

0079

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

RECEIVED  
JAN 27 1994  
NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Benson Railroad Historic District  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 200 & 300 Blocks, East 3rd Street  not for publication  
city, town Benson  vicinity  
state Arizona code AZ county Cochise code 003 zip code 85602

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>11</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>11</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

James G. ... ATSIPO  
Signature of certifying official Date 1/6/94

ARIZONA STATE PARKS  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Paul R. ... 3/11/94  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic - single dwelling &  
Hotel & Row house or Commercial

Domestic - single dwelling &  
Other (vacant)

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival  
No style  
Queen Anne

foundation wood  
walls wood  
roof wd, shingle, metal, comp, shingle  
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**SUMMARY**

The Benson Railroad Historic District is located in Benson, Arizona, north of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks on East 3rd Street. Located across from the vacant site of the former passenger and freight depot, the district is comprised of eleven buildings and five outbuildings. Platted in a rectangular grid, it includes all of Block 13 and the west 125 feet of Block 12 in the Town of Benson. Bounded by East 3rd Street to the south, North Huachuca Street to the west and an alley to the north, ten of the buildings occupy sixteen 25 x 150 ft. lots. Most of the buildings in Block 13 are owned by a single owner and are currently rentals or unoccupied. The eleventh building is located east of North San Pedro Street in Block 12. The district is comprised of five vernacular frame houses, one vernacular adobe building, three Colonial Revival Style frame buildings, one Queen Anne Style house and one isolated commercial building. There are five noncontributing outbuildings (see text). The condition of the contributing buildings ranges from good to poor. Owing to very few alterations, the historic integrity is excellent.

**DESCRIPTION OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

**Vernacular Frame:**

These small, early frame dwellings reflect the influence of the railroad, which came to Benson in 1880. The railroad brought imported materials and an influx of people with American mainstream architectural traditions, especially lightweight, wood frame construction techniques. The introduction of dimension lumber, especially redwood which was shipped by rail from California, contributed greatly to Benson's building boom. The use of redwood as a structural and finish material was widespread. The original modest sized, one-story, townsite buildings in Benson were constructed of dimension lumber with wood siding. There are three primary house forms which represent the vernacular frame dwelling in Benson: the front gabled shotgun (a dwelling one room wide), the side-gabled hall and parlor, and the front-facing "L" (see illustration).

The Benson Railroad Historic District has five examples of these early vernacular frame dwellings. There are two examples of the front-gabled shotgun. One is located

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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at 223 East 3rd Street and features V-groove siding, an elongated shotgun plan and a small, brick, shed-roofed addition to the east. The other front-gabled dwelling is located at 267 East 3rd Street. This house has board and batten siding and a full width, shed roofed porch supported on slender wooden columns. A small side-gabled dwelling with a shed extension on the north is located between 267 East 3rd Street and 285 East 3rd Street. Due to neglect and weatherization, its condition has greatly deteriorated, yet it serves as an important contributor to the Benson Railroad Historic District. Examples of "L" shaped vernacular frame dwellings can be found at 235 and 241 East 3rd Street. With medium sloped gable roofs and board and batten siding, both dwellings have had additions in the corner of the "L."

### Vernacular Adobe:

Vernacular adobe houses did not appear in Benson until 1886 with the construction of a commercial adobe block factory on the northwest corner of 4th and San Pedro Streets. The small vernacular adobe dwellings reflected northern Mexican typologies in which there was commonly little or no front setback and buildings were often built across the full width of the lot. There was very little adobe construction in Benson probably due to a local expansive soil problem which causes differential settlement in heavier structures.

An example of the vernacular adobe in the Benson Railroad Historic District is a gabled adobe building along the alley immediately east of the Arnold Hotel. This was used as a carriage house and features large wooden doors and a wooden shed addition to the east. Although its historic integrity is good, the building is in very poor condition due to differential settlement.

