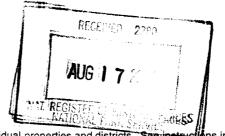
NPS Form 10-900 (Oct.1990)

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 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 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 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 Alpine County Courthouse	
other names/site number	
2. Location	
street & number 14777 State Route 89 (Main Street)NA _ not for publication	
city or town Markleeville NA vicinity	
state California code CA county Alpine code 003 zip code 96150	
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 \(\) ocally. (\) See continuation sheet for additional comments.) California Office of Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property \(\) meets \(\) does not meet the National Register criteria. (\) See continuation sheet for additional comments.) Signature of commenting or other official \(\) Date \(\) Date	
A. National Park Service Certification hereby certify that this property is: centered in the National Register centered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register other (explain):	

		Courthouse
Name of Pror	perty	

<u>Alpine County, Califor</u>nia County and State

5. Classification			
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) private public-local public-State public-Federal Name of related multiple pro (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a N/A 6. Function or Use Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) Government/County Courth	multiple property listing.)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.) Contributing Noncontributing	es
7. Description Architectural Classification		Materials	
(Enter categories from instructions)		(Enter categories from instructions)	
1. 20 th Century Revivals		foundation Concrete	
2.		roof Composite shingle	
	·	walls Stone: Granite	
		other	

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

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)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Law/Politics/Government
X 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.	Period of Significance
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.)	Significant Dates 1928
Property is:	
☐ .4 owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	
☐ B removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
C a birthplace or a grave.	
☐ D a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation
☐ 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.	Architect/Builder DeLongchamps, Frederick J.
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on or	
 □ 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 	Primary Location of Additional Data State Historic Preservation Office Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other Name of repository:
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	Historical Resources Commission

10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property .24 or ¼ acre
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)
Zone Easting Northing 1
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 Judy Molnar, Assistant to the Board of Supervisors
organization Alpine County Board of Supervisors date 12/5/2003
street & number POB 387, 99 Water Street telephone 530-694-2287
city or town Markleeville state CA zip code 96120
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 the SHPO or FPO.)
name
street & numbertelephone
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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1 Alpine County Courthouse, Alpine County, CA

Narrative Description of Property: The Alpine County Courthouse is a single story, granite stone 20th Century Revivalism style building with a pinched cornice, hipped roof and basement. There are three stone chimneys projecting from the roof. There are quoins at the corners of the rough hewn stone. There are three rounded arches into the stonework at the main entrance. A rough-hewn cornice decoration, like crenellation at the cornice is located above the doorway openings. Two in-set square windows are at each side of the main entranceway. Additional groups of three in-set square windows are located on the east and west side of the building and nine windows are in-set on the back side. The building rests on a vented concrete foundation. A long, low flight of concrete stairs leads to the front entrance. The interior of the building reflects the early Romanesque revival style with it's ceramic mosaic tiled entryway and hallway flooring and the built-in oak balustrades, doorways and transoms. The courthouse is facing south on Main Street and is set atop a large, sloping cultivated lawn. The lawn is enclosed on the west side of the property with a brick fence that is graduated to the front of the property. On the east and back sides of the property is an asphalt parking lot. A small brick outbuilding is set on the back east corner of the property and within the counted boundaries of the property. This building was originally constructed in the late 1960's to serve as the firehouse and the single fire engine that served the community was housed here. The entire property, including the courthouse and the outbuilding, is in excellent condition and has had very little alteration since its construction.

The building is located at the intersection of Water Street and Highway 4/89 (Main Street), in a commercial district. The lot measures approximately 95 feet wide by 109 feet deep. The building measures 92 feet wide by 53 feet deep. The building has been in continuous use since its construction in 1928 and has undergone no major structural changes since it was constructed. The exterior construction is blocks of light cream-colored rhyolite tuff, quarried locally at Silver Mountain, Alpine County, in 1928. The historic art of tuck pointing is evident in the spaces between the blocks. The Romanesque Revival style of architecture, designed by well-known western architect Frederick J. DeLongchamps, is evident in the form of the semi-circular masonry arches used for the deeply recessed entry doors and two front windows, the use of rusticated stone for the construction of the entire building, the quoins used at the corners of these stones, and the corbel tables at the eaves on the front entrance. The only exterior changes to the building were the replacement of the original asbestos roof tiling with composite roof tiles in approximately 1980.

