

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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

Phelps Dodge General Office Building

AND/OR COMMON

Phelps Dodge General Office Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Copper Queen Plaza, Main Street at Brewery Gulch NOT FOR PUBLICATION 2

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Bisbee

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Arizona

04

Cochise

003

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_\_DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_PRIVATE

\_\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_PARK

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_BOTH

\_\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_OBJECT

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_NO

\_\_\_MILITARY

\_\_\_OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

Owner: City of Bisbee, Charles E. Eads,  
Mayor, 112 Naco Road

NAME

Occupant: Bisbee Council on the Arts & Humanities

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 451

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Bisbee,

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

Arizona

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Tax Assessor

STREET & NUMBER

Cochise County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Bisbee

Arizona

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

National Register

DATE

1971

FEDERAL  STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

774

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

National Register

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Washington

D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Phelps Dodge General Office Building served as headquarters for copper mining and smelting activities that proved pivotal in the company's evolution from a family-dominated partnership into a "modern" corporation which moved in step with the changing character of American business in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Moreover, the structure is the only important early Phelps Dodge office extant in the entire United States. From the mid 1850's until the late 1880's Phelps Dodge's national headquarters were situated on Cliff Street (variously at number 11 and number 21) in New York City. Afterward they were at 315 West Street for approximately 10 years and then at 99 John Street for many more years. None of the structures that housed these headquarters remain.

Phelps Dodge erected the Bisbee General Office Building in 1895. It stands at the entrance to famed Brewery Gulch and consists of a southward-facing, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed, two-story main block which measures 29 by 90 feet; a small, one-story, rectangular east wing added about 1914; and a pair of two-story, hip-roofed, octagonal bays which rise along the east and west extremes of the front facade of the main block. All four sections are constructed of red brick, and all rest on foundation walls and footings of stone carefully placed in unreinforced brick masonry. All the bricks are of sand construction, and so the building has always been painted its present red color to protect against rapid deterioration. The office roof is covered with grayish-colored corrugated iron, which replaces original standing seam galvanized iron.

All window and door openings in the office are semi-circularly arched and constructed of white-painted brick. Most windows are double-hung one-over-one wood sashes. Those on the first floor and in the bays are paired. Those on the second floor are single, except in the gable ends, where they are also paired. The east wing features mostly tripartite one-over-one sashes. All the windows have either single or multipaned round-arched transoms. All also feature stone lugsills. On the second floor a white-painted brick belt course connects each window arch.

Main entrance to the building is via a wood-and-glass double door situated in the center of the front facade under a hip-roofed shed that features a round-arched entry and shelters a stoop accessible by a set of concrete steps. Beneath the arch hangs a sign bearing the legend: "Bisbee Civic Center--Mining and Historical Museum." A similar entry admits to the rear facade, and another, minus shed, admits to the south end of the east wing. Other notable external decorative features include

(continued)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES Building: 1895-1961 BUILDER/ARCHITECT  
Subject: 1834-present Phelps Dodge

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although best known for its pioneering role in Western copper mining, Phelps Dodge is, as historian Robert G. Cleland has suggested, an even more telling symbol of overall American economic growth and development. Few enterprises spanned so significant a period of economic change or so clearly reflected the late 19th and early 20th-century economic transformations that placed the United States in the forefront of the modern industrial world.

Founded in 1834, Phelps Dodge "grew as the nation grew," says Cleland. "Its activities were not limited to one particular locality or one restricted field."<sup>1</sup> The firm's roots were in the mercantile economy that prospered along the Atlantic seaboard in the early 19th century. By the 1850's it had become a leading New York mercantile house and the largest importer of metals (primarily tin and tin plate) in the United States. Without yielding its recognized leadership in the export-import trade, Phelps Dodge then began to shift capital acquired in its commercial ventures into manufacturing, railroads, timber, and other enterprises designed to take advantage of the expanding economy of the last half of the 19th century. For example, the firm became a leading supplier of copper wire, tin cans, and other metal wares basic to the technological advances of the post-Civil War period. In the 1880's Phelps Dodge underwent a basic reorientation, embarking upon one of the initial copper mining ventures in Arizona and thereby moving into the mainstream of the new industrialized economy and helping lead the way in expansion of the Trans-Mississippi West. Then, in the 20th century the firm shifted from a family-dominated partnership to a new corporate structure in line with the managerial innovations of the period and applied the big business tenets of vertical and horizontal integration. In doing so the company confirmed its commitment to the new economic order and became an integral part of the merger or combination movement that was reshaping the structure of American business and industry.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Glass Cleland, A History of Phelps Dodge, 1834-1950 (New York, 1952), 271.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet.)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,2	603460	347890.0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the inventoried property coincides with the legal boundary of the lot on which the General Office Building is situated in Bisbee, Arizona.

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 Visit and description by George R. Adams, Director of History,

History by James B. Gardner, Historian, Historic Landmarks Project

ORGANIZATION

DATE

American Association for State and Local History

September 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1400 Eighth Avenue South

615/242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Nashville,

Tennessee 37203

## 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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brick quoins on the main block, circular vents with white-painted brick molding and keystones in the gable ends, and stepped brick cornices, also in the gable ends.

