

87001215

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Bridger Coal Company House (Bridger MRA)  
Carbon County  
MONTANA

**JUN 15 1987**

Working No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Due: 7/16/87 - 7/30/87  
Action: ACCEPT  
RETURN 7-21-87  
REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for:  technical corrections cited below  
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

<b>Condition</b> <input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<b>Check one</b> <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> altered	<b>Check one</b> <input type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

**8. Significance**

Period      Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates                      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**10. Geographical Data**

Acres of nominated property Please provide acreage in acres.  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification

**11. Form Prepared By**

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ state      \_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title                      date

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed *Melanie Byers*      Date *7/21/87*      Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



brick chimney is the best representative example of company housing existing today in Bridger. The house has a front porch that spans the length of the south facade. The porch has a wooden floor and turned roof support posts. The house is symmetrically organized with a central door flanked by one-over-one double hung windows. Two, one-over-one double hung windows are set in both the east and west elevations. A small, shed roofed addition was appended to the rear of the house, likely at the time of its move into town in 1917.

The house is set on an uncoursed sandstone foundation. The building is sided with novelty siding with corner boards and fascia boards. The roof is covered with wood shingles.

#### HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

Warren T. and Jennie Baker were early residents of Bridger. In January 1904 Baker took over Wiard's Hall and renamed it Baker's Hall. It was an amusement and recreational center where balls, dances, and other social functions were held, such as the Bridger Military Band Ball, and the Volunteer Firemen's Ball. Warren and Jennie also ran a confectionery store as early as 1907, and carried a full line of tobaccos, fruits, stationery, as well as confections. In his store he also established an employment bureau, which the Clarks Fork Herald (1907) said was "a much needed and very commodious plan for employe and employer." In 1908 the Baker's added a pool hall and amusement room. In 1912 when the new Shupak and Kuchinski Block was completed, Baker's moved the pool hall business into the south half of the two story building. He acquired new fixtures for the enterprises, which the Bridger Times (1912) said were "all finished in Mission Style."

In 1914 this business was called the Busy Bee Pool Hall, and was said to be relocated one door east. This may refer to the S & K Broadway entrance where the one story building joins the 2 story block. Jennie also managed the Bridger Opera House (Block 10, OP) for awhile.

The Bakers purchased lots 1 and 2 in 1903 and 1906, and moved two mine properties in. The residence on the eastern half of the two lots was moved here about 1903, and is one of the earliest moves from the mine to Bridger. Prior to 1907 a north wing was added to the house, as shown on the Sanborn Map. (This property is too altered for inclusion on the National Register.) This house, which sits on the western half of the lots was moved after 1916, and was probably moved here as a residence for the Baker's son, William H. (Billy), and his wife Margurette (Margaret). Billy assisted his parents in their businesses, worked at Interstate Nurseries in Bridger, and hired out to shear sheep. In 1917 he started a ranch on Cottonwood Creek, and did freighting for some oil companies in Elk Basin. Margaret E. Baker held the property in 1936, and she transferred title to William Henry Baker in 1938. The Baker family controlled the property until 1984.

## INTEGRITY:

This Bridger Coal Mine residence was placed here after 1916. It has excellent integrity, original siding, fenestration, and roofing materials. Situated as it is in a neighborhood setting, it nearly replicates its original setting with other residences in the coal camp.

## HISTORICAL and/or ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

This Bridger Coal Mine residence meets criterion C as a pristine example of the distinctive hip roof box bungalow mine owner W.A. Clark had constructed for his employees. More than two dozen of the easily distinguishable mine houses have been moved to Bridger, including seven of the eleven houses on this block. Only this one has been preserved in perfect condition. It conveys the importance of the Bridger coal mine in the development of the community. While moved properties generally have lost site integrity and are not considered eligible for listing on the National Register, the moving of buildings to Bridger was historically common place.

