

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

FEB 22 1993  
NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instructions on *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 Peck House  
other names/site number Hotel Splendide, 5CC183

2. Location

street & number 83 Sunny Avenue N/A not for publication  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 addition comments.)

[Signature] February 11, 1993  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Colorado Historic Preservation Office  
State of 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 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 entered in the National Register Date of Action

[Signature] 3/25/93

Peck House

Name of Property

Clear Creek, 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	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	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)

DOMESTIC/hotel  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel  
OTHER/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE  
walls WOOD: Weatherboard  
roof WOOD: Shingle  
other WOOD: porch  
ASPHALT: shingle

Narrative Description

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

Peck House

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
COMMERCE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1862-1942

Significant Dates

1862
1863
1880

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

James Peck
Frank Lebaron Peck

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Peck House

Clear Creek, Colorado

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.7

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 13 441484 4401428
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2

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 Judith Broeker, Historic Preservationist

organization Community Services Collaborative date 10/22/92

street & number 1002 Walnut, Suite 201 telephone (303) 442-3601

city or town Boulder state CO zip code 80302

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 Gary C. & Sarah E. St. Clair

street & number 83 Sunny Avenue telephone (303) 569-9870

city or town Empire state CO zip code 80438

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.

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Peck House  
Empire, Colorado

7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Peck House is located in a mountain valley at the foot of Berthoud Pass in the town of Empire, Colorado. The site is on a rocky sloping hillside bisected by Lion Creek. Included are Lots 1 through 4 in Block 6 on which the house is built, Lot 5 in Block 6, and an additional track of land in Block 6. Some areas of the site have been graded and store terrace walls built.

There are two buildings on the site — the house/hotel and the stable. The hotel is a combination of the original house and three additions. The original house is a two-story, four room structure with front gable. The main portion of the hotel is a combination of two additions completed in 1863 and 1880. This section is a two-story, frame building with a rectangular plan, side gables, and a large veranda along the south and east sides. The 1863 addition, along with the original house, has some Greek Revival features which can be seen in the Christmas card drawing sent by the Pecks. With the addition in 1880, the structure was modified by Victorian-style decorative features. The final addition was built in 1955. There is a random rubble stone foundation under the entire building, and the roof is now covered with asphalt shingles.

The stable was built in 1900 with an addition in 1901. It is an end-gabled structure built with vertical board siding and a wood shingle roof. The main doors are on the south end. There is an open-sided shed roof extension on the east side. It is located across Lion Creek from the house.

The site has remained largely unchanged over the years with a steep, rocky, sparsely vegetated slope rising behind the hotel. The view from the veranda looks down over Empire and across to the mountains and Union Pass leading to Georgetown. The peaceful feeling and family hospitality has been a draw for guests from the earliest days to the present (see Photographs 1 - 2).

The house/hotel structure will be described by section in the order of date of construction.

*Original 1862 House:*

This is a small two-story, front gabled, rectangular structure 15 feet by approximately 30 feet. The foundation is random rubble, three feet in height. Above it, the wooden post and beam structure is still covered with weatherboard, or clapboard, as it originally was. Two rooms were built on each level, aligned front to back. The two windows on the south elevation, first floor are from two time periods. One is a tall, narrow 6-over-6 light, double-hung window and is original to the structure. The second is a square one-light picture window which replaces an original window. It is part of the 1955 remodeling. The second floor has one centered window from the original 1862 construction. The east elevation still has its original entry, and the rest of the wall adjoins the 1862-63 addition. The west elevation adjoins the 1955 addition. Prior to 1955, a storage shed was located on the west side. A large room was added to

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**Peck House**  
**Empire, Colorado**

the north elevation in 1955. The back portion of this room is a refrigerated room and the rest is part of the current kitchen. The roof, now covered with asphalt shingles, originally had wood shingles.

The cellar beneath the original section has a dirt floor and stone walls. Next to the cellar stairs is the inlet for the original water chute which no longer functions. It carried water from a spring, 1/4 mile away, to the house and was in use from 1862 until 1900 when the City installed its water system. James Peck built the chute fashioned after a system he had seen in Chicago. He used one-inch pieces of aspen hollowed out with a hot poker and fitted tightly together. The pipe was buried deep enough underground to avoid freezing. The rest of the townspeople used a common well in the center of town.

The first floor interior of the original house is still divided into two rooms. The original front room is the bar area and the back room is part of the kitchen. A small waitress station is enclosed between the bar and kitchen. The kitchen was in the back room originally. The second floor has two guest rooms (see Photographs 3 - 4).

*1862-1863 Addition:*

This side-gabled addition was built on the east side of the original house and is 30 feet by 30 feet. The foundation is stone with a 12-inch crawl space, the exterior is clapboard, and the roof is asphalt shingle. The clapboard is 4-inch lapped wood siding. The current main entrance on the south elevation marks what was originally the southeast corner of this addition. This doorway has always been the main entrance to the hotel. It is a wooden door with glass surround. Three square panes are directly over the door and five rectangular panes extend along each side. The first floor has two French doors which open onto the veranda. Originally there were three such doors, but one was removed at some point to accommodate a stove. The second floor still has the original four windows which are 6-over-6 light, double-hung. Currently, the veranda extends in front of this section. Originally it was only a porch and was upgraded when the 1880 addition was built.

The north elevation originally had a doorway and two 6-over-6 light, double-hung windows on the first floor. A spa room now extends out from the doorway area. The three original second floor windows are still in place.