Inside, the building features walls and ceilings covered largely with painted, narrow board siding. The front doors open into an entry hall whose west wall features an original oak-and-glass post-office-type front. To the right of the entry hall, office space has been converted into a museum exhibit hall. To the left are the former mine superintendent's office and general manager's office. These have been restored to their initial architectural splendor and exhibit original golden oak woodwork. Another first-floor room houses the museum library. Upstairs are several additional rooms of various sizes. They house an oral history project, photography laboratory, exhibit workroom, and meeting room. Between 1897 and 1910 the Perfect Ashlar Lodge No. 12 F & AM met in the latter.

Phelps Dodge used the General Office Building from its completion until 1961, when Cochise County began renting it as quarters for the county welfare department and the American Red Cross. In 1970 the structure served temporarily as local quarters for the U.S. Postal Service. The following year it was conveyed to the city for use as a mining museum under the control of the Bisbee Council on the Arts and Humanities. This organization coordinated restorative activities and installed museum facilities in the building. Never significantly altered, the now-restored structure stands in the center of Bisbee's historic district as a striking monument to the growth and development of Phelps Dodge in the Southwest and the Nation.

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This pattern of growth and adaptation, so crucial to American economic development over the past 150 years, bears out Cleland's contention that in essence the history of Phelps Dodge "was part of the very warp and woof of the nation's economic life."<sup>2</sup>

As the headquarters for copper mining and smelting activities that were basic to these developments, the Phelps Dodge General Office Building is an impressive symbol of the sweeping economic transformations of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the success of Phelps Dodge in meeting those challenges and emerging as a modern industrial giant. Moreover, the building is the only important early Phelps Dodge office extant in the entire country. The two-story, red brick, gable-roofed structure was erected at the entrance to Bisbee's now-famous Brewery Gulch in 1895 by the Copper Queen Consolidated Mining Company, a division of Phelps Dodge. Utilized by the firm until 1961, and now restored, the office serves at present as a mining museum.

### History

Phelps Dodge traces its beginnings back to about 1800 and the saddle-making shop of Anson Greene Phelps in Hartford, Conn. In 1913 industrialist Andrew Carnegie cited Phelps as an example of a successful businessman who worked his way up from poverty, and indeed he did. Soon after opening his saddle-making shop, he added a general merchandise line, then expanded his entrepreneurial activities to include general import-export trade, and finally specialized after the War of 1812 in the highly profitable export of Southern cotton and import of British tin, iron, copper, and textiles, a classic trade pattern of the early 19th century. Economic historians  
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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

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Glenn Porter and Harold C. Livesay consider this kind of career an instructive example of mercantile specialization and adaptation of "the techniques of the traditional economy to the new industrial environment" in the period after 1815.<sup>3</sup>

With his trade activities expanded, Phelps formed a partnership with fellow New Englander Elisha Peck in New York in 1821. The partnership was short-lived, however, for in 1834 Phelps bought out Peck and formed a new partnership with sons-in-law William E. Dodge and Daniel James. Later Phelps brought in his son, Anson G. Phelps, Jr., (1838) and another son-in-law, James Stokes, (1853). This Phelps, Dodge, and Company partnership was the first form of the business enterprise that would become the Phelps Dodge Corporation in the early 20th century.

By the middle of the 19th century Phelps, Dodge, and Company was a highly respected and prominent New York mercantile firm and, according to Cleland, "carried on the largest business in metals of any mercantile house in the United States and probably in the world."<sup>4</sup> But the firm was eager to share as well in the growing profits from domestic manufacturing. Anson Phelps had taken the first step in the 1840's when he established the Ansonia Manufacturing Company in Naugatuck Valley, Conn., in order to insure an outlet for the copper and brass imported by his firm. After Phelps' death in 1853, the company continued to expand and took a leading role in the formation of such diverse enterprises as the Georgia Land and Lumber Company; the Lackawanna Coal and Iron Company; the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad; the American Tin Plate Company; and the American Can Company. In his history of the firm, Cleland describes its pivotal role in the economy just after the Civil War: "The company supplied the wire for the first trans-continental telegraph line in 1861, sold nearly a million dollars

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<sup>3</sup>Glenn Porter and Harold C. Livesay, Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth-Century Marketing (Baltimore, 1971), 36.

<sup>4</sup>Cleland, History of Phelps Dodge, 37.

