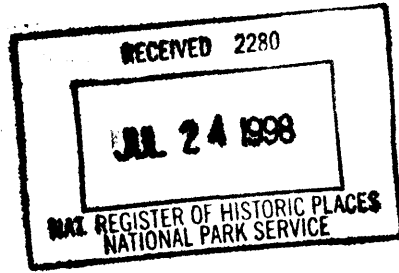


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Chico Hot Springs

other name/site number: Emigrant Warm Springs

2. Location

street & number:

not for publication: n/a
vicinity: n/a

city/town: Pray

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Park

code: 067

zip code: 59065

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally X statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

7-17-98

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register

8/21/98

 see continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet
 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 see continuation sheet
 removed from the National Register
 see continuation sheet

 other (explain):

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private	Number of Resources within Property	
Category of Property: District	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u> building(s)
Name of related multiple property listing: n/a	<u>1</u>	___ sites
	<u>1</u>	___ structures
	___	___ objects
	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC: Hotel
RECREATION: Sports facility
HEALTH CARE: Hospital

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC: Hotel
RECREATION: Sports facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Georgian Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MODERN MOVEMENTS:
Craftsman
OTHER: Gambrel Barn

Materials:

foundation: stone
walls: wood, stone
roof: wood shingle, asphalt shingle
other: n/a

Narrative Description

The historic Chico Hot Springs resort sets back into a creek bend between two steep ridges, at the foot of Emigrant Peak in the Absaroka Mountain Range. Located about midway up the Paradise Valley, it lies along a gravel county road following the east side of the Yellowstone River. Just over a mile south, the old 1860s mining town of Chico remains at the mouth of Emigrant Gulch, now almost a ghost town of about two dozen buildings in various stages of disrepair.

The historic building complex at Chico Hot Springs resort is centered around two large outdoor pools and a main hotel dating to 1900. A sample room and 24 x 50 foot dance hall were built on the overlooking hill to the west a year later. Through the 1910s, the facilities of the resort were expanded and improved. During that era, a boiler building, expanded pools with new pool building, with shelter and shower house, cow and horse barns, an auto garage and a meat house were built. For much of this period, tent cabins also lined the roadway behind the hotel.

Nine contributing resources today represent the historic core of the resort -- the main hotel, pools, shower house, pool building (saloon), horse barn, auto garage, boiler building and smoke house. These buildings read very distinctly as a historic complex, the ridgelines of the natural setting lends the resort a rustic definition, while the surrounding lawn with its century old lilacs, historic swings, wagon, historic limo car and other artifacts helps evoke a timeless feeling of still-living history.

Natural Hot Springs [contributing site] The original resource on the property, the natural hot springs at Chico flows at 112 degrees. The first soaking areas at these springs were undoubtedly natural pools in the springs themselves. A concrete spring box first set in 1866 at the south end of the resort tapped these waters. That spring site remains today, and the steamy flow is directed to the pools and to the resort's heating system. Overflow is carried along the back of the historic complex through a small, concrete-lined channel installed in 1969 to regulate water temperature.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 1

Main Hotel (1900) [contributing building] Painted a traditional white with dark green trim and wooden shingles, the original Chico Hotel is a two-and-a-half story wood frame building, of Georgian Revival influence. It features dormers on upper level windows and a long open veranda which wraps the NW corner and fully spans those two sides. The building as first built was simply two long rectangular masses, set in an L-form. The entrance and lobby were at the northwest end, where the two masses adjoined. Off the lobby, the dining room and a small apartment extended to the south. Upstairs, were 20 rooms with a side corridor.

In the 1910s, the hotel was expanded to the north and south. The two-story north annex (1914-15) housed doctor's offices with a lab, operating room, and 6 examination and consultation rooms. The rear south wing (1919) was a full three stories, adding an operating room, institutional facilities and kitchen on the first floor, along with 20 more hospital rooms on the second and third floors.

The lobby interior has a Craftsman style, particularly suited to the rustic natural setting and the Montana lifestyle. Golden maple flooring, chestnut stain woodwork with square columns and cornices, open staircase and picture rail ornament the warm interior. A fireplace and hearth of gold brick, with a wide segmentally arched fire chamber has a square mantel with engaged brick corbels and cornice supports. Brass lights hang between wooden sash windows, which are richly covered with brocade curtains. Original French doors lead to the office behind the front desk. Mission furniture and two antique pianos complete the vintage atmosphere of this room.

The hotel has been carefully refurbished since the 1970s and retains much of its original detailing and historic fabrics. Narrow hallways off the main stairwell access the accommodations. Hallways are arranged at the side in the original hotel and down the center in later historic additions. Woodwork throughout is of fir, and doorways included transoms (now blocked in due to fire codes). Lath and plaster finishes the walls. In the original hotel, beaded wainscoting lines the hallways. Period furnishings include brass and metal beds, wooden plant stands, chest and dressers.

