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  HISTORIC RESOURCES OF PONY, MONTANA

and/or common

2. Location

street & number  Properties within the Pony Original Townsite, as well as
the townsite additions, and properties within the

not for publication

city, town  Pony  Mineral Hill mining district.

n/a vicinity of

state  Montana  code 030  county  Madison  code 057

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name  Multiple Ownership

street & number

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.  Madison County Courthouse

street & number  Wallace Street

city, town  Virginia City  state  Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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date  1985

depository for survey records  State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society

city, town  Helena  state  Montana
Pony is located on the eastern edge of the Tobacco Root Mountain range in southwest Montana, about fifty miles by road from Virginia City, the seat of Madison County. East of the town lies a broad valley of prairie and agricultural land containing the Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin rivers, which join to form the Missouri River. West of Pony rise the forested slopes of the Tobacco Roots, capped by 10,513 foot Hollowtop peak. Two streams emerge from the Tobacco Roots and bisect Pony: North Willow Creek and Pony Creek. Both flow eastward toward the Jefferson River.

Pony itself is laid out in a typical grid pattern, roughly in the shape of an "L." Parts of the town are arranged differently. Most of Pony is oriented to the cardinal compass directions. The southwest portion of the town is aligned on northwest/southeast and northeast/southwest axes. Pony's main street, Broadway, runs through this area. Pony is comprised of the Original Townsite and the Millsite, Eldorado, Clark and Duncan, Schmaulhausen, and East Side additions. During the course of the survey, all were recorded except for the East Side addition, which is undeveloped. The Original Townsite encompasses most of Pony's residences as well as the central business district along Broadway Street. Lesser numbers of buildings appear in the additions. Pony also contains a few industrial structures, largely related to mining and milling. Other mining and milling structures within the adjacent Mineral Hill mining district were selectively surveyed.

Today Pony is still largely comprised of buildings and structures erected during the town's period of significance (ca. 1875-1910). Many of these buildings have been altered little over the years. Others have lost integrity due to alterations and partial destruction; nevertheless, they still convey associations pertinent to Pony's historical significance because of the activities that they depict and because of their relationship to the other buildings within the town. Although buildings of recent construction are interspersed among the older structures, Pony still conveys the visual impression of a late nineteenth and early twentieth century mining town.

This nomination includes two historic districts, one located within and immediately adjacent to Pony and the other comprised of the industrial structures associated with the Strawberry mining and milling operation. This nomination also includes one independent structure about one-half mile from town which is individually eligible for
listing in the National Register. Contributing structures within the historic districts include some which have been altered but still convey important associations and which possess sufficient historic architectural integrity to accurately depict these associations.

Pony’s architecture is typical of small mining towns in Montana. The town contains a variety of buildings and structures, including commercial, public, residential, religious, and industrial. Most exhibit characteristics of vernacular styling. Several residences are outstanding examples of the Queen Anne type.

Commercial buildings are concentrated along Broadway Street. Examples include the Pony Hotel (1903), the Isdell Mercantile Company (ca. 1895-1899), the Pony Bar (ca. 1880-1895), and the Morris State Bank (1902). Typical details include parapets, large display windows, simple rectangular shape corresponding to lot size, and recessed entries. Older buildings such as the Pony Bar are generally of wood frame construction with horizontal siding and a false front. Most commercial buildings, however, feature brick veneer and brick-bearing wall construction. One structure, the Isdell Mercantile Company, features walls constructed of stone with a brick front, probably an indication of the difficulty and expense of building with brick in Pony prior to about 1900. A few of the buildings designed by architects exhibit Neo-Classical elements. The most notable is the Morris State Bank. Although it served public functions, because of its design and location the Fraternity Hall (1900) can be categorized as a commercial building.

Public buildings vary. Probably the most outstanding public building is the Pony School (1902), an imposing two story brick structure. As with the bank, the school was designed by a professional architect, and exhibits some Neo-Classical ornamentation. The Pony Jail (1900) features thick stone walls and low, squat massing.

