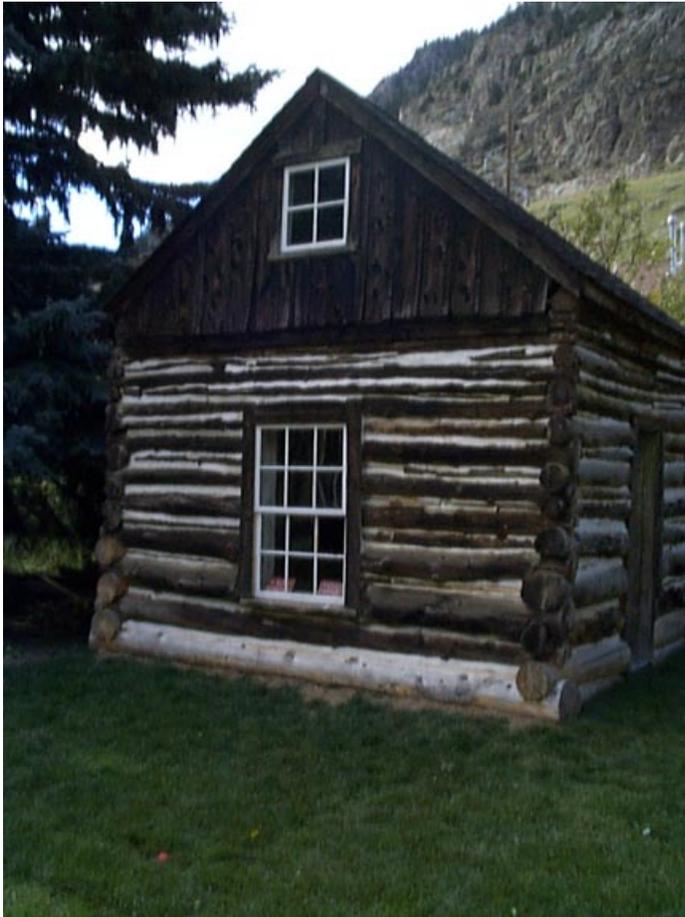# VITUAL FIELD TRIPS – GEORGETOWN'S HISTORIC HOUSES

Log Cabin

This log cabin looks rather small and primitive to us today. But at the time it was built, it was really quite an advance for the gold-seekers living in the area. The very first prospectors who arrived in the Georgetown region lived in tents. Then they built lean-tos. Because of the Rocky Mountain's often harsh winters, the miners soon began to build cabins such as this one to protect themselves from the weather.

Log cabin in Georgetown

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

Log cabins were a real advance for the miners. Still, few have survived into the 20th century. This cabin, which is on the banks of Clear Creek, is an exception. This cabin actually has several refinements. These include a second-story, glass windows, and interior trim. Perhaps these things were the reasons this cabin has survived. It is not known exactly when the cabin was built. But clues suggest it was built before 1870. Historic Georgetown is now restoring the cabin.

The Tucker-Rutherford House

James and Albert Tucker were brothers. They ran a grocery and mercantile business in Georgetown. It appears that they built this house in the 1870s or 1880s. Rather than living the house themselves, they rented it to miners and mill workers. Such workers usually moved more often than more well-to-do people. They also often rented the places where they lived. When this house was built, it had only two rooms. Another room was added in the 1890s.

Tucker-Rutherford house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The Tucker-Rutherford house is probably typical of miners' homes in early Georgetown. It is small, humble, and ordinary. These were real virtues for the housing that miners and mill workers could afford. Because these houses were so ordinary, few of them have been preserved. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Rutherford, however, donated this house to the Georgetown Historical Society.

The Robeson House

The Robeson House was built in 1899-1900. It has many elements of the Queen Anne style of architecture. Some of these elements are the irregular roof line and the covering of the exterior walls within the gables. These coverings were usually shingles decorated in various ways. The Queen Anne style became popular in the United States in the mid-1880s.

Robeson house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

Queen Anne is one of the most ornate styles of the Victorian period in Colorado. It was quite popular between 1880 and 1910. The general traits of the style include a vertical feel, corner towers and bays, fancy porches with turned spindles, projecting gables, and contrasts between building materials, especially brick and wood.

Many regard the Queen Anne Style as the high point of Victorian architecture. It should be noted that many of the features of this style are not present in or on the Robeson House. Many classic Queen Anne homes had turrets, towers, arches, and stained glass windows. Some also had elaborate brick chimneys, and porches or verandas nearly surrounding the house. The absence of these features does not detract from the elegance of this house.

The Bowman-White House

John Henry Bowman and his family arrived in Georgetown during the economic "good times" of the 1880s. Bowman's success in silver mining allowed him to build this house in 1892. The size, style, and elegance of this house reflects his success in business. The house eventually passed to one of Bowman's daughters. She was the wife of a local attorney, John White (thus the Bowman-White house). The house stayed in the family's hands until 1974. Historic Georgetown bought the house.