### Queen Anne Style:

The Queen Anne Revival Style was introduced to Benson prior to 1900. Queen Anne, an eclectic style in England, was a term used to describe buildings that were inspired by transitional architecture of the pre-Georgian period when classical ornament was grafted onto buildings of medieval form. The success of the Queen Anne Style in America dates from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, where it was considered to be a very adaptable style for use in this country. A Queen Anne Style house can be identified by a steeply pitched roof of irregular shape, a dominant front-facing gable, patterned shingles, cutaway bay windows and other devices used to create a textured-walled appearance. A partial or full width porch, which is usually one story high along one or both side walls, is common.

An example of the Queen Anne Style in the Benson Railroad Historic District is the Roadmaster's house at 305 East 3rd Street. Basically rectangular in plan, there is a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   7   Page   3  

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broad, projecting bay to the south. The roof plan and shape is cross gable, jerkinhead. Originally, a veranda, which has been removed, wrapped around the east, south and west facades. The sheathing is wood tongue-and-groove. The entry is currently through a small, shed-roofed porch. The original corbelled brick chimney is still in place, as is an early picket fence. There are three noncontributing outbuildings to the north of the Roadmaster's house. A nonhistoric corrugated metal shop is located on the northeast corner of the property. The other two structures, of stuccoed frame, do not date back to the railroad era.

### Colonial Revival Style:

Around the turn of the century the Colonial Revival Style was a very popular housing style in southeastern Arizona from Patagonia to Willcox. Replacing the more elaborate Queen Anne Style, the Colonial Revival was popularized in this country following the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The greatest number of Benson's historic houses are of the Colonial Revival Style and most were constructed between 1898 and 1910 when Benson was still a major railroad junction. The style was also popular in early duplex construction, where two front-gabled shotgun houses could be joined at the property line under one pyramidal roof to form an economical house form. Although elsewhere the preferred material for the Colonial Revival Style was masonry, in Benson, wood frame construction was common, with adobe used occasionally. In general, Colonial Revival houses are symmetrical, and have square plans and pyramidal or gabled roofs. Accentuation of the entry is common, either with a decorative crown or in the form of a porch supported by slender columns. Doors commonly have overhead fanlights or sidelights. Facades normally have symmetrically balanced windows and a central door. Windows with double-hung sashes are common and usually have multi-pane glazing in one or both sashes. Windows are often found in adjacent pairs.

One example of the Colonial Revival Style in the Benson Railroad Historic District is the house at 201 East 3rd Street which features a sloped pyramidal roof, the original "V" groove wood siding, boxed eaves and one-over-one light double hung windows. The corrugated metal clad shed to the rear is a noncontributor.

Another Colonial Revival Style dwelling with unique characteristics is the double roofed house at 285 E. 3rd Street. This frame house with symmetrical massing and a three sided wrap-around veranda may have been a typical Colonial Revival Style dwelling when first built. After a rear addition was constructed, the entire house was overroofed by a second large gable roof to improve insulation. Although the use of a double roof in Arizona is well documented from Yuma to Phoenix, this dwelling represents the largest known example in Arizona.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

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The most noteworthy example of the Colonial Revival Style in the Benson Railroad Historic District is the Arnold Hotel at 253 East 3rd Street. This one-story, redwood frame building is one of the largest historic buildings in Benson. A major feature is the full, four sided veranda which is integrated into the main hipped roof and supported on redwood columns. The main entry is from the porch. The exterior is sheathed with horizontal redwood siding, and the roof, which was once wood shingled, is covered with galvanized metal. Windows are original and double-hung. Much of the porch and the exterior wood siding has deteriorated. A portion of the original frame front porch has been replaced with concrete. The weight of this concrete may be causing the building to undergo serious differential settlement. Aside from this settlement problem, which can also be observed inside, the interior of the hotel is generally in fair condition. The original tongue-and-groove varnished redwood wall paneling is in good condition. There is a noncontributing redwood storage shed to the north of the Arnold Hotel.