The interior design includes a large courthouse to the rear of the mosaic entry hall that utilizes approximately one-third of the first floor area. The courthouse has two original oak and glass entry doors, and built-in oak balustrades separate the public from the formal proceedings. The jury box is also set behind a low wall, as are the spaces for both prosecutor and defendant. The judge is placed behind yet another oak balustrade that is raised and ornamented. The witness box is also raised and placed behind ornamental balustrades. At the rear of the courtroom, behind

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the sectioned rows of spectator chairs, are built in oak, glassed front bookcases holding antique law books.

Directly to the left and right of the entry doors to the courthouse building are located offices for traffic court and probation. Originally, the district attorney's and county administration offices were located in the building, but were moved when additional space was needed to house the staff. The only changes in the interior of the building since the construction are the installation of electricity (there was no electricity available in Alpine County at the time of construction and it wasn't available until shortly after the end of World War II); carpeting; the replacement of the original plywood spectator chairs with cushioned seating in the courtroom; and a heating and air conditioning system.

The offices of the two Superior Court Judges are located on the east and west sides of the building. All of the offices are entered through original oak and glass front doors with oak and glass transoms located directly above. The mosaic tile is also located throughout the interior hallways, with every door entrance inlaid in marble. Original oak moldings, baseboards and window sills decorate every room, as well as oak chair rails in some. An oak handrail and guardrail lead to the basement, where the original jail facilities were located. Prior to the actual construction of the building, three steel boxes were placed in the basement to serve as jail cells. Open hearth steel gratings, cement floors and tool resisting steel mesh windows complete the cells. The use of the jail cells for housing prisoners was abandoned in approximately 1978 when the cells no longer met state requirements. Prisoners are now escorted to the El Dorado County jail for processing. All of the three jail cells are still located in the basement, although one is utilized for filing for the Sheriff's Department, whose offices encompass the entire basement. Of the other two, one is utilized as a holding cell while court is in session and a third has had the steel gratings and steel mesh windows removed, although the original steel box remains, and serves as an office for the Alpine County Undersheriff.

The original landscaping has grown to maturity and the courthouse is enhanced by the trees, shrubs and flowers that mark the property. In 1977, the dirt parking lot was changed to asphalt and an additional access road was added on the east and back sides of the property to accommodate the increase in the traffic, especially to the Sheriff's Department. A concrete brick outbuilding, originally constructed in the late 1960's, was designed to park the single fire engine that served the community. It now serves to accommodate the generator utilized by the Sheriff's department to provide emergency services.

Except for the changes in the building noted above, both internally and externally the building is remarkably unchanged since its construction 75 years ago.

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Alpine County Courthouse, Alpine County, CA

Narrative Statement of Significance: The Alpine County Courthouse, Markleeville, California, built in 1926-28, meets National Register Criterion A as a property that is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history due to it's association with the establishment and maintenance of local politics and government. Built entirely of native quarried stone and designed by regional architect Frederick J. DeLongchamps (whose architecture is seen in many public buildings throughout Nevada), this building is still utilized as a county courthouse and remains as one of the most significant architectural landmarks in Alpine County. Although Alpine County is the least populated county in all of California with a little under 1200 permanent residents, the residents wanted to be a part of county courthouse standards throughout the nation by building a courthouse that represented their belief in justice and reflected well on their community. As Ronald M. James, author of the book "Temples of Justice: County Courthouse of Nevada" wrote, "The courthouse is one of the most powerful visual reminders of the presence of law and order in society. These often unequaled examples of monumental architecture symbolize civilization, stability, and justice. Because they are usually well-built, they frequently endure for a long time and come to represent a significant part of a people's heritage."

