

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Original Physical Appearance

El Tiradito (The Wishing Shrine) is a site attached by legend to a murder. Mexican-American tradition claims that those who light a candle on this site will have their prayers (or wishes) answered.

El Tiradito is located in the Barrio Libre of Tucson. It was originally located in the late 1870s about one block east of its present location and consisted of "a little collection of battered pieces of oil cans... (a) miniature tin hut...within a tiny cross of wood along side a dirty half-burned candle." This was in the center of Simpson Street on the west side of Meyer Avenue. At this time, Simpson between Meyer and Main was not used as a street, but was simply vacant land covered by creosote bushes. Simpson did extend west from Main Street past an artesian well (One of Tucson's first sources of water and focus of many of El Tiradito's legends) on the North and on down and across the Santa Cruz River. In the late 1870s through the 1890s, this was the road to San Xavier Mission, 10 miles to the south across the river.

Sometime between 1894 and 1909, Simpson was opened between Meyer and Main Streets, and the site of El Tiradito was moved to a new location near the Northwest corner of Simpson and Main Streets.

Although north of the corner, the Wishing Shrine was simply incorporated with vacant land on the corner where "any evening after dark you will see from one to one hundred candles burning."

In September 1927, the City was deeded a lot 40' x 120', 90 feet north of the corner which has been the official site ever since. Soon after this, a building was constructed on the northwest corner of Simpson and Main Streets, divorcing the Shrine's connection with the corner. The Shrine was still simply a spot on vacant land where the candles were lit.

Present Physical Appearance

Today, the site is still essentially a vacant lot with candles, although in 1940, National Youth Administration workers constructed an adobe U-shaped wall at the rear of the lot as a backdrop and focal point of the shrine. The wall is approximately 12 feet high, is capped with red brick and is designed in the "Mission Style." A simple "altar" steps out from the wall. Above the altar is a niche with a figurine of the Virgin and above, at the top of the wall, is a wrought iron cross.

In front of the wall are several wrought iron candle holders which help support the votive candles and plastic flower arrangements which are constantly being replenished.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Folklore
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1870s, c.1895, 1940 BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to Dr. Byrd Granger, an authority on American folklore, this is the only such "Wishing Shrine" in the United States. A similar shrine exists in Sonora, Mexico.

El Tiradito (which means "the castaway") is a site attached by legend to a murder. Mexican-American tradition claims that those who light a candle on this site will have their prayers (or wishes) answered. This tradition and those legends associated with the site form a part of the cultural heritage of the Barrio Libre of Tucson. This site does not have the official sanction of the Catholic Church and is therefore quasi-religious.

The "Tradition" has always been the same since it began in the late 1870s. Light a candle, say a prayer (or make a wish). The physical site has been changed once between 1893 and 1909 (see the physical description section).

The "Legends" which support the tradition are numerous and attached to many different murders.

In 1927, the Tucson City Council accepted the following as the official version:

"As told by Mrs. C. B. Perkins whose pioneering father, Dr. F. H. Goodwin, employed on his sheep ranch the young murdered man. Juan Oliveras was the young shepherd at the Goodwin Ranch. He, his wife, and father-in-law all worked at the Goodwin Ranch, but his mother-in-law worked in Tucson. Juan was infatuated with his mother-in-law and often visited her. One day the father-in-law followed Juan to Tucson and surprised his wife and her young lover together. A struggle followed and Juan fled the house, but his father-in-law seized an axe from a wood pile and killed Juan. The grave marked only by desert shrubs. Mexicans call the spot "EL TIRODITO," or lying dead. Devout Mexican women thought that there should be prayers said for Juan's soul. They slipped through the spiny shrubs at night to light candles beside the grave. Among them there grew the belief that their own personal wishes, made after prayers were said for Juan, came true. The superstition spread through the village. More and more candles guttered through the nights, protected from winds by shields of tin cans and scrap iron."

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	2
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5	0	2	12	0
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3	56	4	04	5
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Garrison, Historical Architect

ORGANIZATION

Arizona State Parks

STREET & NUMBER

1688 West Adams

CITY OR TOWN

Phoenix

10-28-75

DATE

(602) 271-4174

TELEPHONE

STATE

Arizona

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

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

Dennis McCarty

November 14, 1975

TITLE State Parks Director

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

James Garrison

DATE

3/16/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

Robert B. Kellog

DATE

3-15-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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RECEIVED DEC 23 1975

DATE ENTERED Nov. 19, 1971

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Significance (continued)

Prior to his death in 1935, Moses Drachman (who was born in Tucson in 1870) recorded this account of the legend:

"On account of the proximity of this excellent spring, (the well near the northwest corner of Simpson and Main Streets, one of Tucson's first water sources) many of the teamsters who drove freight wagons used to camp on the spot. There was a teamster who drove a wagon between either Magdalena or Hermosilla and this place, who had married a widow with a grown son. He murdered this woman, then came on to Tucson with his team. The son followed him here and, finding him at the camp, killed him. It is customary, even to this day, with the Mexican people, to erect a cross over the spot where a murderer's victim was killed and this case was no exception. The report got out that this man who was killed, could perform miracles, and a great many people got the idea that if they placed a lighted candle here and prayed, they would get whatever it was they earnestly desired - whether it was good health or anything that they wanted badly enough."

Whatever legend is believed, the tradition is still carried out today and every night candles flicker and wishes are made on the site of El Tiradito.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED <i>Nov. 19, 1971</i>

CONTINUATION SHEET

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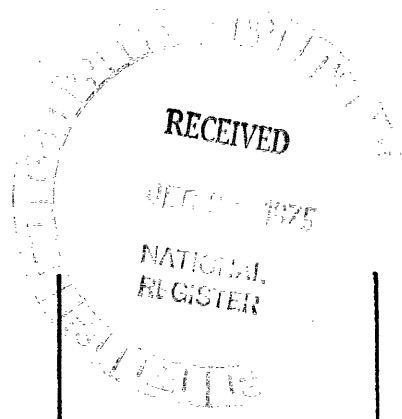
Major Bibliographical References:

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tucson
1883, 1896, 1901, 1909, 1919, 1947

"Wishing Shrine" subject file,
Arizona Historical Society

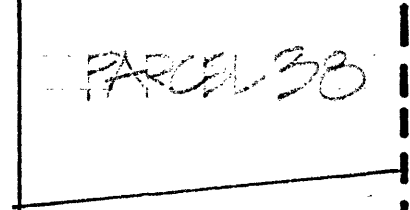
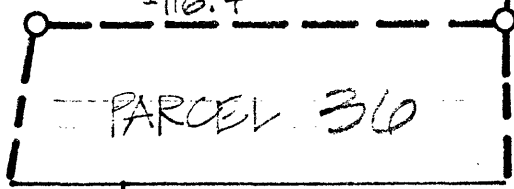
Moses Drachman File,
Arizona Historical Society

Byrd Granger "Secrets of the Wishing Shrine"
The West, April 1970



CITY OF TUCSON
BLOCK 221

PART OF LOT 13



±161.3'

±116.4'

±124.8'

±143.7'

MAIN AVE.

PHOTO A

SIMPSON ST.

"EL TIRADITO"

PROPOSED BOUNDARY

PHOTO B



NORTH

SCALE: 1 INCH = 50 FEET

NOVEMBER 1975 BY J. GARRISON