The interior of this addition is more decorative than the original house. It was built with wainscoting and Victorian wallpaper and fixtures. The interior stairway to the second floor is now the main stairway. It has a unique polished banister, hand-hewn from a pine tree, which is original to the structure. The first floor now has the "Middle Room" in the front which is a sitting room sometimes used for dining, and the laundry is directly behind. Originally the front area was the drawing room with the dining room behind. The "Middle Room" and the first floor front room of the original house have unique lamps. They are etched glass lamp shades which were originally on gaslights in the Colorado State Capitol building. They were removed when the capitol was converted to electricity and taken from storage to be installed in the Peck House in 1955. The original doorway between these two rooms is still present.

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The "Middle Room" also has original glass panes. One of the Peck children, probably James, Jr., scratched his initials in the glass and it can still be seen. The second floor has bedrooms as it always has. Currently there are four guest rooms plus baths; originally there were five bedrooms, each with a small pot-bellied stove. Changes to the second floor include the addition of closets and upgraded baths (see Photographs 5 - 7).

***1880 Addition:***

The addition built in December of 1880, at the cost of \$2000, is 40 feet long and 30 feet deep. The exterior matches the 1862-63 addition in materials and style. At the time of construction, the veranda was built along the south and east sides of the hotel. The decorative woodwork of the veranda railing and brackets follows the Queen Anne Victorian style. Original details and materials are still present. The second floor porch no longer has its railing which originally enclosed the south and east sides. The first floor south elevation has four French doors and a standard door all opening onto the veranda. The second floor has five 6-over-6 light, double-hung windows. The east elevation has two windows, 6-over-6 double hung, and a door between, on both the first and second floors. A small attic window is near the top of the gable end. The north elevation has four 6-over-6 light, double-hung windows on both the first and second floors. No changes have been made on this section.

Two brick chimneys that originally existed have been removed - one was centered on the roof peak of the 1862-63 addition and one identically located on the 1880 addition.

The first floor interior of the 1880 addition currently has a parlor, office, and two guest rooms with baths. The second floor has five guest rooms and baths. Originally the first floor had a reading room, billiard parlor, and office with wide-board wainscotting; the second floor had seven bedrooms. The attic still has many original timbers and beams with hand-made square iron nails. At the time of this addition, the shed and storage area were added to the west side of the original house. They no longer exist (see Photographs 8 - 11).

A telephone line was installed in 1881, the first in Empire.

***1955 Addition:***

This addition is built of materials similar to the rest of the structure - stone foundation, clapboard, asphalt shingles - but the style is different. The building measures 37 feet by 37 feet including the corner porch. It is a side gabled structure with two gabled dormers on the south elevation. One gable has two windows, the other has one. All three windows are one-over-one, double-hung windows. The first floor has two picture windows and a slightly off-center entry door. This addition now houses the dining room and kitchen on the first floor and the owners quarters on the second. The original floor plan and use were the same with the second floor being living quarters for the owners, Louise Harrison and Margaret Collbran, who planned the addition (see Photograph 12).

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Empire, Colorado**

***1982 Addition:***

At this time a spa was added to the north side. It is a small room with large picture windows and clapboards on the lower exterior wall which match the house. It is not visible from the front of the Peck House.

***1900 Stable:***

The stable walls are of board-on-board construction with vertically laid 1x8 exterior siding. The roof is wood shingle. The garage doors currently in the south elevation were added in the 1950s. The original doorway is still present. The 1901 extension to the barn was 26 feet by 28 feet, being one story and a loft. The stable, now used for storage, was originally a stable and livery (see Photographs 13 - 15).

***Alternations:***

The property has seen several changes since 1904. In 1937, interior changes were made to accommodate the needs of small apartments. Many original furnishings were sold. 1955 brought a restoration and re-purchasing of many of the Pecks original items. A storage shed to the west of the original house was removed and an addition was added to this side. A first floor window was changed in the original house, and a refrigerated room added to the back. At some point prior to 1955, the railing was removed from the second floor roof of the veranda. A final additional in 1982 included a spa and restrooms on the back of the hotel. In 1986, bathrooms on the second floor were modernized.

***General Interior Features of the Peck House:***

Much of the original interior finish work still exists. Especially notable are the original doors, wooden door framing, wooden window frames, stair railing, wainscotting, and hardware. Railing and wainscotting have already been discussed. Notice the two different styles of newel posts at the top of the staircase. Original door frames exist in all sections of the house. The style was kept consistent from 1862 through 1880 (see Photographs 4, 7, 16). Much of the door hardware is also original. Photograph 4 shows the escutcheon plate with knob on the door of the original house.

**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

***Summary:***

The Peck House is historically significant under Criterion A for its association with the settlement and commercial history of Empire and as the first hotel in Empire. This structure, comprised of the original house and several additions, represents the community development that occurred between 1862 through 1880, and afterwards. The



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**Peck House**  
**Empire, Colorado**

building stands on its original site and is the oldest hotel in Colorado, still serving in this capacity. The Peck House setting, size, and Victorian-style detailing have made it a prominent structure in the region for the last century. The Peck House is also architecturally significant under Criterion C as it is a very good example of a late 19th century frame structure as they were built in the West. A vast amount of the original material is still intact, including decorative exterior woodwork and interior wood finish work.

