

Way We Were
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Shot Gun Style

Strolling through Park City's historic streets can be a fascinating experience for enthusiasts of historic architecture and historic preservation. There is an array of unique building types that emphasize the heavy hand that the mining era had on structural design, like the t-cottage or the pyramid style. But there also is an assortment of styles that are incredibly interesting and distinctive, like that of the a-frame and the shotgun style.

A shotgun house is very simple and typically has one room leading into the next without hallways and no windows on the sides. This style of house is believed to be well suited for hot climates because the front and back doors could be opened, and the breeze would flow through the entire house. This type of architecture has been documented as an African American contribution to American styles.

With such an unusual name, the lore behind the moniker is just as interesting. It has been said that the name shotgun came from the idea that a person could shoot through the front door and out the back without hitting a wall because of the structure's long, narrow layout. Others have stated that the building style came from West Africa via Haiti, to New Orleans in the 19th century. The style made its way to the American West in the late 19th to early 20th century and arrived in Park City not long after. This architectural style was not a common sight in Park City, with only three existing examples, however it was a staple in many other western mining towns.

The shotgun house at 413 Ontario Avenue is a great representation of what the original architectural style was meant to be. It has a long, lean base with no windows on the sides. The front porch provided a nice space for shaded outdoor visiting. It was built by Charles Barnes in 1902. Mr. Barnes came to Park City from Rhode Island in 1890 to join his brother in jigging (separating crushed ore by agitating water on a concentrator table). He purchased the land lot in early March of 1902 and completed the house within the same year. He also purchased the adjoining lot at 417 Ontario and built another home. Both homes were built as investment properties, based on the speculation that the rental market would keep them afloat.

If you are interested in viewing this shotgun house and other historic Park City homes, please attend our Home Tour. The Home Tour is on Saturday, June 14th from 10am to 3pm. Tickets for the tour are \$15 for members and \$20 for non-members. Free parking is available at the China Bridge Park Garage and Sandridge parking lots. For more information, please call the Park City Museum at 435-647-7457 or visit our website at parkcityhistory.org.

The museum would like to welcome all former teachers and students of the Marsac School, located at 445 Marsac Avenue, to an informal gathering at noon at the school during the tour.

The Park City Historical Society & Museum is celebrating 30 years of preserving, protecting, and promoting Park City's history and heritage.



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Credit: Park City Historical Society & Museum

Caption: The angle of this photograph shows how the structure was long with no windows on the sides.