UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Tombstone, Arizona, sits atop a mesa (elevation 4,539) in the valley of the San Pedro River between the Huachuca and Whetstone Mountains to the west, and the Mules and the Dragoons to the east. The silver-bearing Tombstone Hills, among which the city lies, are caused by a local upheaval of porphyry through a capping of limestone. The town, incorporated in 1879, burned twice, in June 1881, and May 1882, destroying most of the central business district. Most of the present town dates from the rebuilding after the 1882 fire. The buildings are one, sometimes two story, built of adobe, wood, or brick. Decorative detail is sometimes pressed metal, as on the Oriental Saloon, Fifth and Allen Streets. A shed porch supported by white wooden pillars projects over the wooden sidewalks on Allen Street.

Major Buildings

- 1. The Cochise County Courthouse (1882) -- An Italian villa structure built in the shape of a latin cross, the courthouse is a two story brick building with stone quoins decorating the corners and a stone belt course marking the division between the stories. The projecting central pavilion has a central porch supported by Tuscan columns and a balustrade crowning the entablature. Engaged Tuscan columns frame the tall wooden door, which is surmounted by a fan light. The tall four over four windows are topped by cornices held by projecting brackets. A plain cornice tops the second story and each arm of the cross ends in a pedimented gable. The whole is surmounted by a cupola with two round arched windows in each face, each face topped by a pediment which echoes the gable pediment below. The hipped roof of the cupola ends in a balustrade. The courthouse was used until 1929 when the county seat was removed to Bisbee. It is now owned by the State of Arizona which operates it as a museum.
- 2. Tombstone City Hall (1882) -- This three bay, two story brick building houses both the Tombstone city government and the fire department. The arched doorways of the ground floor have recessed doors with plain transoms above, the central doorway being double. The second story windows have round headed drip mouldings, the windows of the central bay being double to match the doorway below. There are two cornices, one over the doorways, supported by ornamental brackets; the second story cornice is topped by a pediment, whose lines are repeated in the parapet above. The parapet is decorated with four finials. The city offices inside have recently been modernized, the ceilings having been dropped, the walls pannelled, a new door cut, and the floors carpeted.

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AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

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SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

After Ed Schieffelin's discovery of silver in the San Pedro Valley in 1877, the boom town of Tombstone became, for a brief moment, the biggest, richest, gaudiest, hottest, meanest, most notorious town in Arizona Territory. While it was the mines that drew the people to the town, Tombstone is best remembered for sixty seconds of one day - October 26, 1881 - when in a blazing flash America's most famous gun battle flamed -- the gun fight at the OK Corral. The battle is a morality play which continues to fascinate because it has nearly every ingredient of the human drama: courage and cowardice, loyalty and treachery, hate, greed, and violence. The day when four tall men dressed in black walked down Fremont Street to meet five outlaws waiting in an obscure horse yard remains fixed on the retina forever recreating in the American mind the eternal battle between Good and Evil that is basic to the human condition.

History

The lands in southeast Arizona were among the last penetrated by American settlement because they were the haunt and fortress of the fierce Apache. After the death of Cochise (1874), which left no clear succession to leadership, the Apache were more than usually rapacious. When in 1877 Ed Schieffelin decided to prospect in the San Pedro Valley no white man and few red ones were secure east of Fort Huachuca, so he used the fort as a base for careful one-day prospecting trips. Laughing troopers told him he would find only his tombstone, so when he made his strike, he called it Tombstone. The name came to mean much more, for those notorious and nameless who died there and are laid in Boot Hill, as well as for the Wild American West, for Schieffelin's mortal town was the last of the wide-open, flaming boom towns that provide us with our Frontier iconography.

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

John Myers Myers, <u>The Last Chance: Tombstone's Early Years</u>. (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1950). Rufus Key Wyllys, Arizona, The History of a Frontier State. (Phoenix, 1950).

