

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 66000458 Date Documentation Accepted: 3/27/91

Virginia City Historic District Storey NV  
Property Name County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Antoniotti G. Bee 3/27/91  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

**Classification:** The Number of Resources within Property should be amended to read: Under Contributing, there are 377 contributing buildings and 5 contributing structures. Under Noncontributing, there are 313 noncontributing buildings, one noncontributing site, and one noncontributing structure.

**Statement of Significance:** Under Criteria Considerations (Exceptions), "A" should be checked.

This information was confirmed with Michelle McFadden of the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

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**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration FormNATIONAL  
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 Virginia City Historic District Amendmentother names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street &amp; number

☐ not for publicationcity, town Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, Dayton☐ vicinitystate Nevadacode NVcounty Storey, Lyon

code

zip code 89440, 8942889403

## 3. Classification

## Ownership of Property

- ☒ private  
☒ public-local  
☒ public-State  
☒ public-Federal

## Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)  
☒ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

## Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>382</u>	<u>315</u> buildings
	_____ sites
	_____ structures
	_____ objects
<u>382</u>	<u>315</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Virginia City Historic DistrictNumber of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register See previous  
nomination

## 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.

Ronald M. James  
Signature of certifying official2/6/91  
DateDivision of Historic Preservation and Archeology

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:) additional documentationAntoinette Bee  
Signature of the Keeper3/27/91  
Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: business

Domestic: single dwelling/secondary structure

Industry: extractive and processing

Government: courthouse: public works

Education: school

7. Description Transportation: railroad

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: business

Domestic: single family/secondary structure

Government: courthouse

Vacant/not in use

Work in progress

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Mixed:

Late Victorian

Other: vernacular

mining & mill buildings

Late 19th Century and Early 20th Century: Bungalow

foundation Brick

walls Brick

Wood

roof Wood

other Metal

Stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### Part I

#### Preface

The intent of this nomination is to amend the Virginia City Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1961. Whereas the nomination form prepared more than twenty-five years ago described the historical significance from 1859 to 1900, this amendment extends the period of significance to 1942, a date that serves as a critical benchmark in the mining history of the Comstock. Although inventories completed in the last decade have noted the potential significance of archaeological resources in the Historic District, this amended nomination focuses on building resources and their immediate setting. It is not the purpose of this amendment to propose alterations to the existing National Register or National Landmark District boundaries (certified in 1978): USGS Quad maps delineating these boundaries and citing UTM references accompany this nomination. This amendment will not repeat, but only build, and occasionally expand, on statements made in the physical description and history and significance sections of the 1961 nomination: new information about the pre-1900 era will be introduced only if it contributes to a better understanding of the 1900-1942 period of significance or when it accommodates recent updated National Register standards and guidelines, including those that accompany the 1986 revised National Register form. "Decline and Survival: Virginia City 1880-1945" by Allan Comp and "Mining History on the Comstock" by Elizabeth Beckham, both chapters in Project 85: Virginia City, Nevada (1985), are narrative histories supporting judgements made regarding the 1900 to 1942 period of historical significance and are appended to this nomination.

#### Summary

Located on the eastern slopes of the Virginia Range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the 14,750 acre Virginia City Historic District includes the five distinct communities of Virginia City, the Divide, Gold Hill, Silver City and Dayton along with hundreds of acres of cultural landscape which, between 1859 and 1942, played an integral role in the history of mining on the Comstock. Between 1900 and 1942, a decline in the Comstock mining industry, which began in the 1880s, resulted in the further loss of buildings (due to fire, decay, demolition and removal outside the District). Late Victorian, vernacular, and industrial designs make up the majority of pre-1942 building types. In 1987, all but one small community, The Divide (comprised of the townships of both Virginia City and Gold Hill), two-thirds or more of the extant building retain integrity of overall design form and fenestration, setting, feeling, and association and contribute to a sense of time and place that recalls the multiple boom and bust cycles in mining that occurred between 1859 and 1942. A total of 382 buildings are judged contributing and 315 are noncontributing.

## 8. 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)

Industry

Commerce

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1859-1942

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Significant Person

Architect/Builder

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

Please see continuation sheet.

☒ See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please 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 # NV-10, NV-15
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # NV-1, NV-3

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 14,750

UTM References

A 

Zone	Easting	Northing
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B 

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

C 

Zone	Easting	Northing
------	---------	----------

D 

Zone	Easting	Northing
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☐ See continuation sheet

Present in 1961 and 1978 National Register nomination.

Verbal Boundary Description

Present in 1961 and 1978 National Register nominations.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Present in 1961 and 1978 National Register nominations.

☐ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By Revised by: K. Kuranda, R. Bernstein, Architectural Historians

name/title Gail Evans, Historian

organization Virginia City Limited Partnership

date January 1991

street & number P.O. Box 382

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city or town Virginia City,

state Nevada

zip code 89440

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The two, noncontiguous sections of the Virginia City Historic District encompass 14,750 acres of sparsely forested land on the arid, eastern slopes of the Virginia Range of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Mount Davidson (historically Sun Mountain), Cedar Hill, Sugarloaf Mountain, Six Mile Canyon, Devil's Gate, and American Ravine are among the more prominent natural landscape features that have served as local natural landmarks throughout the history of the Comstock. Several small, intermittent creeks flow easterly into Gold Creek whose deeply incised, narrow U-shaped canyons dominate the terrain that links the two separate districts and has served, for decades, as the avenue of evolving historical development. As Gold Creek descends to eventually traverse the southern segment of the District, the angular ruggedness of the landscape gives way to the level, pastoral flood plain of the Carson River. Although tall stands of cottonwood, visible from the southern District, demarcate the winding path of the Carson River, within the boundaries of the two Districts vegetation is relatively sparse. Pinon pine, juniper, and sagebrush are the most common native species hardy enough to withstand the arid climate and extreme variations in temperature. In the more developed areas, especially Virginia City and Dayton, the adaptability and minimal water requirements have made locust, poplar, and selected flowering shrubs the favored choices in imported plantings. Throughout the period of significance, stretching from the 1850s to 1942 and then to the present, the topography and patterns of drainage and vegetation have remained relatively constant. More than merely a backdrop against which eighty-three years of history has been played out, the physical setting (including the underlying geology) has substantially influenced patterns of Euro-American human use and development of the land (or lack of it). Similarly, the landscape in the District, both the rural and built-up sections, portrays the evolving and cyclical industrial, commercial, and social patterns relating to mining activity -- the central, significant focus of Comstock history up to 1942.

Scattered across the natural landscape of this predominantly rural historic district are countless cultural landscape features (mill tailings, mine dumps, sunken shafts, dark adit openings, cemeteries, abandoned railroad and road beds), historic structures (headframes, ore rockers, mill leaching tanks, and water tanks and flumes), and archaeological sites (the honeycomb network of underground mining tunnels, partially or totally buried mining equipment and parts of buildings, stone embankments and foundations) that provide visual testimony to the important role of mining in Comstock history up to World War II.

The greatest concentration of historic buildings today and throughout the period of significance are in the towns of Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, and Dayton. A cluster of residences, locally known as "the Divide," is situated on a small elevated plateau approximately half way between Virginia City and Gold Hill. The geographic distribution and orientation of buildings to roads in each of the four major communities makes some allowance for topographic contours. This is minimally true in Virginia City: today, as throughout history, buildings are generally located on rectangular blocks formed by an angular grid pattern of roads imposed on the steep, lower slopes of Mount Davidson. Situated on the broad flood plain of the Carson River, the setting of Dayton is far more conducive to the western tradition of right angle streets: the majority of buildings in this small portion of the District are contained within rectangular

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blocks. In both Gold Hill and Silver City, where the steep, rocky terrain of Gold Creek Canyon resists such human efforts for orderliness, the greatest concentration of buildings are arranged in a linear pattern along the winding path of the single major road (which is State Highway 341). Others front on a modified pattern of straight and curvilinear streets.

**Building Functions**

Both the density and types of building uses vary widely within the five separate and distinct communities. Virginia City has the greatest concentration of buildings. C Street (the main commercial street) and to a lesser extent B Street include two- and three-story brick commercial blocks adjoining each other or sharing a party wall in a tightly packed, nearly unbroken row that continues for approximately ten blocks. Outside the commercial core in increasingly larger concentric circles, the space between residences expands and is interrupted only by varying sizes, shapes, and ages of outbuildings. On the outer fringes of the town stand a few isolated mill and mining structures surrounded by mounds of tailings. Extant Virginia City buildings include those with a broad spectrum of uses including commercial, residential, religious, government, social and cultural, educational, transportation, and industrial. The nearby Divide area is today almost exclusively (except for one complex of government-owned buildings) a neighborhood of single family dwellings situated on regular lots about fifty feet wide and with no appreciable outbuildings.

The uses and types of buildings presently existing in Gold Hill and Silver City repeats those found in Virginia City but on a far smaller scale. Isolated individual, or small blocks of, commercial buildings stretch out along the main street in both towns for a short distance. Both Gold Hill and Silver City include complexes of industrial mill buildings dating primarily from the 1930s. The predominant type of building in Silver City and Gold Hill, however, is the single family dwelling. Bordering the main street and randomly sited along the few tributary unpaved streets, are an uncongested array of residences often accompanied by one or more outbuildings. A few newly constructed residences are intermixed or stand widely spaced at the outlying edges of town.

Within the confines of the sixteen-block Dayton portion of the Historic District, the variety of building uses and types found in Virginia City is more closely duplicated. Adjoining and free standing commercial buildings front on Main and Pike streets, at the heart of the District and to a limited extent along State Highway 50 on the eastern edge of the District. Government, religious, educational, social, and cultural/recreational buildings are scattered throughout the District. Single family dwellings, often accompanied by a proliferation of outbuildings, comprise the majority of extant Dayton buildings and are oriented toward often locust-shaded residential streets. A limited number of more recent, post World War II residences tend to have greater setbacks from the street and a smaller collection of outbuildings. Noticeably absent from the Dayton segment of the District are more than one or two buildings which were used for industrial mining purposes.