### Isolated Commercial:

There was a strong relationship between the former freight and passenger depot and nearby commercial structures, which were universally railroad related until 1910. Some isolated commercial buildings, which were not part of Benson's commercial strip, related instead to nearby residential neighborhoods. One such example in the Railroad District is on the corner of North San Pedro Street and the alley to the north. This is a unique and unusual brick row building constructed around the turn of the century, probably when Benson promoted its "brick and clay molding factory". The building features segmented arches three courses above the openings, articulated sills and lintels, and two-over-two light double hung windows. Although no information has been found regarding the building's original function, it was probably used for offices and perhaps a small store, based upon its placement along the property line with no setback. The north portion of the building appears to be older than the south portion. The building's condition is poor, largely due to differential settlement, but its historic integrity is excellent.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES - BENSON RAILROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT:

East 3rd Street:

		DATE
201	Colonial Revival Style	1893-1910
223	vernacular frame	1880-1890s
235	vernacular frame	1880-1890s
241	vernacular frame	1880-1890s
253 (Hotel Arnold)	Colonial Revival Style	1879 or 1880
*East 3rd Street at alley (carriage house)	vernacular adobe	1886-1910
267	vernacular frame	1880-1890s
*East 3rd Street (side gabled dwelling)	vernacular frame	1880-1890s
285 (double roofed house)	Colonial Revival Style	1880
305	Queen Anne Style	1880-1910

North San Pedro:

\*North San Pedro at alley (row house)      isolated commercial      + - 1900

(There are five noncontributing outbuildings.)

\*Addresses unknown

Note: Builders for all properties are unknown.

**B. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1880-1910  
\_\_\_\_\_

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

NA  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

**SUMMARY**

In reflecting its economic, social, political, and cultural institutions, Benson's architecture mirrors its role as a secondary transportation and trade center for western Cochise County. Benson's architectural development reflects its early history as a railroad town and a hub city for three major railroads. The railroad era, from 1880 to 1910, influenced Benson's architectural character for thirty years.

Benson grew rapidly in the 1880s following the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad and the introduction of regular train service. It was the only town in the area with transcontinental connections. The railroad is considered to have been directly responsible for the town's economic growth in three important ways. First, Benson served as the passenger clearing house for southeastern Arizona, where passengers could take stage coaches directly to Tombstone or other regional towns. Second, employment and trade for Benson were produced by the mining operations in the towns of Clifton and Bisbee and the mining districts in the Galliuero and Rincon mountains. Mining products were sent via wagon train to Benson, where they were shipped by rail. Third, Benson became a "hub city" with the arrival of two additional railroads, the New Mexico and Arizona Railroad in 1882 and the Arizona Southeastern Railroad Company in 1894. The Arizona Southeastern Railroad Company, financed by the Copper Queen Consolidated Mining Company in Bisbee in 1888, was constructed to ship freight to the Southern Pacific connection at Benson. At this time Benson was unique as the only point in Arizona served by three independent railroad lines (see map).

The railroad traffic created a need for retail trades and services, hotels, saloons, livery stables, merchandising establishments, restaurants and housing, as the population grew fourfold from approximately 300 people in 1880 to 1,200 people in 1910. Railroad related buildings included a large, wood frame railroad station and Wells Fargo express office, and an eight-stall, wood frame roundhouse. The development which comprised the Benson Railroad Historic District was immediately

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

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north of the railroad tracks and the original railroad passenger and freight depot. It provided housing and a hotel to accommodate the increased demand for lodging. The thirty-year railroad era ended in 1910 when the Southern Pacific Railroad opened a direct line from Tucson to Nogales. This caused a significant, negative impact on business interests in Benson since passengers and freight no longer had to travel through Benson to reach Mexico. In addition, the former Arizona Southeastern Railroad Company, having been incorporated into the El Paso and Southwestern Railroad Company in 1901, also changed its route leaving Benson with only one railroad and a great decrease in traffic. This decline in the importance of the railroad in Benson greatly diminished construction activities.

Located near the former freight and passenger depot (which was later relocated, then destroyed by an arsonist), the association of the buildings in the district with the railroad was strong. Built during the railroad era between 1880 and 1910, some of the buildings are in their original locations and some are believed by local residents to have been relocated. The use of dimension lumber (mostly redwood), brought by the railroad, was extensive. The lightweight, wood frame construction technology employed was an American, mainstream tradition.