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- 3. Schieffelin Hall (1881) -- This large, two story adobe building once was the scene of touring plays, operas and reviews. Built in an I shape with a gable roof, it today houses the Tombstone Historama.
- 4. The Bird Cage Theater (1881) -- This three bay building with recessed round arched doorways once hosted the less reputable stage presentations, as a combination theater and dance hall. Presumably it took its name from the curtained boxes suspended from the roof in which the girls plied their trade between acts. It is now a museum.
- 5. The Tombstone Epitaph (1882) -- The second home of John Clum's feisty newspaper, this building is typical of store fronts of the period, with its wide, tall windows, its double doorway, and its simple cornice. It is still an active newspaper.
- 6. The San Jose House and the Crabtree Livery Stable (1881) -- These two single story adobe buildings at the corner of Fremont and Fifth Streets are among the oldest in town. The San Jose House, formerly a boarding house, is faced with pressed metal siding and has a simple ornamental cornice.
- 7.5 The OK Corral. The adobe offices of the famous corral stand on Allen Street between Third and Fourth, with the stable yards extending back to Freemont Street. Both the office and the corral wall have simple stepped back parapets. Now a museum with cut-out figures of the combatants.
- 8. The Crystal Palace (1882) -- A simple three bay, two story structure with ornamental quoins and a balustrade atop the shed porch, and a flat roof with a plain cornice, the present building was built in the fall of 1880, but this facade represents what the building looked like before the May 1882 fire.
- 9. The Wyatt Earp Building and the Bank Building represent similarly shaped commercial blocks c. 1881. The bank building's facade was changed in 1883. Both blocks are rectangular with their major entrance at the corner. Compare the parapets. The Tuscan ornamentation on the bank building shows its greater claim to gentility.

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Allen Street was the major commercial center. Respectable women used only the north side; their commercial sisters plied their trade on the south side and in the southeast quarter of the town, as far as possible from the proper residential section north of Fremont Street. Today the shops along Allen Street are a mixture of the museum, trinket shop, and restaurant, with services for local residents, such as a bank and drug store, mixed in. The storefronts will eventually be restored to the 1885 period.

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Schieffelin, his brother Al, and Richard Gird, their mining engineer partner, brought in two big strikes, the Lucky Cuss and the Toughnut, besides owning a piece of Hank Williams and John Oliver's Grand Central, which they called the Contention. With that the San Pedro Valley was in bonanza, with all that meant. Western hard rock mining was actually the antithesis of the American western dream for the mineral frontier required heavy capital and company organization to get the ore out. Former Territorial Governor Anson P.K. Safford offered to find the financial backing for a cut of the strike, and so the Tombstone Mining and Milling Company was formed to build a stamping mill. Up to that time what town there was had been at Watervale near the Lucky Cuss. With the building of the mill, the population shifted to Goose Flats, a mesa above the Toughnut which was 4500 feet above sea level and large enough to hold a boom town. By the fall of 1879 a few thousand hardy souls were in a canvas and matchstick camp, perched among the richest silver strike in Arizona.

Like all mining towns, Tombstone grew like a mushroom. The big capital moved in 1880, the year the Southern Pacific reached Tucson. That fall the village of Tombstone was incorporated, and life settled into its brief, gaudy round. The mill and mines were running three shifts, union wages were \$4 a day, and the mostly young, single, male population--half horse and half alligator-needed some place to roar. Allen Street provided it. Nearly 110 places were licensed to sell liquor, and most sold other things as well. The hotels, saloons, gambling dens, dance halls, and brothels were roaring 24 hours a day. The town grew apace. In 1881 the population was 6,000; at the height of the town's growth (c. 1885) it was perhaps 10,000 making it the largest town in the territory. By 1884 they had taken \$25,000,000 out of the ground. Water proved difficult; it had to be hauled in until 1881 when the Huachuca Water Company piped it 23 miles from the Huachuca Mountains. The gaudy part of town along Allen Street was only the most obvious. All around it, respectable people were struggling to earn a living and erect civilization as they had done elsewhere in the west. There were four churches (Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Methodist), two newspapers (the Nugget and the Epitaph), schools, lodges, and lending libraries. Schieffelin Hall, a large adobe building, provided a stage for plays, operas, reviews, and all the respectable stage shows. The Bird Cage on Allen Street provided the stage for the disreptuable ones.

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The town developed a split personality: on the one hand, respectable, Godfearing folk trying to make a decent life for themselves, on the other, a flashy, hurdy-gurdy town full of shady ladies and tin horn gamblers who catered to the wants of the miners and cowhands. In back of the demimonde lurked a criminal organization that would take a Presidential proclamation and the threat of martial law to dislodge.

