

COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES NOMINATION FORM

SECTION I

Name of Property

Historic Name P. R. Butt & Sons

Other Names Butt Building

Address of Property

[] address not for publication

Street Address 101 West Highway 666

City Dove Creek County Dolores Zip 81324

Present Owner of Property

(for multiple ownership, list the names and addresses of each owner on one or more continuation sheets)

Name John and Becky Nolan

Address P. O. Box 525 Phone 970-677-2437

City Dove Creek State Colorado Zip 81324

Owner Consent for Nomination

(attach signed consent from each owner of property - see attached form)

Preparer of Nomination

Name John and Becky Nolan (additional material by OAHP staff) Date January 2003

Organization _____

Address P. O. Box 525 Phone 970-677-2437

City Dove Creek State Colorado Zip 81324

FOR OFFICIAL USE:

Site Number 5DL.2126

_____ Nomination Received

Senate # 6 House # 58

5/16/2003 Review Board Recommendation
 Approval Denial

6/11/2003 CHS Board State Register Listing
 Approved Denied

Certification of Listing: President, Colorado Historical Society

Date

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

SECTION II

Local Historic Designation

Has the property received local historic designation?

no

yes --- individually designated designated as part of a historic district

Date designated _____

Designated by _____ (Name of municipality or county)

Use of Property

Historic Commerce/department store; Domestic/single dwelling general store & residence

Current Vacant

Original Owner William and Charles Stokes

Source of Information tax records, Colorado Business Directory, and oral histories

Year of Construction 1914

Source of Information oral histories

Architect, Builder, Engineer, Artist or Designer unknown

Source of Information _____

Locational Status

Original location of structure(s)

Structure(s) moved to current location

Date of move _____

SECTION III

Description and Alterations

(describe the current and original appearance of the property and any alterations on one or more continuation sheets)

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

SECTION IV

Significance of Property

Nomination Criteria

- A** - property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to history
- B** - property is connected with persons significant in history
- C** - property has distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or artisan
- D** - property is of geographic importance
- E** - property contains the possibility of important discoveries related to prehistory or history

Areas of Significance

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Economics | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –
prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeology –
historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment/
Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploration/
Settlement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics/
Government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Geography/
Community Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community
Planning and
Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Health/Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Social History |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |

Significance Statement

(explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Bibliography

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

SECTION V

Locational Information

Lot(s) 1-4 Block 5 Addition Karl Butt Addition to the town of Dove Creek

USGS Topographic Quad Map Dove Creek

Verbal Boundary Description of Nominated Property

(describe the boundaries of the nominated property on a continuation sheet)

COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

SECTION VI

Photograph Log for Black and White Photographs

(prepare a photograph log on one or more continuation sheets)

SECTION VII

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY NOMINATION

Owner Consent Form

Black and White Photographs

Color Slides

Sketch Map(s)

Photocopy of USGS Map Section

Optional Materials

For Office Use Only

Property Type: building(s) district site structure object area

Architectural Style/Engineering Type: Vernacular

Period of Significance: 1914-1953

Level of Significance: Local State National

Acreage less than one

P.M. NM Township 40 N Range 19 W Section 1 Quarter Sections NE SE SW NE

UTM Reference: Zone 12 Easting 684660 Northing 4181370

Site Elevation: 6843 feet

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

DESCRIPTION and ALTERATIONS

The Butt Building is located along a main thoroughfare in Dove Creek, a small town in western Dolores County. It occupies the southwest corner of the intersection of Main Street, which runs north-south, and U. S. Highway 666, which runs diagonally northwest-southeast. The structure sits at a 45-degree angle from the highway, and is quite noticeable to west-bound travelers. The gabled-roof, wood frame building was constructed in 1914 along a wagon road between Cortez, Colorado and Monticello, Utah. Main Street on the north side of the highway is paved, but on the south side where this building sits, it is a gravel road. There is a vacant lot to the south and beyond it is the Dove Creek Fire Department fire house. Across the alley on the west side is a large abandoned building. Just off the southeast corner of the Butt Building are the remains of a small building with only four-foot high stone retaining walls extant.

The 1-1/2 story building has a rectangular plan, measuring 27 by 42 feet, and consists of a main floor, an attic story, and a "daylight basement" level. Constructed on a slope, the main floor is at grade on the west side and becomes a second story on the down slope, creating the effect of a 2-1/2 story building on the east side. The walls are 4-inch horizontal siding with corner board trim. The foundation walls are concrete and native stone finished with a concrete stucco. The asphalt-shingled, side-gabled roof has overhanging flared eaves with enclosed rafters. Two evenly spaced shed roof dormers pierce the east slope. The eaves extend out eight feet, creating an overhang for the full width porches on the east and west sides of the building. The length of the west side porch has been reduced by a vertical board, wood frame addition at the northwest corner. A simple "picket fence" style balustrade encloses the second-story east side porch. This second story porch has turned wood posts supporting the roof above, while simple square wood post with cross bracing support the floor below. A wooden staircase leading to an opening in the porch floor provides access to the second level. All the windows are wood frame with wide wood surrounds; many are double hung sash with a 1/1 light. The exterior wood doors are glazed and paneled with a single light transom. The building is painted yellow with brown trim.