Bowman-White house

Photo: N/A

More About This topic

The Bowman-White house is a good example of the so-called Victorian Eclectic Style of architecture. The word eclectic means to borrow freely from many different sources or influences. Notice that the Bowman-White house exhibits many different features that reflect different styles. Houses built in the Victorian Eclectic Style (such as the Bowman-White house in Georgetown) show many different styles. In fact, the influences are so wide-ranging these houses do not fit neatly into any other single category.

The Blackman-Seifried House

The Blackman-Seifried House was built in 1881-82 for a woman whose name was Blackman. Soon, however, Henry Seifried bought the house. Seifried was president of the Bank of Georgetown. His family remained in Georgetown until the early 1930s. At that time the Great Depression forced the family to close the bank it had owned and operated for years. The house is now a private residence and not open to the public.

Blackman-Seifriend house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The architectural style of the Blackman-Seifried house is called "Italianate." This design became popular in the United States in the 1850s. The "widow's walk" on the very top of the roof was also typical of the style. The widow's walk was made of wrought iron, also a popular decoration in Italianate styles. It was unusual for a door not to be in the center of the house front. It was also unusual for a veranda to run the entire length of the front of the house. The Italianate style was popular for many kinds of buildings in Colorado between about 1870 and 1900. Less fancy Italianate buildings have hip roofs, bracketed eaves, and molding around the windows. Fancier (of high style) building may have arcaded porches, quoins at the building's corners, towers, and quite ornate detailing.

The Adams-Church House

John Adams Church built this house during the years 1876-77. Church was in Georgetown trying to make money in new methods of processing silver ore. In 1881, Church sold his house to Professor Albert Chase, master of the Georgetown school until 1985. The house was once the property of Historic Georgetown. Now it is a private residence.

Adams-Church house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The John Adams-Church house is a good example of one of the four dominating styles of late 19th century architecture. This house is an example of Gothic Revival architecture. Two important features accents the vertical nature of the building. The John Adams-Church house is a good example of carpenter Gothic architecture. It has a steep central gable and tall, narrow windows. These features emphasize the house's vertical feel. It also shows board and batten siding and "gingerbread" decoration above the doorway.

The Old Missouri Fire House

Georgetown residents built the Old Missouri Fire House in 1875. It was not the first fire house in Georgetown, but it was the first in this part of town. There were several reasons why Georgetown built a new fire house at this time. First, the town was growing. Second, the existing fire houses ran out of room to store all the fire equipment the town had bought. Another reason may have been that fire companies were popular social outlets for members.

Old Missouri firehouse

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

When a fire broke out, the alarm sounded by ringing the bell in the bell tower. Members of the Old Missouri fire company came running to the alarm. They pulled the fire engine to fires inside and outside town. In fact, in 1884 the firemen went all the way to Silver Plume to fight a major fire there. Even though Silver Plume is only two miles away, it is nearly 1,000 feet higher in elevation. Pulling a fire engine up such a grade is difficult. The Old Missouri operated until about 1900.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church

By 1872, enough Catholics lived in Georgetown to justify their building their own church. The financial "panic of 1873," however, forced them to delay construction for several years. The original building was

finished in 1877. The original building was located at 11th and Main Streets. It would grow to include a school house, a hospital, and living quarters for the priest.

Lourdes Catholic Church

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

In 1917, sparks from a passing locomotive set fire to the original church building. The building was destroyed in the fire. The railroad eventually gave the congregation about $15,000 in damages for causing the fire. With those funds, the Catholics bought a lot at 9th and Taos Streets from the Methodists. They tore down the building on the site and began building the church above in 1918.

Georgetown Presbyterian Church

Sheldon Jackson arrived in Georgetown in 1869. He was a missionary for the Presbyterian church. He discovered that four other churches were already there. Even so, he organized a Presbyterian congregation. This group numbered only eight people at first. In 1872, they began work on the church in the photo. It was and is located on Taos Street, between 8th and 9th Streets. The stone church was finished in 1874, at a cost of $7,000.

Presbyterian Church

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The Presbyterian Church is the only church in Georgetown to have held services continuously since it founding in the 1870s. In 1974, the congregation began a restoration project to celebrate the church's one hundred year (centennial) anniversary.