Pony’s residences are situated throughout the Original Townsite and the additions. These include a variety of types, ranging from small wood frame houses to large dwellings, some with brick veneers. Nearly all have elements of the Queen Anne style, most predominantly ornamented porches and gable ends shingled in a variety of patterns. Examples of small homes include the Box family residence and the dwelling on the corner of Jefferson and Isdell streets (ca. 1900). In Pony’s Schmaulhausen addition the predominant residences feature a four-sided square or rectangular shape topped by a hipped roof. In nearby Butte, another mining town, such houses are termed
"worker's cottages." Mid-sized dwellings with a brick veneer include the Crews residence (1901) and the Schreiner residence (1900-1901). Large dwellings include the Isdell home (ca.1876), two of the Morris Houses (1902 and ca. 1877-1895) and the Adkins (1900-1902), Carmin (ca.1898-1899), and Reel (1902) residences. The latter three are outstanding examples of the Queen Anne style, and feature such characteristics as irregular massing, polygonal bays, elaborate ornamentation, textured wall surfaces, and turrets. Large houses built around the turn of the century or later are of frame construction with brick veneers.

Pony also contains two churches, the Presbyterian (ca. 1894-1896) and the Episcopal (ca. 1907-1908). Although the Presbyterian church is built of wood and the Episcopal of pressed concrete block, both are distinguished by elements of the Gothic style, most notably large pointed-arch windows.

Industrial buildings within the historic district are most often directly associated with Pony's mining history. The Morris-Elling mill (1883), the ruins of which are on the north side of Broadway, is built of stone. The Strawberry mill (1900), two miles northwest of town, is the most intact of all the mills around Pony. The Strawberry is of a typical stamp mill design, with four levels built into a hillside. The building is of post and beam construction with plank siding. Other notable industrial buildings include the brick office of the Jeanette Mining and Milling Company (1900), and an adjacent hydroelectric plant (ca. 1900). An unusual but historically necessary element of Pony's built environment is the Powder House (ca.1875-1900). Built to house mining explosives, this structure was installed about a half mile from Pony, isolated from people in case of an accident. The powder house is of solid stone construction, much like the jail.

This nomination is the result of a comprehensive historical and architectural inventory of Pony, and a selective inventory of mining sites in the Mineral Hill district. The Pony Homecoming Club hired Mark T. Fiege, Historian at Renewable Technologies Inc., Butte, Montana, as consultant to conduct the inventory and complete this nomination. Members of the Pony Homecoming Club supplied research assistance.

All of Pony was inventoried, as well as buildings and structures adjacent or near the town. Structures were recorded with field notes and black and white photographs, and their histories were researched in county records, newspapers, census records, and through oral informants. A
Montana Historical and Architectural Inventory Form was completed for each standing structure in the Original Townsite. The consultant researched the background history of Pony's development to create a context for assessing the significance of each building. Each structure was evaluated to be of either primary, contributing, or non-contributing significance.

A total of 190 buildings and structures were inventoried for the project. After they were evaluated, boundaries were drawn for two districts for this Multiple Resource Area nomination. A powder house constructed of rubble stone comprises an individually eligible structure. The Multiple Resource Area includes buildings and structures that are approximately 79% residential, 7% industrial, 2% religious, 3% public, 9% commercial.
The built environment of Pony is significant because it contains buildings and structures which depict the commercial, industrial, governmental, as well as architectural aspects of a small Montana mining town during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (1876-1910). For example, Pony has a variety of commercial buildings, such as a bank, a hotel, an office building, a store, and a boarding hall, which depict the evolution of the town's commercial life from earlier, less affluent stages, to later years when the community thrived on a booming mining economy. Governmental structures—a school and jail—also reflect this trend, particularly during the early years of the 1900s, when Pony reached its peak as a mining center. Industrial structures, especially stamp mills and other mining-related buildings, depict the town's mining history. Mining developments were directly related to Pony's economic fortunes. Pony's architecture demonstrates the town's evolution as well. Generally, early buildings were of simple log or frame construction; few were of brick. Later buildings, however, were more sophisticated, with stone foundations and brick walls. Styles, too, were eventually more sophisticated in later years. The town contains several examples of Queen Anne dwellings, and some of the larger commercial and governmental buildings feature characteristics of Neo-Classicism.

Many of Montana's earliest cities and towns were established in the southwest part of the state in the 1860s and 1870s, as miners in search of gold and other precious metals established communities at the location of particularly rich deposits. Pony was such a town, founded in 1876 near the mines of the Mineral Hill district.