The building faces east and fronts Main Street. The partially below grade basement level historically housed a general merchandise operation which is evident by the fenestration. There is a large storefront at the north end that is comprised of two large four-light display windows flanking a double door entry with transom. One of the doors is paneled and glazed (9-light); a board covers the other door. There is a double-hung sash window and a door at the south end of this facade. The upper level has two double-hung 1/1 light windows, a glazed and paneled door with transom, and a large fixed sash window with transom. The two small shed-roof dormer windows each have two vertical lights.

The south end of the building has two small square fixed sash windows in the attic level gable with an offset double-hung sash window piercing the wall of the main level. There is evidence of an exterior brick chimney that once was centered on the wall between the two smaller windows.

The full width porch on the west side of the building has been modified by the construction of an addition under the roof extension. The wood frame addition has vertical board siding and its foundation consists of a few short wooden posts. There are two door openings and one large window piercing the west wall. The porch floor is missing and only some foundations of a bathroom addition (since removed) remain. Two metal poles resting on blocks support the roof.

The north end of the building faces the highway. Two windows flank a centrally positioned paneled wood door with transom on the main level, and there is a coupled window above in the apex of the gable. The door opening is several feet off the ground.

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

Alterations

A chimney on the south end of the building is visible in a photograph taken in 1918 or 1921 [depending on the source]. However, it is gone by the time a photograph was taken in the 1940s. The stairs that access the upper level porch on the east side are not in the earlier photograph, but are visible in the later one.

The door on the north end is several feet off the ground and in an historic [1918 or 1921] photograph there are no stairs to access this entry. In a 1953 newspaper photo, when the building served as the county courthouse, a wooden landing and staircase are in place next to the door.

It is not known when the balustrade that encircles the upper level porch was installed. It is not present in the 1940s photo, but is visible in a 1978 photograph. The 1953 newspaper photo shows a balustrade enclosing only the area around the stairwell. Therefore it is concluded that sometime between 1953 and 1978, the balustrade around the stairwell was removed and a larger one that enclosed the entire porch was constructed.

The conversion to the county courthouse forced additional alterations. Two 8'x10' rooms were added to the lower level off the southwest corner. These rooms were used as vaults to store county records while the building was being used as a courthouse between 1945 through 1953. Also during its use as a courthouse, a restroom was added to the back (west) porch off the kitchen; it was removed and only the foundations remain.

There has been some reorganization of interior space with walls and doorways in the kitchen/dining area removed.

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

P.R. Butt & Sons is eligible to the State Register under criterion A in the areas of Settlement and Commerce for its association with the early settlement and commercial development of Dove Creek. Constructed in 1914, most locals agree that it was the second building to be constructed in the town, and it holds the distinction of Dove Creek's oldest extant commercial building. The building is also significant in the area of Politics/Government as it served as the Dolores County Courthouse from 1945 until 1953.

Historical Background

Before homesteaders arrived, the area was a vast expanse of waving grass that provided abundant feed for range cattle and sheep. Although water was scarce, there was enough when supplemented by winter snows. The area first became cattle country with the settlement of the Dolores river valley in about 1880. Cattle ranching and sheep herding continued for 25 to 30 years until the grass was overgrazed. In August 1912, the existing road between Dolores, Colorado and Monticello, Utah passed only three homesteads. This would change as slowly more homesteaders began to arrive.

The center of development for what would become the town of Dove Creek was located along the old freighter's route, halfway between the Mormon settlement of Monticello and the railhead in Dolores. William and Charley Stokes, described as "Mormon brothers," arrived in 1913 and built the first business at this location. It was a store located across the road north of this building [the northwest corner of the intersection, the approximate location of the current Main Supply building]. Oral history indicates there was one large room to the south which contained the groceries with a smaller room to the north which served as a residence. The brothers began construction on another larger store to the south [the nominated building] that was completed in 1914. Tax records for 1915 indicate that C. A. and W. H. Stokes had property valued at \$1250, of which \$500 was merchandise, with \$910 in land improvements.

