

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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received JUL 3 1984

date entered AUG 3 1984

**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 Madison County Fairgrounds

and/or common Madison County Fairgrounds

2. Location

street & number ~~P.O. BOX W~~ MT 41 n/a not for publication

city, town Twin Bridges n/a vicinity of

state Montana code 030 county Madison code 057

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Madison County

street & number County Courthouse 110 West Wallace Street

city, town Virginia City n/a vicinity of state Montana 59755

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Madison County Courthouse

street & number 110 West Wallace Street

city, town Virginia City state Montana 59755

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title none has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Madison County Fair Grounds is located near the confluence of three rivers in a rural mountain valley. The nominated property is now incorporated within the limits of the town of Twin Bridges and includes an area of approximately 50 acres. Irregular in shape, the Fair Grounds is bordered on the east by the Beaverhead River, to the north by Highway 41, and to the south and west by farmland. Included in this nomination are one early homestead structure that was remodeled during the 1930's, seven buildings constructed by the Works Progress Administration during 1936-7, and seven more recently constructed fair buildings. The primary significance of the Fair Grounds is found in its association with the WPA and the rustic architectural styling of the buildings that exist from that period. The historic buildings at the Fair Grounds were built in a semi-circle with the pavillion at one end and the grandstand at the other. The newer structures are placed outside of this configuration and do not detract significantly from the historic character of the district. The following building descriptions are keyed by number to the site map enclosed.

1. Pavillion (1936): A very impressive octagonal building designed by C.D. Paxton as the "Log Community Building". The construction of this building was supervised by the master log craftsman, Tosten Stenberg. Each of the eight sides of the structure measures 37' 8". Saddle corner notching was used and the log butts were cut on a bias. Two multi-paned casement windows are set in each of the eight sides of the structure. The entrance is defined by a gable roofed awning with log support posts and pole railings. At the center of the cedar shingled roof is a lantern, supported by eight large poles set in cement, giving an interior open floor space of 100' in diameter. Multi-paned windows encircle the lantern clerestory. The roof rafters are poles, radiating from the center. The interior walls are exposed logs. All of the logs and poles used in the construction of the pavillion are of lodge pole pine (*Pinus Contortus*), chosen for the lack of linear taper of this species and harvested at Ramshorn Creek, about 15 miles from Twin Bridges. When the building was first started it was to have a dirt or gravel floor. In 1936, the WPA came up with sufficient funds to have a hardwood dance floor put in, if the local people requested it. It took only a day to obtain enough signatures for this addition. The white oak, tongue and groove flooring was put down in eight units; all ends were cut on a bias. The 1983 flood caused the floor to buckle so badly that it likely cannot be restored. The pavillion has been used throughout the years as a dance hall, roller skating rink, a place for wedding receptions, family reunions, political rallies, suppers, Church functions, auctions, and flea markets as well as the main hall during fair time.
2. Caretaker's House (1936): Fir logs used in the construction of the small, hipped roof Caretaker's House also were harvested in the Tobacco Root Mountains near Twin Bridges. Saddle notch corner timbering was employed and the butt ends of the logs were cut at a taper from top to bottom. The front, gabled roof porch has been enclosed, using 3/1 fixed windows. The remainder of the windows in the building are 3/1 double hung. The building measures 26'9" by 21'9". The interior is finished with plaster board and slab log sheathing for the ceiling. The building was raised thirty inches on a new concrete foundation (date of alteration unknown) in an attempt to protect the structure from the occasional floods. The interior of the Caretaker's House has been remodeled.
3. Livestock Shed/Dairy Barn (1936): Originally used as the horse barn, this long stock building is constructed of lodge pole pine logs with saddle notch corner timbering and sawn log ends at either end of the structure with horizontal siding over frame construction between the two cribbed log ends. The building measures 22' by 125'. The

