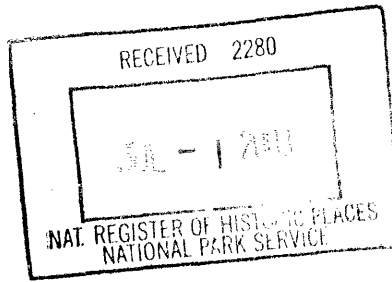


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



1577

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stokes Castle
other names/site number Stokes Tower

2. Location

street & number Castle Road, south side US 50 west of downtown Austin N/A not for publication
city or town Austin N/A vicinity
state Nevada code NV county Lander code 015 zip code 89310

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. [Signature] SHPO 6-26-03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other (explain): _____

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
Edson H. Beall 8/14/03

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

DOMESTIC

single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category

Subcategory

VACANT/NOT IN USE

RECREATION AND CULTURE monument/marker

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Stone

roof N/A
other Wood
Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1897

Significant Dates

1897

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Stokes, Anson Phelps (architect)

Wholey, John C. (master stonemason)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
#
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
#

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approximately 0.16 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1	11	493200	4371350	3	11
	2	11			4	11

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>		
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	date	<u>June 1, 2003</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>Herbert Wallace Trapnell</u>		
street & number	<u>PO Box 57</u>	telephone	<u>(775) 964-2253</u>
city or town	<u>Austin</u> state <u>NV</u>	zip code	<u>89310</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET7

Section 7 Page 1

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description

Summary

The ruins of Stokes Castle are located in Austin, Lander County, Nevada. Austin is situated at an elevation of approximately 6,600 feet above sea level in Pony Canyon near the northern end of the Toiyabe Range and near the geographic center of the state. The town lies in the watershed of the Reese River, a tributary of the Humboldt River, and it is served by US Highway 50. Built in 1897, the Castle is located to the west of the built-up area of the town on an unpaved road that leads southwestward from Highway 50, and it stands on a man-made bench with commanding views of the Reese River Valley. The rocky slopes above and below are forested with pinyon and juniper. The Castle is a three-story granite tower, square in plan, that retains remnants of a castellated top and interior finishes.

Exterior

Stokes Castle is constructed of large granite blocks with scored grapevine-like joints. A change in stone and mortar color marks the addition of the third story within a few months of the completion of the lower two stories. The Castle measures almost exactly twenty-three feet and three inches to a side. The front elevation faces south (slightly southwest) and is distinguished on the first story by a single large entry that formerly contained double-leaf doors. An early photograph in Austin's Gridley Museum depicts these doors as hung on strap hinges and having two panels each filled with diagonal matchboards creating a chevron effect. The entry has a heavy wood embrasure with chamfered panels and carved graffiti. Each of the other first-story elevations has two narrow windows with projecting sills (common to all of the windows) and a single vertical round-section iron bar per window. The two-window pattern is repeated on most elevations of the second and third stories. Below the left first-story east window at grade is a window-like opening associated with a cooler that formerly projected on the interior. The opening has two rectangular-section iron bars and was formerly screened.

The front elevation is also distinguished by projecting iron railroad rail supports for former balconies at the second and third-story floor levels and for a roof over the third-story balcony. Entries and windows including a boarded-up picture window open onto what were the balconies, and a large picture window with a single round-section iron bar opens on the second-story west elevation. At the top corners of the castle are remnants of former castellation with iron strapwork for reinforcement. Rising at the top of the north elevation is a granite chimney, square in section.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 7 Page 2

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

The chimney retains two features associated with a former awning that once shaded a rooftop terrace. These are a slender wooden mast--one of several that once rimmed the top of the castle--that was used to suspend the awning, and an iron band around the top of the chimney with multiple grommets that were used to secure the awning. In addition to the awning the terrace was once provided with canvas curtains that could be drawn for protection from the wind.

Stokes Castle now stands in an approximately square fenced enclosure measuring from seventy-nine to eighty-five feet to a side. The chain link fence with barbed wire top was added in the 1970s to prevent intruders from defacing the Castle or harming themselves in it. The blue-painted metal Nevada State Historical Marker No. 59 stands in front of the south elevation (the sign is enumerated as a noncontributing object in the resource count). Outside and to the south of the fence is a small dirt parking lot, a barbecue hearth, and a concrete picnic table inscribed "Lions Club 91." Farther south and over the edge of the bench on which the Castle stands is a small but heavily constructed mine head frame built with wire nails.