The dining room seats 150. A tin paneled ceiling and barn wood (salvaged from the old cow barn) trim the walls. The kitchen is outfitted with modern restaurant equipment.

Pools [contributing structure] , **Shower House and Pool Building (Saloon)** [contributing buildings] (1917) The first developed pools at Chico were probably just wooden tubs, in place by 1883 when a small bathhouse was recorded on the site. In 1888, a 5-foot wooden tub was placed within a hot bath building, and in 1892, a second tub was added. When the hotel was constructed, a round plunge was built, 44 feet in diameter and 6 feet deep. The plunge was expanded in 1902 with a second pool for cooler swimming water and a shelter.

In 1917, the plunge pools were expanded, lengthened and squared. The old shelter for the pools was replaced. W.W. Lucius, a prominent Portland-based architect, designed a new pool building with an engaged concrete and cobblestone pool enclosure measuring 66 x 185 feet. The pool building (now the saloon) is a two story rectangular mass with beveled lap siding and a raised cobblestone foundation. The roof is a broad, clipped gable with knee brackets projecting on the gable ends. The primary entrance is centered on the west side and a secondary entrance opens onto a covered walkway from the hotel to the north. The windows are double-hung, 8-over-8.

The pool shelter was attached to the back of the pool building and had built-in changing rooms at the far (east) end. It featured a round-arched roof on large trusses supported by stone piers and the framework was exposed on the interior. The top was vented for steam; the sides closed in.

The pool shelter collapsed due to wind damage in 1957 and only the shower house remained standing. A new gable roof was built over the hot plunge in 1960; the cooler swim pool was left open and uncovered. Between 1989-1992, the pool was resurfaced and a new surrounding deck of textured concrete tile installed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 2

Boiler House (1910) [contributing building] A new steam heating system was installed in 1910, and three years later, the first electrical power at Chico was added. A small stone building behind the hotel housed the steam plant and the 120-volt generator. A single-story stone building with a gable roof, it consists of one room accessed by a large-scale, sliding wooden door. Door and deep window openings have concrete lintels and sills.

The boilers were removed from the building by 1960 and it was used as a shed. It is currently being converted to a wine tasting room. The roof has recently been recovered with corrugated metal, a wooden floor has been added and the walls have been repointed. Appropriate, new 6-pane wood-frame windows are fixed in the deep window recesses.

Horse Barn (1916) [contributing building] During the 1910s, two barns were constructed to serve the resort. A big cow barn was erected atop the hill in 1913 (removed in the mid-1970s), and near the hotel gardens, a large horse barn was built in 1916.

The horse barn is an outstanding building, a two-and-a-half story gambrel-roofed barn displaying exceptional cobblestone masonry on the first story. The barn is symmetrical in design with nearly identical facades on the west (front) and east (rear) ends. The first floor has 9 box stalls, tack room, and an earthen floor with wooden planking in the stalls and stall walls. The second floor serves as a haymow. Loading doors in the gambrel end are sheltered by a projecting hood. Hung wooden doors slide sideways to open on all levels. Windows are fixed 4 pane or double hung 1-over-1. All openings in the masonry have concrete lintels and sills. The roof is covered with wood shingles.

Other than a set of corrals surrounding the horse barn since the 1950s, this barn is virtually unchanged since the time it was completed. The corrals have round posts, board rails and metal gates.

Meat house (1915) [contributing building] A meat house for smoking and storage was built behind the hotel in 1915. This handsome two-story stone building is built back against a hill, of native Yellowstone River cobbles. The storage portion is a two-story square block with deeply recessed door and window openings having concrete sills and lintels. A single story smoke room projected on the north end.

The meat house was converted to offices in 1992 with the addition of a new metal shed roof, wooden deck across the front, and interior finishes creating three rooms downstairs and two up. In late 1997, the smoker was converted to office space, adding a second floor with weathered wood lap siding, and a shed roof to complement the storage block. New, but appropriate double-hung wood-framed windows, and wooden exterior doors with upper glazing were installed throughout.

Auto garage (1916) [contributing building] An auto garage stands south of the horse barn. A rectangular building of native cobblestone, with its stepped stone parapet front, simple gable-roofed rectangular form, and large wooden sliding garage doors, it is a classic garage form of the early years of the 20th century. The roof has rolled asphalt roofing. Deeply recessed door and window openings with heavy concrete lintels and sills and double-hung windows complete the design.

The interior is divided into two rooms, front and rear. The back room was used at some interim time for roller skating. Most recently, it is a gift and rental shop with a maintenance room at the rear. The front sliding door has been framed in, creating a smaller doorway and nearby window. To the north, a wood frame, three-bay garage shed was added between the auto garage and the horse barn, apparently during the 1960s or 1970s. Metal roll-up doors, lap siding, T-lock roof shingles and a small entrance door at the south end complete this shed.