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- logs were manually stripped of their bark and some of the cambrium layer was left in place for decorative effect. The gable roof is covered with cedar shingles and the gable ends with vertical board siding. The building is divided into a series of animal stalls, each exposed to the exterior on the west side and enclosed with pole gates.
- 4 & 5. Cattle Barn and Sheep Barn (1936): These two log buildings are nearly identical in design and detailing. Both are monitor type barns in form, each features multi-paned casement clerestory windows on the south sides. The base of each buildings is constructed in log with saddle notch corner timbering and the upper portion of the building is of frame construction. The buildings measure 34'6" by 79'. Large double doors open on either end of each barn. The interiors are divided into separate stalls. The roofs are covered with cedar shingles. Shed roofed, small animal pens have been added on either side of each building. Although the animal pens are a more recent addition to the barns, they do not significantly detract form the historic qualities of the buildings.
6. Grandstand (1936): At its completion, the grandstand at the Madison County Fair Grounds was one of the largest in the State, with a seating capacity of over 2,000. It measures 150' in length by 25'2" in width and has ten tiers of seats. The log pilings on which the grandstands sits are of fir, which has withstood well the damp ground conditions over the years, set approximately 6' apart. The grandstand faces a 1/2 mile race track. The present grandstand and racetrack replaced an earlier structure and 1 mile track built by Mortimer Lott in 1889. From these stands, spectators have viewed horse races, rodeos, car races, demolition derbies, motorcycle races, stunt driving, air shows, as well as the functions of the fair which include cattle judging, animal sales, 4-H rodeos, etc.
7. Swine Building (1947): Although built ten years after the WPA-constructed buildings at the Fair Grounds, the Swine Building is of compatible design and materials and does not detract from the historic character of the district. The open shed has a gable roof supported by square beams. The interior is divided into a multiple, small animal pens.
8. Poultry Building (ca. 1970): Small diameter, lodge pole logs were used in the construction of the Poultry Building, making this structure also compatible with the historic character of the district. The logs that compose the walls are spiked together and no corner timbering is used. The Poultry Building has a gable roof that is covered with asphalt shingles.
9. Open Shed (ca. 1970): This stock building is open in design and features log veneer siding on the exterior walls. Although clearly of recent construction, this structure does not detract from the character of the historic district.
10. 4-H Building (1962): This pre-fabricated metal building detracts from the historic character of the district. It features a gable roof that is covered with raw aluminum.
11. Metal Exposition Building (1973): This pre-fabricated, yellow, metal building also detracts from the historic character of the district.
12. Square Building (1894): The Square Building is the only structure to remain from the original fair grounds complex. Remodeled as a part of the WPA project, this building

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is of post and beam construction and is covered with log veneer siding. The gable roof and gable ends are covered with cedar shingles. Six-light casement windows and a hardwood floor were also added during the 1930's. Built by Mortimer Lott in 1894, the Square Building has always served as one of the central gathering spots at the fair. It has also been extensively used as a local gymnasium since the 1930's renovation.

13. Horse Shed (1980): This long open shed is supported by square beams and features a gable roof that is covered with metal sheathing. The interior is divided into numerous stalls that are open on exterior. This structure does not significantly detract from the character of the historic district.
14. Stud Barn (1954): This building evidently was constructed in two phases. Located adjacent to the race track, the Stud Barn is of frame construction with two rows of horse stalls that are open only on the exterior. The building is sided with horizontal planks. The double shed roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Due to the placement of this structure at the far end of the fair grounds and the use of compatible building materials, the Stud Barn does not significantly detract from the character of the historic district.
15. Band Stand (1937): The Band Stand or Gazebo is an octagonal, open structure that stands near the pavilion. The roof rafter poles tie into a center, notched round block. The foundation is cement with a rock veneer. Pole railings surround the thick, plank floor. The Band Stand has met the eye of all who enter the fair grounds. The structure is in good condition and remains in its original location.

Other landscaping work that was completed as a part of the WPA project at the Madison County Fair grounds includes the rock faced cement pilings that mark entrance to the grounds. The roads throughout the grounds were graded and graveled and 480 yards of water pipe were put down, including the 2 1/2 inch line that goes under the river to the Twin Bridges water supply. Large log picnic tables and cement barbeque pits also date from the 1930's and most are still in existence.

Five animal shelters have been constructed at the Madison County Fair Grounds since the 1930's. Each of these structures employ compatible materials in construction and blend well with the historic architecture at the site. Although these structures do not contribute to the historic quality of the district, they are not considered to be intrusive. The two new metal exhibition buildings, on the other hand, definitely detract from the character of the district.

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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1936-1937

Builder/Architect Mortimar Lott, C.D. Paxton & others

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The rustic style log buildings at Madison County Fair Grounds possess exceptional significance as a cohesive group of structures that represent the impact of the federal work programs during the 1930's, specifically the Works Progress Administration, in Montana. The Fair Grounds has played an important role in the rural life of Madison County, both as a source of employment and income for the county's citizens during the Depression of the 1930's and as a center for social activities. Those structures built as a part of the WPA re-employment project at the Madison County Fair Grounds are architecturally significant as well preserved examples of the high quality of craftsmanship and design, using locally procured building materials, that was typical of the period rustic styling and federally-financed, labor intensive construction projects.