Interior

Most interior fabric is missing as a result of deterioration and removal for safety reasons. The railroad rails that supported the balconies pass through the interior where they once supported the upper floors and roof deck. A small section of board flooring survives on the third level. The ground level presently has a dirt floor. Painted plaster wall finishes survive on each level, the plaster applied to lath or directly on stone and formerly painted white. The ground-level fireplace is lined with brick and has a railroad rail lintel and, above, a stovepipe hole. (There is no evidence for former mantels on this fireplace or on the second and third levels.) A diagonal scar in the plaster indicates that the stair rose in the southeast corner, as it did on the upper levels. According to tradition, the dining room and kitchen occupied the ground level, the latter presumably on the east side where the cooler and stair were located.

The second level contained a living room with picture windows on the south and west sides and a bathroom in the northeast corner (this bathroom and one above are indicated by plumbing chases cut into the walls). The second-level fireplace has a granite lintel with a segmental-arched lower edge. The plaster wall finish is beveled at the edge of the fireplace opening. The third-level, which contained two or three bedrooms, has a fireplace with a large granite lintel above a lintel fashioned

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 7, 8 Page 3

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

from a section of railroad rail. A small section of corrugated metal, apparently a section of the third-floor ceiling, survives. The simple wood door and window trim on the upper levels bears traces of light gray paint.

Integrity Statement

As a ruin, Stokes Castle possesses good integrity. The castle retains its original and distinctive character-defining features of form and construction, although secondary features such as the balconies, castellation, and roof awning are missing or deteriorated. The essential romantic character of the site remains intact, as do the unspoiled views of the Reese River Valley. The modern protective fence and state historical marker are minor and necessary detractions from the integrity of setting.

Section 8 Statement of Significance

Summary

Stokes Castle, located in Austin, Nevada, is one of the state's most recognizable historic landmarks. The three-story granite tower was built in 1897 for Anson Phelps Stokes, the driving force behind the Nevada Central Railroad and Austin's mining industry at the end of the nineteenth century. Stokes modeled his romantic summer home on a family painting of a tower in the Roman Campagna, and he sited it on a prominence with sweeping views of the Reese River Valley. The Castle featured balconies cantilevered on railroad rails (the rails survive), plate-glass picture windows, a castellated parapet, and a rooftop terrace once shaded by a suspended canvas awning. The floors in the simply detailed interior were removed years ago to deter intruders. Anson Phelps Stokes, his sons, a Chinese cook, and guests occupied the Castle on several occasions in 1897 and 1898. For much of the twentieth century the Castle was boarded up and subjected to deterioration and vandalism. Threatened with removal to the Las Vegas Strip after 1950, it was saved by Stokes relative Molly Knudtsen and today stands as a testimony to her foresight.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 8 Page 4

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Applicable Criteria

Stokes Castle meets Criterion C and is eligible in the architecture area of significance. The period of significance corresponds to the date of construction in 1897, and the site is eligible at the statewide level of significance for its unique architectural character and its long-standing statewide fame (the Castle earned two paragraphs of description in the 1940 Works Progress Administration guide to the state). The building is located in the Austin Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout this section.

Acknowledgments

A number of organizations and individuals assisted in the preparation of this report. The nomination was sponsored by Lander County and the Austin Historical Society with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Nevada Commission of Economic Development, and it is one of ten nominations prepared for prominent historic landmarks in Austin in 2003. Herbert Wallace "Wally" Trapnell, the owner of the property, has encouraged the property's preservation and designation and has provided information on its history. Others who provided assistance included Allen D. Gibson, Deputy District Attorney, Lander County; Christy Caronongan, Administrative Assistant, Lander County Executive Director's Office; Ray H. Williams Jr., Ray and Irene Salisbury, Phillip "Poncho" and Joan Williams, and Joy Brandt with the Austin Historical Society; Ray "Ramey" Williams III, Austin; Dee Helming and Herbert Wallace "Wally" Trapnell, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Marvin Wholey, Reno; Susan Nelsen, Senior Deputy Recorder, Lander County; Christine Nelson, The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City; Barbara Prudic, Nevada historical marker program, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office; and Mella Rothwell Harmon, Architectural Historian/National Register Coordinator, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

Historic Context

Austin was established in the early 1860s when silver was discovered in Pony Canyon. Although the town was situated near the route of the Pony Express and was on the later Overland stage road, it lies approximately ninety miles distant from the Humboldt River valley, the principal early