Impressive rock work on the horse barn, auto garage, and likely the meat and boiler houses, was done by Frank Reagan of Livingston.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 3

In addition, three secondary buildings are more recent, non-contributing properties: the poolside grille snackbar was incorporated within the pool complex, a recreation hall was built on the foundation of the 1916 hospital annex, and a geothermal greenhouse and garden stands behind the hotel.

Integrity

The historic core of the Chico Hot Springs resort remains in a high state of preservation, conveying very accurately the historic associations with the emergence of settlement in the Paradise Valley and its long, important history as one of the state's preeminent health spa resorts. Tucked along a dirt road, away from a modern highway and newer buildings along the Yellowstone River, the Chico Hot Springs is a piece of time forgotten. Current owners, Mike and Eve Art, have refurbished the resort, making even major repairs with great care and sensitivity to the historic values of the property. As a result, the atmosphere at the hotel and hot springs remains historic in every sense.

On the exterior, historic fabrics are largely retained. Lap siding on the frame buildings remains as original, stone masonry on barns and outbuildings has been repointed. Historic fenestration is almost completely intact, doors and other major detailing are well retained also. Roofing has been replaced with metal in some cases and a couple of buildings have been converted to alternate uses.

Within the historic property district drawn to encompass the resort complex, there have been some changes over time. The dance hall was lost sometime during the 1930s or 1940s, a large portion of the pool shelter collapsed in 1957; and the hotel's 1916 hospital annex was razed in the 1930s.

The other impact to Chico's integrity is the encroachment into the setting of newer buildings. Surrounding the historic core of the resort, newer cabins and a good-sized lodge have been built in recent decades. These newer lodgings vary in compatibility with the resort's original buildings. Fortunately, they are distinctly set apart from the main core of Chico and do not interrupt the original spatial relationships, nor do they impede one's ability to understand and appreciate the historic values of the resort. The property boundaries drawn to encompass the historic resort complex do not include these newer buildings.

Recent adaptive reuse of secondary buildings including the boiler house, garage and meat house has been careful and sensitive, providing much needed repair and ensuring their preservation through ongoing use. And, plans for new convention space in a reconstruction of the 1916 annex design will greatly enhance the historic character of the hotel.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, B, C

Areas of Significance: ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION, MEDICINE/
HEALTH, ARCHITECTURE

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Period(s) of Significance: 1900-1948

Significant Person(s): Dr. George A. Townsend

Significant Dates: 1900, 1902, 1910, 1915, 1916, 1919

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown, W.W. Lucius, Frank Reagan

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Chico Hot Springs is one of Montana's historical treasures, beloved by people across the state for going on a hundred years. One of a number of hot spring resorts developed in the south-central mountains of Montana during the late decades of the 1800s, Chico today stands out as one of the last to retain its historic character and ambiance. As perhaps the best turn of the century hot spring health resort remaining today, it is representative of important historical patterns and eminently qualified for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Chico Hot Springs is equally significant on a local level, playing a key role in providing health care and medical treatment to this community in the remote reaches of the Paradise Valley.

The resort gains significance through its architecture, exemplifying ideas of Georgian and Craftsman style design, as well as regional building traditions. And it is important for its association with the career and practice of Dr. George A. Townsend, a local physician of some renown during the early part of the 1900s.

Background History¹

The hot springs of Montana were known to Indian people who lived in the region long before the arrival of Europeans to this continent. Springs, and in particular hot springs, were revered and often visited as places of spiritual cleansing and renewal. Water as a basis of life was important to Indian spirituality, as the Crow sang: *bire daxua kok* (water is your life). In oral traditions of the Indian tribes in this area, and in early ethnographic accounts, it is recorded that Indian people revered these springs and used them regularly. Indian people camped by the thousands near the Deer Lodge Mound hot springs in that valley, for example, and Dr. A.J. Hunter stumbled onto Hunter's Hot Springs just east of present-day Livingston, when he forayed away from the Bozeman Trail and observed hundreds of Indians camped and bathing at those springs.

For thousands of years, native people lived in the mountains and valleys of southwestern Montana. The Paradise Valley was frequented by a number of Indian groups, including the Salish, Kootenai, Shoshone, Blackfoot, Cheyenne and Crow. With the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1855, the lands in the middle and upper Yellowstone drainage were assigned to the Crow nation. The Crow Treaty of 1868 further diminished the territory within which the Crow could move freely, however, the Paradise Valley remained Crow land until 1882, when a delegation of Crow leaders to Washington, DC were coerced into ceding 1.5 million acres to the federal government.

