

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

**Architectural Inventory Form**

**Official Eligibility Determination**  
(OAHF use only)

OAHF1403  
Rev. 9/98

- Date \_\_\_\_\_ Initials \_\_\_\_\_
- Determined Eligible – National Register
  - Determined Not Eligible – National Register
  - Determined Eligible – State Register
  - Determine Not Eligible – State Register
  - Need Data
  - Contributes to eligible National Register District
  - Noncontributing to eligible National Register District

**I. IDENTIFICATION**

- 1. Resource number: **5SM.1577/THAS.191**
- 2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**
- 3. County: **San Miguel**
- 4. City: **Telluride**
- 5. Historic Building Name: **Backman House; Ranta House**
- 6. Current Building Name: **Ranta House**
- 7. Building Address: **552 W. Colorado Avenue**
- 8. Owner Name and Address: **Allan Ranta  
P. O. Box 1505  
Telluride, CO 814351505**

Parcel number(s):

<b>456536318007</b>



**THLD RATING:**

- Primary - Contributing to District**
- Secondary Residence - Supporting to District**
- Secondary Structure – Non-Designated – New Construction**

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## II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **New Mexico** Township: **43N** Range: **9W**  
**SW ¼ of SW ¼ of SE ¼ of SW ¼ of Section 036**
10. UTM reference (Datum: NAD27)  
 Zone: **13** **252494 mE** **4202525 mN**
11. USGS quad name: **Telluride, Colorado**  
 Year: **1955** Map scale: **7.5'**
12. Lot(s): **Lots 26, 27, Block 8**  
 Addition: **West Telluride Addition** Year of addition: **1891**
13. Boundary description and justification:  
**This legally defined parcel encompasses, but does not exceed, the land historically associated with this property.**  
 Metes and bounds?: Describe:

## III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building plan (footprint, shape): **Rectangular Plan**
15. Dimensions in feet: **Length: 50 feet x Width: 20 feet**
16. Number of stories: **1**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Asphalt**
18. Roof configuration: **Gabled Roof/Cross Gabled Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Metal Roof**
20. Special features: **Porch**  
**Chimney**  
**Ornamentation/Decorative Shingles**
21. General architectural description:  
**This single-story, wood-frame dwelling appears to consist of an original gabled-L section, and an early gabled addition to the south (rear) elevation. The house is supported by a low concrete foundation, and its exterior walls are covered with rolled brown asphalt with a faux brick pattern, Painted cream white fishscale shingles appear in the upper gable end on the façade (north elevation), however. The house is covered by a cross gable roof, with brown metal roofing material, and with painted cream white boxed eaves. A red brick chimney with a corbelled cap is located on the roof ridge. A painted cream white, 15-light, glass-in-wood-frame door enters an enclosed, 11' by 5', shed-roofed porch which forms the north end of the west elevation. The enclosed porch is approached by a 2-step wood and concrete stoop, and its wall is penetrated by a band of four 8-light fixed-pane windows. The façade wall, to the east of the entry porch, is dominated by a hip-roofed bay, with four 1/1 double-hung sash windows. The west elevation is also penetrated by a set of paired 1/1 double-hung sash windows. All of the home's windows feature painted cream white wood frames and surrounds. A painted cream white wood-paneled door, with one upper sash light, and with a transom light, enters the west end of the south elevation from an elevated wood deck.**
22. Architectural style: **Late Victorian**  
 Building type:

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23. Landscape or special setting features:

**This property is located on the south side of West Colorado Avenue, in the block between Townsend and Davis Streets, near the west end of the Telluride National Historic Landmark district.**

24. Associated buildings, features or objects:

**Secondary Residence/Sheds (THAS #191)**

**This historic building located near the rear (south end) of the property actually consists of three separate abutting structures - a secondary residence, and two sheds. Overall, the three structures measure 36' N-S by 16.5' E-W.**

The earliest of the three (built prior to 1904), is located closest to the alley. This is a rectangular-shape wood frame structure which measures 8.5' N-S by 16.5' E-W. Its exterior walls are clad with rusted corrugated metal, and it has a shed roof, also covered with rusted corrugated metal, laid over 1x wood decking and 2x wood rafters. A vertical wood plank door, side-hinged with metal strap hinges, enters this shed at the east end of the north elevation. A set of paired vertical wood plank doors, also side-hinged with metal strap hinges, open toward the alley on the south elevation.