Tombstone's unique situation was the cause of the trouble. In the beginning it was part of Pima County, whose seat, Tucson, was hard miles away. further away the territorial capital was in Prescott, and in the governor's chair. John Charles Fremont. Sometime since the Pathfinder had begun to lose his way, and he reacted to his gubernatorial appointment by sulking because it was not a cabinet post. And so the territory was run by the Democratic machine which, in those robust days, was engagingly corrupt. In 1881 the southeast corner of Pima County was erected into Cochise County with its seat in Tombstone, and the situation in Cochise County was difficult. Not only were hard cases drawn there by the presence of large silver bars, but the town was situated near enough to the Mexican border to be the center of a large trade in stolen cattle. As the Kansas and Texas towns were tamed, the technologically unemployed gun-slingers and drovers drifted toward Tombstone where they found an agreeable climate for their kind. Following them were the frontier peace officers: the Earps, Virgil, Wyatt, Morgan, and Bat Masterson. They all came to Tombstone, there to work out their destiny.

The head of the rustlers was N.H. (Old Man) Clanton; he was ably seconded by his sons Ike, Phin, and Billy. They had a "ranch" near Lewis Springs. The Sulphur Springs Valley was the site of the McLowry brothers, also of a rustling persuasion. The two groups controlled the water holes for miles around. What cattle they did not run up from Mexico, they lifted from their neighbors. Their lieutenants were the likes of Curly Bill Brocius and Johnny Ringo, and only the strongest cattle men, like Henry Hooker and John Slaughter, could hold out against them.

In the summer of 1879 the first ore shipments came out of the mill; in the fall the first of the Wells, Fargo stagecoaches was robbed. The contest was on. The rustlers-cum-road agents struck and retired to their ranches, untouchable, charged Wyatt Earp, because they were protected by the corrupt Cochise County Sheriff John Behan. The evidence seems to bear out the charge. Few road agents

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were ever arrested, even when they had been recognized, and those few unaccountably escaped custody. By this time Old Man Clanton was dead, killed in retaliation for a cattle raid into Mexico, and his place as chieftan was taken by Curly Bill Brocius, who had killed Tom White, Tombstone's first town marshal. Soon the criminals determined to dominate Tombstone as they did the surrounding country-side, not just "tree the town" as the miners and cowhands were wont to do, but to own it. Between them and their objective stood two men, U.S. Deputy Marhsal Wyatt Earp and his brother Virgil, the town marshal. Honest men banded into a vigilante group, the Citizens Committee of Safety, and backed the play of the Earps.

Political and economic factors brought about the enmity between the two groups; personal hatred brought on the gunfight. On the 25th of October, 1881, Ike Clanton rode into town, got gloriously drunk, and as he went from bar to bar, threatened to kill the Earps and their friend, Doc Holliday, the consumptive Georgia dentist with the ambiguous reputation. The next morning he was joined by his brothers Billy and Frank, Tom McLowry, and Billy Claiborn. Tension rose in the town.

It was just after two o'clock when Wyatt, Virgil, and Morgan Earp stepped out of Hafford's Saloon on the northeast corner of Fourth and Allen Streets to arrest the Clantons and their friends (for carrying arms within the town limits). As they walked toward the OK Corral they were joined by Doc Holliday "indignant at the thought that they had meant to leave him behind." The corral offices were on Allen Street between Third and Fourth, but the lot ran through to Fremont Street on the north. It was in the open lot between Fly's Photo Studio and the Harwood House where the rustlers waited. Sheriff Behan met the lawmen midway to announce that he had disarmed the boys. After finding that he had not arrested the men, the Earps and Holliday brushed him aside and continued down 'Fremont Street. As they passed Fly's Studio they turned left into the yard and confronted the five men. What happened next took only between thirty and sixty seconds. Seventeen shots were fired on each side. When the smoke cleared, Frank and Tom McLowry and Billy Clanton were dead. Virgil and Morgan Earp were wounded and Doc Holliday was creased along the back.

John Myers Myers, <u>The Last Chance: Tombstone's Early Years</u>, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1950), p. 158.

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The gun fight was not the catharsis it is usually portrayed as being, but gasoline on the fire. Only a prompt show of force by the vigilantes prevented the lid from blowing off the town then and there. When Judge Wells Spicer exonerated the Earps and Holliday of murder, the rustlers were determined to get them anyway. The reign of terror increased. Mayor John Clum, editor of the Epitaph and a strong supporter of the Earps, survived an assassination attempt by luck and quick thinking. Murders on the streets of town and stagecoach robberies increased. Because Virgil's arm was permanently disabled by his wound, another town marshal was appointed, and the Earp faction lost important official power because Wyatt's jurisdiction as a U. S. marshal applied only to federal cases.