The first appearance of Dove Creek in the *Colorado Business Directory* occurs in 1916, where it is noted as a new post office in Dolores County. There are three business entries: L. I. Crapo (justice of the peace and notary public), C. A. Stokes (civil engineer and postmaster), and W. H. Stokes (general merchandise, flour and feed). The following year, the only two entries are for the Stokes brothers. Charles is listed as a blacksmith and postmaster, while William continues as a general merchandiser. The population of the town is listed as 15. For the next three years (1918-1920), although Charles continues as the blacksmith and postmaster, the directory does not include a listing for any general merchandise operation. The 1921 business directory notes a population increase to 45 with several businesses including two general merchandisers—P. R. Butt & Sons and C. E. Harter (who is also listed as the postmaster). Tax records help to fill in the blanks.

P. R. (Parley) Butt was born in 1862 at Parowan, Utah. Parley farmed, raised cattle and horses, and served as Attorney, Treasurer, and Sheriff of San Juan County, Utah. Later in life he would start another career as a merchant in Dove Creek. Tax assessment records for the year 1919 have "Butts & Sons" [sic] paying taxes on property and merchandise on the same parcel of land previously owned by Stokes (within the northeast quarter of Section 1, Township 40 North, Range 19 West). As taxes are paid in arrears, it could cautiously be concluded that Parley and his sons bought the Stokes Brothers store and began operations as P. R. Butt & Sons in 1918.

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

Parley and his second wife Edith owned the store with his two sons from his first marriage, Willard and Herman, until Parley bought out his sons in 1930. The 1935 business directory contained a new entry—Mrs. P. R. Butt, creamery. A map of Dove Creek drawn by a student in the fall of 1935 shows a small building to the southeast of the Butt store identified as “Butts Creamery.” Perhaps the ruins in the adjacent lot are the creamery. Parley died at Dove Creek in November 1940, and was buried in Monticello, Utah.

Another long-time similar enterprise was W. L. Larrance, a seller of general merchandise and agricultural implements. Larrance first appears in the 1922 *Colorado Business Directory*. When Watha Larrance arrived in Dove Creek with her husband William in the spring of 1920, she recalled there were only “a few scattered buildings, two general merchandise stores [Butt and Harter], a log dwelling, a large barn, a small blacksmith shop, and a one-room schoolhouse.” William had acquired a relinquished homestead about two miles west of Dove Creek. It would not take the couple very long to decide that “surely there must be an easier way of making a living.” In July 1921, Watha took over the duties of Postmaster from Charles Harter and the Larrances purchased the Harter general store. The original building and its contents burned to the ground in January 1922. The current Larrance Store (5DL2108) was built immediately that same year. From 1922 until 1941, the business directory consistently lists both Butt and Larrance as general merchandisers.

Development of the area was slow until the new highway [U. S. 666] was completed in 1936. Farmers from the Dust Bowl in eastern Colorado, western Oklahoma, and Texas came to the area creating a small boom. This is reflected in the population figures provided in the *Colorado Business Directory*. From 1923 through 1930, the population of Dove Creek is routinely given as 60. In 1931, the population jumps to 115, and in 1937, it is listed as 215. Two years later, the town’s population is given as 250, and it climbs dramatically to 982 by 1941.

This settlement in the previously sparsely populated western half of the county occurred at the same time that mining activity in Rico (the county seat) began to dwindle, resulting in a decline in the population in the eastern half of the county. By 1940 there had been sufficient change in population to generate a movement to shift the county seat west to Dove Creek. Petitions were drawn and circulated and the issue was placed on the November 1944 ballot. The hotly debated contest resulted in the county seat moving from Rico to Dove Creek in 1945. In May of that year the old store was vacated by its owners, the Cash family, to allow for county offices. The Butt Building served as the Dolores County Courthouse through 1953 when construction of a new facility on Main Street commenced. After its retirement from courthouse duty, the building served as both a residence and a church.

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Freeman, Ira S. *A History of Montezuma County Colorado*. Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1958.

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Interviews

Posey, Alma Butt. Interview. On file in the Dolores County Historical Society Archives.

Posey, Jim. Interview. On file in the Dolores County Historical Society Archives.

Posey, Mildred Butt. Interview. On file in the Dolores County Historical Society Archives.

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Page 6
Section V**

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-4, Block 5, Karl Butt Addition to the town of Dove Creek.

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Name of Property: Butt Building
Location: Dove Creek, Dolores County
Photographer: Linda Funk
Date of Photographs: December 2002
Negatives: Dove Creek Press, Dove Creek

Photo No. Photographic Information

- 1 Façade (east side); camera facing west
- 2 West side (rear) of building; camera facing east
- 3 South end of building; camera facing north
- 4 North end of building; camera facing south

**COLORADO STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Page 8
Section VII**

Property Name P. R. Butt & Sons

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP
Dove Creek Quadrangle, Colorado
7.5 Minute Series