Among the most significant buildings in the district are the Roadmaster's house (305 E. 3rd Street), the double-roofed house (285 E. 3rd Street) and the Arnold Hotel (253 E. 3rd Street). The Roadmaster's house is the only remaining example of a large Queen Anne Style house in Benson. Strongly associated with the railroad, this residence is one of Benson's most significant buildings. The roadmaster's role was the repair and maintenance of the railroad tracks and right-of-way. The dwelling at 285 East 3rd Street is the largest known example of a double-roofed house in Arizona, and it is a unique example of the Colonial Revival Style. The Colonial Revival Style Arnold Hotel was built around 1879 to accommodate railroad employees, passengers, commercial travelers and salespeople, who were conducting business in Benson. Built by a retired engineer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Arnold A. McGinnis, the building has been owned by the Matt Lee family since 1917. Currently unoccupied, the building operated as a hotel until around 1935. The north section of the hotel, which was used for dining, was separated from the sleeping quarters by a porch. The hotel offered bathing with hot and cold running water from its own artesian well and storage tank. According to the owner's son, this was the first artesian well in Benson. Although in generally poor condition, the hotel contributes to the Benson Railroad Historic District due to its Colonial Revival Style and its role in Benson's railroad history. The Arnold Hotel represents the peak of the influence of the railroad in Benson.

While some of the buildings in the Benson Railroad Historic District are in good condition, the majority are in poor condition. Since very few alterations have been made, the historic architectural integrity is generally excellent. The residential district has remained intact to this day because, unlike its East 4th Street commercial



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

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counterpart on the south side of the railroad tracks, economic pressures did not force major changes.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- Garrison, James. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office. "The Architecture of Benson, Arizona," a survey report, 1991.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee, *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989.
- Myrick, David F. *Railroads of Arizona, Vol. 1. The Southern Roads*. Howell-North Books, Berkeley, 1975.
- Poppeliers, John C., Chambers, S. Allen, and Schwartz, Nancy B. *What Style Is It?* Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1983.
- Whiffen, Marcus. *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1969.

See continuation sheet

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:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: S. Pedro Arts & Hist. Soc. Museum, Benson & Az. Hist. Soc. Library, Tucson

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 1.81 acres

UTM References

A 12 51661590 315371120  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 12 5164730 3137040

B 12 5161740 31537060  
 Zone Easting Northing

D 12 5161580 31537080

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries are lots 1-16, Blk. 13 and lots 1-5, Blk 12, Benson. See accompanying Historic Resource Map.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See accompanying Historic Resource Map

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Janet S. Gibson (Associate) & Janet H. Strittmatter (Partner)

organization Johns & Strittmatter Inc. date August 16, 1993

street & number 2960 N. Swan, #217 telephone (602) 325-2591

city or town Tucson state Arizona zip code 85712

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Photos Page 1

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THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS THE SAME FOR ALL PHOTOGRAPHS  
ACCOMPANYING THIS NOMINATION:

- 2). Benson, Arizona
- 3). Janet Gibson
- 5). Johns & Strittmatter

INFORMATION FOR INDIVIDUAL PHOTOGRAPHS:

- 1). 235 and 241 East 3rd Street, Benson Railroad Historic District
- 4). March 5, 1992
- 6). Streetscape, view facing northeast
- 7). #1

