

STATE: Wisconsin	
COUNTY: Iowa	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 3 1973

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)



1. NAME

COMMON: Shot Tower
AND/OR HISTORIC: Congressmen to be notified:
Sen. William Proxmire
Sen. Gaylord A. Nelson
~~Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier, 2nd Cong. Dist.~~

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Tower Hill State Park
CITY OR TOWN: Spring Green vicinity
STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55 COUNTY: Iowa CODE: 049

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources
STREET AND NUMBER: 4610 University Avenue
CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Secretary of State
STREET AND NUMBER: State Capitol
CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Wisconsin Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969-72 Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: State Historical Society of Wisconsin
STREET AND NUMBER: 816 State Street
CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

STATE: Wisconsin
COUNTY: Iowa
ENTRY NUMBER: APR 3 1973
DATE: _____
FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6-11-73

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The shot tower is situated on a high sandstone cliff along the Wisconsin river. It consists of a 120-foot vertical shaft dug down through a ledge which begins about a third of the way down from the cliff top, a wood frame clapboarded tower from the ledge straight to the top of the cliff, and a frame melting house built on the top of the cliff. At the base of the cliff is a horizontal tunnel 90 feet in length, leading to the bottom and basin of the shaft. Tunnel and shaft were dug out by hand in 1831-1833, the principal tools being the lead-miner's pick and gad. Both the tunnel and shaft are about six feet in diameter. At the bottom of the shaft is a round basin of water about three feet deep.

The shaft and tunnel are of course original and are well-maintained. The wooden parts--tower and melting house were recently reconstructed, faithfully planned after the originals as shown in a sketch made in 1836 by John Wilson. Nothing remains of the other buildings associated with the shot making industry.

In the melting house, lead from the nearby lead-mining regions of southwestern Wisconsin was melted in two large kettles and "tempered with arsenic in another kettle to give it the necessary brittleness. The dropping ladle, perforated with holes of various sizes, was partly filled and then tilted gently to spill down the shaft. The drops of lead assumed a spherical shape in falling and landed in a three-foot deep basin of water, which both cooled the shot and broke the fall." From the basin the shot was collected, taken by horse-drawn vehicle to another building, sorted to size, weighed, and put into kegs for shipment.

The original melting house equipment and machinery were sold after use of the tower was discontinued in 1861, most except the buckshot machine going to people in Dodgeville. The buckshot machine was sold to a Chicago shot company. An attempt is being made to obtain authentic replacement machinery with which to furnish the reconstructed melting house.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1831-33; 1861

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The old shot tower is both unique and important in Wisconsin history. It was not only the site of the only such industry ever carried out in Wisconsin--especially important in the lead-mining era of our history--but also played an important role in the state's early commerce when it "helped to connect the western and eastern parts of Wisconsin by establishing a trade route from the west to Green Bay and Milwaukee."

It is significant too as an engineering feat, because the workmen who dug the shaft and tunnel used no sets of drawings or surveyors instruments. In digging the tunnel to meet the base of the shaft they used a line of stakes for sighting and their tunnel met the base of the shaft almost perfectly.

Shot making was an important industry for a time and at its peak six men could make about two and a half tons of shot a day. The tower's operation was intermittent throughout its history, varying with economic conditions, changes in ownership, and interruption at one time when the melting house burned and had to be rebuilt. Started in 1831 with the digging of the shaft, the shot tower's construction was interrupted by the Black Hawk War of 1832, but completed in time for the operation to begin late in 1833. It was closed for good in 1861.

The town of Helena which developed near the tower site when the industry flourished, prospered for a time and weathered the panic of 1837 which caused the temporary closing of the tower two years later. But when the village was bypassed by the railroad in the 1850's the prosperity came to an end and the settlement was abandoned after the panic of 1857. Four years later the shot making industry in Wisconsin came to its final halt. The original settlement of Helena has now disappeared, but its site within Tower Hill State Park is commemorated by a marker.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(Kleinmaier, Judith), "Lead Became Shot When It Was Dropped 180 Feet in Tower at Old Helena," Wisconsin Then and Now 17(9):4-5, April 1971

Libby, Orin Grant, "Chronicle of the Helena Shot-Tower," Wisconsin Historical Collections, 13:335-374, Madison, 1895.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY.				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	N43	09	01
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	W90	02	48
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 1.0

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Donald N. Anderson, Asst. Director, Historical Sites & Markers Division

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Society of Wisconsin DATE: July 24, 1972