The Peck House in Empire, Colorado is representative of the era of westward Exploration and Settlement when people were forced to be industrious and innovative as they settled new areas. The panic of 1857 left many Americans east of the Mississippi River in precarious financial standing. Reports of gold strikes in the Rocky Mountains convinced many that moving west was the best solution. The first gold in the area of Empire was discovered in August, 1860. Union District was formed on August 9, 1860, becoming known as Empire City in 1861. James Peck, a Chicago businessman, moved to Colorado around 1861 and settled in Empire in 1862. His four room house completed in 1862 was the first frame house in town, and he and his wife entertained many travellers who had nowhere else to stay. An addition added to the house in late 1862 allowed the Pecks, after a few years, to meet some of their financial needs by charging visitors and functioning as an hotel.

The Pecks' commercial interests included mining, retail sales, and the hotel. The Peck House was owned by the Peck family until 1945, being closed intermittently as circumstances dictated. Even with numerous owners over the next 42 years, the hotel has been restored and has remained in operation the majority of the time. It is now the oldest hotel in Colorado still in use.

***Chronology:***

The property on which the Peck House stands was first purchased from the U.S. government by James Peck around 1861. It is on hilly, rocky terrain seen as undesirable by others, but James Peck loved the view from this location. James and his oldest son, Frank Lebaron Peck, built the original two-story, four room house, completed in 1862. The first large addition was added late in 1862 shortly before the arrival of James' wife, Mary Grace Parsons Peck. She arrived with their two younger sons, James, Jr. and Harvey (Harry), and brought many of her valuable possessions. The Pecks opened their home to travellers and for the first few years did not charge for their hospitality. In the late 1860s when the town was not prospering, the Pecks began charging a small fee for their services. The property was known as the Peck homestead until 1872 when it officially became the Peck House and from then on functioned as a hotel. Another large addition was built in 1880 completing the main hotel building which still exists with its wide veranda on the south and east sides. The barn was built in 1900, and the newspaper stated on 7/26/1901 that "Anderson, Peck & Co., have built an extension to their new barn, 26 x 28 feet, one story and loft."

Four newspaper references give some idea of the hotel's ups and downs in its earlier years. *The Rocky Mountain News* on 7/4/1881 stated: "The Peck House feeds its guests on fresh mountain trout and wild mountain berries." On

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6/6/1896 *The Georgetown Courier* stated that: "The Peck House is being papered, painted and renovated, which will give the interior a fresh appearance and made attractive to the summer guests." On 8/2/1901, *The Empire True Fissure* said, "The Peck house annex is being painted and already looks fine indeed. With the heavy influx of trade to that well-known and perfect hostelry, that continues in an increasing ratio, Proprietor Peck says that he may have to build two or three more annexes." *The Georgetown Courier* on 3/29/1904 printed: "The Peck House at Empire was opened on Tuesday of this week, after being closed down for some time. D.W. Croff a hotel man late of Fort Collins is the new landlord and he comes well recommended."

***Chain of Ownership***

James L. Peck: 1862 - 1880

Frank Labaron Peck: 1880 - 1917

Howard Peck and Charles Peck: 1917 - 1937

Howard Peck: 1937 - April, 1941

Mabel Peck Lake (Howard's sister): April, 1941 - October 18, 1945

Eudochia Bell Smith (Denver's Democratic Senator): October 18, 1945 - August 13, 1955

Louise C. Harrison & Margaret Collbran: August 13, 1955 - April 15, 1970

Kevin & Emly Lu Croke: August 15, 1970 - December 13, 1971

Kriendler Investment Corp. (Kris Kriendler): December 13, 1971 - August 14, 1972

Harry F. & Joan Hull: August 14, 1972 - July 16, 1976

R.C. Peck, Inc. (Rick & Carol Norton): July 16, 1976 - February 12, 1979

Vernon Hines & Sam Newton: February 12, 1979 - July 1, 1981

Nova Corporation (Sally & Gary St. Clair): July 1, 1981 to present.

***Discussion of Significance:***

a. The first area of significance for the Peck House is Exploration/Settlement. This house is significant both locally and to the State of Colorado, and represents the major national trend of westward expansion of the 1800s. The Peck family, beginning with James, played a significant role in the settlement of Empire, Colorado, after exploring possibilities in nearby areas along Clear Creek. James Peck's first job was managing the Whitcomb Mill in the mining camp of Whitcomb, now known as Nevadaville. He then moved to Trail Creek, taking charge of the Van Dearn Mill that worked ore for the Tannel Mine of Clear Creek County. Although James had staked out claims of his own here, he moved on to Empire City in the Union Mining District, staking several claims on Silver Mountain. In addition to the mining claims, he purchased the property on Lion Creek on the north side of Empire City. On this property James and Frank Peck built the first frame house in Empire in 1862. It was a two room, one-story structure that later the same year they expanded adding two rooms on the second floor. Probably in late 1862 or early 1863, before Mrs. Peck's arrival from Chicago, the first large addition to the east of the house was completed. In front

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of this addition a large brass bell from a Lake Michigan steamship was hung. This began the role of the Peck House being central to community activities. The bell was rung three times a day to announce meal times and another three times a week at the arrival of the tri-weekly stage from Central City.