Permanent settlement in the Paradise Valley was prompted by the discovery of gold in Emigrant Gulch in 1863 by an Irish miner named Thomas Curry. Early the following summer, Curry and two companions from Virginia City returned to the gulch, but were robbed and driven out by the Crows, whose territory they were violating. That year, 1864, saw the opening of the Bozeman Trail; this route to the gold fields of Virginia City and Bannack passed about 25 miles north of the Emigrant diggings. Boosting their forces, Curry and friends recruited prospective miners from passing wagon trains bound for the better known gold fields. By mid-August, when the Curry Mining District was organized in Emigrant Gulch, there were 200-300 miners in the camp. They settled an area on the flats beyond the gulch, and named the place Yellowstone City. By March of 1865, Yellowstone City consisted of "75 log houses and a couple hundred inhabitants."² The first recorded visit to the nearby hot springs is found that year, in the January 16 diary entry of John S. Hackney, who "went out to the hot springs and washed my dirty 'duds."³

In 1866, a group of six travelers fresh from a visit through Yellowstone stopped over with the miners of Emigrant, regaling them with stories of the wonders of the area. A young Mexican member of the party, very animated, was remembered two years later, when the camp's new mail drop was named "Chico." An official post office was established in 1874 and three years later the Chico School was built.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 1

By 1876, settlers in the vicinity included William and Maynard Randall. One of the two brothers tapped into the springs' natural warmth to water a greenhouse and raise tomatoes, vegetables and enough "garden sas" to supply the residents of the area. William Maynard, in partnership with Peter McDonald, Walter Matheson and five other investors, held numerous mineral patents in the Emigrant Gulch minefields; the claim encompassing the hot springs was named the McDonald Placer.⁴

McDonald and Matheson (an editor of the Daily Herald in Billings) held the controlling interest in the hot spring property. In 1883, the local paper reported that Walter Matheson was about to "secure full title to the property", and shortly thereafter announced plans for construction of a hotel at the springs.⁵ That year, a reporter on an "'idle excursion' far up Emigrant Gulch" reported to have stopped at the springs "owned by the Matheson Brothers of Billings, and enjoyed himself in the temporary bathhouse there, the water being just the right heat to bathe and lots of it."⁶

The following year, the government land surveyor platting this area, noted not a hotel, but the "Emigrant Hot Spring and a bathhouse 10 x 6, ... a frame house 27 x 14, ... a mining shaft (discovery) 12 x 6 x 8, ... and a stream from spring in ditch 70 rods long."⁷

During this period of the late 1800s, as interest in the West grew and travel to Montana became feasible with the completion of transcontinental railroad lines, a number of Montana's natural hot springs were improved to become health resorts. Situated primarily in the southwest quadrant of the state where geothermal zones remain active and artesian hot springs naturally occur in uplift mountain formations, these ranged from rambling Victorian hotels to smaller ventures wherever warm water mountain springs bubbled up to the surface. Notable hotels erected prior to the turn of the century included the Broadwater Hotel and Natatorium near Helena, the May Hotel near Boulder, and Gregson Hot Springs near Anaconda.

In 1900, Chico joined the ranks of Montana's 20th century hot spring resort hotels. These vacation spots combined the relaxation of a resort with a prescription for good health, and catered particularly to the growing number of rail travelers from the East. Along with Chico, on the Yellowstone River these included Corwin Springs to the south, and the preeminent Hunter Hot Springs to the north, near present-day Springdale. Like Chico, Hunter got its start during the territorial mining period primarily as a place to soak and bathe. And under the management of Dr. Hunter, a physician, the healing qualities of the warm waters were also plied. It was a subsequent owner, Butte banker James A. Murray, who in 1909, built the 350 room Spanish Mission style Dakota Hotel at Hunter' Hot Springs, one of the most elegant hotels "west of St. Paul." (Sadly, this building burned down in 1932.)⁸

Throughout the mountain west, hot spring resorts sprang up, many on a lesser scale of grandeur, and popular with a more local crowd. Chico Hot Springs was one of the larger facilities, catering both to the railroad trade, and to neighbors of the area. (In the Pryor Mountains, Chico's owner, Walter Matheson expanded his hot spring holdings to include another on Mill Creek, later named Montanapolis.)⁹

Completion of the Park Branch of the Northern Pacific Railroad, between Livingston and the newly created Yellowstone Park, increased travel through Paradise Valley. To reach the hot springs near Emigrant, travelers disembarked at Emigrant Station west of the Yellowstone River, and until 1886, crossed the river by ferry. After 1886, a toll bridge at Emigrant Station (renamed Fridley) made the crossing easier.

