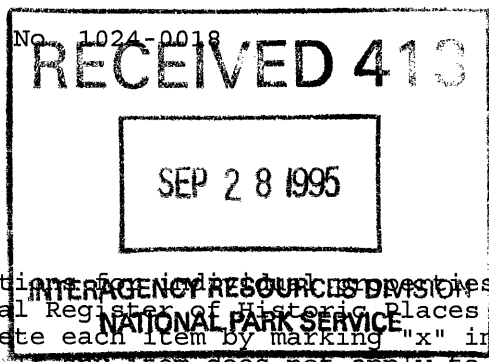


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name McCarthy House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 50 South I Street not for publication _____
city or town Virginia City vicinity _____
state Nevada code NV county Storey code 029 _____
zip code 89440

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. Jones 9/21/95
Signature of certifying official Date

Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

 LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation WOOD, STONE, CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls WOOD

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

 ETHNIC HERITAGE/EUROPEAN

 INDUSTRY

 ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance 1875-1914

Significant Dates 1875

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder McCarthy, Timothy Francis and Dwyer, Robert

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Comstock Historic District Commission

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	11/271550	4354100	3	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ronald M. James/SHPO and John E. McCarthy/Owner

organization State Historic Preservation Office/ N/A date June 1995

street & number 100 Stewart St./50 S. I St. telephone (702) 687-6360

city or town Carson City/Virginia City state NV zip code 89710/89440

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name John and Katherine McCarthy

street & number 50 S. I St. telephone (702) 847-0438

city or town Virginia City state NV zip code 89440

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

RECEIVED 413	
SEP 28 1995	
McCarthy House	
name of property	
INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION	
county and state	
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	

Description

The McCarthy family built the McCarthy House of Virginia City in 1875 shortly after they purchased the property. The building survived the Great Fire of October 26, 1875 which decimated much of the community. The fire stopped one block uphill to the west of the McCarthy property. The house is located downhill from the commercial C Street in the core of an area that has been identified as heavily populated by Irish immigrants and Irish-Americans.¹ Local tradition maintains that wealthier families lived uphill from C Street whereas working-class families and the poor lived below the commercial zone. While research with the census and preliminary archaeological surveys of Virginia City challenge this idea, the generalization holds true for the McCarthy House which stands in a solidly working-class neighborhood. The house is one block from the orphanage and school that the largely Irish Sisters of Charity established in 1864. That complex is no longer extant. The McCarthy House is also close to Saint Mary in the Mountains Catholic Church built by Father Patrick Manogue, an Irish immigrant, who dominated the Comstock religious scene and in particular, the Irish neighborhood in the vicinity. The Church remains an important contributing element of the Virginia City Landmark District and provides a visible boundary marker for what had been the Irish neighborhood.

The McCarthy House is a vernacular one-and-a-half-story, wood-framed, rectangular-in-plan, residential structure with shiplap siding and steeply pitched, gabled, asphalt-shingled roof with a front-facing gable. The symmetrical, 3-bay front facade has two slanted bays with one-over-one-light, double-hung, sash windows. The gable window is a two-over-two-light, double-hung, sash with ornate surrounds. The house has a boxed cornice and frieze, eave returns on the rear, and a pedimented gable with dentils on the front facade. Straight exterior stairs lead to a paneled vestibule and a four panel door with a transom. The building's original wood and quarried stone footings have been reworked and new wood installed. To protect the wood, "site cast" concrete sheathing was installed over the wood. The building continues, however, to be supported by original 4x4-inch wood center footings nested in cross form with 4x4 posts within the foundation. The original house measured 22 1/2' wide by 32 1/2' deep (or about 700 square feet).

¹ Ronald M. James, Richard D. Adkins, and Rachel J. Hartigan, "Competition and Coexistence in the Laundry: A View of the Comstock," Western Historical Quarterly 25:2 (Summer 1994): 165-184.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

McCarthy House
name of property
Virginia City, NV
county and State

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Description (continued)

The McCarthy House is well maintained and has had few alterations since its construction in 1875. The house was unoccupied from 1914 to 1986 at which time John McCarthy, grandson of the original builder, installed electricity and indoor plumbing. In 1986-87, the property owner also added a 12' deep by 22 1/2' wide addition to the rear to provide a family room and laundry room. The addition has a conventional foundation with a 4' basement and three windows. Windows were also added to the first floor of the original structure, one on the south and one on the north side elevations. The front, and most significant elevation, remains unaltered.

The interior includes a central hall with a stairway at the rear end. There is a front parlor on the left and a bedroom on the right. An additional bedroom stands at the rear of the hallway on the left, with the kitchen to the rear on the right. Originally there was a small corner bedroom reached from underneath the stairway. This was subsequently converted to a bathroom. The second-story interior was not finished until 1987. It consists of an open "guest" bedroom and a small 1/2 bathroom over the downstairs bathroom. The interior retains the original wainscotting throughout with doors and trim in faux bird's-eye maple, achieved through graining.

