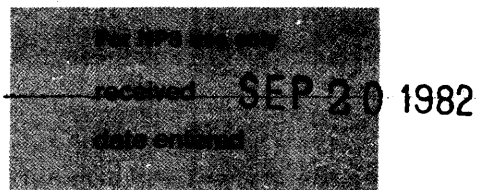


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Norton, W. H. House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Third Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Columbus

N/A vicinity of

~~Congressional District~~

state Montana

code 030

county Stillwater

code 015

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 Stillwater County

street & number Stillwater County Courthouse

city, town Columbus

N/A vicinity of

state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Stillwater County Courthouse

street & number Third Avenue

city, town Columbus

state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A 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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

On the grounds of the Stillwater County Courthouse in Columbus, Montana stands the two story residence of brick bearing wall construction erected in 1899 by W. H. Norton. The building rests on a native stone foundation. The south or front facade has a centrally located, two story wooden porch. The second story is supported by shaped wooden posts; both levels have railings and turned spindles. A second story door provides access to the balcony. Decorative bracketing accents the porch supports. The wood shingled roof is a combination of the gabled form set in a modified Mansard roof with 2 gable roofed dormers cut in at the eave line on the east and west sides of the building. Delicate cut-outs decorate the gables above the dormer windows. The tall, 2/2 double hung windows of the first floor are set in low arched heads of a double row of brick headers. Small wood panels set between the window heads and the brick arches on the front facade are accented by a decorative wood overlay. Corbelled brick chimneys are located centrally on the east and west side walls and project above the roof between the two roof dormers on each side. A third chimney, smaller but of the same corbel pattern is found on the east wall of the small projecting wing.

The floor plan consists of a basic rectangular block for the two story portion of the building, with a rectangular one story wing on the north end of the building. This wing has a hip roof and windows similar to those of the rest of the house. This wing houses a kitchen, pantry, bathroom and enclosed wooden porch.

The front entry is centrally located and leads into a hall running north and south. A staircase rises from the entry hall to the second floor. On the left, or west side, of the entry hallway is the living room with the dining room beyond it. On the right side of the hallway are two bedrooms, one behind the other.

The staircase goes up to a landing and from this landing two short flights of steps continue up. One leads to a rear upstairs hallway and the other to the south, or front, hallway. Initially there were four bedrooms on this floor, but it has been remodeled into an apartment which now has two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bath. Presently, the upper floor is unoccupied.

A trap door in the hallway ceiling gives access to a small attic. There is a partial basement located beneath the kitchen wing. It has a dirt floor covered with wooden planks. The building, once heated by pot bellied stoves (now removed), is heated by gas.

The front door has the original turnbuckle doorbell. Electric switches are of the original turn-button type. The walls are brick bearing walls covered with plaster. The stairway and balusters are oak. The interior doors opening into the hallways are paneled doors and have transoms above them. Many of the doors still have their original, decorative hardware. The interior walls are approximately 12" thick, and the exterior walls are about 17" thick. Cracks in the plaster and brick work have been noted, and are probably due to settlement of the house. The house has retained excellent historic integrity of design, materials, location, and setting.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1899 **Builder/Architect** Builder: Jack Smith

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

When the north side of the Yellowstone River adjacent to the Crow Indian Reservation was reopened for white settlement in 1888, W. H. Norton filed a homestead claim on 160 acres which later became the site of the town of Columbus, Montana. Due to Norton's extensive business and political involvement in the early development of Columbus, he has achieved widely recognized local historical significance. The W. H. Norton House, built in 1899, stands at the northwest corner of the Stillwater County Courthouse block. In addition to the associational value of this property, the W. H. Norton House is an important example of late Nineteenth Century brick bearing wall vernacular architecture which has retained an exceptionally high degree of historic integrity.

Prior to settling his homestead claim along the Yellowstone River, W. H. Norton pursued a number of diverse occupations with little lasting success. Norton ventured out to Montana Territory after serving as a Union soldier in the Civil War. Norton first worked in the placer fields near Virginia City in 1866. Next, he turned his attention to farming, then he hauled freight along the Bozeman-Miles City stage route, until he set up a profitable trading post along the Yellowstone River. Norton's store became known as "Sheep Dip" because of the vileness of the liquor he sold to the Indians. When Crow Indian Agent Dexter Clapp discovered the source of drunkenness among the Indians, he had the north side of the Yellowstone made into a reserved area and closed the store. Mr. Norton then became an employee of the Agency. C. H. Barstow, agency clerk, stated in his notes that W. H. Norton enjoyed unusual popularity among the Indians and white people alike.

When the north side of the Yellowstone was reopened in 1888, Norton homesteaded the 160 acres at the site of the present town of Columbus. He built another store at this location and also went into the sheep business which occupied him until 1899 when he went into semi-retirement. Norton, by this time nicknamed Colonel Norton, subdivided part of his land for homes and business blocks and began laying the foundation for a new house of his own. Constructed of brick made in the newly built brick yard in Columbus, the Norton House was one of the most elegant houses in the area. It is thought that the stone mason was one Jack Smith; the identity of the architect is unknown.

W. H. Norton had a long history of involvement in the development of the area. As correspondent for the Helena Herald, Norton covered the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876. He was elected the first Territorial representative for Yellowstone County and when Montana became a state in 1889, Norton served as the county's representative to the legislature. Norton helped to finance a large number of local business endeavors: the development of the stone quarry near Columbus (source of the building material for the Montana State Capitol Building); the construction of the local Opera House (now the City Hall building), the creamery, the flour mill, and the hospital.

9. Major Bibliographical References

They Gazed on the Beartooth, Annin Trilogy
The Columbus News
Stillwater County Journal of Commission Meetings, Vol. 1, p. 11
History of Montana 1735-1885, M. A. Leeson, p. 1361

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Columbus West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	2	6	3	6	1	4	0	5	0	5	5	4	2	5
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

W1/3 of Courthouse Block, Original Townsite of Columbus, MT
T2S; R20E, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 21

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See continuation sheet

organization date

street & number telephone

city or town state

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

Marcella Sheffy

title Deputy SHPO

date 9-14-82

For NPS use only

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

Linda McClelland
Keeper of the National Register

date 10/25/82

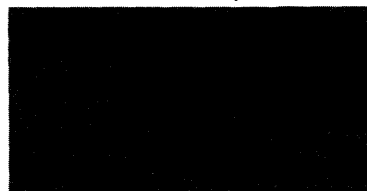
Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

In 1913 when Stillwater County was created, Norton sold the area for the Courthouse and Jail to the county for \$7,000. This sale included the Norton House. The Nortons moved from the house in 1913; Mr. Norton died in 1915. After the county acquired the house it became the home of the sheriff and, after 1940, the under sheriff or jailor lived here.

Except for the addition of the bathrooms and some minor interior alterations, the W. H. Norton House remains much as it was when the property was sold to the county in 1913.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 11

Page 1

FORM PREPARED BY:

John DeHaas Jr./Architect
Preservation and Restoration Consultant
1021 South Tracy Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59715 (406)586-2276 June 6, 1982

Mitch Press/County Planner
Stillwater County
Stillwater County Courthouse
Columbus, Montana (406)322-4439 June 6, 1982

Isabelle Johnson
Stillwater County Historical Society
Route 1
Absarokee, Montana (406)328-8350 June 6, 1982