The Star Hook And Ladder

The Star Book and Ladder Fire Company formed in 1874. It was a part of the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department. The Company bought the property the present building is on in 1881. At the time, the original building on this property was in run-down condition. The Company petitioned the town to build the building seen in the photograph (to the bottom). The new building became the home for the Fire Company.
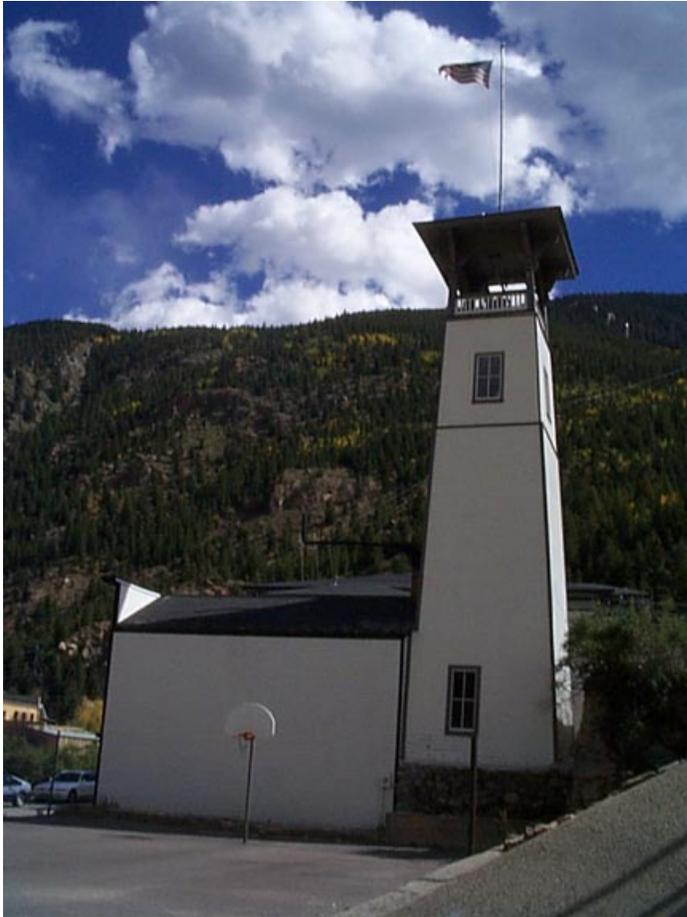
Star Hook and Ladder Fire Company

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The Star Hook and Ladder Fire Company building has fallen into disrepair by the early 1960s. Local residents began to restore the building to its original condition. The restoration included returning the bell to the town and the reconstruction of the Fire Company's logo. The building now houses some of Georgetown's city offices.

Alpine Fire House #1

From its start, fire was probably the greatest danger faced by Georgetown and its citizens. Georgetown residents organized the first volunteer fire company in 1870. But before long, one fire company was not enough for the growing town. In 1874, residents organized the town into four fire zones, each with its own fire company. The Alpine Hose No. 2 Company was organized that year. The building included all but the bell tower (on the right of the photograph).

Alpine firehouse

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The basic building was built in 1874. The bell tower added in 1880. Mining magnate William A. Hamill donated the bell that hung in the tower. The organization of the town into zones and fire companies helped the town escape a major fire. Almost all other mining camps had at least one major fire, if not more. Georgetown's many brick homes and offices also prevented fires.

Grace Episcopal Church

The first building for the Episcopal Church was begun in 1869. A severe winter wind storm blew the framework down later that year. The building on the left was finished in June 1870. It is still located on Taos Street, not far from Fifth Street.

Grace Episcopal Church

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The church obtained a pipe organ in 1877. The original organ was powered by foot pedals. The pedals pumped air through the organ's pipes. As the wires in the photo suggest, the organ is now powered by electricity rather than foot pedals. Even so, the organ still makes music! The church building not only contains the organ, but many other artifacts as well.

The Maxwell House

The Maxwell House could just as well be called the Potter House. That is so because the house was originally built by a Georgetown grocer named Potter. The original house was less elaborate than the one in the photo. But Potter grub-staked several prospectors who hit lucky silver strikes. Potter used his new wealth to add on to his home in 1890. The house got its name from Frank Maxwell. Maxwell bought the house from Potter and lived in it for 50 years.

Maxwell house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

The Maxwell House is a classic example of the architecture of Victorian America. One can see many architectural styles in the Maxwell House. These include Queen Anne (fancy shingles), French Second Empire (mansard roof), Italianate (windows), and Greek Revival (columns and pediments). Some believe that this house represents the high point of Victorian architecture. The house is a private residence and not open to the public.

The Hamill House

Upon his arrival in Georgetown in 1867, William A. Hamill helped his brother-in-law build this house. Hamill himself bought it in 1874. Prosperous from his many mining ventures, Hamill added the middle and back portions of the house and built other buildings on the property between 1874 and 1881. The gabled part of the house on the right of the photo was the original house. A summer kitchen is just to the left of the back porch of the house.

Hamill house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

Hamill's improvements to the house included the center and back wings, the glass solarium, and the bay windows on the north and south sides. He redecorated the interior with rich walnut woodwork, fancy hardware, and elaborate wall and ceiling coverings. The privy behind the house had one door for servants and one for the Hamill family. The house operates as a museum in the summer months and is open to the public.

The Cornish House

The so-called Cornish House was and is located at the corner of 4th and Argentine Streets. It was built by Thomas Cornish, a wealthy mine manager and politician in Georgetown and Silver Plume during the 1880s. During the last quarter of the 19th century, Thomas and his brother Nicholas operated the Cornish Brothers Firm. In 1889, Frank was a state senator from Georgetown and owner of the Terrible Mine and Mill. Both were located in Brownville, a mining area west of Georgetown and Silver Plume.

Cornish house

Photo: N/A

More About This Topic

Ownership of the Cornish House passed from Frank Cornish to Frank Graham. Graham owned one of the silver mines in the region. The house itself is a very elegant structure. Its style of architecture is basically French Second Empire. One of the primary clues about this style is the "mansard roof." Other clues are the second-story windows, the chimneys on the roof, and the entrance.