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Architectural styles represented in all four towns generally fall into three categories --late Victorian period, vernacular, and industrial -- and date from the mining bonanza years of the 1860s and 1870s and the period of economic revival in the 1930s. In Virginia City especially, quintessential examples of the late Victorian period survive in many of the Italianate style brick commercial buildings that line C Street, such as the Knights of Pythias (1876) and Miners Union Hall, fraternal buildings, and the Storey County Courthouse (1876); survivals in the Gothic Revival style include St. Mary's in the Mountains Catholic Church (1876), St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1876), and the Presbyterian Church (1867); survivals in the Second Empire style include Fourth Ward School (1876) and Savage Mansion (1861); and survivals in the Queen Anne style include the "Castle" and Antunovic House. (See the 1961 nomination form and appended inventory cards for detailed descriptions.) Influences of the Eastlake/Stick style can be seen in small decorative details at roof lines, on porches, and around windows. In addition to the relatively few buildings that could be classified as pure examples of one architectural style, many pre-1900 residential, commercial, and public buildings in Virginia City exhibit a mixture of high style design forms and features: this characteristic eclecticism invariably reflects the fact that few, if any, buildings on the Comstock Mining District were architect designed and that manufactured building parts could be easily shipped from San Francisco by train after 1869.

In Virginia City's sister communities of Gold Hill, Silver City and Dayton, only a few extant buildings mimic popular pre-turn-of-the-century architectural styles. In each of the three towns, modest examples of the Italianate style exist in the Bank of California Building and the Vesey's Hotel (Gold Hill), in the Masonic Lodge and the stone Hardwicke House (Silver City), and in the Odeon Hall, the Union Hotel and the adjoining Fischer Building, the Fox Hotel, and the Bluestone Building (Dayton). Similarly, there are few remaining pure examples of other late nineteenth-century Victorian period styles. Among the extant buildings, the Lynch House (other historic name given on inventory card) and the Lipscomb House both in Gold Hill, and the Donovan House in Silver City faintly reflect design characteristics of the late Victorian period.

Unquestionably, a preponderance of domestic buildings dating from the nineteenth century are vernacular. In all four communities, dwellings built in the vernacular are characterized by their relatively small size and scale, generally consisting of only one story and infrequently more than two stories, by their adherence to a medium pitch gable end, side gable, and sometimes L-shape, gable building forms, by their predominate use of wood in either single-wall and framed wall construction, exterior wall sheathing, and sometimes roofing materials, by their consistent use of multi-pane and single-pane, double hung sash windows, by the existence or present evidence of a porch extending across part or all of the main facade, by the relevance of one or more small, side or rear extensions, and by the conspicuous absence of decorative adornment. Although not unique to the Comstock, the great abundance of pre-1900 vernacular buildings existing in the Historic District today is an ever present reminder of the social and technological history of these four surviving mining towns.



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Despite their often hurried construction and the intent of their builders for temporary shelter, many of the great stock of vernacular dwellings survived into the twentieth century and were maintained and "modernized" when economic conditions allowed. Commonly occurring alterations made to vernacular buildings between 1900 and 1942 that are still in evidence today include the application of brick pattern composition shingles (in the 1920s and 1930s) followed by asbestos shingles (beginning in the late 1930s) over existing wood lap or channel drop siding, the resheathing of wood shingle roofs, sometimes with corrugated metal, the enclosure of porches, and the construction of new side or rear additions. Many vernacular buildings in the District today, even more than the few high style homes of prominent citizens, experienced such typical alterations in the 1920s and 1930s when mining on the Comstock came to life once again.

The existence of an abundant building stock dating from the 1900s, diminished the need to construct new buildings during the 1930s mining revival. In Virginia City, for example, only about 10 percent of the buildings standing today date from the 1900 to 1940 period.<sup>2</sup> When new construction did occur, Comstock houses were modest and built on multiple lots that allowed for side wall projections, side yards, driveways, and a setback from the street.<sup>3</sup> Examples of the relatively few residential and commercial buildings dating from the 1900 to the 1942 period of significance include: a concentration of small, one-story residences on blocks 65 and 103 on C Street in Virginia City; the School House and the small Thomas Cleaves residence, both in Gold Hill; the Post Office, the Golden Gate Bar & Hotel Building, and the Laughlin/Hughes residence, all in Silver City; the High School in Dayton; and a number of outhouses in Dayton and Silver City, constructed by enrollees based at a Dayton Works Progress Administration (WPA) camp in the mid-1930s. Aside from the influence of the Mission and Colonial Revival styles evident in the 1918 Dayton High School, those few residences erected after 1900 and before World War II generally perpetuate earlier, gable roof vernacular building types. They also often exhibit the low pitch roof, broad overhanging eaves with exposed rafters, recessed porch supported by truncated posts, and narrow clapboard siding design features found in the Bungalow style.

Perhaps most of the new construction that took place in the 1920s and 1930s was in the mining industry. Today mining buildings that date from this period of renewed activity are clustered together at the Yellow Jacket Mine and the New York Mine in Gold Hill and the Donovan Mill and Dayton Mill in Silver City. Unlike their predecessors that were typically of wood frame construction and sheathed with horizontal wood boards, the 1920s and 1930s era mining building stand on poured concrete slabs or foundations and are of wood frame construction with both roofs and exterior walls sheathed with corrugated steel.

Appearance During 1900-1942 Period of SignificanceVirginia City

The decline of mining activity beginning in the early 1880s ushered in depressed economic conditions on the Comstock that continued well into the twentieth century. The process of depopulation that resulted and the accompanying decay of buildings was dramatically apparent in Virginia City by the first decade of the 1900s. By the early 1930s, as noted by Allan Comp

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in the accompanying narrative history, probably "at least half of the buildings standing in 1880 (in Virginia City) were gone by the time Franklin Delano Roosevelt took office." Mining and commercial buildings suffered the most dramatic losses: many succumbed to fire. These include the International Hotel in 1914, the Fredericks Building in 1939, the Union mining works in 1904, the Belcher hoisting works in 1910, and the Consolidated California and Virginia Mine buildings in 1939. Others experienced slow deterioration and collapse, as in the case of the IOOF Hall in 1939, after long years of vacancy.<sup>4</sup> In 1930, although C Street remained lined with adjoining brick commercial buildings for a distance of about five blocks, the majority of these were vacant. Dwellings remained scattered throughout the town, yet unlike the 1870s boom years, they were far fewer in number and often surrounded by empty lots creating a sense of uncharacteristic spaciousness.<sup>5</sup> In only a few words, Flannery Lewis captured the essence of life -- and the visual appearance of Virginia City at the close of the 1930s. "From her home on the Divide," Lewis wrote, "Grandmother can see the abandoned blocks of old houses down in the town. There is seldom traffic down there, and the roadways is indistinct, and the buildings are slowly settling into the undermined earth."<sup>6</sup> The Divide was also not immune from decay and destruction: in 1942, a devastating fire totally destroyed all buildings in the three block area between C and F streets and between present day Toll Road and Sheldon Road.

Perhaps the best physical description of Virginia City at the close of the period of significance was provided around 1940 by the Writer's Program of the Work Projects Administration. "The highway follows C Street, the core of the town," states Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State (c. 1940).

Below C Street the remaining buildings are largely industrial, about it are the old, fine residential sections.... Only a few houses are left from the bonanza days.... Yet enough still cling to B and A streets... Most of the houses have long been unpainted and the elaborately turned wooden balustrades along the high retaining walls are beginning to sag. Yet even the freshest show beyond question that they belong to the days when the jigsaw was creating domestic Gothic Revival decorations.

C Street is lined with old places.... Wooden awnings are still supported by spindling cast-iron columns and cast-iron pilasters still frame the show windows.... Though sidewalks tilt and walls crack no one is seriously concerned about a collapse of any large section of town.

Survival amidst decay resound as the dominant theme in this WPA portrayal of Virginia City on the eve of World War II.

Gold Hill

Gold Hill experienced similar losses through attrition. In Gold Hill, although vacancies existing in 1890, a continuous row of brick and frame commercial building extended for about two blocks southward from the base of the steep Geiger grade leading to Virginia City. By 1930, the scene was markedly different: gaping holes existed in the former commercial row; of those buildings standing, all but two were either vacant or in ruins.<sup>8</sup> The Sanborn Map

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Company provided a terse but telling explanation of the devastating losses that were apparent in both 1907 and 1930: "Many buildings moved away and pulled down for fuel yearly," noted the map company in both years.<sup>9</sup> One of several buildings that experienced a transplantation was the Episcopal Church, moved to Dayton from Gold Hill in the early 1900s.<sup>10</sup> Residential structures suffered similar dramatic losses during the same period: only a comparatively small number of dwellings and mining buildings that once blanketed the steep slopes of Gold Canyon remained standing by the end of the 1930s. Finally, in the early 1940s, Gold Hill witnessed the destruction of three local landmarks: the elongated Maynard Building, then in a dilapidated condition after nearly eighty years of service, was torn down; the nearby Miners Union Hall collapsed; and the 1873 wood frame Gold Hill schoolhouse, situated on the hillside south of the present day Crown Point mining complex, was destroyed by fire.<sup>11</sup> It was at this time that the linear alignment of buildings along Main Street emerged as the dominant pattern.

**Silver City**

Although only a few maps, photographs, and written descriptions of Silver City exist depicting the physical appearance of the town during the first four decades of the 1900s, it can be easily imagined that attrition similar to that in Virginia City and Gold Hill took place in Silver City as well. Fire, the dreaded mining town anathema, unleashed its fury on the town in 1928, destroying the Catholic Church and several residences along Main Street between Second and Third streets and severely damaging the popular, two-story Bonanza House just north of Second Street. Quick to recover from the losses, property owners by the mid-1930s, had repaired the Bonanza House by removing the badly charred second floor and reconstructing a one-story brick block and moved two buildings from nearby Mound House and American Flat to the leveled block that existed on the east side of Main Street. Again in 1935, buildings one block east of Main Street between Third and Fourth streets, including the towering, second generation, wood frame Episcopal Church, a restaurant and bar and several homes fell to flames. Undefeated, the congregation<sup>12</sup> raised a third Episcopal Church the following year, on the site of the former church structure.

Although fire took its toll between 1900 and 1942, the residents of Silver City seemed quick to repair or replace damaged or destroyed buildings. Additionally, the slow decay and collapse of buildings, endemic to Virginia City and Gold Hill after the turn of the century, appears to have been less dramatic in Silver City. Never achieving the prominence of either of its Comstock neighbors to the north, the congestion of structures covering the hillsides in both Gold Hill and Virginia City, did not occur to the same degree in Silver City. There were fewer buildings to lose and it appears that fewer were lost during the early decades of the twentieth century. Although commercial and mining buildings that stood at the southern end of town in the 1870s and 1880s no longer exist, photographs of Silver City around the turn of the century depict a significant number of buildings in the core residential area that survive to the present.