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worth of newly invented sewing-machines to English customers, supplied tin cans for the 'coal-oil' or kerosene with which another merchant named John D. Rockefeller was beginning to light American homes; and manufactured the brass lamps in which most of the new illuminant was burned."<sup>5</sup> Looking at these developments, historian Elisha P. Douglass concludes in his study of American business that Phelps Dodge "reached its position of eminence. . . by the familiar process in nineteenth-century America whereby capital and entrepreneurial talent was transferred from mercantile to industrial enterprise."<sup>6</sup>

The most notable such transfer of talent did not come for Phelps Dodge until the 1880's, when the firm made its initial investment in Arizona copper mining, a step that eventually led to a total cessation of all the company's earlier mercantile activities and a shift of its major interests nearly three-fourths of the way across the continent. The man most responsible for this was James Douglas, a Canadian metallurgist and mining engineer and later president of Phelps Dodge's mining enterprises. Phelps Dodge executives had discussed the newly found copper sources in Arizona with the owners of the Clifton-Morenci mine, the first copper mine to be developed in the State (1877), but it was Douglas's reports on the Arizona copper mines and his enthusiasm about the potentials of the Bisbee area that convinced the company to make its initial investment in 1881. The first copper discovery in the Bisbee area had been made as early as 1875, but no claim had been made until an army scout named Jack Dunn staked one in 1877 for what later became the Copper Queen mine. The title for the mine soon passed into the hands of a group of San Francisco financiers, who began active mining in 1880 as the Copper Queen Mining Company. Douglas convinced Phelps Dodge to buy the adjoining Atlanta claim in 1881, but by 1884 it was evident that continuing conflicts over mineral rights and boundaries would hinder full exploitation of the evidently rich copper deposits. Consequently, in 1885 a merger was accomplished under the auspices of Phelps, Dodge, and Company. The newly formed Copper Queen Consolidated Mining  
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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>6</sup>Elisha P. Douglass, The Coming of Age of American Business: Three Centuries of Enterprise, 1600-1900 (Chapel Hill, 1971), 397.



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Company was, as Cleland puts it, "destined to acquire almost legendary fame in the history of American copper mining."<sup>7</sup> The formation of the mining company also signaled the further shift of Phelps Dodge away from its traditional mercantile interests and toward the new forces of industrialization and expansion.

According to a 1913 article in the Bisbee Daily Review, Phelps Dodge's Copper Queen venture "really marked the beginning of systematic, scientific and permanent development of the great Arizona copper mining enterprise."<sup>8</sup> The New York firm was indeed thorough in its new undertaking, expanding existing mining operations, authorizing intensive exploration, constructing and enlarging smelters, and purchasing other properties. When faced by the reluctance of both the Southern Pacific Railroad and the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe Railroad to construct the connecting tracks essential for economical transportation of newly mined copper, Phelps, Dodge, and Company constructed its own line. By 1924, when it finally sold out to the Southern Pacific, the company had built nearly 1,200 miles of track, with connections to three transcontinental American railroads and two major Mexican lines. Phelps Dodge's influence was fully evident in the town of Bisbee as well. Before 1885 Bisbee had been a typical rowdy Western mining camp; after Phelps Dodge moved in, it became a company town, presided over by the Phelps Dodge General Office Building, constructed in the heart of the town in 1895. The company's determination to dominate the mining area and the town became most pronounced in its opposition to labor organization and its support of the Bisbee Deportation, a notorious violation of civil liberties which received wide publicity throughout the country. On July 12, 1917, 1,186 men, reputedly members of the Industrial Workers of the World, were rounded up by the sheriff and a group of citizens, put in Phelps Dodge boxcars, hauled into the desert, and denied reentrance to the town. The power and influence of the company was never more clearly illustrated.

The focus of Phelps, Dodge, and Company on its copper mining and refining operations became even more evident in 1906, when the firm publicly ceased its trade activities after a final shipment of tin from England. Recognizing the

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<sup>7</sup>Cleland, History of Phelps Dodge, 101.

<sup>8</sup>"Copper Queen Mining," Bisbee Daily Review, 1913 Mining Edition. 23.

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potential profits from the new age of electricity, the firm focused its full attention on the Arizona copper industry, which, in the next year, took the lead in the U.S. in domestic production of the metal. In 1908, in line with the new demands placed upon the company and with the trends in business management, the partnership that had begun in 1834 came to an end, yielding to a new corporate structure established by action of the stockholders of the Copper Queen Consolidated Mining Company and three other subsidiary mining companies that had been acquired under the old partnership. The new corporation was only a holding company, but in 1917 the controlling Copper Queen Company directed an internal reorganization that resulted in the formation of an operating company, the present-day Phelps Dodge Corporation. By World War I, neither the activities nor the organization of the Phelps Dodge company resembled the original venture begun by Anson Phelps, but the new corporation did reflect the industrialization and management revolution that had swept the United States at the turn of the century, ushering the Nation into a new age of modern industrial giants.

The transformation of Phelps Dodge was not yet complete, however, for in the years after the war the company continued to adjust to the new economic pressures and undertook further vertical integration through expansion of its refining and fabrication facilities and horizontal integration through the acquisition of such former competitors as Calumet and Arizona in 1931. Ever aware of the necessity of maintaining new sources, Phelps Dodge turned to new methods for extracting copper from the remaining low grade ores, most notably in the strip mining operations at Sacramento Hill and the Lavender Pit in Arizona. By 1950, the company was considered one of the "Big Four" copper producers responsible for mining 90 percent of the United States' copper. But as copper prices declined and new sources opened up in South America and Africa, further operations at the Copper Queen became unprofitable. In 1975 the mines were closed. But the Phelps Dodge General Office Building remains, a symbol of the legendary Arizona copper mining industry and of the importance of Phelps Dodge in the growth and development of the modern American economy for almost 150 years.

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