

1842

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mint Saloon

other names/site number Mike Cook's Saloon; Empire Shop

2. Location

street & number 13 East Park Avenue (U.S. Highway 40) n/a not for publication

city or town Empire n/a vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Clear Creek code 019 zip code 80438

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title
State Historic Preservation Officer
State of Federal agency and bureau

December 9, 1992
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]
National Register

2/3/93

Mint Saloon
Name of Property

Clear Creek County, CO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

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.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/Restaurant

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/Specialty Store

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Clapboard

Tin

roof Asphalt

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

attached

Mint Saloon
Name of Property

Clear Creek, Colorado
County and State

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

ca. 1885 - 1942

Significant Dates

ca. 1885, 1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

not known

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

John Tomay Memorial Library, Georgetown, CO
Idaho Springs Public Library, Idaho Spgs, CO

Mint Saloon
Name of Property

Clear Creek County, CO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .10 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	113	4415810	44012710
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frances C. Richardson, Owner

organization N/A date September 11, 1992

street & number P. O. Box 215 telephone 303/569-2346

city or town Empire state CO zip code 80438

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name same as preparer

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 1

Mint Saloon

**Mint Saloon
Clear Creek County, CO**

Description

The Mint Saloon, now the Empire Shop, is a small, one-story commercial building located near the intersection of U.S. Highway 40 and Main Street in Empire, Colorado. It is believed the building was constructed in the mid-1880s. Since then it has been in continuous commercial use except when it was closed during World War II. The building remained vacant until 1947 when it was purchased by the current owners. It has retained its original appearance and integrity except for a hand railing added along the street side of the boardwalk between the high upright posts that support the roof over the sidewalk.

The building is one story faced with clapboard on the front and rear and stamped metal on the east side. It has a rectangular plan, flat roof and false front on the south facade. The building measures approximately 17 by 48 feet on a 36 by 120 foot lot. Its design is typical of the commercial buildings of the 1880s in Empire and other mountain towns. It is similar in design to the two story, false front, clapboard buildings on either side.

The saloon building has a stone foundation. In front of the false front is a shed roof across the front of the building which covers the boardwalk that extends for over half a block along the fronts of the adjacent buildings. The saloon's front features a large display window divided into four sections by muntins with a transom above and paneled kick plates below. The adjacent double door entrance is recessed and has a large rectangular transom above and a narrow display window set in the recess at an angle between the large display window and the doors.

The east side of the building is covered by tin stamped with a brick design. According to historic photographs of Empire, there was a building adjoining the east wall. It is assumed the tin was installed when that building was removed. The date is not known.

The lot slopes up to the north. When the building was constructed an area in the rear of the building, approximately 10 by 10 feet was excavated in the hill side. The sides of the excavation were faced with a rock wall up

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Mint Saloon

**Mint Saloon
Clear Creek County, CO**

Description (continued)

to a height of six feet to meet the slope of the hill. There is a board fence added to the top of this rock wall for privacy and safety. This courtyard-like area is accessible only through the rear of the building. On either side of the rear door there are two tall, narrow one-over-one wood sash windows.

The interior of the building has tongue and groove wainscoting along all four walls. The upper walls are wood covered by wallpaper. There is a high ceiling of unfinished two-by-fours extending the length of the building. There is a nonoriginal partition separating the front two-thirds of the building from the back. In the front portion of the interior, there are wooden shelves on either side wall which were added when the store was converted from a saloon to a liquor store in 1938.

Statement of Significance

The Mint Saloon is historically significant because of the commercial role it played in the everyday life of the Empire community and meets criterion A. It was one of very few such establishments, and at times the only saloon in this small mountain mining town beginning ca. 1880s to 1938. The establishment met a recreational and social need in the town as a gathering place for miners to meet, swap stories, discuss town affairs and play cards in the room at the rear of the building. The building also meets criterion C as representing a type, period and method of construction in late 19th century Empire. Because the building is relatively unaltered, it is an excellent example of commercial buildings of this type.

Historical background and significance

Originally known as Empire City, the town was located in what was known as the Union Mining District when gold was discovered in 1860 on nearby Eureka Mountain. A mining camp, North Empire, was established about a mile up from the site of Empire.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 3

Mint Saloon

**Mint Saloon
Clear Creek County, CO**

Statement of significance (continued)

Although the area had been populated from the 1860 gold discovery, Empire was not an official town until it was platted and incorporated in 1882. Early-day Empire was typical of Rocky Mountain mining towns, many of the first buildings were of log followed by frame buildings after saw mills were built. Between 1861 and 1865 the town prospered due to the large amount of silver and gold that was mined in the area. There were arastras and stamp mills built along the creek and Empire City boasted a hotel (the Peck House); a school for 50 students; a county poor house and an Episcopal Church. The Mint Saloon was located in the heart of the business area with boarding houses, a bakery, feed store, livery stable and mercantile stores nearby.