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Of all the four communities in the National Historic Landmark District, the core commercial and residential section of Dayton contained within the District experienced the least physical change between 1900 and 1942. Unlike Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Silver City, Dayton's historical role as a mineral processing and supply center continued after the turn of the century when gold was discovered and mined in Tonopah and Goldfield, southeast of Dayton. Understandably, Sanborn Publishing Company maps for the years 1907 and 1930 show a relatively unchanged cluster of commercial brick and frame buildings at the T intersection of Main and Pike streets.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the physical appearance of the neighborhoods immediately north and south of the commercial center remain fairly static during this same period -with one major exception. In May 1909, the dreaded fire bell sounded rallying townspeople to the substantial, two-story, 1864 county courthouse, located two blocks north of Main Street on Pike which was engulfed in flames.<sup>14</sup> Despite tireless efforts to save the historic structure, only the walls and foundation remained when the embers cooled.<sup>15</sup> Historically, the fate of Dayton was sealed due to this conflagration. Yet architecturally, less than a decade later, a modern new Period Revival style structure, the Dayton High School, was erected on the courthouse site. The fire resulted in Dayton's loss of Lyon County government which was subsequently transferred south to Yerington.

It was not until the 1920s and 1930s that minimal changes took place in certain residential sections of that portion of Dayton now in the Historic District. Following World War I, in the early 1920s, a large mineral dredging operation just north of the Dayton district boundary, led to the relocation of several old residences standing on the excavated site: some were moved to vacant lots now within the District. Two known examples of infilling that occurred as a result of these house moves are at the northeast corner of Pike and Second streets and on the east side of River Street between Douglas and Silver streets. (See inventory cards DA-4 and DA-40.) A decade later, in the mid-1930s, Dayton became the home of a small encampment of WPA work relief enrollees: several temporary, makeshift structures were clustered together between Third and Fourth streets and Pike Street and Ziller Way to serve as what locally became known as "Ding Camp." Comprised mainly of older, single males, camp workers concentrated their efforts on constructing a number of small outhouses, all of similar design, in the rear and side yards of residences, throughout Dayton and other nearby rural towns.<sup>16</sup>

Although the loss of the courthouse, the moving of houses, and the construction of new outhouses invariably influenced the social history of Dayton, such changes ~~has~~ had a minimal visual impact on the area contained within the Division boundaries between 1900 and 1942. One local resident, recalling Dayton in the 1920s and 1930s wrote in 1961: "Many people moan that the dredges spoiled Dayton. The town I knew in my childhood remained virtually intact except for some homes along the hills (outside the District) that might have become more weatherworn and dilapidated with time."<sup>17</sup>

Appearance After Period of Significance

In the four settlements within in the Virginia City Historic District, nearly fifty years of evolving history since 1942 has incurred physical changes, just as the preceding eighty-three

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years left its mark on the landscape. Such changes, however, has been less sobering and dramatic than during the tumbling borrasca (Spanish meaning "storm") years. By 1942, crumbling decay and fire, such as the 1942 Divide fire which climaxed the long period of economic depression, had already wreaked ruin on Virginia City and Gold Hill. Furthermore, traditional losses endemic to the Comstock and nearly all Western mining towns caused by the collapse, conflagration, or moving out of buildings, began to be offset by yet another wave of economic revival that, at first, gently washed over the Comstock and, then, surged in the 1960s. It was tourism that brought new life and hope to the Comstock, especially Virginia City, and with it came a renewed interest in perpetuating the life of those built reminders of a memorable and significant past.<sup>18</sup> A balance between losses and gains in the physical fabric of the Historic District characterizes the last forty-five years.

The history of decline and decay, that had become a well-established pattern by the end of World War II, continued unabated for several years after 1942 before the struggle to survive was fully expressed and became visually embodied in the Comstock landscape of buildings.<sup>19</sup> In Virginia City, a 1950 fire took the Virginia Hotel, the Mayre Building, and the post office. Additional building losses occurred in Gold Hill. During the winter of 1951-52, the Liberty Fire House collapsed under a mantle of snow.<sup>20</sup> By the mid-1950s, the Miners Union Hall, the Masonic Building and St. Patrick's and the First Methodist churches were gone from the landscape.<sup>21</sup> Contrary to a general trend since the 1950s, in both Virginia City and Gold Hill where losses have progressively slowed and even reversed, the physical fabric of Silver City and Dayton have sustained some isolated cases of recent destruction. In Silver City in the early 1930s, two<sup>22</sup> decaying structures on the east side of Main at the northern end of town were demolished. In Dayton, local sentiments raised when the ninety-eight-year-old Episcopal Church, moved from Gold Hill early in the century, was demolished in 1975.<sup>23</sup> Two other demolitions occurred in the early 1980s at the southeast corner of Shady Lane and Logan Alley near the western periphery of the District. Unquestionably, Dayton experienced its most tragic recent building loss when fire destroyed three, turn-of-the-century commercial buildings at the northwest corner of Main and Pike streets in the mid-1980s.<sup>24</sup>

Although buildings lost cannot be recovered, this has been balanced with an effort to maintain, rehabilitate, and restore extant historic buildings and to move architecturally significant buildings to vacant lots. Virginia City, the Divide, and Gold Hill, magnets for tourists since the 1950s, and most recently commuters and senior citizens, are the focal points of this building revival movement. Lucius Beebe, noted journalist and theatre critic for the New York Herald Tribune and sophisticated maverick of New York society, played a powerful role in this reincarnation when, after moving to Virginia City in 1950, he widely publicized the glamour of the Comstock and revived the Territorial Enterprise of Mark Twain and Dan DeQuille days. A physical manifestation of Beebe's ardor and concern for Virginia City<sup>25</sup> was expressed by his remodeling the long-vacant and darkened Enterprise office on C Street. Beebe was followed by others with both the desire and means to bring the Comstock back to life. In the 1960s, Mary and Jack West and George C. Bartholomew restored the Libscomb and Lynch houses, respectively, in Gold Hill. In Virginia City, notable recent building restorations or rehabilitations include: the Fourth Ward School, the Piper's Opera House, the Mackay Mansion, and the Savage Mansion. Within the last decade, several historic buildings in both Virginia City and Gold Hill

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have been rescued from decay through adaptive reuse. Additionally, in the last ten years, residences dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been moved from neighboring cities and towns to vacant lots in Virginia City, the Divide, Gold Hill, and Silver City. These are but a few examples of recent efforts to breathe vitality into Comstock towns that have consequently slowed the process of physical decay and revived many buildings dating from the period of significance.

**Intrusions**

Intrusions on historic buildings and their setting, although limited, have occurred in two principal forms. In recent years, some ground disturbing activity related to mining and tourism has threatened the continuing existence or intactness of a few contributing buildings. Secondly, in some instances, new construction or remodeled buildings have failed to consider historically and architecturally appropriate scale, design (such as roof lines, window and door openings and fenestration, and details), materials, and siting or orientation to the street.

**Methodology**

The 1990 amendment to the Virginia City Historic District National Register nomination draws on the historical and architectural data compiled by three separate projects that span seven years. Inventory cards of selected buildings and sites in the Historic District and monographs on mining and mining sites completed by an Historic Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) team served as the foundation for the two subsequent projects. In 1985, Rainshadow Associates, funded by Storey County, Nevada, the Nevada State Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, and the National Endowment for the Arts, inventoried all pre-1942 buildings in Virginia City and compiled narrative histories of Comstock mining and Virginia City buildings.

In 1987, with funding from Storey County, Nevada and the Nevada State Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology, Virginia City Limited Partnership gathered historical information, architectural descriptions, and photographs of all pre-1942 buildings in the Comstock communities of Dayton, Silver City, Gold Hill, and the Divide. Architectural documentation was accomplished by on-site inspections of all pre-World War II properties. Building histories were compiled from the two previous project inventory cards and, additionally, by reviewing both primary and secondary literature sources, historic maps and photographs, and by conducting informal oral interviews. Although both the National Register amendment and the assembled inventory cards recognize the historical importance of sites and structures within the boundaries of the Historic District, the primary focus of both is buildings.

**Part II****Contributing Buildings**

The Virginia City Historic Landmark District contains 382 contributing buildings, and 315 noncontributing buildings. The distribution of buildings in each of these categories for all

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or portions of the four townships or identifiable neighborhoods that lie within the boundary of the District are as follows:

<u>Township</u>	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
Virginia City	246	174
"The Divide"	18	26
Gold Hill	32	25
Silver City	48	54
Dayton	<u>38</u>	<u>36</u>
Total	382	315

Guidelines for counting contributing buildings, presented in the National Register of Historic Places, Bulletin 14, have been followed to arrive at the above number of buildings in each category. Specifically, those resources counted as one include: every building of substantial size and scale or those that are small but are associated with one or more of the historical themes described in the statement of significance in the original nomination or this amendment to the nomination; a building of substantial size constructed as a single unit even if it has received later additions; and individual commercial units that are attached or share a party wall. Resources not counted in the above tally of contributing and noncontributing buildings (even though drawn and numbered on the accompanying sketch map) include: buildings of insubstantial size unless they specifically related to an area of significance addressed in the nomination or unless they form part of an architecturally or historically significant building ensemble; and buildings that are now in an advanced stage of deterioration or in ruins. Objects, structures, and sites (archaeological and historical), unless they are an integral part of a building ensemble, are outside the scope of this nomination amendment and are not included in the above listing. Headframes, although structures, are counted due to their physical connection with mining buildings (hoist houses), their conspicuous appearance on the landscape, and their symbolic and real association with the mining history of the Comstock.

A general description of the architectural and historical qualities that contributing, and noncontributing buildings possess follows.