In 1892, bather E.E. Henson noted that a second tub had been added. The following year, a new road was built from Fridley to the springs and the newspaper reported that "The hot springs near Chico are attracting more attention every year. A number of families are camping near the springs and enjoying the baths daily. A good hotel is greatly needed here and would undoubtedly pay a good interest on the investment."¹⁰

After Walter Matheson's death in 1893, his daughter Percie and her husband William E. Knowles inherited the springs. Percie had come with her family from Ontario to Chico in 1888. As a woman in her twenties, her arrival near the mining camp stirred interest, "as

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 2

our little burg is greatly in need of the fair sex." Bill Knowles, a native of Pennsylvania, who had worked several quartz claims in Emigrant Gulch since 1880, won the heart of the local school teacher and in October 1891, Bill and Percie were married.

In the late 1890s, the Knolls' built a boarding house near the springs, which accommodated a dozen of the local miners. The business earned a good reputation for its \$6 a week rooms, and the kitchen which served hearty meals with fresh strawberries to lodgers and bathers alike. In 1898, 16 wall tents were set up to expand accommodations.¹¹

Construction of the Chico Hotel

In 1900, the Knowles erected the long-awaited Chico Warm Springs Hotel, with a \$7,000 loan from local Chico merchant, Alex Campbell.¹² On June 20, the hotel officially opened, with a "big jollification" and praise for the "handsome frame building with dormer windows, ... a veranda extending across the entire front, ... and accommodations for forty guests." Bathing facilities included the hot plunge, separate baths for the ladies, and private baths. At the grand opening, the new dance pavilion on the hill housed entertainment throughout the afternoon and evening.¹³

Along with the dance hall, a "sample room" was situated on Dance Hall Hill; the building was formerly Knowles' butcher shop which he moved down the road from the small town of Chico. This enabled alcoholic beverages to be served, but at a distance from the hotel proper.¹⁴

The year 1902 was a most auspicious one for Chico Hot Springs. Teddy Roosevelt stayed in the hotel while en route to dedicate the Gateway Arch at Yellowstone Park's north entrance. And, the term natatorium was affixed to the resort with the addition of a cooler 9-foot deep pool for more active swimming, in addition to the 6-foot hot pool.

That year as well, the focus of the resort changed with the addition of a resident physician. Mineral content of the pools was analyzed, and the resort advertised relief in its healing waters from ailments such as rheumatism, and stomach and kidney disorders. Dr. F.E. Corwin treated a variety of patients at the springs until 1908, when he moved farther south up the valley to establish his own facility, Corwin Springs.

Through these years, the business grew and Chico Hot Springs became known to people throughout the region, thanks to Bill Knowles' active promotion. He courted well-to-do clients visiting Yellowstone -- drivers in starched uniforms ferried guests from the Emigrant train stop to Chico in a posh, leather upholstered 10-seater wagonette; while attendants dressed in starched white aprons bushted around the hotel. Clientele to the resort could avail themselves of the health staff, the pools, swimming lessons, concerts, dances and theatre productions, and social functions in the dance hall. Among the better known guests, western artist Charlie Russell was a Chico regular during the years between 1906-1916. At the same time, Knowles never lost his connection to the Montana way of life. He also ran sheep on four adjacent sections of land, harvesting wool and undoubtedly meat for his hotel and restaurant.

In 1910, Bill Knowles died. Percie, and her young son Radbourne, continued to manage the hotel. During the decade that followed, Percie Knowles built up the medical end of the business. She closed the saloon and retained a new doctor in residence. During 1911, Dr. J.E. Stuart resided at Chico, followed in 1912 by Dr. George A. Townsend.¹⁵

Building the Chico Hospital

Dr. Townsend was a gifted physician, who rapidly gained a reputation throughout the northwest. During his tenure, he oversaw completion of hospital facilities at Chico: in 1916, a doctor's office and hospital annex complete with laboratory, operating room and 20 hospital rooms. In the year 1920, the hospital admitted 2390 patients, 935 surgeries were conducted and 32 babies were born. Dr. Townsend earned widespread acclaim for a successful brain surgery in the hospital in 1921; but by 1925 he moved on to a more restful practice.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 3

The 1910s saw other major improvements of the resort. Cow and horse barns, and a garage in 1916; larger pools with a new enclosure were completed in 1917. In 1919, a 3-story kitchen wing greatly improved the institutional facilities and doubled the number of hospital rooms. A home for Radbourne and his new wife, Agnes Sophia, was also built that year.¹⁶

Hard Years at Chico

The fortunes of hot springs across the region declined during the late 1920s and into the 1930s, perhaps due to combined strain as the homestead era went bust regionally and nationwide economic depression set in. Chico Hot Springs was no exception. Following the departure of Dr. Townsend, business tapered off at Chico Hot Springs despite attempts to rebuild the health resort end of the business, with resident physician Dr. William Crawbuck and Dr. George Windsor, frequently coming down from Livingston for surgeries.

