

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 CRIPPLE CREEK HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON Cripple Creek Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
On Route 67

CITY, TOWN Cripple Creek VICINITY OF 3rd CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Colorado CODE 08 COUNTY Teller CODE 119

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input 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 type="checkbox"/> YES, RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER Community

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mayor of Cripple Creek (and various private and public owners)

STREET & NUMBER City Hall, Bennett Avenue

CITY, TOWN Cripple Creek VICINITY OF STATE Colorado

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Registry of Deeds, Teller County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER First Street

CITY, TOWN Cripple Creek STATE Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Colorado State Inventory

DATE in progress FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS 1880 Gaylord Street

CITY, TOWN Denver STATE Colorado

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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 Cripple Creek-Victor mining district was founded late in comparison to other Colorado mining towns. Though gold had been found as early as 1874, it was not until Bob Womack's discovery in Poverty Gulch, after 15 years of unsuccessful prospecting, that the area became interesting to other prospectors. The city of Cripple Creek was officially incorporated in 1892. For sometime after the town sprang up, progress was slow as there was not a great influx of miners into the district. In 1891 the population was less than 500, in 1892 about 2,500, but between that time and 1900 the population had grown to more than 25,000 in Cripple Creek and in excess of 55,000 in the district.

The first town was constructed primarily of wood. In 1896 a fire started in a local dance hall. This fire leveled 15 acres of the town. Only four days later the town was completely razed by another fire. The subsequent town was then constructed of brick and a number of these structures remain today. Though few of these structures are outstanding in themselves, they are indicative of the historic fabric of the town.

1. The Midland Terminal Depot (photograph no. 1) was purportedly erected in the early 1890's thus making it one of the oldest buildings in the town. It is a three-story building with gabled roof. The first level is fashioned of stone while the two upper levels are brick. When the railroad closed the building was unused some years. It now houses the Cripple Creek-Victor Historic Mining Museum. The building sits facing the beginning of Bennett Avenue at its point of junction with Route 67.

2. El Paso County Courthouse (photograph no. 2) is a completely functional two-story building built in 1901. The Courthouse sits at 1st and Bennett Avenue. The building was constructed after Cripple Creek was made the county seat. Constructed of brick with a stone foundation, there are no architectural features of distinction.

3. The Imperial Hotel (photograph no. 3) sits on 5th Street. The Imperial and the Palace (located on Bennett Avenue) were the two outstanding hotels of Cripple Creek. The Imperial was constructed of brick with a flat top. In recent years it has been completely renovated on the interior and is now the home of an annual summer production. In the renovation all period materials from various hotels in the state were used. The interior is plush in period furnishings and the bedrooms have brass beds and other late 19th, early 20th century furnishings.

4. The Old Homestead (photograph no. 4) is located on Meyers Avenue which was the center of an extensive "red light" district. A two-story brick building with flat top roof and painted white, the Old Homestead is now operated as a museum.

5. St. Paul's Catholic Church (photograph no. 5) sits on Third Street on a high hill overlooking the west section of Cripple Creek. The Church was constructed early in the 20th century. St. Paul's is one of several other

(continued)

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 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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the years in which other Colorado Mining towns were on the decline, one of the world's largest gold fields was discovered in 1891, along Cripple Creek. Cripple Creek ranks near the top, of all the rich gold strikes of the mining era, for the amount of gold recovered and for the amount of people involved in the boom. It has been estimated that in excess of \$400,000,000 in gold has been mined in the Cripple Creek district. At its peak, the population of the district was over 50,000 and was served by 3 railroads and two trolleys.

The Cripple Creek district eventually comprised a number of satellite gold camps. These towns, in many cases, were autonomous entities. In 1899 nearly \$20,000,000 was produced from the almost 500 mines.

Cripple Creek has lost many of the buildings of the first boom period. There remains, however, a good representation and the buildings constructed during the early 20th century reflect the character of the town. Cripple Creek is situated west of Colorado Springs and is under municipal and various private ownerships.

HISTORY

Cripple Creek district in Colorado is one of the world's most famous gold fields. This area originally pronounced worthless by mining experts, has produced almost 400 million dollars worth of gold since 1891.

Although Cripple Creek sprang up in the early 1890's, the first discovery of gold was made there in 1874. However, at that time little gold was found. In 1884, as the result of the "salting" of an area near Mount Pisgah, a short distance west of Cripple Creek, 3,000 prospectors rushed to that place in search of gold. However, after the hoax was proved, miners were suspicious of new discoveries in the region because they feared another "salted" mine.

The actual discovery of gold at Cripple Creek was the result of the prospecting of Robert Womack, a young cowhand. When 2 Colorado Springs prospectors in 1891 traversed Poverty Gulch, they found Womack working at the bottom of a 48-foot shaft in which he had uncovered a promising vein of gold. Womack called his claim the El Paso and took specimens of the ore to Colorado Springs. At the assay office, it was discovered that the ore yielded almost \$250 a ton. Womack subsequently sold his claim. He later died impoverished in Colorado Springs, a ward of loyal friends.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2,300

UTM REFERENCES

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

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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

Joseph Scott Mendinghall, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

12/9/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

London
Designated:

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.

Comelius Herne 12-22-75

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

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

Comelius Herne 12/22/75
Acting Director, OAHIP

DATE

date

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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churches in Cripple Creek, none of which are on a grand scale.

6. Mansard Roof House (photograph no. 6) sits on Warren Avenue. This house in English Victorian style seems perfectly out of place. Built by an Englishman in 1908, it is a two story house with a mansard roof. Dormers circle the second floor and there is a bay on the southeast corner off the porch and entrance. There are very few impressive private residences in Cripple Creek.