After Fremont's resignation, Acting Governor John J. Gosper moved against lawlessness in Cochise County by appointing Wyatt Earp to do the job Sheriff Behan would not -- drive out the bandits. In retaliation Behan re-opened the OK Corral case.

On the 19th of March, 1882, Morgan Earp was shot in the back as he played pool in Hatch's Saloon. While Wyatt and the youngest brother Warren were escorting Virgil and his wife to Tucson, Wyatt shot and killed Frank Stilwell, one of the rustlers. Because he knew the conditions in Tombstone, Sheriff Paul did not issue warrents for the Earps, but Sheriff Behan deputized Curly Bill Brocius and the other gun-slingers of the rustler faction to arrest the Earps or shoot them on sight. The county, territory, and finally the Nation were treated to the spectacle of the U. S. posse and the county posse stalking each other across the badlands, Wyatt with federal warrants for the arrest of the sheriff's men, Behan with no legal justification at all. After Wyatt killed Curly Bill at an ambush at Iron Springs designed to net the U.S. marshal, the rustlers, deprived ther of their leader, fled to Mexico. The surviving Earps went north into Colorado to await extradition to Pima County.

The new territorial governor, F.A. Trittle, had hardly taken his post when the murder of Morgan Earp blew the lid off Tombstone for once and all. On investigation, he sent an urgent appeal to President Chester Arthur asking for funds to set up a territorial police to deal with the situation. Arthur went him one better and in a special message to both houses of Congress (April 26, 1882) suggested using the Army instead. On the third of May Arthur's Presidential Proclamation threatened martial law by May 15 unless the situation was corrected. Tombstone was shocked by the national publicity.

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Governor Trittle and Pima County Sheriff Paul informed Governor Pitkin of Colorado that they could not guarantee the safety of the Earps, and Pitkin refused extradition. That ended it for the Earps. Wyatt followed the frontier wherever it went, retiring to Los Angeles where he died in bed in 1929. In all his career he had never been wounded.

In July Johnny Ringo, the last outlaw leader, was killed near Turkey Creek. There were still plenty of penny-ante badmen around, enough to make "Texas John" Slaughter's career as Cochise County Sheriff famous (1888-1892), but the reign of terror was over. With federal interest aroused, Sheriff Behan did not run for re-election; the machine found him a job anyway -- assistant warden at the Yuma Territorial Prison. He was later promoted to warden.

Tombstone settled down to respectable prosperity. Two fires (June 22, 1881, and May 25, 1882) had wiped out most of the business district. It was promptly rebuilt, and the good times lasted through 1883. By 1884 the price of silver led the mine owners to attempt to reduce wages from \$4.00 a day to \$3.50. The union struck, and violence at the mines brought what outlawry had never brought-troops from Fort Huachuca.

In 1886 water filled the mines, and despite attempts to pump, the mines were closed. Two-thirds of the population left the town. Two brief flurries of prosperity occurred, one in 1890 and one in 1902, but they did not last. In 1929 (the same year Wyatt Earp died in Los Angeles), the county seat was moved to Bisbee, and Tombstone lost its last reason for being, but the town proved "too tough to die." It pulled itself together, began restoration and rebuilding, and found a new life as a tourist attraction. In 1961 it was declared a National Historic Landmark and today illustrates much of the flavor and vitality of the old west.

As one of its historians, John Myers Myers, has written, "The great thing about Tombstone was not that there was silver in the veins of the adjacent hills, but that life flowed hotly and strongly in the veins of the people."2

^{2.} Ibid., p. 243.

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The National Historic Landmark boundary for Tombstone, Arizona, is Approximately the same as that of the proposed Schieffelin Historic District. Boot Hill is not included in the boundary beaause of its lack of historic integrity.

Beginning at a point 180' southwest of the southwest corner of Third and Toughnut Streets (behind the former Cochise County Courthouse) proceed in a northeasterly direction to the southern curb of Safford Street, thence southemsterly 1,300', more or less, along the said curb to a point, thence southwesterly 1,020', more or less, to a point, thence in a northwesterly direction 1,300', more or less, to the point of origin.