When Mary Grace Parsons Peck arrived in Empire, she brought with her a quantity of furniture, much of it in the Louis XVI style. Among items that still exist are a rare set of twin sleigh-style beds, a birds-eye maple bedroom suite, and highly carved sideboard. She also brought china, silver, linen, jewelry, and 16 full-skirted dresses of the latest style. Since the Peck house was, without a doubt, the nicest in Empire, it was natural that the Peck family would provide lodging for travellers. Mrs. Peck was a hostess who loved to entertain in the most gracious style possible. For several years the Pecks hosted travellers at their own expense as there was really nowhere else available. Visitors included those with mining interests, newly arrived settlers, and those exploring the region. One major concern brought recognized names of the time to Empire. This was the issue of building a road and hopefully the transcontinental railroad through Empire on its route over Berthoud Pass.

The people of Empire City were ecstatic at the possibility, only to have their hopes dashed when ultimately a survey requested by President Lincoln found the grades to be too steep. A final decision was reached in 1866 in which the transcontinental railroad bypassed Colorado. In her book, Louise Harrison states that “the gloom of despair lingered at Empire City.” First, because the railroad had been lost, and secondly, because no method could be found to separate gold from its pyritous ores. Businesses began to leave Empire City, among them the James Peck & Company store. Frank Peck moved the store’s goods to Georgetown. It was during this difficult time that the Pecks began charging a modest amount for their food and lodgings. Empire’s initial boom period ended at this point, but James Peck was able to continue successful operation of his mines and his hotel.

The final major addition was made to the Peck House by Frank Peck in December 1880 shortly after the death of his father in January 1880. At this point the hotel became the center of Empire’s social life. In the 1880s it was the popular spot for the young social crowd, hosting card parties, hops, and wedding receptions. It was not only local people, but also visiting dignitaries, who signed the black oilcloth register—P.T. Barnum, Senator Edward Wolcott, General John A. Logan, and General William Tecumseh Sherman. Each evening at dusk, when the red, white, and blue bulbs were turned on around the veranda, the Empire Silver Cornet Band serenaded the town from the second story veranda. The Peck House was the first house in Empire to have electricity. It was originally powered by a water wheel. Several years later, Frank Peck bought a motor to generate electricity for both the hotel and the town.

Business continued to go well until around 1910. From that time until 1955, the Peck House operated, going into a steady decline. The restoration in 1955 led to a change in fortunes for the hotel, and it continues to operate as a successful hotel and restaurant to the present time. It is now the oldest hotel still operating in Colorado. Well known guests of the modern era were Muriel Sibell Wolle and Caroline Bancroft, both authors of Colorado history.

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The Peck family made important personal contributions to the community as well. Outside of business interests, James Peck served as mayor, postmaster, and station agent of Empire. Frank Peck also served as mayor for a time while helping his mother run the hotel and managing their mining interests. He was clerk of Clear Creek County Court for more than 30 years. Harry Peck became tax assessor for Routt County, and his wife, Emma Hull Peck, became superintendent of schools. Around 1920, Frank's son, Howard, began working as an electrician in Empire. For \$10 per house he wired homes that had previously had no electricity. He did an excellent job and much of his work still remains functioning.

b. The second area of significance represented by the Peck House is Commerce. The Pecks were involved in the hotel business, mining, and retail sales. The family was very successful in the hotel business. Their accommodations were known as the best in the area for food and gracious hospitality from 1862 until Mary Grace Parsons Peck's death in 1900. Even after this date, the hotel continued to serve the community with varying degrees of success until the present time.

In 1955, the Peck House was sold to two sisters, Louise C. Harrison and Margaret Collbran. They were the granddaughters of Adolf Coors, founder of the Coors Brewery in Golden, Colorado, and Henry Collbran, a founder of the Colorado Midland Railroad. Harrison and Collbran updated heating, electricity, and plumbing along with making basic repairs needed to many of the old furnishings which remained unharmed in the unused, dilapidated structure. The owners had an addition built, and the renovated hotel opened to the public in 1958. Harrison and Collbran changed the hotel's name to the Hotel Splendide, and the name remained until 1972 when it was changed back to the Peck House. Their mother, Augusta Coors Collbran, lived with her daughters at the Peck House for several years. The Peck House is a visual landmark of the area, looking much the same today as it did in 1880. Minor alterations have occurred, but do not seriously infringe on the structure's ability to convey the feeling of a Victorian hotel.

Mining was another area of involvement of the Pecks. James Peck came to Colorado from Chicago where he had attained wealth as a commission and forwarding agent. He never doubted his ability to attain wealth from the new frontier and sold his Chicago business in 1861. Peck's first commercial dealings in Colorado were in mining. He staked several claims in Empire City and actually worked his Atlantic and Gold Dirt mines contrary to the practice of many.

Peck's Atlantic mine on Silver Mountain was the most fully developed mine in the district. This lode became the nucleus of the Peck Gold Mining Company. Another property, the Equator lode, was not expected to yield gold. Its purpose was to provide a right-of-way for an aerial tramway that would bring the ore down some 1500 feet to the gulch where a stamp-mill was built on Lion Creek. Harrison states that "beginning with the Atlantic, the sequence of the patent numbers of the Peck properties indicate a careful planning that was far-sighted and ambitious far in advance of the times." James Peck's mill was the only one to remain in operation during the mining depression of

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the late 1860s. After James' death in 1880, Frank took charge of the mining interests. The Atlantic mine continued to be profitable into the 1900s.

c. The third area of significance for the Peck House is its architectural significance. Many of the features were described in the narrative discussion and will be emphasized again. This structure is representative of the type of building constructed during the period of settlement in Colorado and in other western states. Its late 19th century structure is highlighted by a Victorian-style veranda with wooden Victorian detailing. The decorative brackets are original to the 1880 addition. The random rubble foundation is very typical for this time period. Even though the house was built in several sections, a common feature in many 19th century western buildings, with a number of years between additions, a unified structure was created. The interior woodwork is of a simple design, in harmony throughout the additions, and almost all original woodwork is intact.