The frontier line in Carbon County moved eastward in 1892 when lands were ceded from the Crow Indian Reservation and opened for settlement. County residents moved frequently from one settlement to the next, following the coal mines and other economic enterprises. Not only did they move their families, but often their buildings as well.

In 1900 when the town of Bridger was being platted, the town of Carbonado, an early coal mining camp, was being dismantled or moved away. Even the town of Bridger officially began with a move. Earlier known as "Stringtown", in 1898 a row of impromptu business houses were hastily constructed inside the county road right-of-way through the Clarks Fork Valley. Once the official townsite was platted everyone had to lease, then purchase lots upon which to move their buildings. (Red Lodge Picket, October 5, 1900).

Although County Clerk and Recorder and County Assessor records do not document the sale or moving of buildings, Council Minutes of the City of Bridger indicate permission granted to move 44 structures into the townsite between the years of 1941 to 1959. During those nineteen years, 39% of the structures placed in Bridger were moved in from elsewhere, or 44 moved and 68 new construction. In 1946 alone, 14 houses were moved in, while only 7 new ones were constructed. Prior to 1940 moving permits were either not required, or not enforced, and several structures were moved after 1940 without a permit. By 1955 27% of the buildings in Bridger had been moved in.

While for the most part it is not possible to document where a structure was moved from, oral accounts are often sufficient evidence. Many of Bridger's moved-in buildings came from the local Bridger Coal Company Complex, the oil boom towns of Warren,

Dry Creek, and Elk Basin, and sister coal camps, Bearcreek and Washoe. Other residents are known to have moved in from their nearby ranch, bringing the house to town with them. And at least one building, the school house, was moved in from the agricultural community of Bowler. The New Prospect School was moved to town as late as 1953.

The Bridger Coal Company structures are of particular interest. Senator W.A. Clark, Butte's notorious "Copper King", developed the Bridger Coal Mine in 1898 on the bluff just west of where the town of Bridger was ultimately platted. His coal mine complex included a substantial number of dwellings and at least two boarding houses. The first documented moving of the mine residences was in 1903 when mine manager George Hough moved his house and family to town. The townsite was obviously the preferred residential area, and since the mine school closed that same year, families with school age children needed to move, or transport them daily. The 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows 42 dwellings and 2 boarding houses. The newspaper that same year described the "fifty or more" dwellings as "comfortable homes which are supplied with water from the mains and electric lights if desired..[and] large and roomy lodging and boarding houses, where single miners board." The same paper reported that due to the opening of a new vein, the dwellings would all be moved to the flat just west of town, which would "double the size of Bridger at once, and will give the town a great impetus."

The 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map locates the dwellings in the flat, indicating that they were moved as planned. This map shows 32 dwellings, only eight of which were occupied then, and two boarding houses, neither of which were in use. So by 1916 at least ten, or perhaps as many as eighteen miner's residences had already been removed from the complex. By the late 1940's none of the W.A. Clark mine residences remained at the site.

The removal of houses from Bearcreek may have started as early as the 1920's but by the mid-thirties it was so common place as to warrant the following comment (Bear Facts, October 9, 1935). "Such a thing as passing a house on the road is not unusual to anyone around here. At the rate the houses are being moved we may need a traffic cop to let the houses go by." According to Fay Kuhlman in her booklet on "Bearcreek, Montana" (1972), all the Washoe company houses that were not bought by people living in them were sold to Henry Michaelson of Bridger and a Mr. Thornton of Billings. Trucks were used to move the properties to Red Lodge, Joliet, Bridger, and other locations in this area. Building permits were not yet in effect to require reporting of the relocation of those dwellings.

