

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED APR 7 1975	
DATE ENTERED	MAY 12 1975

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

The H. B. Ailman House *with*

AND/OR COMMON

The Silver City Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

314 W. Broadway

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Silver City

— VICINITY OF

Second

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

New Mexico

CODE

35

COUNTY

Grant

CODE

017

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Town of Silver City

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Silver City

— VICINITY OF

STATE

New Mexico 88061

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Grant County Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Grant County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Silver City

STATE

New Mexico

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties

DATE

May, 1970

—FEDERAL  —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

State Planning Office, 200 W. DeVargas St.

CITY, TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87501

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>3-15-75</u>

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The H. B. Ailman House, which now serves as the Silver City Museum, is an impressive building constructed of locally-fired brick during the early years of this Southwestern town's mining boom. Except for an addition on the west, the original house has not been altered. The eastern section, the original 1881 home of Silver City miner, merchant and banker H. B. Ailman, consists of a two-story structure with a turret, two and a half stories high, inset on the southwest side to form an interesting facade. The rear of the building (on the north), however, presents an entirely different appearance, since the small square turret protrudes above the two-story level which "wraps around" and encircles it on the north and west. Mansard-style metal sheeting roofs cover both turret and house proper. The exteriors of the turret's top half-story and the second floor of the main building are covered with decorated shingles. All four sides of the turret contain vertical gable dormer windows with overhangs which served as lookouts against hostile Apache approach when the house was constructed in 1881. The second story of the main portion has two similar dormer windows on the east, one on the west and a larger one on the south (front). Two large bay windows are located on the lower main floor, one on the south; the other on the east. Between the latter and the southeast corner is a double-hung, plain window; a similar window is in the south side of the turret second story. Decorative wooden urns are set atop the turret roof and above the three gable dormer windows of the main section. Wooden entablatures of varying sizes with projecting friezes and single brackets encircle the turret, the top of the ground floor on three sides and the roof sections.

The flat-roofed single-story western portion was built during the 1890's of the same local kiln-fired red brick. The roof is also of metal sheeting. By comparison, this section is plain in appearance, but the ornamentation is similar to the original building. The entablature with single brackets along the roof links the newer structure to the turret in harmonious fashion. A metal-roofed veranda extends the entire length of this addition and in front of the turret so that it shelters the original front door. The simple wooden cornices and eight squared posts of the veranda are in keeping with the decorative style of the entire building, as are the double-hung windows.

When the Ailman House became the city hall in 1926 a poured concrete vault, still intact, was built into the east wall behind the bay window of the original residence. After the building became the fire station a garage abutting the northwest portion of the newer section was constructed to house the fire engines.

Alterations to the interior, such as plywood walls, lower ceilings and tasteless installation of electrical wiring, have been made at various times to accommodate the structure to use as a city hall and a fire station. However, the woodwork, including the wainscoting, wood floors, transomed doorways and paneled doors, and the staircase have been retained, and the original ceiling trim is still intact above the present ceilings.

(See continuation sheet 1)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

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Plans by the Silver City Museum are being developed to rehabilitate the exterior and restore the interior of the historic house for an expanded civic museum project.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1881-      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Robert Black

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in 1881 amidst frequent Apache attacks, the Henry B. Ailman House was the home of a former prospector, prominent merchant and banker and today remains as a unique and little altered Victorian structure constructed in Silver City during the town's boom period.

Sometime in late 1868 or early 1869 several men, including John and James Bullard and A. J. Hurlbut, settled along the springs known since the Spanish period as "La Cienega de San Vicente" (the marsh of St. Vincent). These springs, located near the early 19th century Spanish Santa Rita Coppe Mine, with its protective adobe fort built in 1804, had long been an early camping site for the Apache Indians. In 1870 the rich Chloride Flat silver strike was made by James S. Campbell and within a few weeks a new town sprang up slightly to the north, soon appropriately named, "Silver City." Unfortunately, pioneer founder John Bullard was killed by Apaches near Clifton, Arizona in 1871 and was the first resident to be buried in the Silver City cemetery.