**Contributing Buildings**

All contributing buildings in the Historic District were built during the period of significance which extends from 1860 to 1942. Buildings judged contributing either add to the architectural qualities of the Comstock Historic Landmark District, or have historical associations with the period of significance, or both. Contributing buildings have retained substantial integrity of setting (taking into account the evolution of both natural and cultural landscape features that invariably has taken place over the eighty-two year period of significance), feeling, and association. Integrity of overall design form (shape, size and roof pitch) is visibly apparent in contributing buildings. Additions to the original body of the building do not necessarily place a building in the noncontributing category since historically buildings of both high style and

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vernacular design in the four Comstock mining communities have received additions. These additions, in fact, often portray an important aspect of the evolving social and architectural history in the District during the period of significance. Additionally, the presence of known or suspected nonoriginal siding on exterior walls does not alone disqualify a building from contributing status. Throughout the building history of the Comstock, when new siding has been applied, the underlying layer or layers were retained and, at the same time, protected from further weathering. Since this general pattern of layering prevailed on the Comstock, especially with vernacular building types, it can be assumed (unless documentation exists to the contrary) that the original and subsequent pre-1942 siding remains intact. Buildings with important historical associations, that retain integrity of location are classified as contributing. On the other hand, a building that is undistinguished historically, yet does not have integrity of location, is a contributing resource if it is architecturally appropriate in its present setting and if it dates from the period of significance of the District. Integrity of workmanship is not a key qualifying criteria for contributing buildings (unless a building exhibits outstanding workmanship) since the majority of District buildings, especially those built in the vernacular, are not distinguished by exceptional craftsmanship.

**Noncontributing Buildings**

Noncontributing buildings in the Virginia City National Historic Landmark District were constructed after the period of significance or were constructed after 1942. A building is also considered noncontributing if it was constructed during the period of significance but has suffered a substantial loss of physical integrity due to extensive deterioration (less than three, intact walls remain standing), damage, or alterations. A substantial loss of physical integrity for Comstock buildings typically occurs when: one or more post-1942 addition(s) obscures or destroys the overall form and essential design features of a building, or that irrevocably alters or destroys building materials that date from the period of significance; substantial and irreversible changes in the size and position of window and door openings have been made; and substantial losses of integrity of setting, feeling and association exist due to the intrusion of a detracting cultural feature or the loss of major nearby buildings that once formed part of a significant building ensemble. In short, a building that has suffered a loss of integrity of significant design features and materials that cannot be regained (nor recreated) by removing post-1942 additions or alterations is noncontributing. Finally, a moved building that now stands in the District which is noteworthy primarily for its historical associates, or that is architecturally incongruous with the District, or that is sited in an historically inappropriate manner is considered noncontributing.

Each building within the District has been assigned an identification number (except in the case of Virginia City where a lot and block number define its location) and are keyed to accompanying sketch maps. In this nomination, contributing buildings are listed with their identification number or their block and lot numbers (Virginia City). Individual inventory cards for contributing and potentially contributing buildings, which include a physical description, building history, photograph(s), and location map, accompany this nomination. Photographs of important historic or contemporary vistas are also appended to the nomination.



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Attached is a list of all contributing and noncontributing buildings within the Virginia City Landmark District and located in the community of Virginia City (VC), the Divide (VC or GH), Gold Hill (GH), Silver City (SC), and Dayton (DA). In the case of building ensembles, the most prominent building in the group appears on the first line. Building identification numbers on the second line denote ancillary buildings that are part of the building ensemble.

References

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4. Rainshadow Associates, Vol. III, Understanding and Managing Historic Resources, 15; Dorothy Young Nichols, Virginia City in My Day (Placerville, Calif.: np. 1983), 16; "Chronology of the Comstock," Box 28, File 41, U.S. WPA, Ms., Nevada Historical Society (hereafter cited as NHS).
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6. Flannery Lewis, Suns Go Down (New York: MacMillan Company, 1937), 11-12.
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8. "Gold Hill, Storey County, Nevada" (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1890 and 1930).
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10. Print File, "Dayton -- Churches, Episcopal," NHS.
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13. Sanborn Map Company, "Dayton, Lyon County, Nevada," May 1907 and October 1930.
14. Reno Evening Gazette, 11 April 1987, Print File, "Dayton -- History," NHS; Stanley Paher, Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps, (Berkeley, Calif.: Howell-North Books, 1970,) 64,69.
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18. Rainshadow Associates, Project 85, Vol. III, 10, 15; Clifford C. Walton, comp., Nevada Today: A Pictorial Volume of the State's Activities (Portland, Oreg.: Capitol Publishing Company, 1949).
19. Barbara Richnak, Silver Hillside (Incline Village, Nev.: Comstock Nevada Publishing Company, 1984), 159; Lucius Beebe to Roger Butterfield, 17 June 1950, Butterfield Papers, NHS.

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20. Print File, "Gold Hill -- Landmarks," NHS.
21. Print File, "Gold Hill -- Landmarks," NHS.
22. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, HAER, ID Nos. 22, 23.
23. Print File, "Dayton -- Churches, Episcopal," NHS.
24. HAER, ID Nos. 10, 11, 13, 14, 15. Among the three commercial buildings destroyed, the two-story brick Dayton Station Building and the adjoining, one-story, frame American Bar were irreplaceable losses.
25. Richnak, Silver Hillside, 159-62; David W. Toll, The Compleat Nevada Traveler (Gold Hill, Nev.: Gold Hill Publishing Company, 1985).

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VIRGINIA CITY

<u>Block/Lot</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
4/1	Turney House	Current
22/9	Gallagher House	Current
23/1A	Jacobsen House	Current
23/2	Gladding House	Current
23/3-4	Beaupre House	Current
23/9	Avansino House	Current
23/11A,B	Rodhouse House	Current
24/1	Andrews House	Current
24/9	Andrews House	Current
24/5	Addison House	Current
24/9	Andrews House	Current
24/10	Garner House	Current
24/11	Avansino House	Current
24/12A,B	McNeille House	Current
25/1	Byrne House	Current
25/3A,B,C	Girardo House	Current
25/8A,B,C	Girardo House	Current
25/9A	Cormany House	Current
25/9B	Harrington House	Current
25/10	Murdock House	Current
27/6-7	Christiansen House	Current
43/13-14	Hilton House	Current
43-18	Colbert House	Current
43/19	Hill House	Current
43/20	Weeks House	Current
43/21A	Colletti House	Current
44/7A	Turney House	Current
44/9	Bromund Art Gallery	Current
44/12	Johnson House	Current
44/13	Hubbard House	Current
44/15	Viani House	Current
44/19-21,21A	Varga House	Current
44/24	Garner House	Current
44/25	Bowers House	Current
44/26	Sappenfield House	Current
45/1-2	Crider House	Current
45/3	Marks Shed	Current
45/4	Marks House	Current
45/6	Abel House	Current
45/8	Howard House	Current
45/9	Jones House	Current

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46/3	Eaton House	Current
46/4A	Girardo House	Current
46/4E	Residence	Current
46/4F	Daniels House	Current
46/4G	Residence	Current
65/1	Hungry Miner Restaurant	Current
65/3	Girardo House	Current
65/5	Fisher House	Current
65/9	Hess Shed	Current
65/10	Hess House	Current
65/11A	Greenhalgh House	Current
65/11B	McBride House	Current
65/12	Marks House	Current
65/15	Cosentino House	Current
66/10	Storey County Medical Clinic	Current
67/4	Powell Shed	Current
67/8-12	Virginia & Truckee Freight Depot	Current
73/6	Kiechler House	Current
77/1	Shed	Current
79/1,1A	Sanders House	Current
79/1B	Water Tank	Historic
80/4	Marshall House	Current
81/1	Williams House	Historic
81/9-10, 16	Hancock House	Historic
82/9-10	Schafer	Current
83/1A	Sharon/Deveney House	Historic
83/1B	Buckner House	Historic
83/1C	Sullivan House	Historic
83/4	Erickson House	Historic
83/6	Kowalsky	Current
83/8-9	Corcoran House	Historic
83/11	Miners Union Hall	Historic
83/12	Moran Building	Historic
83/13	Knights of Pythias Building	Historic
83/17-22	Pipers Opera House	Historic
84/1	Empire Meat Market	Historic
84/6-7	Longbranch Saloon	Historic
84/8A	Wild West Museum	Current
84/8B	Wild West Shed	Current
84/9	Wild West Souvenirs	Current
84/10	Silver Stope	Current
84/11	Virginia City Trading Post	Current
84/17	Silver Queen/Old Time Photo Shop	Current
84/18-19	Silver Queen	Current
	Molinelli's Hotel	Historic

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84/20	Odd Fellows Hall	Historic
	Grandma's Fudge Factory	Current
85/3	Yesterday & Today	Current
85/4A	Union Brewery Saloon	Historic
85/5	Brass Rail Saloon	Current
85/7	The Forge	Current
85/11	Silver Dollar Hotel	Current
86/9	V&T RR Locomotive No. 27	Historic
86/12	Shed	Current
91/1A,1B	Hathaway Shed	Current
92/7	Virginia City Electric Company	Current
100/1	Larson House	Current
100/2	Savage House	Current
100/6	Lankey Shed	Current
100/7A	Lankey House	Current
100/7B	Goodman House	Current
101/5-7	Rising House	Historic
101/9	Chamberlain Shed	Current
101/10-12	Shields House	Historic
101/13	King Mansion	Historic
101/14	Corbett House	Historic
102/1	Piper/Clegg House	Historic
102/3-4	Harris House	Historic
102/8	McDonald House	Current
102/9A,9B	O'Brien House	Current
102/13	Meacham House	Historic
102/15	Flanagan House	Current
103/4-10	Storey County Courthouse	Historic
103/8	Hose House	Historic
103/17	Wilson/Gallagher House	Historic/Current
103/21	Wilson/Gallagher House	Historic/Current
103/25	Wilson/Gallagher House	Historic/Current
103/27	Wilson/Benner House	Historic/Current
104/1	Sawdust Gift Shop	Historic
104/10	Delta Gift Shop	Current
104/11	Telephone Exchange	Historic
	Eilley Orrum's Antiques	Current
104/13	Visitors Bureau	Current
104/14	Roos Brothers Clothing	Historic
	Palace Emporium	Current
104/17A	Palace Saloon	Current
104/17B	White House Boarding House	Historic
104/18	Calamity Janes Ice Cream Parlor	Current
104/20A	Red's Old Fashioned Candies	Current
104/20B	Mark Twain's Saloon	Current