The period of significance for this building is 1928-1954. This period of significance is based on the fact that nothing of exceptional interest took place after 1954. Although the courthouse was built in the early 1900's, Alpine County was still relatively new, having been established in 1864 as part of the famous Comstock Lode discovery in nearby Virginia City. Prior to the construction of the current courthouse building, court was held in the Odd Fellows Hall, one of the first permanent buildings in Markleeville. But county residents wanted a designated courthouse and jail; having outgrown the capacity of the old log jail which housed only two prisoners at a time in iron jail cells which were transferred from Silver Mountain City when it went bust. (The Old Log Jail is on display at the Alpine County Museum in Markleeville). They also wanted a building of significance and enduring quality. Alpine County residents, due to their geographic isolation from most of California, especially during the winter months, were more familiar with Nevada communities and buildings and when it came time to replace the existing two-story wood frame courthouse utilized since 1875, they turned to DeLongchamps, who had already designed courthouses for seven Nevada counties, as well as nearby Modoc County. DeLongchamps favored the classical revival styles in his courthouse designs, and the Alpine County Courthouse design reflects his regionally-adapted style. Originally, the architectural plans called for a two-story courthouse, but financial considerations resulted in the revision of the plans to a one-story. (Copies of the original architect plans are included in this application.)

It is important to note the colorful political history of Alpine County in any discussion about local government. Alpine County, as described above, was then and still is now, the least

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populated county in all of California (it is also one of the least populated counties in the entire country). It was named Alpine County for its high mountain setting in the Sierra Nevada's, adjacent to the Nevada State Line, which contributes to its rural nature and lack of services. Alpine County was built upon the discovery of the Nevada Comstock Lode in 1859, which drew California minors to the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and resulted in the formation of a thriving mining community at Silver Mountain City. Originally, the miners at Silver Mountain City believed their settlement to be in Nevada Territory, but an 1863 survey of the two state borders placed the site firmly in California. In 1864, the community petitioned for the California legislature to form an independent county for them due to the isolated nature of life in the Sierra's and the treacherous travel that was required to conduct official business. Alpine County was established on March 16, 1864 as the 46th county in the state and although Markleeville and Silver Mountain City competed for the role of county seat, Silver Mountain City was appointed as it held the largest population in the county.

Even though the Comstock Lode would ultimately become the richest lode in United States History, yielding over \$300-400 million in precious metals, the success was short-lived. The mines, although revolutionizing mining techniques due to their odd configurations and the instability of the geography, eventually began to play out and when the final crushing blow came of Congress demonetizing silver in 1873, Silver Mountain City became just one more deserted mining town. Today, all that is left of this city which once housed over 11,000 are a commemorative plaque and the stone foundations of the old jail. By 1874, when Markleeville, now the most populated town in the county, became the new county seat, the counties' population had gone from 11,000 in 1864 to under 2500 in 1873. Despite the fact that the population kept dwindling (the population dropped to just over 200 people in the 1920's), in 1926 the Alpine County Board of Supervisors approved the construction of a new courthouse to replace the existing Courthouse. The county purchased the site on which town founder, Jacob Marklee, had built the first cabin in 1861 (Marklee was shot and killed in 1863) and set about hiring DeLongchamps to design a prestigious courthouse building that would reflect well on Alpine County. Residents, in order to fund this expensive commitment, passed a bond issue for \$18,000 in July 1927. In this same month, a rock quarry was established on the site of the now deserted Silver Mountain City and enough native blocks of light cream-colored rhyolite tuff were quarried to build the courthouse, which was completed in 1928. Residents were committed to using this native stone in the construction of the courthouse as an enduring reminder of the early beginnings of the county and of the city that once served as the county seat.

Prior to the actual construction of the building, a basement was dug and the three steel jail cells purchased by the county were lowered into the ground. These served as the Alpine County Jail from 1928 until 1978 when they were abandoned due to changes in the state requirements for the housing of prisoners. During these 50 years, there served one sheriff and one deputy, both

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responsible for prisoner care. This meant that prisoners were often left alone, most especially through the night. Prisoners are now transferred to nearby El Dorado County Jail and the Alpine County Jail no longer exists. The steel cells however, still remain in the building and can be seen when visiting the Sheriff's Department.