The center structure (built between 1908 and 1922) measures approximately 13.5' N-S by 10' E-W. Its exterior walls and shed roof are covered with rusted corrugated metal, over vertical wood planks, except on the east elevation where the vertical wood planks are exposed. A vertical wood plank door enters this shed on its east elevation.

The secondary residence (built between 1904 and 1908) comprises the northern-most of the three structures. This is a small 1.5-story wood frame building which measures 14' N-S by 13' E-W. It is supported by a painted red foundation, and its exterior walls are covered with rolled brown asphalt, with the same faux brick pattern found on the primary dwelling. A steeply-pitched gable roof is covered with corrugated metal roofing material, and the eaves are boxed with painted cream white wood trim. A crumbling red brick chimney, with a corbelled cap, is located near the north end of the roof ridge. A 2-step entry porch is recessed under the building's northeast corner where a painted white wood-paneled door enters the building. A 1/1 double-hung sash window penetrates the east elevation. A 6-light window penetrates the upper gable end on the south elevation.

A separate building at the southwest corner of this property is addressed as 556 W. Colorado Avenue. It was constructed in the 1970s and is a non-rated building within Telluride's Landmark District. It was not surveyed as part of this property.

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### IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of construction:      Estimate:                      Actual:      **1903**  
 Source of information:    **Sanborn Insurance maps, December 1899 and July 1904; San Miguel County Assessor records.**
26. Architect:                      **Unknown**  
 Source of information:    **N/A**
27. Builder:                        **John Backman**  
 Source of information:    **"Historic Building Inventory Record" prepared by Front Range Research Associates, July 1987.**
28. Original owner:              **John Backman**  
 Source of information:    **"Historic Building Inventory Record" prepared by Front Range Research Associates, July 1987.**
29. Construction history:  
**San Miguel County Assessor records list 1903 as this dwelling's year of construction. This date is corroborated by Sanborn Insurance maps which document that the dwelling was erected sometime between 1899 and 1904. According to a previous survey, completed by Front Range Research Associates in 1987, this house was built and originally owned by John Backman. Sanborn maps also provide relative dates of construction for the three abutting structures at the rear of the property (THAS #191). The Sanborns indicate that the shed closest to the alley was built between 1899 and 1904 (probably at the same time as the house); the secondary residence was built between 1904 and 1908; the center shed was built between 1908 and 1922.**
30. Original location:       Moved:                      Date of move(s):

### V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s):                **Domestic/Single Dwelling**
32. Intermediate use(s):         **Domestic/Single Dwelling**
33. Current use(s):                **Domestic/Single Dwelling**
34. Site type(s):                  **Single family dwelling**
35. Historical background:  
**This house was erected in 1903 and has served as a single family dwelling throughout its history. The house reportedly was built and originally owned by John Backman. According to the 1920 census, John Backman, his wife Salma, and sons Rudolph and Albert, were Telluride residents. John and Salma were both natives of Finland, John having been born in that country circa 1874, and Salma circa 1881. John Backman immigrated to the United States in 1894, and by the turn-f-the-twentieth century, he and Salma were married and living in Telluride. A son, Rudolph, was born in 1901, followed by another son, Albert, in 1910. At least two other Backman children died in infancy. According to the 1920 census, John Backman was then employed as a janitor at a stamp mill.**

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Throughout much of its history, this property has been associated with the Ranta family. Finnish immigrants, members of the Ranta family arrived in Telluride just after the turn-of-the twentieth century. Jacob "Jack" Ranta was born in Finland on September 18, 1882, and immigrated to America in 1900. After briefly settling in Red Lodge, Montana, Jacob moved to Telluride to work in the mines. His wife, Anna (Erma?) Maki Ranta was also born in Finland on October 12, 1886; she immigrated to the United States in 1905. Jacob and Anna were married in Telluride, and were an integral part of the town's Finnish community during the early 1900s. A son, William "Bill," was born on October 26, 1906, and another son, Elmer, was born on August 5, 1917. Jack Ranta reportedly worked as a tram boss at the Black Bear Mine, and according to the 1920 census, he was a carpenter.