By the spring of 1877 three hundred people lived in Pony, many of them miners. The town quickly developed a thriving commercial sector which included hotels, a shoemaker's shop, and harness, butcher, and barber shops. Above Pony, in the hills adjacent to the town, prospectors had located and started to mine numerous claims. These workings were the reason for Pony's existence. The mines included the Strawberry, the Keystone, the Boss Tweed, the Willow Creek, the Ned, and numerous other smaller, lesser-developed claims, such as the White Pine, the Nut Pine, the Narragansett, and the Belle (these last three and
9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property  See continuation sheet
Quadrangle name  Harrison, MT.
UTM References  See attachment

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title  Mark T. Fiege, Historian  (under contract to the Pony Homecoming Club)
organization  Renewable Technologies, Inc.
date  November, 1985
street & number  630 Utah (P.O. Box 4113)
telephone  [406] 782-2386
city or town  Butte
state  Montana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- [ ] national  - [ ] state  - [x] 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  

date  6-18-87

For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:  

Chief of Registration

GPO 911-999
the Ned were not recorded in this project because either they have become part of larger groups of claims, were unpatented, were insignificant in terms of the wealth they produced, or are no longer extant. The Keystone, Boss Tweed, Willow Creek and Ned mine sites were judged to possess insufficient integrity to qualify for National Register listing.

The rush on Pony soon dwindled. By 1880, only 87 people remained. Many miners probably found the extraction of quartz ores locked in the hills around the town an unprofitable undertaking. Efficient transportation systems were largely undeveloped, and winter snows often prohibited year-round work. As in other instances of mining history in the West, the profitable exploitation of Pony's gold--much of it existing only in minute amounts in low grade ore--required the application of relatively sophisticated technology backed by sufficient amounts of investment capital.

Despite its decline, interest in Pony mining continued. During the 1880s and 1890s wealthy investors and mining firms, such as the Garnet Gold Mining Company, the Pony Gold Mining Company, and the partners W.W. Morris and Henry Elling purchased many of the claims around the community. Modern mining and milling technology were brought in and the Northern Pacific railroad laid tracks into the town in 1890. This activity eventually revived Pony and the settlement evolved into a mature town.

In 1895, the Northwest Magazine reported that Pony's population numbered about five hundred. 170 names appeared on the list of registered voters, and the school enrollment stood at 108. The events of the previous few years reinvigorated the town's commercial and social life. According to the Northwest Magazine Pony had a school house, a church used by both the Presbyterians and the Episcopalians, a public hall in which a fraternal order held meetings, two hotels, a drug store, a restaurant, a meat market, a livery and feed stable, an assay office, two blacksmith and wheelwright shops, and one shoe-shop.

Around 1900 and into the first few years of the twentieth century mining activity in the Mineral Hill district increased. Numerous rich deposits were discovered in some of the smaller mines, including the Old Joe, the Oregon, and the Fourth of July group of claims. Some of the larger mining operations, notably the Garnet, also located significant amounts high quality ore. Mining
companies around Pony began to employ the cyanide process, which leached minute amounts of gold out of mill tailings and low-grade ore. Big mining companies and groups of wealthy investors took a renewed interest in the resources of the Mineral Hill district. These firms erected new and larger mills in which to process ore. The most notable development occurred when W.W. Morris and Henry Elling sold the Boss-Tweed Clipper claim to the Amalgamated Copper Mining Company for an estimated $1 million.

The renewal of Pony's mining industry produced a related boom within the town. The number of businesses multiplied. In the early 1900s between thirty and forty companies and professionals (doctors, lawyers, etc.) advertised their goods and services in Pony's newspaper, the *Sentinel*. In 1901 citizens banded together and formed a corporate government, which enacted a number of regulatory laws and which took steps toward establishing a system of public works. The town received limited telephone service in 1900 and electricity in 1902. The population also greatly increased. The 1900 U.S. census recorded 647 people, 118 of them miners. In 1902 the *Sentinel* reported that the town had 1,000 citizens.

After about 1904 Pony mining declined. No large mining companies moved in to develop any of the claims. Mining engineers had mapped the routes of the various ore veins, so that great, unexpected strikes were no longer encountered. The nationwide economic depression of 1907 hurt the Montana mining industry, including the mines in the Mineral Hill district. In Madison County ore production declined by almost fifty percent from the previous year, 1906. Gold production, Pony's staple, fell forty percent. Mining continued, although slowly and unspectacularly.