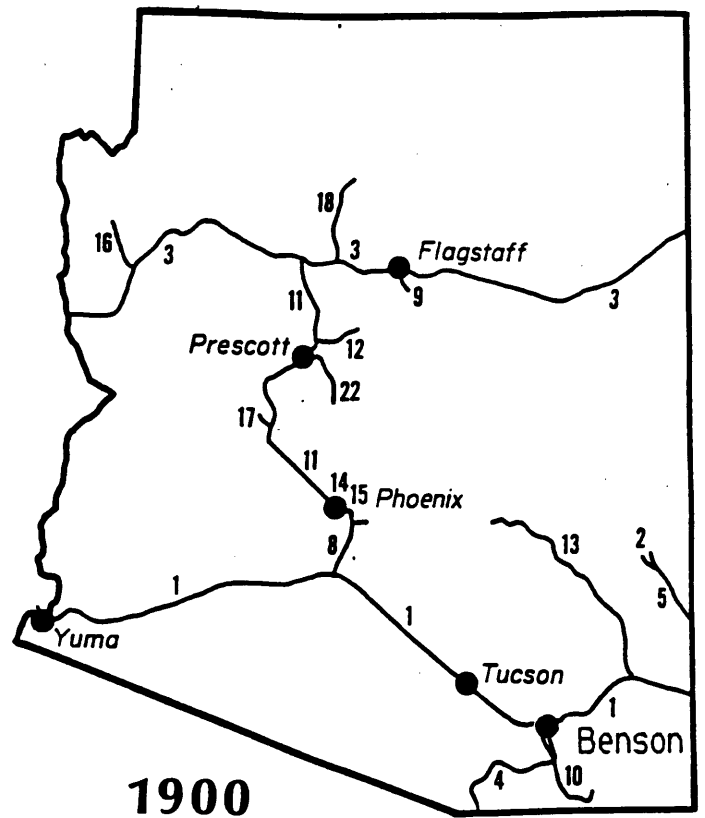
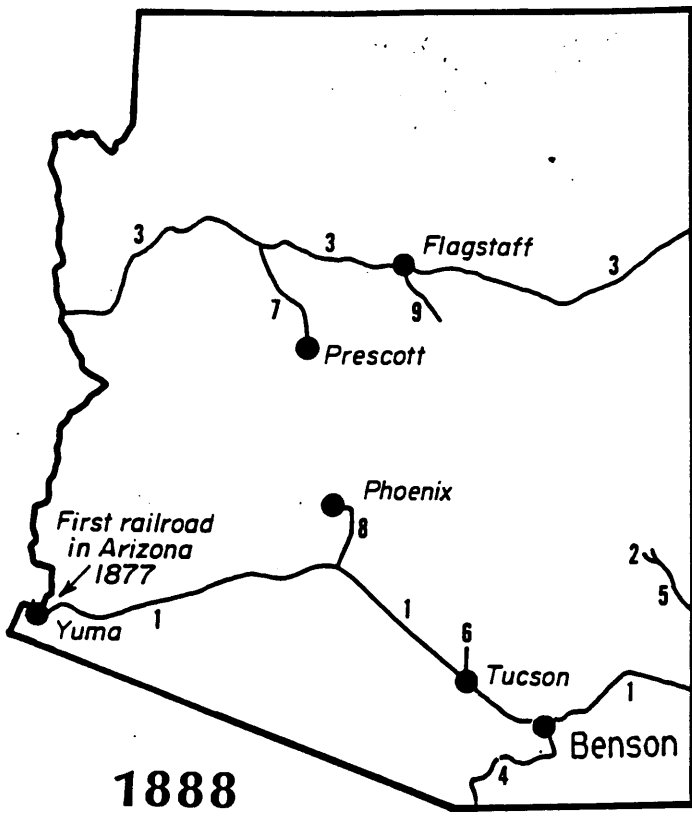
- 1). Double roofed house and brick row building, Benson Railroad Historic District
- 4). March 5, 1992
- 6). Streetscape, view facing northwest
- 7). #2

- 1). Roadmaster's House, Benson Railroad Historic District
- 4). March 5, 1992
- 6). View facing northeast, of west facade
- 7). #3

- 1). Arnold Hotel, Benson Railroad Historic District
- 4). March 5, 1992
- 6). View facing north, of main facade
- 7). #4

- 1). 201 East Third Street, Benson Railroad Historic District
- 4). April 3, 1992
- 6). Front view, facing north, of main facade
- 7). #5

- 1). 241 East Third Street, Benson Railroad Historic District
- 4). April 3, 1992
- 6). Front view facing north, of main facade
- 7). #6



