. The surface of the rusticated blocks never rises to more than ~1" above the plane of the buildings' walls. The profile of the rusticated blocks is typically convex and rises from the edges toward the center of each block. The mortar joints are also alike: in each building they are recessed to a comparable depth and span the same width.

The manner in which the corners of the three buildings were finished is just as distinctive. In each case, the stonemason employed horizontal chisel strokes to accent the corner blocks and give them a smooth edge measuring roughly 1" wide (cf. Figure 8-7 and Photo 6). The width of these edges, as well as their depth in relation to the rest of the blocks is generally consistent across all three buildings. Some of the specifications for the buildings at Fort Lewis (e.g. the inner door dimensions) are also identical with the Pond House.⁵⁷

An 1880 township plat for the area shows a structure called "Powell's Cabin" on the site of the present house, indicating a *terminus a quo* of 1880. A letter from one of the Pond daughters dated December 1899 was found under one of the floorboards of the house, establishing a *terminus ad quem* of c. 1900.⁵⁸ The style of the masonry indicates a date that is close to the time when the guardhouse and the quartermaster's storehouse at Fort Lewis were built and the estimated date for the construction of the Pond House is c. 1890.

Historian Marilu Waybourn, author of several books about San Juan County, including *Homesteads to Boomtown: A Pictorial History of Farmington, New Mexico and Surrounding Areas* (Wadsworth Publishing, 2001) and *Aztec – Images of America* (Arcadia Publishing, 2011), has distinct memories of the Pond House

⁵⁷ These specifications may be found in Box 1 of Manuscript Collection M118-Fort Lewis Military Post Federal Records, at the Robert Delaney Research Library, the Center of Southwest Studies at Fort Lewis College, Durango.

⁵⁸ The homestead proof, which describes the house, was also filed in 1900.

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dating back to her childhood during the 1930s. She and her mother would travel through La Plata to visit one of her mother's friends, a teacher at the Fort Lewis Native American boarding school. Ms. Waybourn remembers that even then, the Pond house "really stood out" architecturally among the various buildings that lined the road. Now, over 70 years later, she notes that the Pond House is "probably the oldest stone house in San Juan County."⁵⁹

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

⁵⁹ Personal communication from Marilu Waybourn to Lillian Makeda, August 8, 2012.

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M093 First National Bank of Durango Records

M118 Fort Lewis Military Records

Durango Public Library, Durango, Colorado

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Farmington Museum, Farmington, New Mexico

John B. Arrington Papers

National Archives of the United States

Homestead Proof for "The West ½ of the Northeast ¼ of Section 15 in Township 32 North of Range 13 West Containing 80 Acres"

New Mexico History Museum, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library, Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Dabney Ford

Georgia Morphis

James Pond

Jackie Pond Rasberry

Neil Sherman

Marilu Waybourn

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>13</u> Zone	<u>216396.94</u> Easting	<u>4098266.67</u> Northing	3	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing
2	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing	4	<u> </u> Zone	<u> </u> Easting	<u> </u> Northing

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

House located on W 1/2 of NE 1/4 of Section 15, T32N, R13W

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lillian Makeda
organization _____ date September 5, 2012
street & number PO Box 1532 telephone 505-728-7960
city or town Gallup state NM zip code 87305
e-mail lmakeda@unm.edu

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Florence and John R. Pond House

City or Vicinity: La Plata

County: San Juan State: New Mexico

Photographer: Lillian Makeda

Date Photographed: March 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo No.	Photographic Information
0001	NM_San Juan County_Florence and John R. Pond House_0001 East, Front Façade
0002	NM_San Juan County_Florence and John R. Pond House_0002 Southwest Side
0003	NM_San Juan County_Florence and John R. Pond House_0003

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West Side

0004 NM_San Juan County_Florence and John R. Pond House_0004
Northwest Side

0005 NM_San Juan County_Florence and John R. Pond House_0005
Masonry Detail, South Side

0006 NM_San Juan County_Florence and John R. Pond House_0006
Masonry Detail, Corner of Bay Window, South Side

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Scott Andrae and Dabney Ford
street & number 1875 Highway 170 telephone 505-324-5244
city or town La Plata state NM zip code 87418

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

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.