The Peck House also represents the innovative spirit of the 19th century settlers which gave the house its unique features. The interior banister from first to second floor is made from a single board-hewn pine log, which was highly polished. The newel posts at the top of the stairs are matched in size, but not design. Each has a uniquely designed cap, which is an unusual feature. Also significant is the water system bringing water to the house from a spring one-fourth mile uphill. It was built from pieces of hollowed aspen fit tightly together and buried deeply enough to avoid freezing in the winter. This system remained functional from 1862 until at least 1900, and is still in place. The Peck House is the grandest structure in Empire and an outstanding representaton of the settlement and boom era in Colorado.

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9. Bibliography

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Warranty Deeds: March 26, 1884  
June 1, 1981

Quit Claim Deeds: April 12, 1913  
May 9, 1919  
May 21, 1937  
September 26, 1972

Decree of Final Settlement and Determination of Heirship, In The Matter of the Estate of Russell G. Peck. Deceased. August 20, 1945.

**10. Boundary Description:**

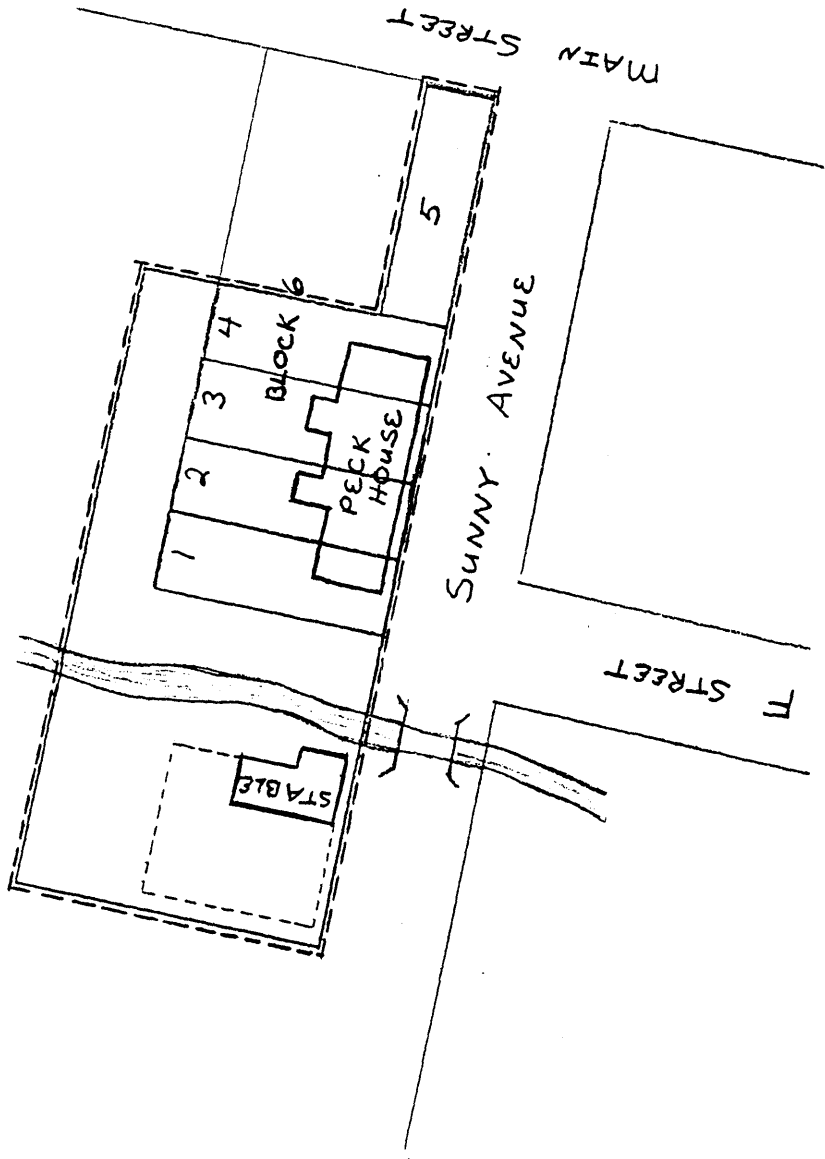
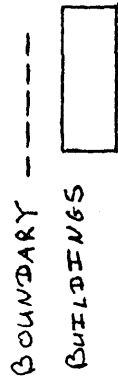
The nominated property fronts on Sunny Avenue with Lot 5 extending to Main Street. The property includes Lots 1 through 5, Block 6, Town of Empire, and a tract northwest of Lot 1. The tract is 160 feet by 160 feet abutting Lot 1 on the northwest, and includes an extension 40 feet by 160 feet to the northeast of Lots 1 through 4. Lion Creek bisects the property, running through the tract northwest of Lot 1. The Peck House sits on the southwest end of Lots 1 through 4 with a small setback from Sunny Avenue. The stable and fenced-in pasture sits on the southwest end of the 160 feet by 160 feet tract. Lion Creek runs between the house and the stable.