By the mid -1930s, most of the hotel was shut down. In failing health, Mrs. Knowles deeded her ranch to her niece and assistant, Anna Luton, and left the resort to Radbourne. Radbourne, his wife Sophia and teenage son Billie returned to Chico and engaged Ed Leak to help run the hotel. A quieter place than in its heyday, the resort continued operation. However, the hospital annex and doctors offices were razed to avoid heavy taxes based on potential occupancy.

The 1940s brought change to the resort. In 1940, Dr. Townsend returned to finish out his career at Chico's scaled back facilities, again drawing in many area patients. Following Radbourne Knowles death in 1943, his wife Sophia and Ed Leak managed the business. And in 1948, Sophia Knowles sold the hot springs resort to Oneita Behnke of Oregon.¹⁷

Chico Goes Western

Behnke shifted emphasis at the resort to its food and libations, reopening the bar. It became a bawdy place, her recipe for success reportedly relied heavily upon gambling and ladies of the evening.¹⁸ After the death of her husband Joe Davis in 1950, Nita Behnke's niece and husband Albert Peters assisted with management. They catered to Yellowstone Park tourists and hosted group trips. And, they jumped on the dude ranch bandwagon, providing a real western experience for their guests, with barbecue, rodeo, square dancing, and of course swimming. Pete acquired an outfitting license and became a hunting and fishing guide. Meanwhile, Behnke's second husband, John Broderick, ran a herd of up to 60 bucking horses and constructed a rodeo arena at Chico. The name was changed to Chico Ranch, cementing the shift in the resort.

In 1957, wind damage from a tornado resulted in collapse of the roof enclosing the pool. When the rubble was cleared away, pools were left open to the sky.

The following year the Brodericks sold the Chico resort to North Dakotans, Julian and Alma Read. The Reads catered in particular to large church, college and school groups and erected a recreation hall on the site of the former hospital annex in 1960. They reconstructed the covering over the hot pool while leaving the swimming pool open and added private baths to some of the old hotel rooms.

In 1967, Chico Hot Springs sold to John and Susie Sterhan of Glendive, who in turn sold to Jake and Myrle Franks in 1972. A year and a half later, the business again sold, to three investors -- Don Conway, Mike Art and Bob Jackson -- from Cleveland, Ohio. Conway became active manager for three years, adding a rustic bar near the pool entrance and a snack bar.¹⁹

New Life for an Aging Resort

In 1976, Mike and Eve Art bought out the partners, moved to Montana and took over the management of Chico Hot Springs. They staked a personal commitment to the aging hot springs, building a home on Dance Hall Hill, and becoming part of the local community.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 4

When the Arts arrived at Chico, they found no central heat in the main lodge, spartan rooms "and linoleum everywhere". Many of the antique furnishings (wash basins, pitchers, etc.) had been sold off by the previous owners. Mike Art wanted to preserve the natural beauty and ambiance of the place -- its special setting, waters and people -- yet clean it up. Thus began a 20-year restoration of the resort. They remodeled the dining room, converting the apartment adjoining the dining room that once housed nurses into a lounge. They revived the nightlife at Chico with live music and a full bar. And, they added the keystone to their success -- an outstanding gourmet restaurant replacing previous fare which Mike Art recalls as "home of the three bean salad." Over two decades, the Arts have completely refurbished the hotel, repairing buildings, retiling the pools, and stabilizing deteriorating masonry.²⁰

Surrounding the historic resort, they also added time-share chalets, an upper lodge, and most recently in 1997, a large lower lodge. The stone garage now houses a gift shop and equipment rentals; the stone maintenance shed is being converted to a wine tasting room. A green house and gardens have been reestablished onsite of the old gardens, once again providing fresh herbs and vegetables. And, replacement of the recreation hall with convention rooms is in the planning stages. The new building will restore the appearance of the historic hospital annex.

Architectural Significance

The buildings of Chico Hot Springs resort represent a variety of building styles and traditions significant on a statewide level. The main hotel is a very well preserved turn of the century hostelry, demonstrating Georgian Revival details in the exterior design, while incorporating the sturdy, clean lines of Craftsman style on the interior.

The Main Hotel recalls a Georgian influence: with its blocky massing, symmetrical orientation, moderate gable rooflines with dormers aligned at regular intervals, 2-over-2 window patterning, simple turned columns, and roomy veranda. Like many railroad and rooming hotels of the day, the design is simple and functional, with just enough detail to be visually appealing. The frame construction, with its white color scheme and dark contrasting trim was commonplace at the time. Interior spatial arrangements are typical, with a main lobby affording space for business and socializing and hallway wings with shared baths providing the lodgings.

Unique to this hotel was the overlay of hospital facilities. Although the main hospital wing was razed, the second story of the original hotel, and the 1916 east wing housing medical rooms and doctors' offices remain relatively intact. Here a view of early 20th century hospital life can be gained through an operating room just off the lobby, a suite of exam rooms and waiting area on the west end of the second floor, and rows of small hospital rooms on the second and third floors.

