

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

Revised

1. STATE California		2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XV-(Mining Frontier)	
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Bodie		4. APPROX. ACREAGE 500 Acres.	
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Mono County, 7 miles south of Bridgeport, via U.S. Highway 395, and 12 miles to the east of the highway.			
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) State of California, Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources.			
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)			

Bodie, in its location, setting, and total isolation, and in terms of the number of original buildings which have survived in unusually good condition, is probably the finest example of a mining ghost town in the West.

Gold was first discovered in the Mono Lake region in 1852 and placer gold was then discovered at the future site of Bodie in July, 1859, by William S. Bodey. On July 10, 1860, the Bodie Mining District was organized. In August, 1859 quartz veins were also discovered in the area, but the lack of water and the extreme difficulties of transporting supplies and equipment over the mountains and desert tended to severely restrict mining activities at Bodie for some time. From 1860 to 1877, Bodie polled only some 20 votes a year, and in 1865 the town still had only some 14 small frame and adobe houses.

In 1876-77, however, new quartz discoveries were made at the Bodie and Standard mines, touching off a great gold rush to Bodie in 1878. From a few shacks, a town of some 250 wooden buildings rapidly appeared in the desert and the population leaped to 10,000 or 12,000 persons, with the usual assortment of gambling dens, breweries, saloons, and the nightly shootings, stabbings and brawls. Bodie soon merited the title of "Shooters Town," and a "Bad Man from Bodie" was then universally recognized to be a particularly unpleasant individual. In 1879, when Bodie reached its pinnacle, its main street was over a mile long and built solidly with one and two-story frame buildings. In 1881 a 32-mile narrow gauge railroad was constructed from Mono Lake to Bodie to carry in fuel and lumber. By 1883, however, the boom was over and all but the Bodie and Standard mines closed down; these two mines finally consolidated in 1887. In 1895 Bodie had a small revival when the cyanide process of recovering gold was put in use. Mining continued intermittently up to World War II, when Bodie finally became a true ghost town.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Ella M. Cain, The Story of Bodie (San Francisco, 1956), Muriel W. Wolle, The Bonanza Trail (Bloomington, 1955), 130-134; Harold Kirker, California's Architectural Frontier (San Marino, 1960), 66; Rodman W. Paul, California Gold; The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Cambridge, 1947), 191-92, 280.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, ILABS, etc.)

None

10. PHOTOGRAPHS * (736, 819-20, 1411)		12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) State Historical Park		13. DATE OF VISIT September, 1958	
ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		IF CONDITION Excellent			
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles W. Snell <i>Charles W. Snell</i>			15. TITLE Historian		16. DATE April 10, 1964

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE California	NAME(S) OF SITE Bodie
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The total output of the combined Bodie mines from 1878 to 1941 has been estimated at \$70,000,000.

Present Appearance.

Today, Bodie is a true ghost town situated at the 8,375 foot level in high desert country near Mono Lake. Within 4 miles radius are mountain peaks of 10,000 feet elevation and only fifteen miles to the west, across a treeless bleak expanse of lake and sagebrush desert, rises the sheer wall of the Sierra Nevada.

As its peak, 1878-1883, Bodie had some 250 to 300 buildings. In July, 1892, however, a large fire destroyed most of the business section on Main Street, and only a few brick buildings escaped this destruction. The business district was rebuilt, but on a smaller scale. On June 23, 1932, a second holocaust again swept the business district; and again only the few brick buildings escaped, but this time the business section was not reconstructed. The section still stands, but on a much reduced scale.

The residential section of Bodie, including churches and schools, however, was untouched by these disasters. There are thus probably over one hundred dwellings, nearly all of wood, weathered a dust-brown color, still standing. Many still have original curtains, shades, furniture, and old newspapers still in place. There are also some 40 abandoned mines around the edge of town.

In 1956 the California State Division of Beaches and Parks began acquiring land and buildings at Bodie to preserve the mining town as a State Historical Park. Today, the State owns a considerable portion of Bodie. Rangers are on duty to protect the buildings, but utilities, such as electricity, water, and sanitary facilities, and a Visitor Center, have not yet been developed.