Similar to many Montana counties where the economic structure was based upon agriculture and/or capital-intensive mineral exploitation, Madison County experienced particular hardship and very high unemployment during the Great Depression. By 1930, many mines in the county had already closed due to rising production costs. Although a number of small scale mining operations came into production during the 1930's due to reduced labor costs and agriculture continued to employ a portion of the population, the Re-employment Office in Virginia City was working to secure jobs for over 1,400 registered unemployed in the county in 1934. This accounted for more than half of the county's workforce. Projects financed through the Civic Works Administration and later the Works Progress Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, and Public Works Administration provided needed, temporary employment for a great number of county residents. The effect of the federal assistance programs in stabilizing the local economy and materially improving the quality of peoples' lives in the county during the 1930's may be surmised, based upon the listing of the schools, public buildings, roads, bridges, campgrounds, miles of fencing, dam construction, etc. completed with these dollars.

The application for funding assistance for the Madison County Fair Grounds was approved in 1935. Construction began in 1936 and was largely completed by 1937. Some additional funding was provided in 1938 and 1941. A WPA engineer, C.D. Paxton, drew up the original plans for the fair buildings. The State's WPA headquarters in Livingston sent Tosten Stenberg to direct the construction, especially the initial laying of the log sills and walls. Stenberg was well known for his work on large log structures in Montana and Yellowstone National Park. Fred Sommers of Twin Bridges, the general foreman and a highly skilled carpenter and builder, was, at age 65, brought out of retirement with a special waiver from Washington to supervise work on the project. The lodgepole pine, fir logs, and other building materials were gathered locally and prepared by the workers on the site. An older exhibit building on the site (structure #12) was re-sided with log veneer as a part of the WPA project so as to compliment the newly constructed buildings at the complex. Collectively, the buildings at the Madison County Fair Grounds exhibit a quality of craftsmanship in the use of local materials and an architectural styling that is not found elsewhere in the county.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(see continuation sheet also)

Madison County History Association, Pioneer Trails and Trials; Madison County, compiled by Madison County History Association, N.P., 1976.

The following newspapers from the decade of 1928-1938 were perused for background on economic conditions in Madison County: The Madisonian, The Twin Bridges Sentinel, The Madison Co. Monitor

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx 50

Quadrangle name Twin Bridges, MT

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>3</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
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D	<u>1</u> <u>2</u>	<u>3</u> <u>9</u> <u>5</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>
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E	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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F	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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G	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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H	<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification The Madison County Fair Grounds is located in the south west corner of Section 27, T3S; R6W. The northern boundary of the historic district is the right of way of State Highway #41; the eastern boundary is the bank of the Beaverhead River; the southern and western boundaries are marked by the intersecting section lines. The district includes all of the developed picnicking areas and the race track.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>n/a</u>	code	county	code
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state		code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Garry L. Preston, Manager

organization Madison County Fair Board

date 20 January, 1984

street & number P.O. Box W (General Delivery)

telephone

city or town Twin Bridges

state Montana 59754

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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

title SHPO

date 6-28-84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 2/3/84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The tradition of holding county fairs at this location adjacent to the Beaverhead River at Twin Bridges began during the 1890's. The early fairs were privately operated but did receive some financial support from the county. While basically an agricultural fair, space was given to the display of mining machinery, which indicated the importance of mining in the county economy during the early 1900's. The Fair Ground property was owned by two families until 1930 when the land was sold to Madison County for \$2995.50, although the fair had not been held since 1928 due to the depressed economic conditions in the county. The WPA construction project gave the Fair Grounds renewed life with seven new and significant buildings, replacing all but one of the original buildings.

The present condition of the buildings runs from poor to fair. The Fair Grounds lies close to the Beaverhead River; drainage is poor and the river has swamped the grounds several times. The last flood occurred on December 26, 1983, leaving the interior of the main pavillion building severely damaged. Overall, the historic buildings at the Madison County Fair Grounds are structurally stable and retain excellent historic architectural integrity, although stabilization measures and basic repairs are warranted.

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Montana Projects Folders, Works Progress Administration, National Archives,
Washington, D.C., Microfilm series RG69, reels #436, #439, and #453.