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104/21	Lazy Burro Gift Shop	Current
104/24	Gilig & Mott Hardware	Historic
	Red Garter Saloon	Current
104/26	Crystal Bar	Historic
105/1	Bucket of Blood Saloon	Current
105/2-3	Bucket of Blood Saloon	Current
105/10	Territorial Enterprise	Historic
	Mark Twain Museum	Current
105/12A	Glass Blowers Workshop	Current
105/12-13	Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory	Current
105/14	Sazerac Saloon	Current
105/16	Black & Howell Building	Historic
105/3,4A	Residence	Current
106/3B	Gavazzi Shed	Current
106/4B	Gavazzi House	Current
106/9	Tannahill House	Current
106/10	Grant House	Current
107/1	Residence	Current
107/2	Barton Shed	Current
107/5-6	Glasscock House	Current
108/6	Burkhardt House	Current
108/8	St. Paul's Episcopal Church	Historic
125/6½	Storey County Firehouse	Current
125/8-9	Virginia & Truckee Railcar	Historic
	Virginia City Chamber of Commerce	Current
126/1-5	Storey County Elementary School	Historic
127/2	St. Mary's in the Mountains	Historic
	Catholic Church	
128/2A	Langman House	Current
129/1A,1B	Brown House	Current
129/2	Benner House	Current
129/3	Pecoraro House	Current
130/1A	Salmon House	Current
130/3	McCarthy House	Current
130/4	Loper House	Current
132/4	Obester Shed	Current
133/4	Abbott House	Current
133/5	Bella House	Current
136/1	Beaupre Shed	Current
142/17A	Flanagan House	Current
142/17B	Martinez House	Current
142/21A	Flanagan House	Current
142/24	Residence	Current
143/29-31	Storey County Barn	Current
143/32	Karrasch House	Current

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143/39A	Water Company Building	Historic
143/42	Cole Mansion	Historic
143/43	Schafer House	Current
143/45	Dressler House	Current
143/49	The Castle	Historic
143/50	Residence	Current
144/1	Ponderosa Saloon/Sharon House	Current
144/2	McGrath Grocery	Historic
144/3-5	Old Washoe Club	Historic
144/5B	Graham House	Current
144/9	Sundance Saloon	Current
144/10	Pioneer Emporium	Current
144/11	Virginia City Market	Current
144/12	Old Time Photo	Current
144/13	Museum of Wax	Current
144/14	Tahoe House	Historic
144/14A	White Shed	Current
144/15A	Turquoise Shop	Current
144/15B	Hole in the Wall	Current
144/16B	Riata Gallery	Current
144/16B,C	Lammors Variety Shop	Historic
144/17	First Presbyterian Church	Historic
144/20	Gallagher House	Current
144/21-22	Gallagher House	Current
144/23-25	Gallagher House	Current
144/26	Gallagher House	Current
144/27	Gallagher House	Current
144/28A	Gallagher Shed	Current
144/28B	Gallagher House	Current
144/29	Gallagher House	Current
145/16	Pera House	Current
145/18	Martin House	Current
146/3	Silva House	Current
146/4	Silva Shed	Current
146/10A,B	Gould & Curry Mining Office/ Mackay Mansion	Historic
148/1	Herron House	Current
148/7-8	Turlin House	Current
148/9A	Carr Shed	Current
148/9B	Carr Shed	Current
148/9C	Carr House	Current
149/12	Gunkel House	Current
149/13	Del Carlo House	Current
154/2-3	Curran Shed	Current
173/9	Rule House	Current
173/13A,B	Edith Palmer's County Inn	Historic
173/14	Kenawell House	Current

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175/1E	Morgan House	Current
175/1A	Nevin House	Historic
175/1F	McNaught House	Historic
175/10-11	Savage Mansion	Historic
176/1	Voorhies House	Current
176/2	Shelley House	Current
176/14	Tannahill House	Current
179/5	Graham House	Current
194/2	Washoe Boarding House	Historic
194/3	Elkin House	Current
194/4	LeFevre House	Historic
194/6	Petrini House	Current
196/1	Shed	Current
196/5-6	Residence	Current
196/10A,B	Residence	Current
197/1-4,7	Arizona Comstock Mill Structures	Historic
198/1-2,3,6	Arizona Comstock Mill Structures	Historic
198/6	Changing Room/Arizona Comstock Mine	Historic
205/3-4	Fourth Ward School	Historic
206/3-4	Residence	Current
206/5-4	Zalac House	Current
206/6	Shryver Shed	Current
206/8	Gladding Property	Current
206/9	Shed	Current
206/9-10	Shed	Current
206/12-13	Chollar-Potosi Mine Office	Historic
206/15	Residence	Current
207/2	Residence	Current
322-325/1	St. Mary's Hospital Wash and Steam Room	Historic
322-325/1	St. Mary's Hospital	Historic
179/10	Arizona Comstock Mill	Historic
MS-39	Combination Shaft	Historic
MS-33	Hale and Norcross Trestle	Historic



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THE DIVIDE

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
VC-153	Antunovich House	Current
VC-265		
VC-262	Conde House	Current
VC-261		
VC-263	Store Ruins	Current
VC-266	Solaga House	Current
VC-271,272		
VC-275	Gilbert Rental Property	Current
VC-274,276		
GH-8	Ballander House	Current
GH-179		
GH-9	Wegman House	Current
GH-178		
GH-10	Miller/Hansen House	Current
GH-11	Kolsch House	Current
GH-12	Learn House	Current
GH-176		
GH-18	Johansson House	Current
GH-122,123,170,175		
GH-19	Spargo House	Current
GH-21	Storey County Water Co.	Current
GH-20,22,172,173,174		
GH-130	Pickett House	Current
GH-133	Wesner House	Current
GH-132,171		
GH-136	Wallop House	Current
GH-135		
GH-139	Fain House	Current
GH-182		
GH-142	Ross House	Historic

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GOLD HILL

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
GH-13	Larson House	Historic
GH-168		
GH-14	Sharp House	Historic
GH-121		
GH-16	Foot/Zalac House	Historic
GH-165,166,167		
GH-17	Johnson House	Current
GH-147		
GH-26	Virginia & Truckee RR Depot	Historic
GH-27	Davis House	Historic
GH-148,149,150		
GH-28	Bank of California	Historic
GH-106	Building	
GH-30	Cleaves House	Current
GH-102		
GH-31	Vesey's Hotel/Gold Hill Hotel	Historic
GH-32	Blue House	Current
GH-161		
GH-33	Boarding House, Gold Hill	Historic
GH-100	Brewery	
GH-34	Bowers House	Current
GH-35	Carr House	Current
GH-36	Gray House	Current
GH-99		
GH-37	Gold Hill School House	Historic
GH-38	Lynch House	Historic
GH-97		
GH-39	Toll House	Current
GH-40	Gorman House	Historic
GH-41	Blacksmith Tool Shed	Historic
GH-44	Pinkston House	Current
GH-48	Pinkston House	Current
GH-50,51,185,52	New York Mine	Historic
GH-54	Dufresne House	Current
GH-155,156,157		
GH-59	Con Chollar	Historic
GH-57,58,60,62,70,159		
GH-77	Sutro Tunnel Coalition Bldg.	Current

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GH-84	Hoskins/Hess House	Historic
GH-83,85		
GH-89-96	Crown Point Mill	Historic
GH-98	Shryver Building	Current
GH-110	Yellow Jacket Mine	Historic
GH-11,112,163,186,187		
GH-115	Holman House	Historic
GH-152	Storey County Hose House	Historic
GH-154	Keystone Headframe	Historic

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SILVER CITY

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
SC-5	Crouch House	Current
SC-10	Assay Office	Current
SC-14	Donovan Garage	Current
SC-15	Donovan House	Historic
SC-12		
SC-16	Herron House	Current
SC-17	Muckle House	Historic
SC-19	Bennett House	Current
SC-157		
SC-21	Daumen House	Current
SC-24	Rose House	Current
SC-25	McNamara House	Current
SC-26	Young House	Current
SC-27	Silver City House Co. No. 1	Historic
SC-28	Maximova House	Current
SC-29	Silver City Post Office	Current
SC-31	Masonic Hall	Historic
SC-33	Golden Gate Cafe	Historic
SC-34	Hardwicke House Bed and	Current
SC-32	Breakfast	
SC-36	Crandall House	Current
SC-182		
SC-37,143	Crouch Rental Property	Current
SC-141,142		
SC-38	Young Building	Current
SC-39	Stevens House	Current
SC-146		
SC-40	Old Silver City Church	Current
SC-148,133,134,135		
SC-41	Seelinger House	Current
SC-185,186		
SC-42	Silver City School	Historic
SC-43	Hillman House	Current
SC-223		
SC-44	De Crona House	Current
SC-190,191		
SC-45	Rockin' Chair Trading Post	Current
SC-136,244		
SC-46	Herron House	Current
SC-137		
SC-47	Bennetts House	Current
SC-130,218,219		

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SC-48	Elston House	Current
SC-50	Kendall House	Current
SC-109,110,111		
SC-54	Cobbey House	Current
SC-53,92,93,94,94,205,240		
SC-55	Weber House	Current
SC-66-88	Dayton Mill	Historic
SC-134,135,168		
SC-97	Jackson Mill/Donovan Mill	Historic
SC-96,98,99,206		
SC-100	Trench Mill	Historic
SC-108	Pedlar House	Historic
SC-116,114,115	"No Damn Reason" House	Current
SC-118	Wilson Rental Cabin	Current
Sc-117,237		
SC-139	Santos House	Current
SC-138,140a,140b		
SC-144	Crouch Rental House	Current
SC-152	Victor House	Current
SC-153		
SC-155	Kitchner House	Current
SC-154		
SC-159,160	Adobe Houses	Current
SC-167	Water Tank	Current
SC-242		
SC-222	Golden Gate Theatre	Current
SC-229,239	Vonderheide Twin Silver	Current
SC-238,241	Property	
SC-231	Lawseth House	Current
SC-127		

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DAYTON

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
DA-4	Nieri House	Current
DA-126,216		
DA-5	Bluestone Building	Historic
DA-6	Johnson/Parriott House	Current
DA-178,224		
DA-7	Dayton Public School	Historic
DA-177		
DA-8	Carriage House	Historic
DA-12	End of the Trail	Current
DA-203	Restaurant & Saloon	
DA-16	Odeon Hall	Historic
DA-204		
DA-18a	De Witt House	Current
DA-85,87,88,209,210,211		
DA-18b	Mineral Rapids Restaurant	Current
DA-86		
DA-19	Burke House	Current
DA-115,116,213,217		
DA-20	Sbragia House	Current
DA-21	Smith House	Current
DA-114,195		
DA-22	Smith House	Current
DA-113,194		
DA-23	Smith House	Current
DA-118		
DA-24	Vanous House	Current
DA-117,214		
DA-25	Fox Hotel Building	Historic
DA-27	Dutch Knotts Antiques Express	Current
DA-28	Union Hotel	Historic
DA-29	Fischer Building	Historic
DA-31	Union Market	Historic
DA-212		
DA-32	Meyer Building	Historic
DA-106		
DA-34	Stotts House	Current
DA-104,223		
DA-36	Dayton Firehouse	Historic