Through the 1870s and 1880s, the population of Empire remained around 250. It increased to 500 by 1888 where it remained until after the turn of the century when it declined again. Empire was not only a mining town but also a supply town for miners and ranchers in the area and a stage stop on one of the main wagon roads in the mountains.

The exact years of construction of the Mint Saloon is not known. It is believed to have been built sometime in the mid-1880s after the property was purchased by Jonathan Bowman in March of 1884 two years after the incorporation of the town. The Bowman property was sold to F.H. Coon in 1896 for \$1,000, indicating there were improvements on the property. That year, Coon and his partner, William Woodruff entered into a loan agreement with Adolph Coors who owned the Adolph Coors Brewing and Manufacturing Company in Golden. As part of the agreement, Coon and Woodruff would sell 'Coors' Golden Beer' exclusively in their saloon during the existence of the Trust Deed. For a few years it appears business was good for Coon and Woodruff, but by 1913, Adolph Coors owned the property. The building was then transferred to the Coors Company. The Coors Brewery, established in 1873 in Golden, was one of the pioneer breweries in Colorado and the longest in continuous operation up to the present day.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 4

Mint Saloon

**Mint Saloon
Clear Creek County, CO**

Statement of significance (continued)

The company owned the building until 1915 when it was sold for back taxes to James T. Garrett. The building changed hands several times until 1947. It is notable that after a number of owners that the building has changed so little.

The building next became the Mike Cook Saloon. When the boardwalk in front of the building was replaced in 1991, among the items found during construction was a token from the Mike Cook Saloon entitling the bearer to five cents credit at the bar.

On December 31, 1917, the Eighteenth Amendment prohibiting the sale of liquor went into effect. Mike Cook continued to operate his establishment and sold nothing stronger than strawberry sodas and sarsaparilla at the bar in the front of the saloon. However, Cook kept the poker room going in the back room along with a little bootlegging as a sideline. The small courtyard area outside the rear door has broken bottle glass in the soil as evidence that empty bottles were tossed out the back door.

Even though the Eighteenth Amendment was repealed in 1933, no liquor was sold in Empire until 1938 when the Mint Saloon became a liquor store. When the mines closed at the beginning of World War II, the population of Empire declined and a number of buildings were vacated. The Mint Saloon sat empty until it was sold in 1947.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

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Mint Saloon

**Mint Saloon
Clear Creek County, CO**

Significance (continued)

The Mint Saloon has architectural significance because it is an unaltered example of a one story frame commercial building from the late 19th century. This building is an excellent representative of the second generation of buildings that were constructed in Colorado mountain mining towns. When precious metals were first discovered in an area, the initial settlements were temporary mining camps rather than permanent towns. The camps usually consisted of tents and temporary lean-to buildings. The first buildings were usually constructed of logs because of the availability of materials. After the saw mills arrived, more permanent buildings were built of sawn lumber to replace the ones of log. This practice was especially true in the commercial sections of mining towns and usually occurred after the town was platted and incorporated. While Empire has a few examples of 19th century, two-story, wood frame buildings, the Mint Saloon is the only intact representative of the one-story, wood frame commercial building with its distinguishing features, such as display windows with transoms and kick plates and recessed entrance with original double doors.

Bibliography

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- Harrison, Louise C. Empire And The Berthoud Pass. Big Mountain Press, Denver. 1964.
- Idaho Springs Historical Society. A History of Clear Creek County. Denver. 1986.
- Luedde, Henry (Abstractor). Property Abstract - 1947. Clear Creek, Gilpin Abstract & Title Company.
- Wolle, Muriel Sibell. Timberline Tailings. Sage Books, Chicago. 1977.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 10 Page 6

Mint Saloon

**The Mint Saloon
Clear Creek County, CO**

Verbal boundary description

The east 16 1/2 feet of lot #8 and the west 20 feet of lot #9, Block 10, located in the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4, Section 28, Township 3, South, Range 74 West of the 6th P.M., Town of Empire County of Clear Creek, and State of Colorado.

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Mint Saloon building.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Clear Creek Co Page Co Mint Saloon SCALE - 1/16" = 1'

