

# NYE COUNTY HISTORIC PROPERTY SURVEY

**PROPERTY NAME:**

<i>Historic</i> Tonopah Volunteer Firehouse and Gymnasium
<i>Common</i>

**LOCATION:**

<i>Street Address</i> Corner of Brougher and Burro Streets	
<i>City</i> Tonopah	<i>County</i> Nye

**CURRENT OWNER:**

<i>Name</i> Board of County Commissioners		
<i>Street Address</i> Nye County Courthouse		
<i>City</i> Tonopah	<i>State</i> Nv.	<i>Zip</i> 89049

**FORM PREPARED BY:**

<i>Name</i> Janus Associates	<i>Date</i> Sept. 1980
<i>Street Address</i> 2121 S. Priest Suite 127	<i>Phone</i> 967-7117
<i>City</i> Tempe	<i>State</i> Arizona
	<i>Zip</i> 85282

**PROPERTY INFORMATION:**

<i>Historic Use</i> Firehouse and Gymnasium	
<i>Current Use</i> Residential/vacant	<i>Acreage</i> less/one
<i>Architect/Builder</i> E.E. Baker contractor for firehouse	
<i>Construction/Modification Dates</i> Firehouse, 1907- Gymnasium 1908 Remodeled	

c. 1920

<i>Township/Range/Section</i>	<i>Inventory No.</i> TON-139
<i>Quad/County Map</i>	<i>Classification</i> Building

**CURRENT BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPH**



<i>Photo By</i> Jim Woodward	<i>Date</i> July 1980
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<i>View</i> Looking south east at main facade
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**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:**

The Tonopah Volunteer Firehouse and Gymnasium is a combination of two metal clad structures built on a small rise at the foot of Brougher Avenue. Both buildings share a common wall and have similar false front facades, although built to different heights. The firehouse, constructed in 1907, is a two story structure with a pitched roof behind a high metal facade. It measures 35' wide by 50' deep and is covered with horizontal sheets of corrugated iron. The metal facade features a simple cornice with console-like end pieces, and contains three evenly located double hung windows on the second floor and two double door vehicle openings on ground level. An additional central doorway separates the two large openings. Extending from the front of the building is an early hipped porch supported by three wood posts. Windows at both levels along the side wall are evenly located two over two double hung sash with plain wood casings. The adjacent gymnasium is a combination of one and two story masses measuring 70' in overall depth and 30' wide. Its false front metal facade also features a cornice articulated by simple consoles at each end. A small central independent entry extends from the facade and is flanked on either side by two double hung windows. The front portion of the building is a single story while the gymnasium proper is a taller, one and a half story structure. Both are covered with independent pitched metal roofs. Original clerestory window openings at the eaves provide light into the building. All exterior architectural features remain intact and the buildings are in sound condition.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Tonopah Volunteer Firehouse and Gymnasium is significant for both its historical association with the development of local public services, and its architectural value and method of construction. A volunteer fire department had been organized in the beginning years of Tonopah's development, but the town's first major fire in May, 1904 proved the ineffectiveness of the department. Contributing factors were disorganization and lack of better water facilities, equipment and central location. Three fire commissioners were appointed in 1905 but had little success in their efforts to address the fire protection of the community. Finally in 1907 the county commissioners appointed a fire chief to coordinate the volunteer department. Equipment was purchased and this firehouse was built near the center of town. A year later the fire department petitioned the community for contributions in order to erect a gymnasium adjacent to the firehouse. With the assistance of donations and volunteer labor and materials, the substantial structure was completed by the end of 1908. Although the gymnasium is not directly associated with fire-fighting, it shows the degree of local support in what was (despite county control) still a community volunteer organization. Despite the addition of paid members of the department and new facilities and equipment, adequate fire protection in Tonopah was never obtained. Major fires in 1908 and 1912 continued to cause heavy losses to the business district. In 1920 a fire at the firehouse damaged the superstructure and exterior of the wood frame building. It was remodeled to its present condition with complete exterior metal siding and details. Today the combined structure is the largest of three remaining, all-metal public buildings in Tonopah and retains the highest degree of architectural integrity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Elliott, Russell R., Nevadas Twentieth Century Mining Boom U of N Press, Reno, 1966  
Tonopah Bonanza, 1907, 1908

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

A portion of the Burro Mining Claim at the intersection of Burro and Brougher Avenues including the building only

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPH

*Photo By*

Jim Woodward

*View*

Main Facade

*Date*

July 1980