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 5

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

wagon path through Nevada. The Humboldt valley was a natural choice for the route of the Central Pacific Railroad. Shortly after completion of the transcontinental line in the late 1860s, Austin's business community began work toward the construction of a branch line to connect with the Central Pacific at Battle Mountain. The projected branch, incorporated as the Nevada Railway in 1875, eventually attracted the attention of New York financier Anson Phelps Stokes (1838-1913). Stokes was a partner in Phelps Dodge, the nationwide mining, railroad, and lumber corporation founded by his grandfather Anson Greene Phelps. In the late 1870s, according to historian Donald Abbe, Stokes planned "to develop his many central Nevada silver properties on a large, unified scale." Rail connections were important to his strategy, and with others Stokes reorganized the Nevada Railway as the Nevada Central Railway in 1879.¹

The Nevada Central laid tracks to Austin in early 1880, and Anson Phelps Stokes remained involved with the line and with Nevada mining development over the following years. In 1891 Stokes and two associates purchased the assets of the Manhattan Mining Company (also known as the Manhattan Silver Mining Company), which since the 1870s had controlled Austin's principal silver mines. The concern, reorganized as the Austin Mining Company, did not generate the expected profits due to the declining silver prices of the 1890s, and Stokes was unable to convince his principal partner to invest at a level Stokes felt was necessary for profitability. This prompted Stokes to incorporate the Nevada Company in July 1897 with the objective of developing new mines in the vicinity of Austin. Stokes's Nevada Company venture coincided with the construction of his residence at Austin, Stokes Castle.²

Research by historian Dee Helming in Austin's paper, the *Reese River Reveille*, has documented key events in the Castle's planning and construction. In late April 1897 grading began on a 2,900-foot-long road to the building site (this was apparently the present access road to the Castle). An April 28 article noted:

¹ Abbe, *Austin*, 51-52; Phelps Dodge Corporation website.

² Abbe, *Austin*, 52-53; Douglass and Nylen, *Letters from the Nevada Frontier*, 327-328; and Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns*, 167.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 6

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

As soon as the grading is finished a large tower, or castle, of two stories and about 30 feet high, one room to each story, will be built out of stone and large plate glass. The castle is being built for Mr. Stokes, a wealthy New Yorker, and one of the principal owners in the [Austin Mining Company], who intends to spend the summer months with his family in Austin. The grade will follow the "lover's trail" the entire distance and will make a splendid drive way and track for bicyclists. The plans for the tower were drawn by Mr. Stokes and were received last week.

Work on the Castle had begun by May 8 and was completed and the building furnished in mid-June in anticipation of a visit by Anson Phelps Stokes on June 22. Stokes apparently decided to add a third story during or shortly after his visit, for on August 11 it was reported that the additional story was under construction. On August 28 the *Reese River Reveille* noted that 800 tons of stone had gone into building "Stoke's [sic] Castle."³

A photograph survives of the Castle under construction. The view shows seventeen workmen, most or all Austin area residents, posed among construction debris in front of the east elevation. A temporary ramp-like construction stair is shown ascending on the south elevation and a one-over-one double-hung window is shown in one of the east elevation window openings. Among the workmen in the picture is John C. Wholey, who a later owner of the Castle, Molly Knudtsen, identified as the "master stonemason." Another photograph, published in Stanley Paher's *Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Camps*, portrays Stokes Castle in more or less its original condition. The balconies featured cross-braced wood railings and the third-story balcony had a cantilevered flat roof of simple design. The view shows the tall surviving awning mast as well as shorter and more slender masts arrayed around the edge of the roof parapet, and a boom-like feature extending from the chimney that may have served to support the middle of the awning. The second-story south picture window appears to be shuttered or boarded over, perhaps a precaution against breakage when the Castle was unoccupied.⁴

³ Helming, "Stokes Castle [and] Phelps Stokes Family References"; *Reese River Reveille* for dates cited.

⁴ Taylor, "Stokes Castle Point of Interest;" Arden, "Interview with Molly Flagg Knudtsen," 5; and Paher, *Nevada Ghost Towns*, 173.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 7

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Use of the Castle by the Stokes family and associates is documented for several occasions in 1897 and 1898. The June 23, 1897 *Reveille* reported the first visit by Anson Phelps Stokes, accompanied by his son and business associate J. G. Phelps Stokes, A. C. Washington (the recalcitrant principal partner in the Austin Mining Co.), Philo Taylor Farnsworth Sr. (another partner in the Austin Mining Co. and soon-to-be incorporated Nevada Company), Austinite W. J. Phillips, and two New York gentlemen. The Stokes party left in early July but J. G. Phelps Stokes returned around the first of September to inspect the Castle's added story. Anson and J. G. Stokes returned in October, and J. G. spent much of February 1898 in the Castle accompanied by business associate and future Nevada Governor Tasker L. Oddie. Anson and J. G. Stokes stayed in the Castle one last time in June 1898.⁵

The young Tasker L. Oddie described life at the Castle in letters to his parents in New Jersey. He was enthusiastic about the vistas from "Mr. Stokes' Tower":

The view from there is beautiful. We can see up and down the valley for a great distance and across to the next range, a distance of about 60 miles. I don't know of any place of its kind anywhere. It is very romantic in every way and the most ideal place to live in I can imagine.