Although the courthouse represented the county residents hopes that the population would increase, no doubt remembering the early years when mining brought boom times to both communities, growth was extremely slow. It wasn't until the 1970's that the two skiing communities of Bear Valley and Kirkwood were developed, increasing the resident population as well as the tourist trade. All of the community centers in Alpine County were then and are now separated by distance, weather conditions, and rugged, mountainous passes. The Alpine County Courthouse serves as the central meeting place for these communities to come together to manage their affairs. During the period of significance stated above, the courthouse held not only the offices of the county judges, but the county recorder and assessor as well. The County Sheriff operated out of the basement, managing the jails and escorting the prisoners upstairs to appear in court. It was also the meeting place for the county supervisors and all public meetings were held in the building. The building was the repository for all county legal documents and served as the official archives until they were moved into the present Alpine County Library building in the late 1970's.

Judges assigned to the Alpine County courthouse were once considered "cow county" judges, a term used to describe judges of small, generally agricultural based communities, and spent a large majority of their time traveling to other communities to hear cases. They were given the "hot potato" cases in other jurisdictions, mostly disputes based on land and water rights, that other judges did not want to have to make decisions on that might affect their chances for reelection. The first judge to serve in the new courthouse, Judge Lester T. Price, sat on the Alpine County Superior Court from 1907 until his death in 1947. Although he spent much of his time traveling to assignments at other judgeships, he was a favorite in Alpine county, never defeated in his attempts for reelection. At one point, when it was discovered that the town sites had never been recorded, each and every property owner deeded their property to the judge so that it would be recorded and surveys approved. Once this was completed, the judge deeded the property back. Even though this transaction was done as a matter of administrative protocol, for a short period of time the judge owned all the property in the entire community. Few positions were given such trust or respect.

Although the rural nature and the small population of Alpine County results in very limited criminal activity or historic trials, the Alpine County Courthouse is not without its share of controversial cases. In the 1970's, two political takeovers were attempted resulting in trials for voter fraud that led to convictions of members of a radical group called the Posse Comitatus. At

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this time, there were only 700 registered voters in all of Alpine County, leaving it vulnerable to a political takeover. Some elections in the county were decided by as few as five votes, some with a single vote. In 1970, with this in mind, a group of militant homosexuals called the Gay Liberation Front announced plans for a migration of gays to Alpine County in order to infiltrate the political process and elect a majority of their group to power. This attempt failed, but a later attempt by the Posse Comitatus was much more threatening. The "Posse" was a far right group whose leaders wanted to establish a community based on a strict interpretation of the U.S. Constitution. Their plan was to pack the voter rolls, elect its own sheriff, district attorney and board of supervisors, abolish taxes, and cut all ties to the state and federal government processes. This attempt may have been successful had the posse members not registered fraudulently.

Courthouses have been described as "the visual, and often the emotional, center of communities for decades," and this holds true for the Alpine County Courthouse. Probate, divorces, land disputes, fish and game violations, adoptions, criminal activity...all are heard by judges in the courthouse. Until 1977, when the administrative staff outgrew the limited capacity in the courthouse and constructed a separate building on adjacent property, all county business was conducted within the courthouse walls. Today there are two superior court judges assigned to the Alpine County Courthouse who take turns hearing the county's cases, which have increased dramatically in the last several decades as the influx in tourists bring more legal violations.

The Courthouse is also a draw for tourists. Its location on Main Street in Markleeville is unchanged. As many of the older buildings have been destroyed or renovated, the courthouse remains virtually the same. There have been no significant changes to the building since its completion and it is currently listed as a State of California Point of Historical Interest. Photo's included with this application include a photo of the completed courthouse taken in 1928 and a recent photo taken in 2003. The only noticeable changes are the replacement of the roof, the additions of roadways and sidewalks, and the landscaping.