The Pool Building (Saloon) by W.W. Lucius reflects sensibilities of early 20th century Craftsman style in its pronounced knee brackets, multilight windows, moderately-pitched clipped gable roof.

Elsewhere, the architecture also pays tribute to the craftsmen of the day. Design of the outbuildings -- the gambrel roofed barn, auto garage, meat house and boiler house -- is handsome while fitting the functional patterns of the time. And the stone masonry is exceptional, handling of the cobblestone reflects a master's touch and an experienced knowledge of the building forms.

Associations with Dr. G.A. Townsend

Dr. George A. Townsend will long be remembered in the Paradise Valley as a gentleman who made tremendous contributions to the quality of health care in this rural community. A native of Illinois, Dr. Townsend relocated to Chico after a short summertime stint at a practice in Livingston. His arrival at Chico Hot Springs was heralded in the local papers and before long, plans were laid for a hospital which would serve the broader community of Paradise Valley, along with resort visitors. Upon completion two years later, Townsend's hospital was a well-stocked modern facility, with a white-enameled operating room, a complete laboratory setup, and six to eight nurses on duty.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 5

Dr. Townsend's practice ran the gamut during the Chico years, from delivering babies and minor operations to two sensitive brain surgeries. The brain surgeries cured headaches and frequent convulsions in his patients by removal of blood clots in the brain. Yet Townsend also followed the traditions of a true country doctor, which probably earned him equal respect in the eyes of his neighbors in the remote reaches of the valley. He was known for snowshoeing and skiing when necessary to reach patients who couldn't reach him, setting broken bones on kitchen counters, and riding on horseback to deliver a baby in 1918 after June floods had washed out the bridges.

Following his second tenure at Chico, Townsend moved his practice to Livingston. He performed all major surgeries at Park Hospital and led the medical community in supporting plans for the new Livingston Memorial Hospital, built in 1954. When the hospital opened, he became first chief of staff.²¹ During a total of 54 years, the role Dr. Townsend played was pivotal in this emerging western community. While ministering to the medical needs of thousands of area residents, he was an active leader in the founding of 20th century medical institutions to serve the population of the area. The history and facilities at Chico Hot Springs are a tribute to his long and important career.

*

Chico Hot Springs
Name of Property

Park County, Montana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository: Chico Hot Springs, Park County Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approximately 10

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A 12	524060	5020120

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s)): Chico Hot Springs is located in the W 1/2, SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 1, T6S, R8E.

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached sketch map labeled "Chico Hot Springs Map", along with USGS topographic quad map for Emigrant, Montana.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries are drawn to encompass the historic core of the Chico Hot Springs Resort and the ridges which provide a natural backdrop to the buildings. At the same time, the boundaries exclude newer constructions, which surround the historic resort, reflecting expansion of the facilities in more recent years.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Chere Jiusto	date: April 1998
organization:	telephone: (406) 443-2114
street & number: 2064 Orofino Gulch	state: MT zip code: 59601
city or town: Helena	

Property Owner

name/title: Mike & Eve Art	telephone:
street & number: PO Drawer D	state: MT zip code: 59065
city or town: Pray	