Meals were prepared by a "little Chinaman" named Charley, who also ran a restaurant in Austin. Oddie's use of the term "Tower" reflected Stokes family usage. Herman Albert, a visitor to the Austin area not long after the construction of the Castle, offered a more objective assessment. "After roughing it a day or two" in Nevada, Albert quipped, "Stokes would return to his socialist spouse in New York, the former Rose Pastor, to be regaled by her with anti-capitalist, humanitarian preachments."⁶

⁵ *Reese River Reveille*, June 23, July 7, and September 1, 1897; Douglass and Nysten, *Letters from the Nevada Frontier*, 3, 7, 8, 329, 336-337.

⁶ Douglass and Nysten, *Letters from the Nevada Frontier*, 3, 7, 8; Albert, *Odyssey of a Desert Prospector*, 109.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 8

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

In 1898 Philo T. Farnsworth embezzled \$300,000 from the Stokeses. Anson and J. G. Phelps Stokes made their June 1898 visit to Austin and the Castle primarily so that they could confront Farnsworth on the matter. The loss to the Stokes's mining enterprise at Austin was more than could be sustained. As J. G. Phelps Stokes later noted: "Shortly after [his and his father's last visit] the mines were sold, and a little later the Tower was sold too." Stokes Castle then entered a period of neglect. In 1940 it was reported that the Castle was the "prey of wanton visitors." The balconies had been removed to discourage vandals (some accounts state that they rotted away), and in 1965 the interior floors were reported to have been removed. Also in 1965 it was noted that the building had been used "in comparatively recent years" for temporary storage of mining and road-construction equipment. This use may have been associated with the operations of the Castle Mountain Mining Company nearby in the late 1940s. A small head frame a short distance south of the Castle may have been associated with the company's mining activities.⁷

In the 1950s or 1960s a "promoter" or "group of businessmen" attempted to purchase Stokes Castle in order to move it to the Las Vegas Strip. Word reached Molly Flagg Knudtsen (1915-2001)--anthropologist, first woman regent of the University of Nevada, and Stokes relative--who later said that she was "absolutely horrified" at the prospect of the Castle's removal. In 1966 Knudtsen (then known as Molly Magee) purchased the Castle from Fred and Lois Vollmar and others, and although she acquired an underlying gold mine in the deal, her main motive was preservation. She erected a fence to protect the Castle from vandals and in 2000 Knudtsen and a friend, Herbert Wallace Trapnell, set up floodlights to illuminate it for motorists approaching Austin on Highway 50. According to Knudtsen, "I didn't buy it with any idea of doing anything much with it, I just wanted to save it for Austin," although she also stated, perhaps in jest, that she considered the possibility of retiring there. In 1969 the Austin Chamber of Commerce, which Knudtsen helped found, hosted Governor Paul Laxalt at the dedication of the state historical marker that stands in front of the Castle. Upon Knudtsen's death in 2001, Stokes Castle passed to Herbert Wallace Trapnell, the

⁷ Hall, *Romancing Nevada's Past*, 60-61; Douglass and Nysten, *Letters from the Nevada Frontier*, 337; Nevada State Historical Society, *Nevada, A Guide to the Silver State*, 261; and Earl, "Stokes Castle marks end of Austin mining boom."