With a more than adequate supply of water provided by the springs, the growth of the new town was phenomenal. Within a year of its founding Silver City could boast one hundred permanent buildings, fronting streets laid out in the standard gridiron pattern, totally foreign to New Mexico at that period. Even the brick was locally produced in a large kiln north of town. In 1874 Silver City replaced Pinos Altos as the county seat of Grant County, which had been formed from Doña Ana County January 30, 1868.

Two great floods on July 21, 1895, one with a crest of water twelve feet high and three hundred feet wide, created a huge ditch out of Main Street, washing away such landmarks as the Trimmer and Tremont Hotels, the Porter and Campbell Store and numerous other original structures. The Ailman House which was situated to the west of the flood area was not damaged. Main Street, however, was never rebuilt and is still known as the Big Ditch

In 1871 Henry B. Ailman arrived in Silver City as a prospector with great hopes of "striking it rich." He had achieved this objective by November of 1874 when he and H. M. Meredith discovered the Naiad Queen Silver Mine in Georgetown, eighteen miles northeast of Silver City. The mine was extremely productive and in 1880 the partners sold the Naiad Queen Silver Mine for \$160,000.00 and moved to Silver City where they invested in mercantile and banking concerns. Soon after their arrival, Ailman and

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sources:

Bartlett, John Russell. Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora and Chihuahua, Connected With the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission During the Years 1850, '51, '52 and '53. 2 Vols., New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1854.  
(see continuation sheet 2)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. less than .25 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	12	7	5	5	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	8	8	8	0	B									
	ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING									
C																D									

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE James H. Purdy, Historian and Michael McCachren, Archivist I

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>State Records Center and Archives</u>	<u>4-1-75</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>404 Montezuma</u>	<u>827-2321</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Santa Fe</u>	<u>New Mexico</u>

# 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.

SIGNATURE Thomas W. Mark DATE 4-1-75

TITLE Historic Preservation Officer DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>David A. Goussally</u>	DATE <u>5/12/75</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
ATTEST: <u>Ronald M. Greenberg</u>	DATE <u>5/9/75</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

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Meredith purchased block 67 on Broadway Street and contracted with Robert Black to construct two identical brick houses. The Ailman House, with its distinctive turret which was used to spot raiding Apaches, was completed in February of 1881 and along with the identical Meredith House was considered to be the finest home in Silver City during the 19th century. The Meredith House was razed long ago but the Ailman House has been more fortunate.

Ailman and Meredith were poor financiers and in 1887 their bank failed and was forced into receivership. The Ailman House passed through several hands and in 1917 was known as the Collins Boarding House. The Town of Silver City purchased it in 1926 and utilized the structure as a City Hall. After construction of a new City Hall the Ailman House became the city's fire house as well as living quarters for the fire chief and his family. On July 4, 1967 the Silver City Museum was established in the original house and the Fire Department was moved into quarters constructed on the north side of the 1890 addition to the building. Recently, the fire department has been moved to a new location. The entire property is now in the hands of the Silver City Museum which plans, as part of the old mining town's Bicentennial celebration, to rehabilitate and restore this 19th century historic residence into an expanded museum facility.

Sources continued:

Myres, S. D. (ed.). The Personal Narrative of O. W. Williams 1877-1902, Pioneer Surveyor - Frontier Lawyer. El Paso: Texas Western College Press, 1966.

Twitchell, Ralph Emerson. The Leading Facts of New Mexican History. Vol. 3, Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1917.

"Memoirs of H. B. Ailman" loaned to the Silver City Museum, 314 W. Broadway, Silver City, New Mexico.

Jenkins, Myra Ellen. "Preserving Our Historical Heritage," Paper presented at Western New Mexico University, Silver City, New Mexico, April 10, 1970.

Silver City Enterprise, 1882-1895.