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

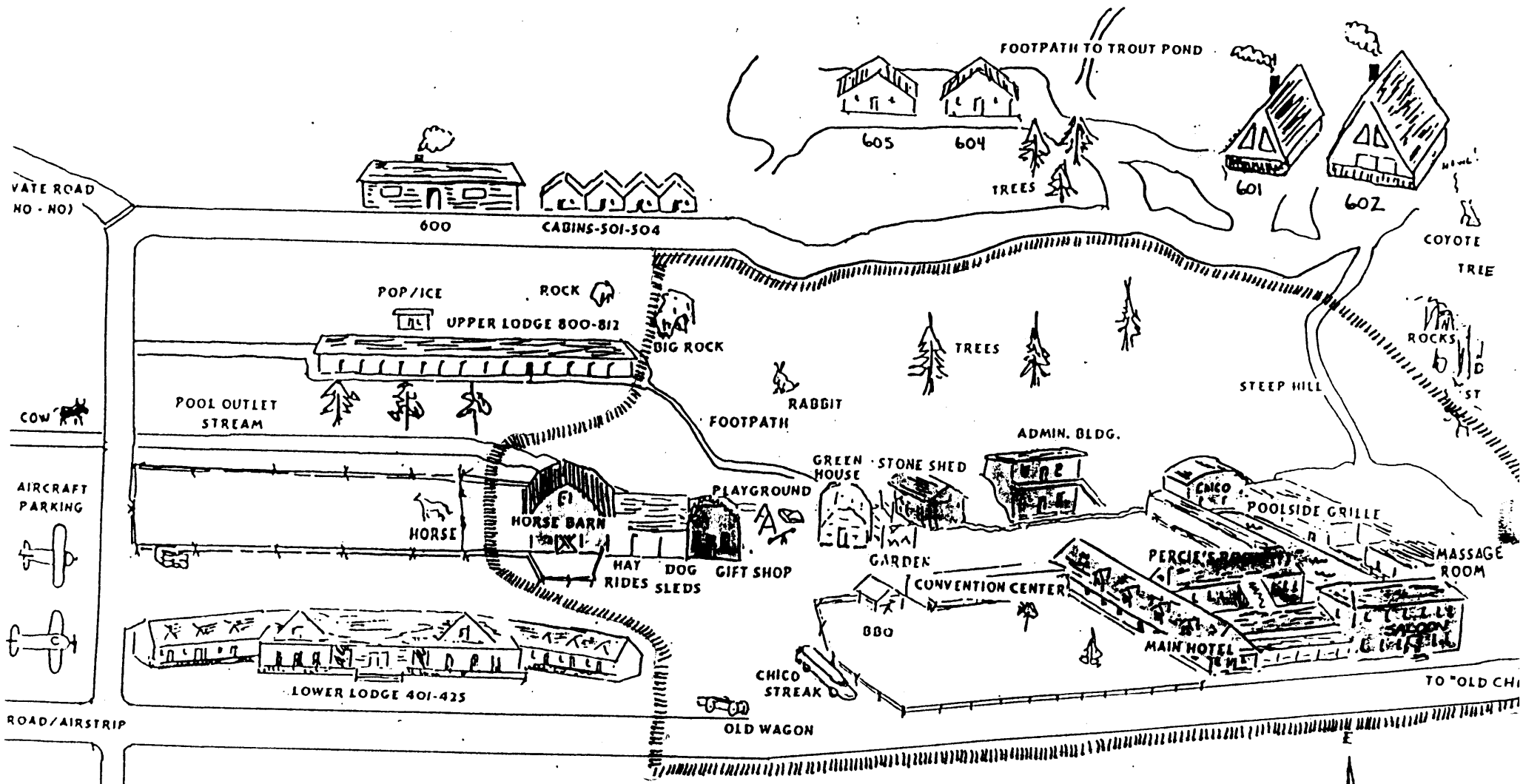
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9

Chico Hot Springs
Park County, Montana

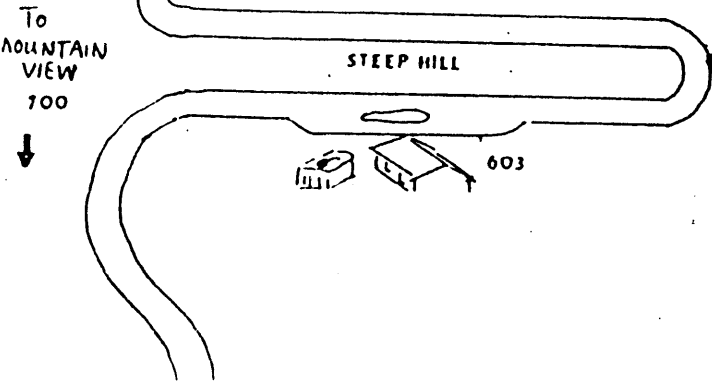
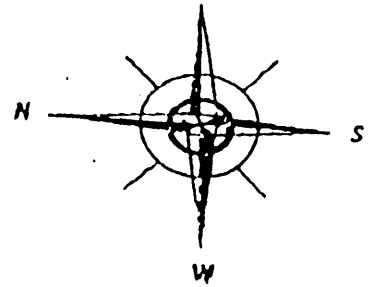
Page 2

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- ¹ Much of this account is based upon the excellent book by Doris and Bill Whithorn, *A Photographic History of Chico Hot Springs*.
² Western Historical Publishing *An Illustrated History of the Yellowstone Valley*, pp. 117-190.
³ Whithorn, Bill & Doris p. 1.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ *Livingston Daily Enterprise*, June 30, 1883.
⁶ Whithorn, p. 3.
⁷ Knight, Albert B. *Mineral Survey # 42, McDonald Placer*.
⁸ Limp, Marcie *Hot Springs in Montana*, pp. 11-13.
⁹ Whithorn, p. 3.
¹⁰ As quoted in Whithorn, p. 6.
¹¹ Whithorn, pp. 6-11.
¹² Ibid., p. 11.
¹³ *Livingston Enterprise*, June 20, 1900.
¹⁴ Whithorn, pp. 11-14.
¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 18-20.
¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 20-22.
¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 24-26.
¹⁸ Mike Art, March 20, 1998.
¹⁹ Whithorn, pp. 27-30.
²⁰ Mike Art.
²¹ Whithorn, pp. 41-47.



CHICO HOT SPRINGS MAP

----- National Register Boundary
(see USGS Map)



CHICO HOT SPRINGS
Park County, Montana