Outbuildings include an original nineteenth-century outhouse and adjoining woodshed. The property owner moved the structure twelve feet to the west and twelve feet to the south to make way for the 1980s addition to the rear. The outhouse section is now a tool shed. The shed has a new addition of a porch on the north side in front of the doors. This extends the roof to provide protection from rain.

The McCarthy House is located in a block that had been called "Conlan's Milk Ranch" and before that "Steel's Hay Yard." The City was platted in 1865 establishing block dimensions, right-of-ways, and names or letters for streets. The block for the McCarthy House was about 100' deep and 250' wide, and it was subdivided into two lots, #1 and #2. About 1870 the block changed hands and was subdivided again into smaller lots.

The block was divided into 25' by 50' interior lots and odd-sized larger lots at the four corners. The 1890 Sanborn Perris Fire Insurance Map indicates that there were nine lots abutting both H and I Streets, with eight houses on each street. The vacant lot on I Street was on the south side of the McCarthy House, allowing for a south side window in the middle bedroom. Most of these houses measured from 22' to 24' wide and 32' to 36' deep. They were pushed as close to the street as possible so that there

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Section 7 Page 3

McCarthy House
name of property
Virginia City, NV
county and State

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Description (continued)

would be a large rear yard for the outhouse, a woodshed, space for a small garden, and a clothes drying area. These houses stood cheek-by-jowl with generally only a narrow slot on one side for exterior access from front to back.² This use of space often dictated that most houses would not have side windows.

The property now enclosed by the McCarthy fence consists of six 25' by 50' lots which originally had five houses. There are only five houses left on the block, four dating to about 1875 and one from the 1920s. The 1920s structure is actually made of two one-room miner's shacks from American Flats (part of the Virginia City Landmark District). These structures were moved in and nailed together with new siding to unify them. All five buildings have rear additions to provide space for bathrooms and storage.

The McCarthy House was continuously maintained as long as T.F. McCarthy lived there, from 1875 to 1914. The addition of a brick chimney was a major project undertaken during this period, but because it passed through the upstairs walkway, it had to be removed when the upstairs was finished during the 1980s rehabilitation. The house was unoccupied from 1914 to 1986 except for occasional visits from the family. The last repairs before restoration were in the 1950s by T.J. McCarthy who stuccoed the south wall and reroofed the structure.

In 1986 John E. McCarthy, grandson of the original builder, installed electricity and plumbing, both of which had been unknown to the building. His rehabilitation project included the removal of the stucco finish and the application of new siding, milled to match the existing.

² The 1890 Sanborn Perris Fire Insurance Map shows this pattern of land use as do photographs of the area. Copies of the Map are available at the State Historic Preservation Office (Carson City, Nevada) and at the Nevada Historical Society (Reno, Nevada). The Historical Society also has a large collection of nineteenth-century photographs of the Comstock. In addition, the Comstock Historic District Commission (Virginia City, Nevada) has an excellent collection of photographs. See also the "Deed Book" in the Recorder's Office of the Storey County Courthouse, Virginia City, Nevada.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

McCarthy House
name of property
Virginia City, NV
county and State

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Statement of Significance

The McCarthy House of the Virginia City Historic Landmark District is significant as a well-preserved working-class house in the heart of an Irish-immigrant neighborhood. It is significant under criterion A as an excellent expression of an important ethnic, mining work force. It is also significant under criterion C as a well-preserved example of the vernacular architecture used for an average working-class house on the important Comstock Mining District.

Historical Background and significance: Criterion A

The Comstock Mining District was established in 1859 after a strike of gold and silver ore that became internationally famous. Thousands of people flooded into the area, hoping to lay claim to some of the millions that the riches had to offer. Although the local economy was not without its fluctuations, prosperity continued almost without stop for the next twenty years. The most famous strike occurred in 1873 when four Irishmen found what would be forever known as the "Big Bonanza."

The McCarthy house was built in 1875 at a time when the Comstock Lode was at its zenith. By 1875, the population of the Virginia City-Gold Hill area had grown to about 25,000 people, making it a densely populated urban center. Its mines were both corporate and industrial and because of the way they developed, they set a precedent for the growth of mines and mining communities throughout the West during the nineteenth-century. In recognition of the premier importance of the Comstock, the National Park Service gave landmark status to the district in 1961.