**Boundary Justification:**

This property boundary is identical to a boundary description written for Frank Lebaron Peck in 1884. It is apparently the property originally purchased by James Peck for construction of the house.

SITE MAP

PECK HOUSE - EMPIRE, CO

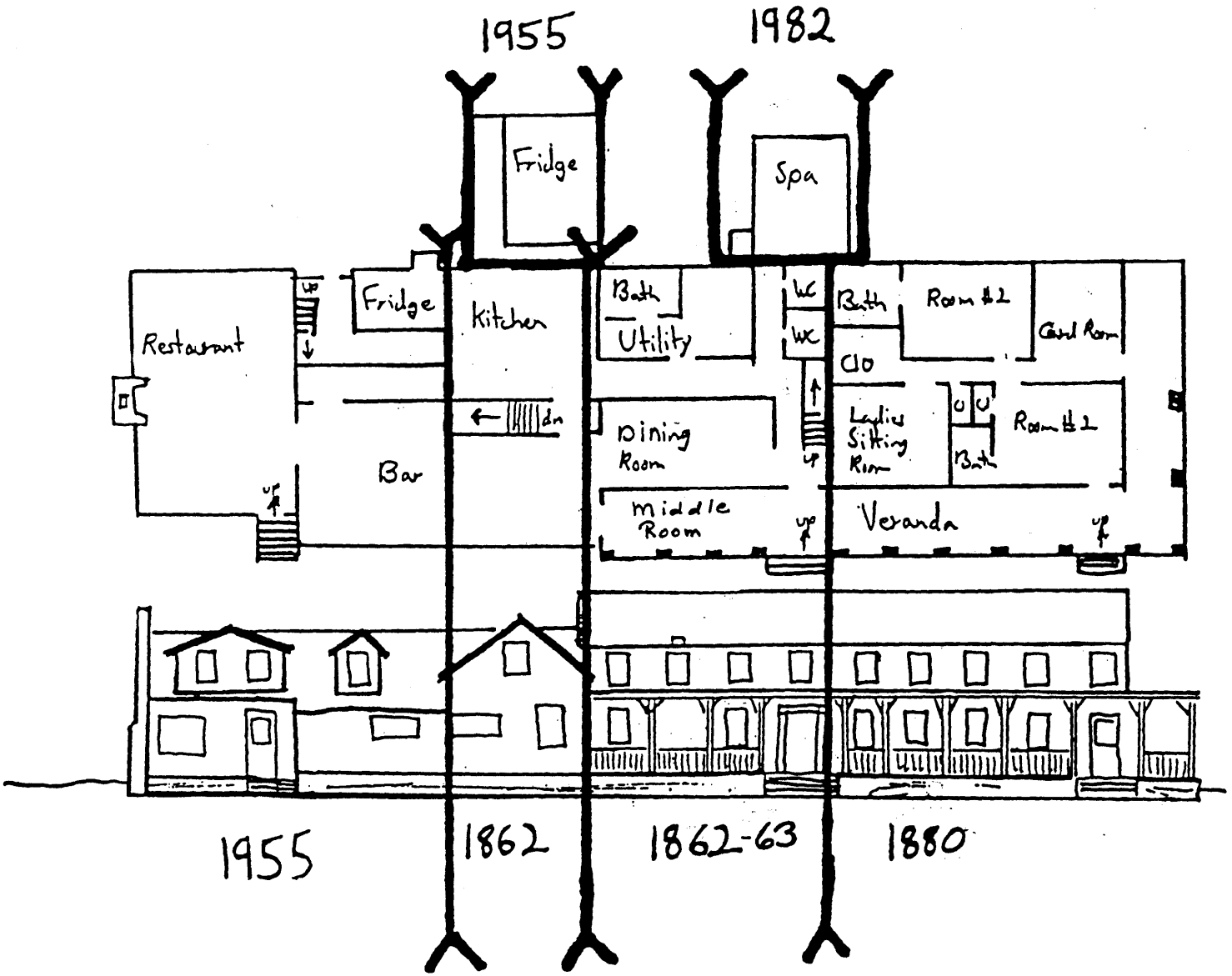


SCALE: 1" = 100'