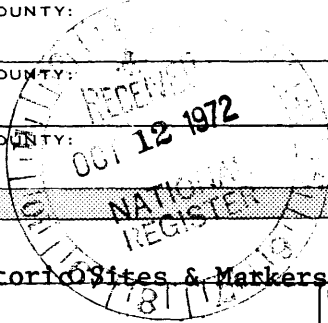
STREET AND NUMBER: 816 State Street

CITY OR TOWN: Madison STATE: Wisconsin CODE: 55

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

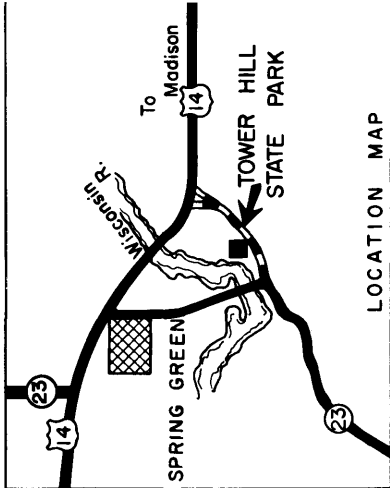
<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>James Morton Smith</u> James Morton Smith</p> <p>Title <u>Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin</u></p> <p>Date <u>OCT 16 1972</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert A. Utley</u> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>4/3/73</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>3/23/73</u></p>
--	--

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



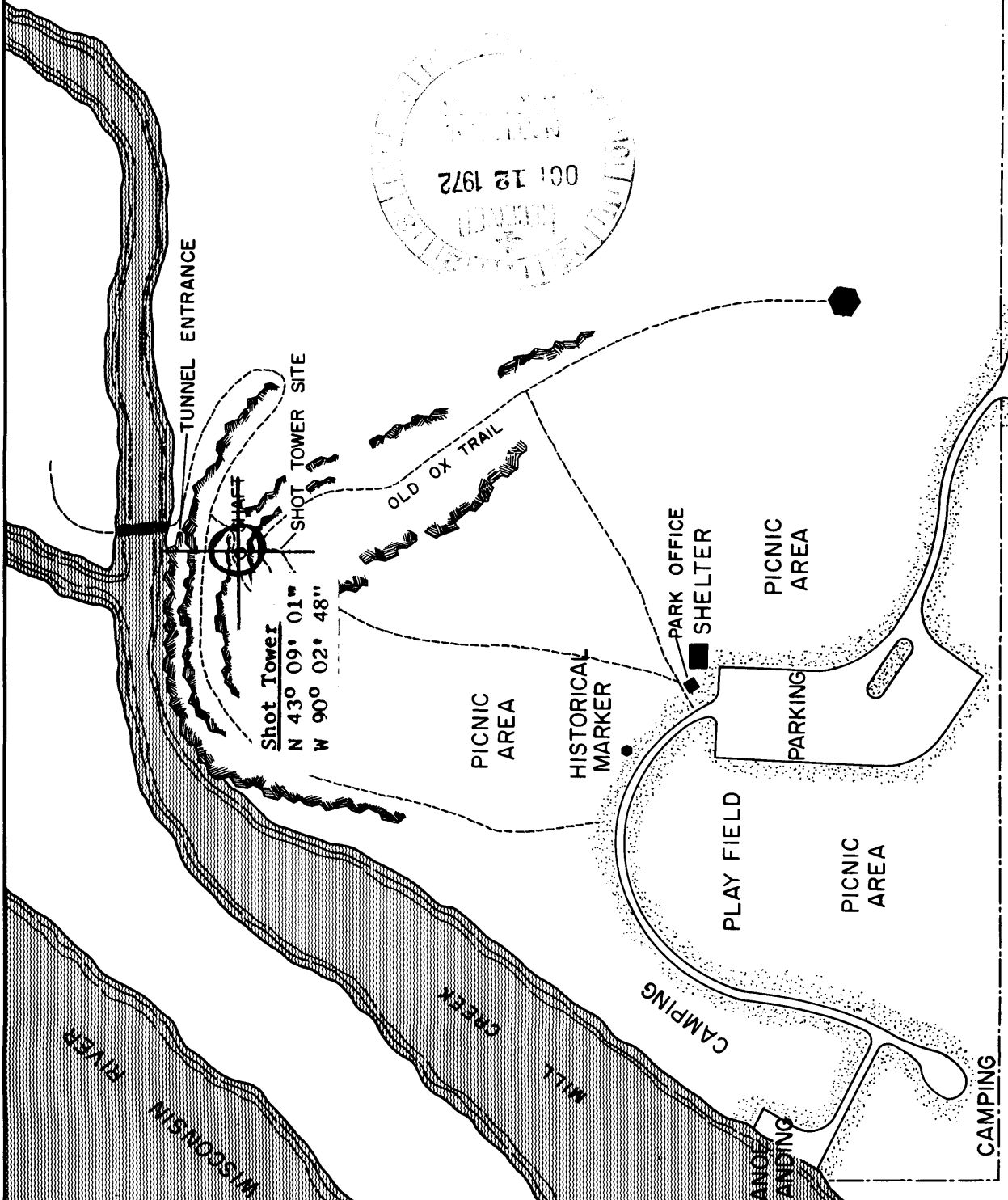
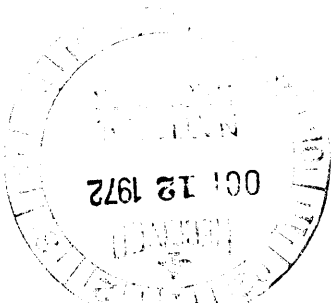
TOWER HILL State Park

Wisconsin
Department of
Natural Resources



TRAILS

ROCK LEDGES



CEMETERY