With the decline Pony changed. The population shrank. The 1910 census recorded 369 residents (in 1911, the Pony Dispatch and Express claimed there were over 390), about 600 hundred fewer than the figure of 1000 reported in 1902. Furthermore, coinciding with the onset of Montana's homestead boom, Pony underwent a transition from a mining town to one based on agriculture. Evidence of Pony's evolution appeared in different forms. In 1908 the Pony council passed ordinance no. 40, which prohibited the running of cattle and poultry within the town. Articles and advertisements in the local newspaper after about 1908 tended to focus on farming and ranching rather than on mining. Finally, the 1910 census counted eighty-eight mine
workers as opposed to ninety-nine men who earned their living from agriculture.

During Pony's mining era residents erected a variety of buildings and structures which represented, or characterized, the stage of development of the town at particular times. Many of these still exist.

From its origins until about 1900 most of Pony's buildings were simply designed and constructed, typical of a youthful frontier town. Frame and log dwellings, some without foundations, predominated. Such buildings as the Presbyterian church (ca.1894-1896), the Pony Bar (ca.1880-1895), and the Isdell residence (ca.1876), all of wood, typified the town's early, less affluent years. As wealthy investors arrived to develop some of the nearby mining claims, buildings became more sophisticated. W.W. Morris remodeled a log house (ca.1870s) into a 11/2 story building (ca.1877-1895) with novelty siding. Henry Elling built a stone mill (1883), which he operated with Morris.

After 1900, during its greatest boom, Pony acquired a more urbanized appearance. A workforce of local carpenters and masons erected numerous buildings of all types, particularly residential. In their construction projects these tradesmen used a variety of materials made at Pony, principally brick. Masons also withdrew foundation stones from local quarries, and a sawmill near the town produced finished lumber. Architects, several of them well-known, designed the more sophisticated buildings. Butte architect H.M. Patterson designed the Pony School building (1902), Frederick G. German and A. Werner Lignell of Duluth (Minnesota) designed the Morris State Bank (1902), and George F. Barber and Company Architects of Knoxville, Tennessee--a well known purveyor of "mail order" houses--designed the Adkins residence (1900-1902).

Some of Pony's buildings were large commercial structures, such as the bank (1902) and the Fraternity Hall (1900). Both exhibited typical early 20th century commercial styles: the Fraternity Hall, vernacular, and the bank, Neo-Classical. The Pony School and the Jail (1900) reflected the town's early efforts at self-government. Several residences--the Reel (ca.1898-1899), Adkins, and Carmin (1902) exhibited outstanding characteristics of the Queen Anne style popular at the time. In addition to town buildings a variety of mining and milling structures, reflective of Pony's industrial base, were erected. Some of these, most notably the Strawberry mill (1900), were located away from the town, up in the mountains. The most
significant of these, and those that still survive, were mills and associated structures. All reflected Pony's prosperity and level of maturation.

Some of Pony's buildings are associated with major historical figures. N.J. Isdell owned the IM Company Store (ca.1885-1895). Isdell is significant because of the importance of his business (the largest mercantile in Pony, and a retailer and manufacturer of all types of building materials important to the growing town, particularly brick and lumber), and because of his involvement in community affairs—for example, Isdell led the movement to have the Pony jail erected. The IM Company store and Isdell's residence reflect his wealth and stature in the community. Henry Elling, a wealthy Virginia City Banker, built the stone mill on Pony's west side. W.W. Morris soon joined him as a partner in the operation of the mill, as well as in the ownership and management of the wealthiest mining claims in the Mineral Hill district, most notably the Boss Tweed-Clipper group. Morris probably had a greater influence on Pony's development than any other individual. Besides his position as the town's leading entrepreneur, Morris founded the Morris State Bank. The bank and a complex of four residential buildings bear witness to his life and accomplishments.

After 1910 and Pony's decline and transformation into an agricultural community, few new buildings were erected. Pony noticeably lacks examples of the craftsman style, popular after 1910.

Within the Multiple Resource Area there are currently several preservation and/or restoration activities being planned or in progress. Numerous Pony residents maintain their homes in keeping with the basic historic character of the town. Denimil Resources, a mining company, looked into the possibility of restoring the Jeanette Mining and Milling Company brick office in order to receive federal historic preservation tax credits, although the project has not been initiated. The Pony Homecoming Club, a non-profit civic organization and the sponsor of the survey that has resulted in this nomination, hopes to secure capital from Montana's Cultural and Aesthetics Fund (generated from interest on the state coal tax) to repair the historic Pony School. A National Register listing for the building would enhance the Homecoming Club's chances of attaining its goal.
This Multiple Resource Area nomination includes two districts and one individually-eligible property. The Pony Historic District encompasses the historic commercial, residential, public, and industrial buildings within the Pony townsite and extends to include the W.W. Morris residence and the millsite of the Jeanette Mining and Milling Company. The second district encompasses the Strawberry mill as well as several structures associated with the it: a dwelling, two ore bins, and an adit. An historic explosives storage house located safely away from the town constitutes the individually-eligible property.
SOURCES CONSULTED

Bozeman Ayant Courier

Catalog of Pony Public Schools. N.p., n.p.: n.d.