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DA-37	St. Anne's Catholic Church	Current
DA-39	Dayton High School	Historic
DA-40	Scott House	Current
DA-59,61,62,225,226		
DA-41	Leslie Hay Barn	Historic
DA063		
DA-42	Quilici House	Historic
DA-60,222		
DA-43	Como Mining Office	Current
DA-66		
DA-51	WPA Camp Building	Historic
DA-52	WPA Camp Building	Historic
DA-53	WPA Camp Building	Historic
DA-58	Teegarden/Tennant Rental House	Current
DA-75	Morton House	Current
DA-89	Teegarden Garage	Current
DA-94	Walmsley House	Current
DA-205,207		
DA-112	Morton Building	Current
DA-150	Murdock House	Current
DA-149,188		

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VIRGINIA CITY

<u>Block/Lot</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
23/1	Wolf House	Current
23/1B	Jacobsen House	Current
23/1C	Jacobsen House	Current
23/5A,B	Yoder House	Current
23/6	Rosso House	Current
23/7	Avansino House	Current
24/6	Seskin House	Current
24/7	Anderson House	Current
25/5-6	Seymore House	Current
26/5	Virginia City Gas Station	Current
26/6-7	Motel Buildings	Current
26/10-11	Residence	Current
27/3	Martinez House	Current
27/4	Giuffra House	Current
27/5	Karno House	Current
30/10	Concrete foundation	Current
43/1	Amsler House	Current
43/2-3	Amsler House	Current
43/5	Sappenfield House	Current
43/16B	Shed	Current
43/16A	Corn House	Current
15/5		
44/7	Garrett House	Current
44/11A	Sappenfield House	Current
44/11B	Greenlund House	Current
46/2	Kick House	Current
46/4D		
47/1	Rudnick House	Current
47/2	Residence	Current
47/4	Urban House	Current
47/5	Urban House	Current
47/6	Warren House	Current
47/7	Avansino House	Current
49/2	Storey County Swimming Pool	Current
66/8-9	Storey County Fire House	Current
66/11-14	The Way It Was Museum	Current
68/1	Shed	Current
73/1	Allison House	Current
76/6		



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73/3	Peterson House	Current
74/4	Thrift House	Current
75/1A-1B	Ayers House	Current
76/2	Simons House	Current
80/5	Shed	Current
82/1	Gladding House	Current
82/15A	Shed	Current
82/15B	Holloway House	Current
83/14-16	Park Gazebo	Current
84/2	Comstock Assay Office Addition	Current
84/4	Western Woodcrafters	Current
84/12-13	Virginia City Mall	Current
85/1	Ingram House	Current
85/2	Old Virginia Shooting Gallery	Current
85/4B	Solid Muldoon	Current
85/4C	Wagners Carpentry Shop	Current
85/8-10	Bonanza	Current
85/12	Julia C. Bulette Saloon and Cafe	Current
91/3-7	Building Complex	Current
100/4	Smith House	Current
100/9	Goodman Shed	Current
101/3A,3B	Fruehill House	Historic
101/17	McBride Shed	Current
103/2½	Piper House	Historic
104/2-9	Delta Saloon	Historic
105/11	Grants General Store Museum	Current
105/13	Comstock Bandito	Current
105/15	Buffalo Sweet Shop	Current
106/1	Valley Bank	Current
107/7	Del Carlo House	Current
107/8	Clark House	Current
108/1-2	Bouvier House	Current
108/4-5	Koch House	Current
108/3	Shed	Current
109/1	Petrini House	Current
110/2	Young House	Current
110/3	Campbell House	Current
110/4	Curtis House	Current
110/5	Griffin House	Current
110/7	Shed	Current
111/5	Shed	Current
111/8	Curtis House	Current
112/2	McBride House	Current

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112/7	Brooks House	Current
125/1-2	Nevada Bank/ Mark Twain's Museum of Memories	Historic Current
125/3-9	Storey County Auditorium	Historic
128/2B	Shed	Current
128/3-4	Young House	Current
130/1B	Marks House	Current
130/2A,2B	Chobotov Hosue	Current
131/1	Murkovich House	Current
131/5A-5B	Miller House	Current
132/5	Obester House	Current
133/3	Anderson House	Current
134/4	Thistle House	Current
136/5	Beaupre House	Current
137/1	Clowers House	Current
140/1	Hess Current	Current
141/1	Baxter House	Current
142/18	Flanagan House	Current
142/19	Martinez House	Current
142/21A	Flanagan House	Current
142/21B	Penderson House	Current
143/33	Pioneer Livery	Current
143/33-35	Shed	Current
143/39B	Shed	Current
143/48A	Hansen House	Current
143/48B	Hansen House	Current
144/6-8	U.S. Post Office	Current
144/18	Custers Market	Current
144/25	Shed	Current
144/30	Clowers Shed	Current
145/3-8	Wagon Wheel Restaurant	Current
145/14	Seeger House	Current
146/6-8,8A	Storey County High School	Current
146/10C,10D	Kielbaugh House	Current
147/1	Clouatre House	Current
147/2	Virginia & Truckee RR Terminal	Historic
148/2	Tanner House	Current
149/3	Tordoff House	Current
149/4	Fullace House	Current
149/5	Walling House	Current
149/5B	Heins House	Current
149/6	Boyd House	Current
149/8	Shed	Current

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149/10	Allen House	Current
150/1	Reid House	Current
150/2	Reid House	Current
150/6	Antunovich House	Current
150/13	Pratt House	Current
150/14	Pyatt House	Current
150/15	Pyatt House	Current
151/1	Residence	Current
151/2	Butler House	Current
151/3	Residence	Current
151/4	Residence	Current
151/5	McArthur House	Current
151/7	Speers House	Current
152/1	Pourks House	Current
152/1B	Maynard House	Current
152/2	Cox House	Current
152/3	Randall House	Current
152/4	Pendleton House	Current
152/5	Bartaglia House	Current
152/6	Shorter House	Current
152/12A,B	McNeilly House	Current
153/1	Michalica House	Current
153/7	Larson House	Current
155/11	Marks House	Current
156/2	Jones House	Current
156/3	Evans House	Current
157/1	O'Conner House	Current
173/15	Kenawell House	Current
174/14A	Werrin House	Historic
174/14B	Lyon House	Current
174/15	Sugarloaf Motel	Current
174/16	Sugarloaf Motel	Current
175/1B	Shed	Current
175/1C	Shed	Current
175/6	Colletti House	Current
175/14	Del Carlo House	Current
176/11-12	Del Carlo House	Current
177/13	Wynn House	Current
177/14	Boggs House	Current
194/1A,1B	Sugarloaf Motel	Current
194/7A	Fisher House	Current
195/1	Commercial Building	Current
207/4	Reinheller House	Current
321/1	Sandbeck House	Current
321/2	Echevarria House	Current

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321/5	Owens House	Current
321/6	Moore House	Current
48/1	Storey County Senior Citizens Center	Current
142/19	Martinez House	Current
142/21B	Penderson House	Current

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THE DIVIDE

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
VC-251	Petrini House	Current
VC-252,254	Comstock Motel	Current
VC-253	Nevada Bell Building	Current
VC-255	Sewell House	Current
VC-256		
VC-257	Herman House	Current
VC-258		
VC-259,260	Virginia City Motel	Current
VC-267		
VC-268		
VC-269		
VC-270		
VC-273		
VC-277		
GH-124	Magistrali House	Current
GH-125	Bacus House	Current
GH-126	Lynch House	Current
GH-127	White House	Current
GH-128	Ramirez House	Current
GH-129	Jordan Hosue	Current
GH-131	Horning House	Current
GH-134	Kuffner/Wallof House	Current
GH-137	Pearson House	Current
GH-138	Yahne House	Current
GH-140	Fain Office Building	Current
GH-141	Fain Rental House	Current
GH-144,143	State of Nevada Storage	Current
GH-180	Building	Current
GH-183		

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GOLD HILL

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
GH-15	Dowling/Greiner House	Historic
GH-169,145		
GH-24	Markley House	Historic
GH-184		
GH-25	Blair House	Current
GH-113,114		
GH-29	Gold Hill Mercantile Bldg.	Current
GH-43		
GH-160		
GH-45	Shryver's Cabin	Current
GH-82		
GH-46	Toll House	Current
GH-55	Cabin In The Sky	Current
GH-56	Halliwell House	Current
GH-71		
GH-49		
GH-73		
GH-72		
GH-74		
GH-75		
GH-76	Sutro Tunnel Coalition Rental Property	Current
GH-78	Sutro Tunnel Coalition Rental Property	Current
GH-81	Shryver Building	Current
GH-79		
GH-87	Hess Storage Building	Current
GH-86		
GH-101		
GH-105	Maynard Station Tavern	Current
GH-116	Charlton House	Current
GH-117		
GH-118,119,120		
GH-146	Storey County Hose House	Current
GH-151	Gingerich Building	Current
GH-153	Storey County Hose House	Current
GH-162	Parsons House	Current
GH-181		

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SILVER CITY

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
SC-2	De La Mare Property	Current
SC-1		
SC-4	Crouch Garage	Current
SC-7	Moore House	Current
SC-6,9		
SC-11	Devil's Gate Toll House	Historic
SC-18	Wahrenbrock House	Current
SC-20	Kitchner House	Current
SC-156		
SC-30	Bonanza House	Historic
SC-35		
SC-56	Conn House	Current
SC-90,91		
SC-57	Frenzel House	Current
SC-58		
SC-52		
SC-59		
SC-161,162,184		
SC-60	Brown House	Current
SC-61		
SC-151		
SC-63	Goins House	Current
SC-64	Goins House	Current
SC-65	Stabbe House	Current
SC-89	Young House	Current
SC-105	Works House	Current
SC-51,101,104,208,210,211		
SC-106	Stein House	Current
SC-212		
SC-113	Dressler House	Current
SC-112,204		
SC-121	Lawseth House	Current
SC-119,120,122,202		
SC-123	Kendall House	Current
SC-124	Kendall House	Current
SC-126		