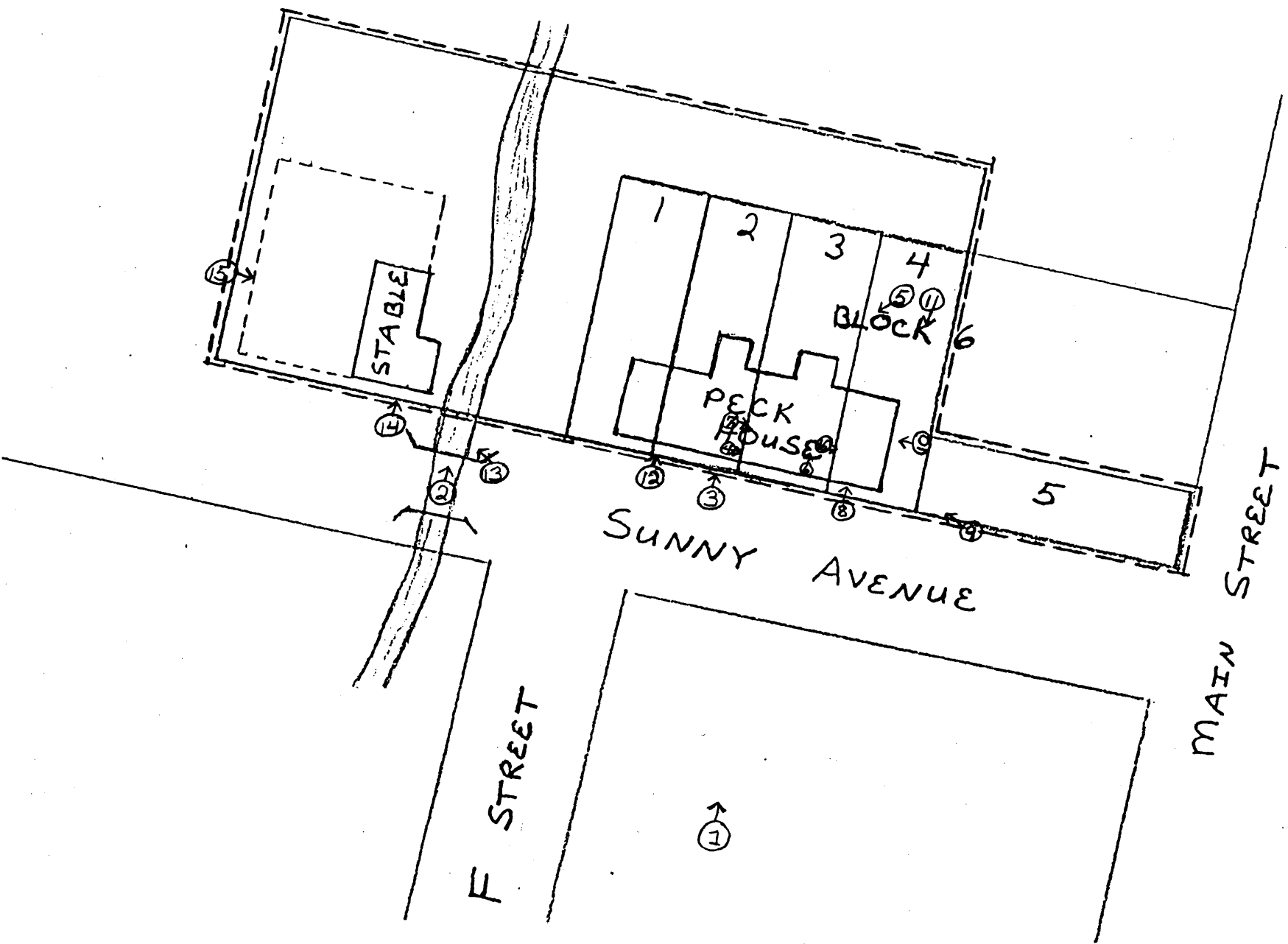
Map 2 of 4



The Peck House  
Empire, CO



Chronology of Additions



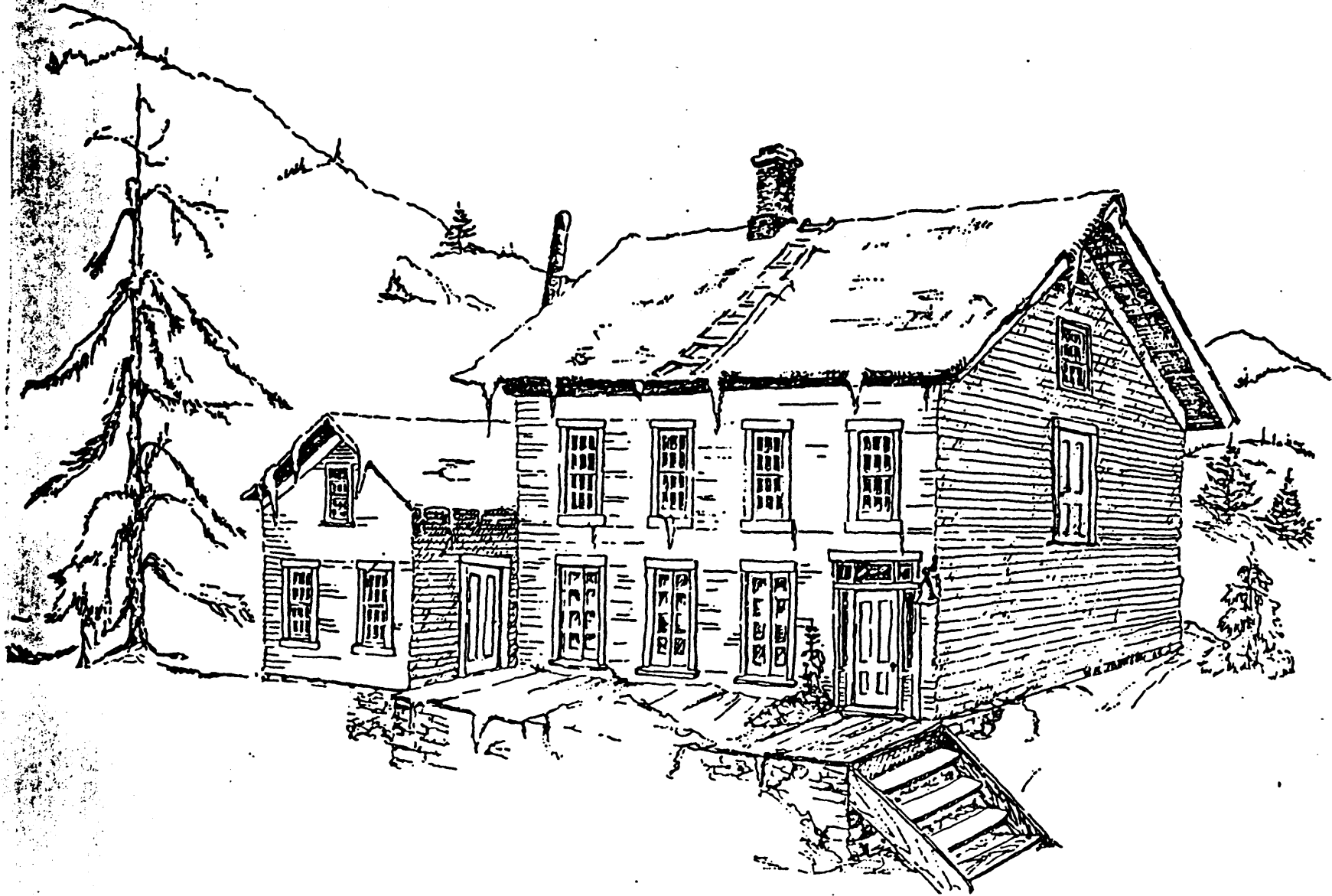
PHOTOGRAPH KEY  
MAP 4 OF 4