### Legend

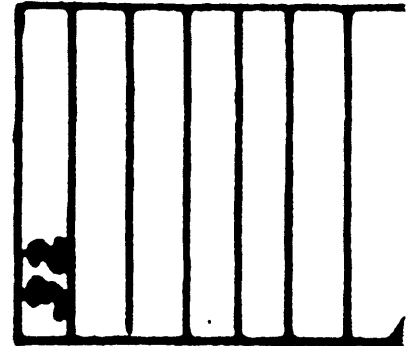
- 1 Southern Pacific
- 4 New Mexico & Arizona
- 10 Arizona Southeastern

# RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT

HUACAYUCA ST.



SAN PEDRO



THIRD ST.



120



175

FOURTH ST.



Benson Railroad Historic District  
Benson, Arizona



Photographic Views

☆ ADDRESS UNKNOWN

HUACHUCA ST.

SAN PEDRO



THIRD ST.

120'



175'

FOURTH ST.



Benson Railroad Historic District  
Benson, Arizona



Photographic Views



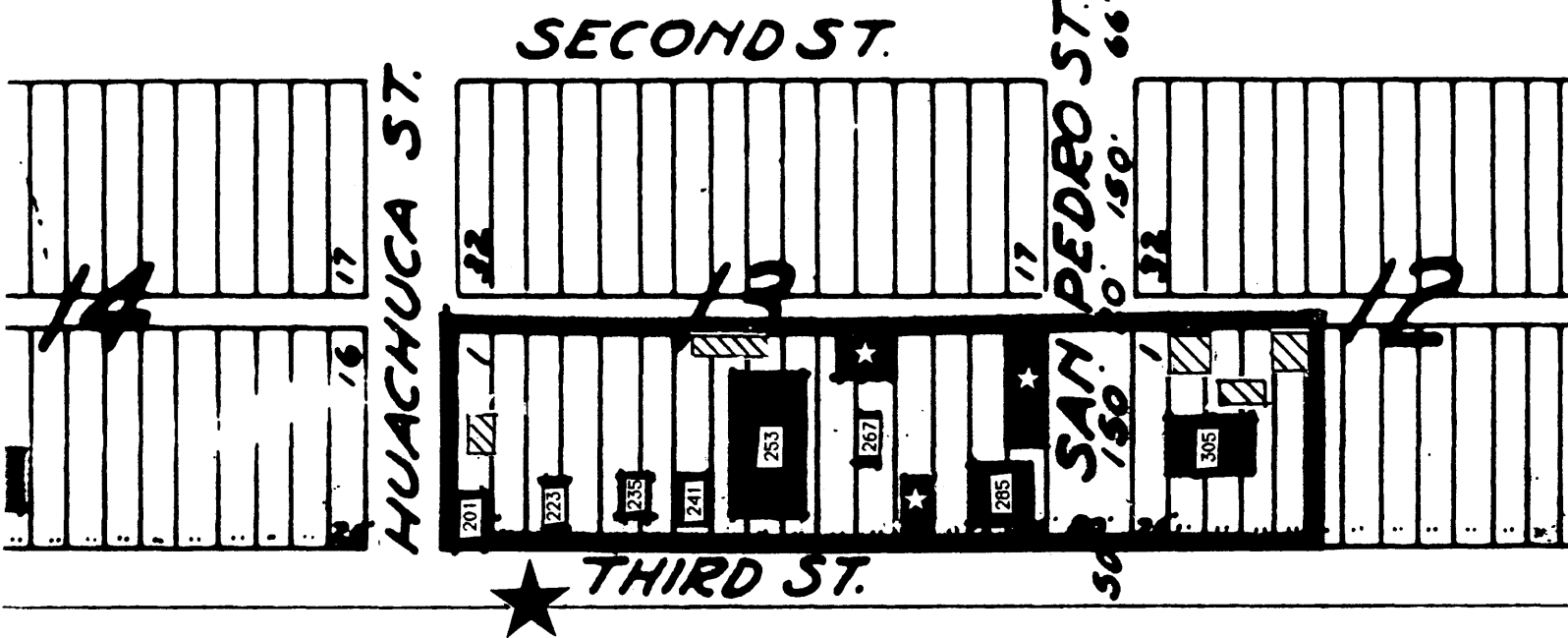
Contributing



Noncontributing

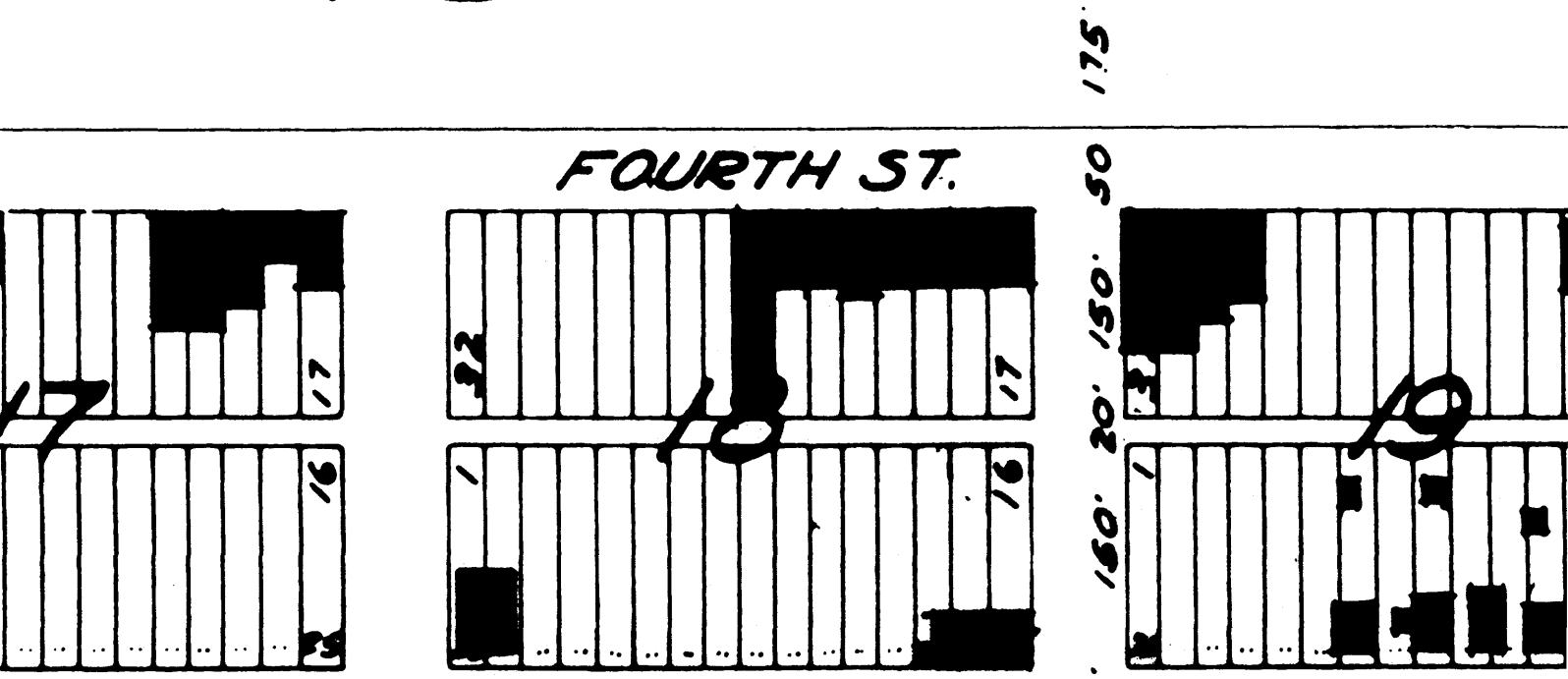


ADDRESS UNKNOWN



RIGHT-OF-WAY

120'



★ Benson Railroad Historic District  
Benson, Arizona

■ Contributing      ▨ Noncontributing

☆ ADDRESS UNKNOWN