There are several historic reasons for the moving of properties. As in the case of Red Lodge, Joliet and Bridger, construction began in advance of townsite development, and once platting occurred, officials required moving onto acquired lots. And plans changed, as in the case of the Bridger Mine Company residents, where further development required removal in order to

accommodate a new vein opening. And third, the rise and fall of economic fortunes dictated where the population would be drawn, and hence where houses were needed. The closing of the Carbonado Mine in 1901, the Gebo mines in 1912, the reduction in mining in Bearcreek after 1920, Red Lodge after 1925, and closure of the Washoe mines in 1943, all led to reduced demand for housing, or in the case of Gebo and Carbonado, total abandonment of the towns. As the population in Carbon County dropped from its peak of 15,279 in 1920 to 10,241 in 1950, Bridger's population rose from 679 to 854 during the same period, so as housing demands decreased in the County in general, it increased in Bridger. As the population moved it went on to other enterprises and took along what valuables, including buildings, it could. And finally, the scarcity of locally available building materials no doubt inspired conservation and re-use. Bridger's residential neighborhoods are constructed of wood, and their closest supplier was the Pryor Mountain Sawmill, which operated only during good weather, as heavy winter snows made travel difficult to impossible on the high timbered areas. Also during World War II, when the population grew most rapidly, building materials were scarce and the War Production Board froze use of certain materials for non-wartime purposes.

In most instances residences were moved from one town to the next, so while the original integrity of setting was lost, the new location on a lot and block in another small community would nearly replicate the original townsite setting and surroundings. And, in some cases, at least, the houses even had the same occupants. In this study when sufficient integrity of historic architectural features and design remain, as in this case, the moved building is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

**FORM PREPARED BY:**

Name: Carbon County Historic Preservation Office

Address: Box 1651

Red Lodge, MT 59068

Date: October, 1986

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

Acreage: 60' x 67 1/2'

USGS Quad: Bridger, Mont. 1956 7.5

UTM's: Zone 12, 663345 E., 5017740 N.



MONTANA HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY

BRIDGER SURVEY

Legal Description: Block 5, Lots 1-2 (W1/2) OP  
Address: 307 West Broadway  
Ownership: Name: William Currie  
                  %Albert Dautau  
                  Address: Box 235  
                                  Joliet, MT 59041



Roll# 1 /Frame# 25

Historic Name: Bridger Coal Co. Residence  
Common Name: Mine Residence  
Date of Construction: Circa 1898  
                                  Moved Circa 1917 ✓

Architect: Unknown  
Builder: W.A. Clark/Bridger Coal Mine  
Original Owner: Moved by the Baker Family  
                                  as early as 1917  
Original Use: Mine Residence  
Present Use: Residence

Research Sources:

Abstract of Title: Carbon County Courthouse:  
1903, Jenny Baker (lot 1); 1906, Jenny  
Baker (lot 2); 1923, Frank E. Aikens;  
1936, Margaret E. Baker; 1938, William  
Henry Baker; 1971, Margaret M. Baker;  
1984, William Currie  
Plat Records: Carbon County Courthouse  
Tax Records: Carbon County Courthouse  
Building Permits: N/A  
Sewer/Water Permits: N/A  
City Directories: N/A  
Sanborn Maps: 1907-1916 at mine site  
Newspapers: Red Lodge Picket; 1-21-04;  
                  4-7-04; Free Press; 1-8-04;  
                  Bridger Advocate; 1-24-07;  
                  Carbon County Republican; 6-15-06;  
                  5-25-06; Clarke Fork Herald;  
                  4-11-07; Bridger Banner; 4-9-08;  
                  Bridger Times; 1-5-12; 3-1-12;  
                  5-11-17; 12-14-17; Carbon County  
                  News; 7-10-42; 7-24-42  
Other: 1928 Voter's Register; Bridger City  
                  Council Minutes 5-2-45

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Location Map

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:

This one story, hipped roof, four-square residence with a central

brick chimney is the best representative example of company housing existing today in Bridger. The house has a front porch that spans the length of the south facade. The porch has a wooden floor and turned roof support posts. The house is symmetrically organized with a central door flanked by one-over-one double hung windows. Two, one-over-one double hung windows are set in both the east and west elevations. A small, shed roofed addition was appended to the rear of the house, likely at the time of its move into town in 1917.

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Address: Box 1651

Red Lodge, MT 59068

Date: October, 1986

**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:**

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