7. The El Paso County Hospital (photograph no. 7) sits just outside the Cripple Creek city limits on the northwest edge of town. The county hospital built in the first decade of this century, is one of the most impressive of the buildings in the district. Constructed of brick in Greek Revival style, it is a two-story building. There is an enclosed porch entrance (formerly open) on the south facade. A circle solarium is located on the side of this porch. The hospital has been recently purchased and is now used as a guest facility for tourists. The interior has been converted for this purpose. The building is now called Hospitality House.

The town of Victor sprang up shortly after Cripple Creek in 1893. The town is located about five miles southeast of Cripple Creek. Victor has gained the name the city of mines because it was here the biggest and most productive of the mines were located. Battle mountain which sits on the north side of town contained the most successful mines in the district.

The Major Mines of the Cripple Creek Mining District

At the height of mining efforts in the historic mining district more than \$18,000,000 was mined. More than 8,000 persons were employed by Miners at an annual payroll of \$900,000. In this area were more than 500 mines. Of all these there are several which are outstanding.

The Portland located on Battle Mountain overlooking Victor was the largest and the richest producing \$60,000,000 in 50 years. The mine shaft was more than 3,200 feet deep and contained 180 acres.

The Cresson was the second largest producer. The richest vein was found at the 1,200 feet level in 1914. The cavity was termed the "treasure chest."

The Independence was discovered by Winfield Scott Stratton. This mine produced \$4,000,000 for Stratton before he sold it for \$11,000,000. Total take from the mine's production totalled more than \$28,000,000.

The Gold Cain was found by accident in the heart of downtown Victor while moving dirt for a hotel.

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The Pharmacist, this gigantic producer which rendered its founder a millionaire, was haphazardly discovered by the toss of a hat. A.D. Jones was a pharmacist, and knew nothing of mines. At the toss of his hat he selected the location and dug up the Pharmacist.

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Reports of Womack's discovery did not result in an immediate rush to the region. Experienced miners still refused to believe that any large quantity of ore might be found in that place. In the fall of 1891, a straggling settlement of tents and cabins grew up on the present site of Cripple Creek. Bennet and Myers, owners of the land, after learning that gold had been found on their land, platted out 80 acres for a township which they called Fremont for the explorer John W. Fremont. The lots were eagerly purchased by the miners who later poured into the region. Since there was already a town in the State by the name of Fremont, postal officials refused to accept it as a name for the camp. The name of Cripple Creek was then suggested and was subsequently approved by the Postal Department.

The development of the mines at Cripple Creek was relatively slow. During 1892 most of the mining was from placers, for the great lodes were not discovered until the following year. In that year the population of Cripple Creek rose to 4,000. In 1893 the big mines of the district were discovered and developed. However, in that year as a result of demonitization of silver, thousands of miners were thrown out of work. As a result, many silver camps were forced to close down and the miners flocked to Cripple Creek to dig for gold. It was discovered that the deeper the mines were developed the richer the veins became. In 1894, a railroad was completed to the city. Both a Midland Terminal from Divine, and the Florence and Cripple Creek Railroad from Canyon City reached Cripple Creek, the latter one, sending its first train puffing into the camp on July 2 of that year. By 1894 the population had increased to 18,000. By 1896, gold production reached \$8,750,000; by 1898, \$16,000,000; by 1899, \$21,000,000; by 1900, the year's production was \$23,000,000. The greatest production appears to have occurred in 1901 when almost \$25,000,000 in gold was taken from the region which was surpassed only by a town in Transvaal, South Africa. By this time the district of Cripple Creek, which comprised the towns of Victor, Goldfield, Gillett, Anaconda, Independence, Cameron, Altman, and 2 or 3 smaller ones.

Towns like Cripple Creek prospered. Victor, located on the southern edge of the district rivaled Cripple Creek in size and population. The mines located around the town were by far the most productive in the district.

Unlike most gold mining districts, Cripple Creek has enjoyed an extended prosperity. For almost 2 decades before the veins began to be depleted gold was mined in great quantities. Following 1914 there was a long period of stagnation, but in the early 1930's the district took on new life and in the latter part of that decade population trebled when gold production rose to over \$5,000,000.

At its height, Cripple Creek had a population of 25,000. At the beginning of the century the camp had 41 assay offices, 91 lawyers, 46 brokerage houses,

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88 doctors and dentists, 14 newspapers, 70 saloons, and one coroner. Bennett Avenue was a busy street. As the main street of the town Bennett Avenue was congested with the hustle-bustle of the rapid pace of a mining boom town.

Today Cripple Creek is a small community which looks back on its heritage with great pride. The community is in the process of restoring the old Cripple Creek-Victor leg of the Midland Railroad as well as a number of the old buildings of the town.

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- Osterwald, Doris B. Cinders and Smoke. Western Guideways: Lakewood, Colorado.
- Walle, Muriel S. Stampede to Timberline: The Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of Colorado. Walle: Boulder, Colorado, 1959.

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Beginning at the summit of Mineral Hill, elevation 10,225', proceed southwest to the summit of a mountain, elevation 9,855', then proceed to the northeast corner of Mt. Pisgah Cemetery, then south along the east boundary of the cemetery to the southeast corner, then proceed southeast to the summit, elevation 9,731' 1600 feet northwest of Signal Hill, then proceed northeast to the summit of Globe Hill, elevation 10,436', then proceed northwest to the summit of Carbonate Hill, elevation 10,335', then proceed east to the point of origin.

The boundary is established by points of elevation surrounding the town of Cripple Creek in order to provide the discrete natural setting reminiscent of the historic environment. Additionally, it encloses part of the extent of Poverty Gulch where some of the original ore discoveries were made as well as the County Hospital building which is located outside the town limits.