The Alpine County Courthouse is one of very few remaining structures in the county that represent the colorful history and determination to provide local government. Despite being the least populated county of California's 58 counties, Alpine County found the means to hire a well-known Western architect and build a lasting monument to their faith in the need for longevity and stability of justice in their communities.

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Major Bibliographical References:

"Alpine Heritage – One Hundred Years of History, Recreation and Lore in Alpine County, California – 1864-1964," Centennial Book Committee; 1964.

"Courthouses of California, An Illustrated History," by Ray McDevitt, Foreword by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, California Historical Society, San Francisco, CA, Heydey Books, 2001

"Historic Architectural Survey Report" by Dorene Clement, Associate Environmental Planner, Architectural Historian, Environmental Program, Department of Transportation, Sacramento, CA, Dec. 1994

"Historical Resources Inventory of Markleeville"; State of California Resources Agency, Department of Parks and Recreation

"Illene Price Long, An Oral History of Judge Price," The Alpine County Historical Society, 1989

"In Age of Change, they're above it all," Sacramento Bee, September 9, 1990

Minutes of the Alpine County Board of Supervisors – Alpine County Clerk

"National Register of Historic Places 1966-1994" by the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Historic Preservation Officers National Conference of State, 2nd Edition, John Wiley and Sons, 1995

Point of Historical Interest Application and designation correspondence, State of California Resources Agency, Historical Resources Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation. 1991-1992

"Stress in Sierra, Alpine County has beauty, problems," <u>San Jose Mercury News,</u> Sunday, May 25, 1980

"Temples of Justice: County Courthouses of Nevada," by Ronald M. James, Univ. of Nevada Press, 1994.

""The Price Family of Markleeville," Alpine Review, Vol VII, #2, Fall/Winter 2000/2001

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Alpine County Courthouse, Alpine County, CA

Verbal Boundary Description:

Alpine County Assessor's:

Markleeville Townsite:

Lot 4, Blk 2 described as follows:

Beg. At a pt. which bears N 51 degrees 30' E 40 ft. from Highway Station 15 + 07/8 being said NW corner of Lot 4, Blk 2; thence N 51 degrees 18' E 190.55 ft. M/L; thence S 38 degrees 26' E 77.5 ft.; thence S 28 degrees 37' W 34.6 ft., M/L; thence S 56 degrees 17' E 128 ft.; thence S 28 degrees 37' W 34.6 ft., M/L; thence S 56 17' E 128 ft.; thence S 28 degrees 37' W 34.6 ft., M/L; thence S 4 degrees 10' E 95 ft. M/L to northerly R/W line of said State Hwy; thence on a curve to the right with a radius of 310 ft. thru an arc of 50 degrees 34' for a distance of 220 ft. M/L; thence N. 37 degrees 43' W 95.7 ft. to pt. of beginning.

*Note: this legal description describes the city lot originally purchased by the county supervisors. The entire lot was not utilized for the courthouse and the remaining lot is utilized for access, parking and open space.

Boundary Justification:

This parcel is a city lot retaining its original property lines.

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Photo Descriptions:

The photographer for the photographs of the Alpine County Courthouse is Lynn Nolan. Negatives are located at the Alpine County Administration Building, 99 Water Street, Markleeville, CA 96120. All photo's were taken on June 13, 2004 (as is date stamped on each photo). This statement applies to all of the following photographs.

Photo #1:

This photograph is a view of the West side of the building (direction of camera was east) that lies adjacent to the Water Street entrance to the courthouse and the Alpine County Administration building.

Photo #2: This photograph is the back or north side of the building (direction of camera was south). The five windows in the build out are the court room. The back side of the building faces undeveloped county property.

Photo #3: This photograph is a view of the East side of the building (direction of camera was west), which contains a small parking lot and entrance to the Alpine County Sheriff's Office. The small building to the rear of the parking lot is the first original garage for the fire engine but is no longer used for this purpose and is a non-contributing resource.

Photo #4: This photograph is the main entrance to the courthouse that faces CA State Hwy 89, or the Main Street for Markleeville (direction of camera was north). The front of the building has a southern facing.