Engineering and Mining Journal.


Holiday Miner.

Interview, Katharine Adkins Bierrum, 7-24-85.

Interview, Oleta Carmin Box, 7-28-85.

Interview, Clara Box McAllister, 7-28-85.


Madison County Tax Assessments--Pony File, Tax Appraiser's Office, Virginia City, Montana.

Malone, Michael. The Battle For Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906.


Missoula Missoulian.

Northwest Architect.

Pony Dispatch and Express.

Pony Real Property List, Clerk and Recorder's Office, Virginia City, Montana.

Pony Sentinel.


Rocky Mountain Husbandman.


The Northwest Magazine.

Virginia City Madisonian.

Boundary Description for Multiple Resource Area

Beginning at a point on the northwest corner of Sec.16, T2S, R3W, proceed south one mile to a point at the northwest corner of Sec.21, T2S, R3W; then proceed west 1/2 mile to a point at the middle of the section line between Sections 17 and 20, T2S, R3W; then proceed east 3 1/2 miles to a point on the southeast corner of Sec. 23, T2S, R3W; then proceed north one mile to a point on the northeast corner of Sec.23, T2S, R3W; then proceed east one mile to a point on the southeast corner of Sec.19, T2S, R3W; then proceed south approximately 1650 feet to a point on the 5760' contour; then follow this contour approximately one mile due east to a point on the contour 1485' directly south of the intersection of Madison and East Streets in the Pony townsite; then proceed north approximately 1,155 feet to a point in the middle of East Street at the intersection of East and Butler Streets in Pony; then proceed northeast 1,200 feet along the south-facing edge of the "triangle lot" in the Schmaulhausen Addition at the Corner of Robley Ave. and the Pony-Harrison Road; then proceed north along the east edge of blocks 6 & 9 (Schmaulhausen Addition) facing Robley Ave., to a point on the northeast corner of the same block 9 at the intersection of Robley Ave. and Delora Streets; then proceed west along Delora to a point on the east bank of North Willow Creek at its intersection with Delora Street; then proceed south (upstream) along North Willow Creek to a point on the east edge of East Street, at its intersection with North Willow Creek; then proceed north along the east edge of East Street to a point at the northeast corner of block 2, Clark and Duncan Addition; then proceed west along the north edge of the Clark and Duncan Addition to a point corresponding to the north end of the dividing line between lots 5 & 6 of block 1, Clark and Duncan Addition; then proceed south between the lots, on the dividing line, and continue south on Getchel Street to a point in the middle of the intersection of Getchel and Isdell Streets; then proceed east on Isdell Street to a point in the middle of the intersection of Pattee and Isdell Streets; then proceed south on Pattee to a point in the middle of Madison Street, just beyond the intersection of the two streets; then proceed west on Madison Street to a point in the middle of Madison Street where Quartz Street intersects with Madison Street; then proceed north on Quartz Street to a point where on the north edge of the Eldorado Addition; then proceed west along the edge of the Eldorado
Addition approximately 1/4 of a mile to a point between the 5640' and 5680' contours; then proceed south approximately 300 feet to a point on the 5760' contour; then follow the contour approximately 1600 feet to a point on the contour approximately 1300 feet directly north of North Willow Creek; then proceed north approximately 5000 feet to a point on the northeast corner of Sec.13, T2S, R3W; then proceed west two miles to a point on the southwest corner of Sec.11, T2S, R3W; then proceed north to a point on the northeast corner of Sec.10, T2S, R3W; then proceed west one mile to a point on the northwest corner of Sec.10, T2S, R3W; then proceed south one mile to a point on the southeast corner of Sec.9, T2S, R3W; then proceed west one mile to point of beginning.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _______ Page _______

Name _______ Pony Multiple Resource Area
State _______ Madison County, MONTANA

Nomination/Type of Review

Cover

1. Powder House

2. Strawberry Mine Historic District

3. Pony Historic District

Date/Signature

Keeper

Attest

Keeper

Attest

Keeper

Attest

Keeper

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