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 9

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

present owner. Trapnell is interested in the preservation and interpretation of this unique architectural curiosity, one of Nevada's best-known historic landmarks.⁸

Architectural Analysis

Stokes Castle was modeled on a painting of a tower in the Roman Campagna (the countryside around Rome) that hung in the library of the Stokes's New York City residence. According to J. G. Phelps Stokes, "the view from that little tower in Austin was no less beautiful than the view from the ancient tower on the Campagna." The Stokes residence where the painting hung is now a branch of the Pierpont Morgan Library, but unfortunately the library's collections staff has no record of the painting or its whereabouts. Presumably, the painting was a romantic view of a building from the Roman or medieval periods. The Roman Campagna has a number of square-plan medieval towers, some built on top of Roman tombs, that served defensive purposes, and that were favorite subjects for depiction by Piranesi, Lorrain, and other artists. Interestingly, a painting based on the Stokes Castle/Roman Campagna tradition exists in Austin. The Austin City Hall at 90 South Street, later used as a Knights of Pythias and VFW meeting hall, has a painting over a bar mirror that depicts Stokes Castle in an idealized Italian landscape with cypresses, a bridge, and mountains.⁹

Simplicity of construction was also a factor in the Castle's design, according to J. G. Phelps Stokes. This motivation and the architectural evidence of the Castle itself suggest it was never meant as more than an occasional retreat for the Stokes family men and their business associates. For the Castle's construction, Stokes tapped one of the area's best stonemasons, John C. Wholey (1848-1925). According to Nevada chronicler and acquaintance Herman Albert, the Irish-born Wholey was "a latter-day Leonardo da Vinci." Albert attributed "scores of stone buildings, rock foundations, pillars, arches, culverts, and tall brick chimneys" to Wholey. The list suggests Wholey

⁸ Earl, "Stokes Castle marks end of Austin mining boom;" Hillinger, "Gold Mine Bought;" Lander County Deed Book 13, p. 118; Newton, "Skeleton of Castle;" Arden, "Interview with Molly Flagg Knudtsen;" and Wally Trapnell personal communication.

⁹ Douglass and Nysten, *Letters from the Nevada Frontier*, 336; "A Walk to the Ponte di Nona;" Pezzoni, "Austin City Hall;" and Christine Nelson personal communication.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 8 Page 10

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

was involved in railroad construction, which may be how he came to the attention of the Stokeses. Wholey also worked on St. George's Episcopal Church in Austin, and he may have had a role in the original or later construction work at St. Augustine's Catholic Church.¹⁰

Stokes Castle was modeled on an ancient Italian tower, but in many respects it belonged to its place and time. The awninged rooftop terrace suggests the awninged deck of a yacht or a camp tent. The iron hardware associated with the awning relied on the accomplished iron working tradition that had been an aspect of Austin's construction trade since the 1860s. The Castle's picture windows utilized the large sheets of window glass that were technically feasible by the end of the nineteenth century. Another innovative feature was the cooler at the base of the east elevation. The cooler worked on the same principle as a ventilated dairy, a common farm outbuilding used for air-cooling foodstuffs. It is curious that such a low-tech solution to cooling food was adopted when ice was available to Austin's saloons and restaurants.

The Castle's reasons for existence are also indicative of its milieu. Stokes Castle was a product of the vast riches generated by the development of Western resources and concentrated in the hands of a few railroad and mining barons. Only a Gilded Age magnate would be inclined to build such an architectural folly--and then abandon it after a few visits. Stokes Castle may have been impractical as a dwelling but it was potent as a symbol. The Castle stood for Anson Phelps Stokes's great wealth, and for his commitment to his Austin and Nevada enterprises. In this regard it calls to mind the showcase business blocks and model homes of America's late nineteenth century boomtowns, built at the outset of development to convince investors of the permanence and prosperity of the community. The real audience for the architectural stagecraft of Stokes Castle may have been the potential investors who accompanied Stokes on his junkets.

¹⁰ Newton, "Skeleton of Castle;" Albert, *Odyssey of a Desert Prospector*, 117-118; "Austin Cemetery Records;" Pezzoni, "St. George's Episcopal Church;" Pezzoni, "St. Augustine's Catholic Church;" and Marvin Wholey personal communication.

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Section 9 Page 11

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

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Section 10 Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area is defined by an approximately square area of approximately 0.16 acres enclosed by a chain-link fence.

Boundary Justification

The fence enclosing and protecting the small parcel on which Stokes Castle stands is chosen as the nomination boundary because it includes the Castle and excludes surrounding acreage in separate ownership.

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Section Photographs Page 15

Stoke's Castle, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

PHOTOGRAPHS

1. 1. Subject: Stokes Castle (same for all photos)
 2. Location: Lander Co., Nv. (same for all photos)
 3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
 4. Photo date: March 2003 (same for all photos)
 5. Original negative archived at the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office,
 Carson City, Nv. (same for all photos)
 6. Description of view: South (front) and east elevations. View looking northwest.
 7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)

2. 6. West and south elevations. View looking northeast.

3. 6. Interior with chimney on north wall.

4. 6. View from US 50 showing north and west elevations. View looking southeast.