

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

PH 0687171

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 24 1978 BY 25

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Park County Courthouse and Jail

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

418 Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fairplay

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Colorado

CODE

08

COUNTY

Park

CODE

093

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Park County

STREET & NUMBER

418 Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairplay

VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of Park County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

501 Main Street (Court House Annex)

CITY, TOWN

Fairplay

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites (#47/01/0016)

DATE

Ongoing

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society, 1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

80203

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in Court House Square in the Town of Fairplay, the Park County Court House is a single detached structure basically square in shape. It is two stories in height with a full basement part of which is underground. The south facade of the building, generally considered the front, has six bays; the east and west facades two bays; and the north or back facade four bays. The Court House is built of red stone; that used in the foundation is large, natural, cut, and coursed; that used in the rest of the structure split rubble that has been squared. The south facade has a gabled roof with a lower hipped roof attached to either side. The cornice is boxed with consoles. The structure has two porches, an open porch above the front door and a closed porch over the entrance to the basement. The main entrance is located in the side of the projection on the south facade; the doors are double leafed with two plain recessed panels; the architrave is plain with embrasure. The windows are double hung and sashed; the openings are segmental in shape with a keystone and a plain lugstone, although the windows above the entrance are two sashed with a mullion. A fire escape has been added to the west side of the building, while the porch adjacent to the front door is a recent addition to the structure. Internally, the most notable architectural feature is a wooden, spiral staircase which makes a half circle in its ascent from the first to the second floor.

ed. JEF 6/78

A short distance to the northwest of the Courthouse lies the jail. It is a single detached structure rectangular in shape, one story in height, and built of stone. The roof is gabled. The main or southeast side has two bays, the northeast side two bays, the southwest side one bay, and the northwest or rear side a more recently added projection with a single bay located on the southeast side. Entry occurs through a door in the main facade and through the door in the projection. All the windows as well as the door on the main facade are heavily barred. There are two chimneys rising through the apex of the roof.

Written by JEF 4/23/79

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Folklore
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1874-present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT George W. Nice, Architect

Robert Frazier, Lewis W. Lewis, Contractors

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Erected in 1874, two years before Colorado achieved statehood, the Park County Court House is the oldest court house still in operation in the state. Essentially unchanged since the time of its construction, the building is significant for its architectural qualities, for the information that may be derived about early construction techniques in an isolated area, for its contribution to local settlement, and for its century-long role in the administration of law and government in Park County.

Fairplay owed its origin and name to the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859 although neither the town nor Pike's Peak were anywhere near the site of the discoveries that touched off the gold fever. In any case prospectors searching for the new Eldorado pushed over the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains into the high mountain valley known as South Park and sometimes Bayou Salado. Here, mining camps sprang up with such names as Buckskin Joe, Tiger, Mosquito, and Tarryall. Miners at Tarryall, however, were so zealous in keeping out newcomers that many late arrivals grumbled that the place should be named "Graball." In 1860 a prospector named Jim Reynolds, later an infamous highwayman, found a placer near Tarryall and announced that everyone who came there would receive "fair play." The name caught on for a time, and a small settlement arose with perhaps as many as 1,200 inhabitants, a figure that may have been conveniently inflated to "boom" the area. In any case the settlement soon changed its name to the more dignified South Park City until it was formally changed back to Fairplay in 1872.

The Court House came into being as a result of political activity during the early 1870s. The Town of Fairplay was platted in 1872 and named the county seat of government. Within the plat lay an area designated as Court House Square, and as a result the county commissioners ordered a bond election to take place on February 25, 1873, to raise \$15,000 needed for construction. The voters approved the bond issue, and on April 10, the commissioners ordered the bonds placed at no less than seventy percent of par value. The commissioners then received plans and specifications for the structure, and on May 5 they accepted the proposal of George W. Nice. Later the commissioners accepted the bid of Robert Frazier and Lewis W. Lewis, who had to post a surety bond double their bid and complete the structure by November 1, 1874. Since that time the Court House has served as the locus of the District Court and the Park County Court, the office of the Park County Sheriff, and an official storage area for county records dating back to 1863.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- McConnell, Virginia. Bayou Salado: The Story of South Park. Sage Books, Denver, Colorado, 1966.
- Records of the Park County Board of Commissioners, 1873-1875.
- Wolle, Muriel Sibell. Stampede to Timberline: The Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Colorado. University of Colorado Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1949.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5

QUADRANGLE NAME Fairplay West

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,3	4,1,3	5,2,0	4,3	4,2	1,4,0	B	1,3	4,1,3	6,2,0	4,3	4,2	0,4,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,3	4,1,3	5,7,5	4,3	4,2	0,0,0	D	1,3	4,1,3	4,9,0	4,3	4,2	0,8,0
E							F						
G							H						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Court House Square is 200' by 400' bounded by Main Street on the south, Fourth Street on west, Fifth Street on the east, and Hathaway Street on the north. It is located in section 33, T9S, R77W. According to the Federal

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

George H. Gault / Community Development Consultant

ORGANIZATION

Management Services Company

DATE

2/22/78

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 47

TELEPHONE

(303) 249-8416

CITY OR TOWN

Montrose

STATE

Colorado

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Arthur C. Hammond*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

October 13, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5-25-79

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

*William A. Bradburn*

DATE

5-24-79

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CONTINUATION SHEET Park County  
Courthouse & Jail ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

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The structure has also become celebrated in Park County folklore for despite its formal role in the administration of government and law, the Courthouse was, in 1880, the scene of a notorious crime that occurred when a group of vigilantes, displeased over a long jail sentence given a convicted murderer, broke into jail under cover of darkness and hung the unfortunate prisoner from the window above the main floor. Later a judge retrieved the noose and secreted it within the building in hope of using it as evidence when the vigilantes were brought to the bar of justice. But no one ever came to trial for the lynching, and the noose remained hidden in the building until accidentally found in 1953, a grim reminder of that fell event three-quarters of a century before.

Like the Courthouse, the Jail is significant for its architectural features and for its role in the administration of law in Park County. The jail was built about the same time as the Courthouse and was used as a temporary facility for incarceration for about seventy years; later it was converted to storage. From an architectural perspective the jail is typical of many simple, undecorated vernacular buildings erected for this purpose in small towns of the mountain West.

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Court House ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

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Communications Commission, the Court House is located at latitude 39° 13' 24" N  
and longitude 105° 59' 59" W.