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SC-128	Bennetts House	Current
SC-125,129		
SC-145		
SC-221		
SC-147	Laughlin House	Current
SC-131	Williamson House	Current
SC-132	Nichols House	Current
SC-217		
SC-149	Davis House	Current
SC-150		
SC-169,170	Stevens Houses	Current
SC-227		
SC-171	McCormick/Chappel House	Current
SC-172		
SC-173	Swanson House	Current
SC-174	LaCroix House	Current
SC-175	Cowin House	Current
SC-228		
SC-176		
SC-177	Mayer House	Current
SC-226		
SC-178	Fulcher House	Current
SC-179	Kirkland/Norsen House	Current
SC-181	Page House	Current
SC-180		
SC-183	Stevens Residence	Current
SC-187	Gomez House	Current
SC-188,189		
SC-195	Lord House	Current
SC-194		
SC-196	Sherman House	Current
SC-197	Johnston House	Current
SC-198	Olender House	Current
SC-200	West House	Current
SC-199		
SC-201	Brown House	Current
SC-207	John House	Current
SC-102,103		
SC-214,215		
SC-224		
SC-230	Crawford House	Current
SC-236	DeCrona House	Current
SC-164,165,166,192		



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DAYTON

<u>Inventory No.</u>	<u>Building</u>	<u>Name</u>
DA-2	Barton Rental House	Current
DA-220		
DA-26	Indian Motorcycles	Current
DA-30	McCubbin/Spurgeon Building	Current
DA-33	Carson and Colorado	Historic
DA-97,99,100,103,105,107	Railroad Depot	
DA-35	Lopez House	Current
DA-101,102		
DA-45	Bell Telephone Building	Current
DA-47	Herman House	Current
DA-46,49		
DA-48	Greenbeck House	Current
DA-44		
DA-50	Teegarden/Tennant Rental House	Current
DA-54		
DA-56	Teegarden/Tennant Rental House	Current
DA-55,57		
DA-64	Teegarden House	Current
DA-65	Teegarden Mobile Home	Current
DA-67	Lyon County Utility Bldg.	Current
DA-70	Como Mine Office	Historic
DA-68,69,71		
DA-78	Perondi House	Current
DA-72,73,74,76,77,79,189,190		
DA-80	O'Neil House	Current
DA-83,84		
DA-81	Dallas/Cooke House	Current
DA-82	Dallas/Cooke House	Current
DA-90	Dressler House	Current
DA-93		
DA-96,95	Shell Gas Station	Current
DA-98,191,192		
DA-108	Bar and Grill	Current
DA-111	Forsythe House	Current
DA-109,110		
DA-119		
DA-215		
DA-122	Stallings House	Current
DA-120,121,123,218		

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DA-124	Kordonoway House	Current
DA-125		
DA-127	Howard House	Current
DA-131		
DA-128	Dayton Firehouse and Town Hall	Current
DA-130	Bourland House	Current
DA-132	S & S Mini Market	Current
DA-174	Rayford House	Current
DA-175	Liebhard House	Current
DA-176	Liebhard House	Current
DA-193		
DA-201	Riordan House	Current
DA-200,206		

United States Department of the Interior  
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Storey and Lyon Counties, Nevada

Photographer: Bernadette Smith

Date: January 9, 1991

Location of Original Negative: Historic Preservation and Archeology  
123 West Nye Lane, Room 208  
Capitol Complex  
Carson City, Nevada 89710

<u>Number</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Direction</u>
1.	Main Street, Dayton	Looking E
2.	Taylor and Pike Streets, Dayton	Looking S
3.	Route 341, Silver City	Looking N
4.	Route 341, Silver City	Looking S
5.	Peddler Lane, Silver City	Looking NE
6.	Route 341, Gold Hill	Looking N
7.	Route 341, Gold Hill	Looking SW
8.	Route 341, Gold Hill	Looking S
9.	Train Bridge on Truck Route, Virginia City	Looking N
10.	Truck Route, Virginia City	Looking N
11.	"The Divide", Virginia City	Looking N
12.	B Street, Virginia City	Looking NE
13.	W. Sutton St., Virginia City	Looking SE
14.	D Street, Virginia City	Looking S
15.	C Street, Virginia City	Looking N
16.	C Street, Virginia City	Looking N
17.	Cemetery, Virginia City	Looking SSW

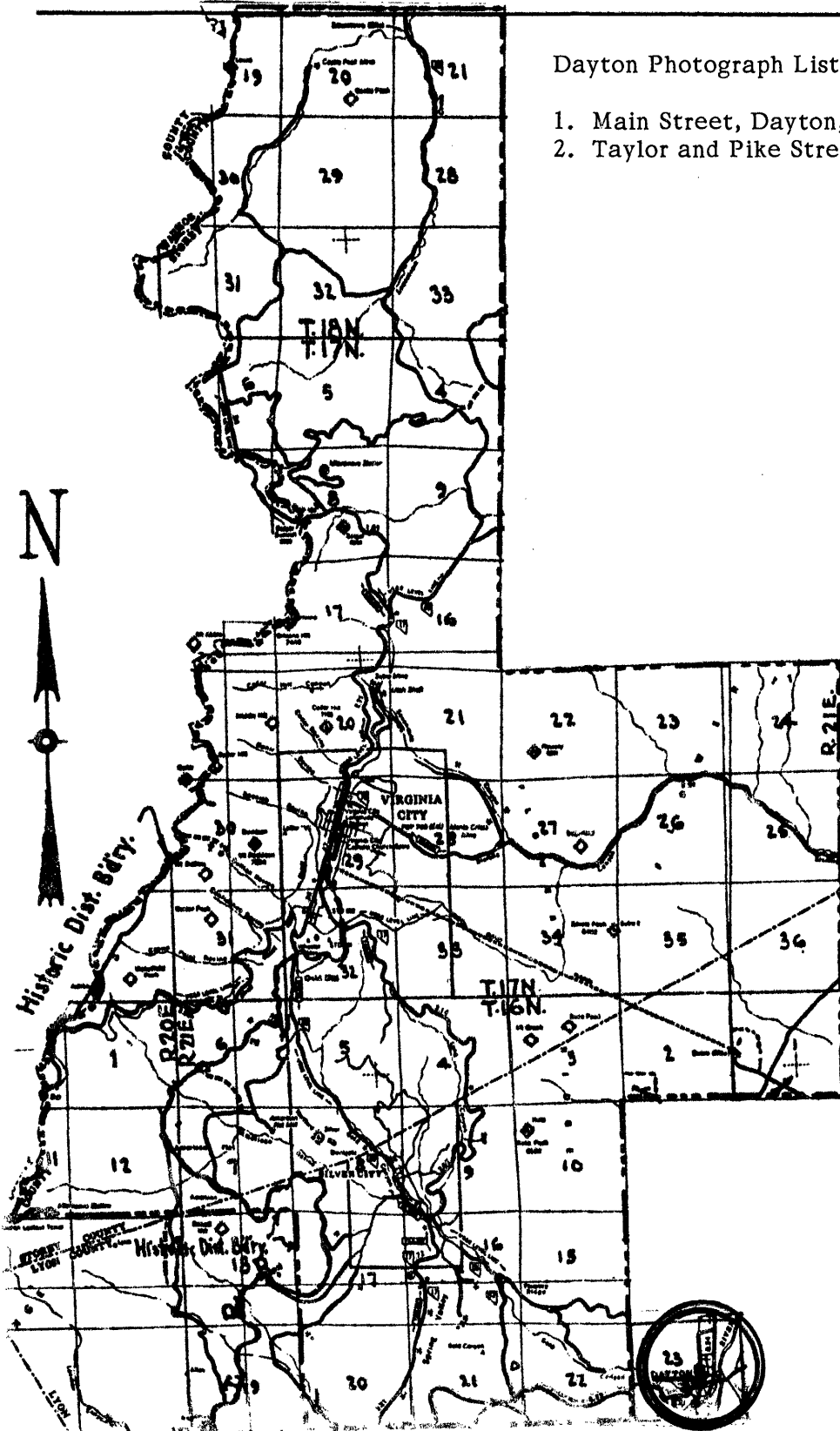
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Dayton Photograph List

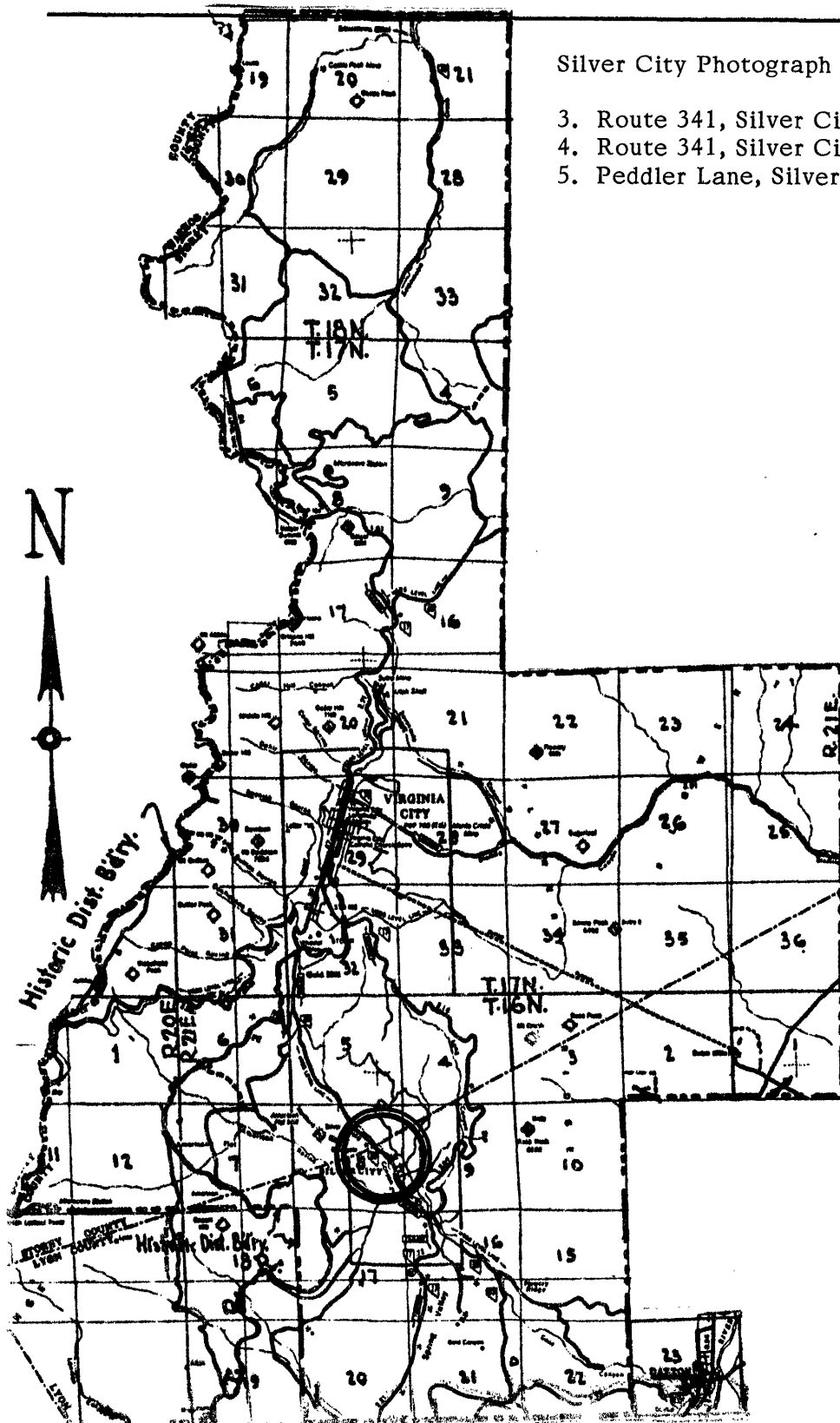
1. Main Street, Dayton, Looking East
2. Taylor and Pike Streets, Dayton, Looking South