The Peck House  
Empire, CO



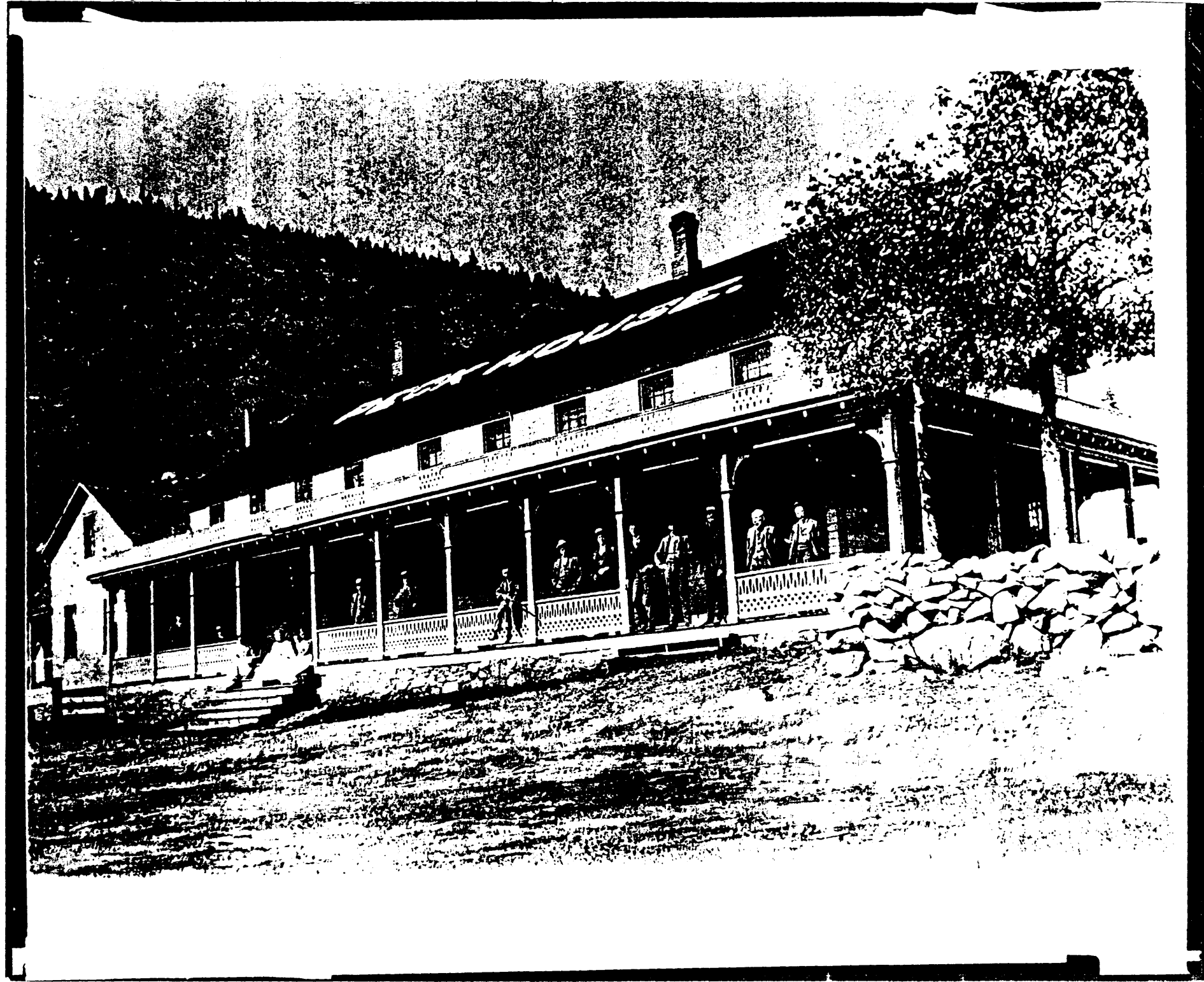
c. 1960

The Peck House  
Empire, CO



CHRISTMAS CARD SENT BY PECKS  
PRIOR TO 1880

THE TELE HOUSE



c. 1885