Timothy Francis McCarthy, a blacksmith born January 3, 1834 in Berehaven, County Cork, Ireland, built his house on I Street in 1875. To assist him in construction, he sent home to Ireland for Robert Dwyer, a nephew who was a carpenter. McCarthy followed a common pattern of immigration that used employment opportunities in the New World to facilitate the immigration of additional members of the family. McCarthy was married to Frances Dillon McCarthy, born about 1860, also in Ireland. They had a daughter, Mary, born in Nevada about 1879, and a son, Timothy J., born in 1881. McCarthy's first wife had died earlier, leaving the family with two additional children from the previous marriage, James, born about 1869 and Robert, born about 1872. McCarthy also had a

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Section 8 Page 5

McCarthy House
name of property
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county and State

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Statement of Significance (continued)

brother, James, also a blacksmith and born about 1830, living in the household during the 10th U.S. Census of 1880.³

The Comstock was characterized by an exotic population from throughout the world, and during the 1870s, the area had more foreign-born per capita than any other state in the nation.⁴ The population included a large number of Irish immigrants, many of whom worked in mining and related industries. Approximately one third of Virginia City's population was either Irish or Irish-American, but that group was also characterized by a high percentage of women and children: nearly fifty percent of the Irish adults were women, and many had children. These factors allowed the Irish to form a community that had much more cohesion than most ethnic groups. Of the immigrants on the Comstock, only the Chinese had a better defined neighborhood. There is also strong evidence that the Irish were inclined to remain on the Comstock longer than other ethnic groups, further supporting the idea that they were interested in building a community more than other immigrants. With the failure of the mines beginning in the late 1870s, people began to leave the Comstock. The Irish were, however, more tenacious than others and strived to remain in the district as long as possible.⁵ The McCarthy House, built by natives of Ireland at the core of the Irish neighborhood, is an excellent and well-preserved expression of this aspect of the immigrant experience.

The McCarthy family has retained ownership of the house since its construction. In 1914 Timothy F. moved to Jerome, Arizona, to live with his son "Joseph" and died four years later. The house remained unoccupied from 1914 to 1986 when John McCarthy, son of Timothy Joseph, moved into the house and oversaw its restoration.

³ This demographic profile is available from the 10th U.S. Manuscript Census of 1880 and from family history available from John McCarthy, grandson of Timothy F. McCarthy, the builder of the house.

⁴ See, for example, Wilbur S. Shepperson, Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants and Their Interpreters (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1970), 4.

⁵ See Ronald M. James, "Defining the Group: Nineteenth-century Cornish on the North American Mining Frontier" Cornish Studies: Two, Philip Payton, ed. (Exeter, United Kingdom: University of Exeter Press, 1994), 32-47 and James's "Erin's Daughters on the Comstock: Building Community" submitted together with a collection of articles on Comstock women to the University of Nevada Press, 1995. See the files of the State Historic Preservation Office; see also James, "British and Irish, Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan, 2nd. ed. William G. White, Ronald M. James, and Richard Bernstein, eds. (Carson City: State Historic Preservation Office, 1991).

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Section 8,9 Page 6

McCarthy House
name of property
Virginia City, NV
county and State

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Statement of Significance (continued)

The continuity of ownership, and now occupation, gives further expression to the longevity that the Irish community strived for and achieved to a certain extent.

Expression of working-class vernacular architecture: Criterion C

The McCarthy House is architecturally significant as a well-preserved expression of working-class architecture in a community that housed miners and other workers. McCarthy, as a blacksmith, would have had an average working-class status in the community, and the house he built fits well into the neighborhood. The vernacular architecture combines simple elements of Italianate and Greek Revival styles, giving further expression to what distinguishes it from the upper-class structures uphill that are noted for their finely crafted Italianate architecture and elaborate details.

The McCarthy House is one of the best preserved nineteenth-century structures in the area. Although the combination outhouse and woodshed has been altered and moved, it is a contributing element to the McCarthy property, conveying a sense of place that once included such outbuildings for nearly all houses in the district. Because of its survival in the context of change, the McCarthy House is an outstanding example of the area's Bonanza-era architecture.

Bibliography

Deed Book. Storey County Recorder's Office. Virginia City, Nevada.

James, Ronald M. "British and Irish." Nevada Comprehensive Preservation Plan. 2nd. ed. William G. White, Ronald M. James, and Richard Bernstein, eds. Carson City: State Historic Preservation Office, 1991.

----- "Defining the Group: Nineteenth-century Cornish on the North American Mining Frontier." Cornish Studies: Two. Philip Payton, ed. Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press, 1994.

----- "Erin's Daughters on the Comstock: Building Community," in The Other Side of Bonanza: Women of the Comstock Lode, ed. Ronald M. James and C. Elizabeth Raymond Reno: University of Nevada Press, anticipated publication.

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McCarthy House
name of property
Virginia City, NV
county and State

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James, Ronald M., Richard Adkins, and Rachel J. Hartigan.
"Competition and Coexistence in the Laundry: A View of the
Comstock." Western Historical Quarterly 25:2 (Summer 1994):
165-184.

Sanborn Perris Fire Insurance Map of Virginia City. 1890.

Shepperson, Wilbur S. Restless Strangers: Nevada's Immigrants
and Their Interpreters. Reno: University of Nevada Press,
1970.

Tenth U.S. Manuscript Census. 1880.

Verbal boundary description

Legal parcel number 001-185-004.

Verbal boundary justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically
associated with the house.