William Ranta was living in this house in 1952. In 1987, this property was owned by William and Elmer Ranta. Today, in 2007, it is owned by Allan Ranta.

36. Sources of information:

Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, San Miguel, County, Colorado, Central Telluride precinct.  
 Pera, Davine (comp.). *Conversations at 9,000 Feet A Collection of Oral Histories From Telluride, Colorado*. Ouray: Western Reflections Publishing Company, 2000. (Reference p. 237, et. al.)  
 San Miguel County Assessor records.  
 San Miguel County Commercial Property Appraisal Record.  
 Sanborn Insurance maps, August 1886, October 1890, February 1893, December 1899, July 1904, November 1908, October 1922.  
 Simmons, Laurie and Whitacre, Christine. *Historic Building Inventory Record*, July 1987.

### VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation:    Yes            No     Date of designation:

Designating authority:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

- A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
  - B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
  - C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguished entity whose components may lack individual distinction;
  - D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.
- Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see Manual).

Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

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Telluride Standards for Designation:

- 7-505.A.1. The structure is representative of a unique historical social activity of an era
- 7-505.A.2. The structure dominates the neighborhood by virtue of its mass, architecture or location
- 7-505.A.3. The structure was an historically or architecturally important public building
- 7-505.A.4. The structure has a unique historical significance beyond a local level
- 7-505.A.5. The parcel was the site of an important historic event or activity
- 7-505.A.6. The structure has a "contributing or qualified contributing" rating on the THAS

39. Area(s) of significance: **Architecture, Ethnic Heritage/European, Settlement**

40. Period of significance: **1878-1913**

41. Level of significance: National:  State: Local:

42. Statement of significance:

**This dwelling is architecturally significant for its Late Victorian-era style of architecture, including such notable features as the prominent bay window on the façade, and the decorative shingles in the upper gable end. The property is also historically significant for its association with Telluride's socioeconomic development during the early 1900s. Finally, the property is important for its ethnic history, having been associated with two Finnish immigrant families - the Backman family and the Ranta family. As such, the dwelling should be rated as a "contributing" resource within the Telluride National Historic Landmark District. The three adjoined outbuildings (THAS 191), date from the district's period of significance, but have been modified to some extent as they have been maintained over the years. As a result, THAS #191 should be considered "supporting" to the district.**

43. Assessment of historic physical integrity related to significance:

**This property displays a reasonably high standard of physical integrity, relative to the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service and the Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation - setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Alterations to the original building, including the application of asphalt siding, appear to have occurred many years ago, and have not seriously compromised the building's historic integrity. In somewhat deteriorated condition, the three adjoined secondary buildings (THAS #191) have been modified to some extent over the years. Overall, this property contributes to the district's historic character.**

### VII. NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

44. National Register eligibility field assessment: **Not Individually Eligible / Contributing to District**

Local landmark eligibility field assessment: **Eligible / Contributing to District**

45. Is there National Register district potential? Yes  No

Discuss: **This property is located within the Telluride National Historic Landmark District.**

If there is National Register district potential, is this building: Contributing Noncontributing N/A:

46. If the building is in existing National Register district, is it: Contributing  Noncontributing N/A:

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## VIII. RECORDING INFORMATION

47. Photograph number(s):	<b>CD #5, Images 112-119</b>	CDs filed at:	<b>Town of Telluride</b>
48. Report title:	<b>Town of Telluride Re-Survey of Historic Structures</b>		<b>Planning and Building Department</b>
49. Date(s):	<b>07/30/2007; revised 4/10/2013</b>		<b>113 West Columbia Avenue</b>
50. Recorder(s):	<b>Carl McWilliams Timothy Wilder</b>		<b>Telluride, CO 81435</b>
51. Organization:	<b>Cultural Resource Historians</b>		
52. Address:	<b>Dogwood Court Fort Collins, CO 80525</b>		
53. Phone number(s):	<b>(970) 493-5270</b>		

# Architectural Inventory Form

## Sketch Map



# Architectural Inventory Form

## Location Map