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3. Route 341, Silver City, Looking North
4. Route 341, Silver City, Looking South
5. Peddler Lane, Silver City, Looking North East



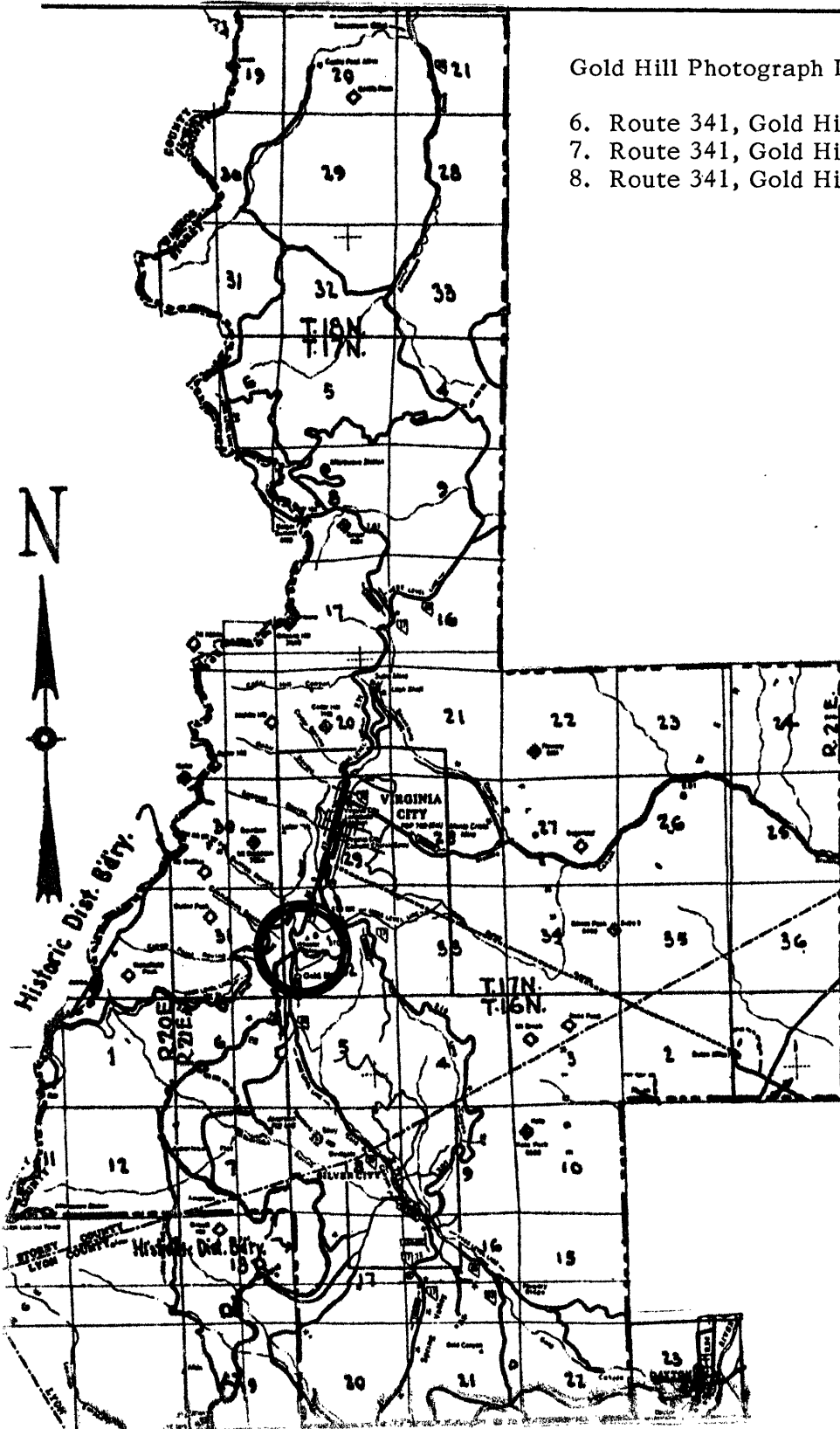
United States Department of the Interior  
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Gold Hill Photograph List

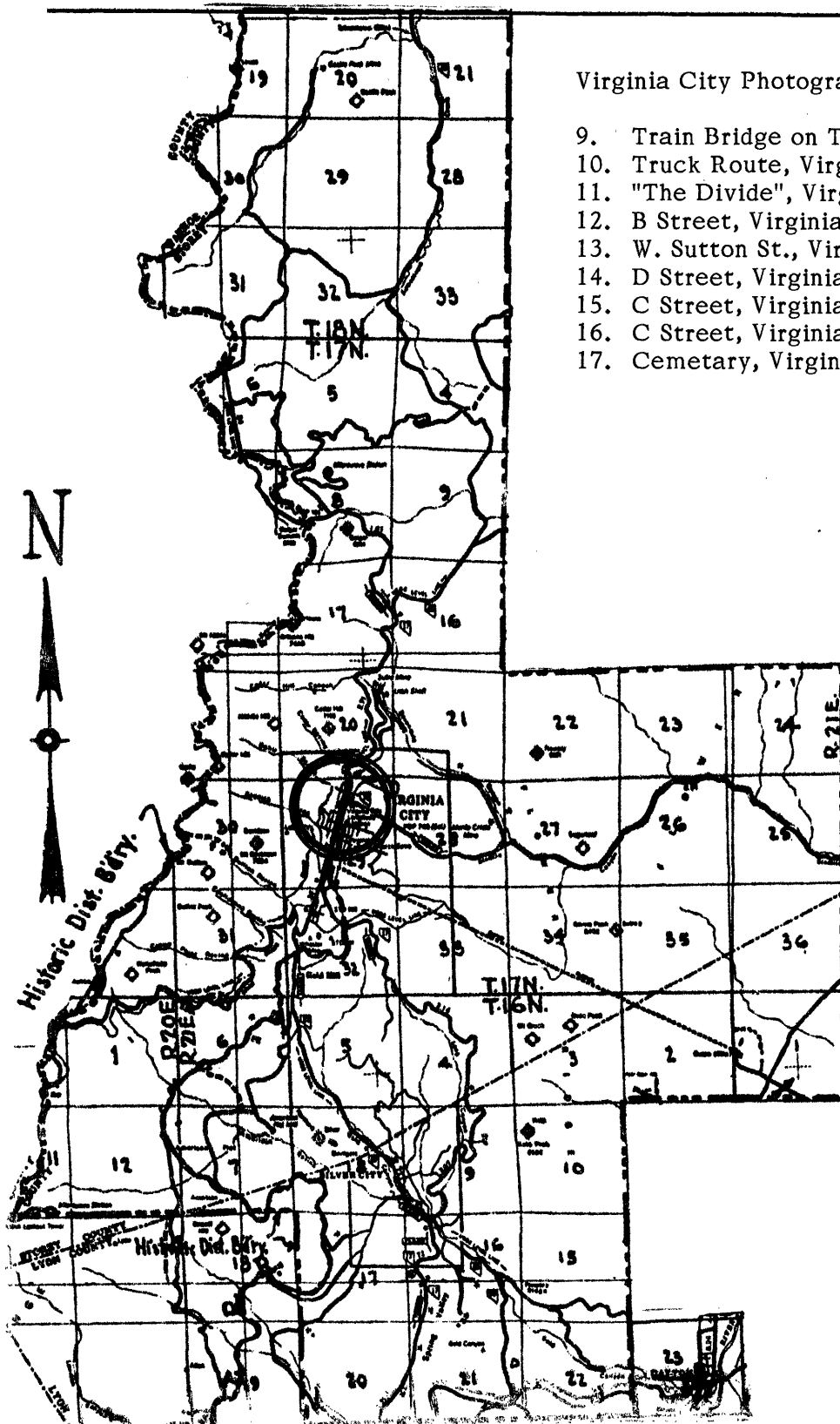
6. Route 341, Gold Hill, Looking North
7. Route 341, Gold Hill, Looking South West
8. Route 341, Gold Hill, Looking South



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## Virginia City Photograph List

9. Train Bridge on Truck Route, Virginia City, Looking North
10. Truck Route, Virginia City, Looking North
11. "The Divide", Virginia City, Looking North
12. B Street, Virginia City, Looking North East
13. W. Sutton St., Virginia City, Looking South East
14. D Street, Virginia City, Looking South
15. C Street, Virginia City, Looking North
16. C Street, Virginia City, Looking North
17. Cemetary, Virginia City, Looking South, South West

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This nomination builds on the existing Virginia City National Register Historic District and retains the same boundaries as well as the same areas of significance as the Virginia City National Historic Landmark District. The intent of the nomination is to recognize that the existing cut-off date for the National Historic District (1900) is artificial: the industrial, commercial, governmental, transportation and architectural history of the National Historic Landmark District continued in unbroken continuity until 1942. It was only at that time that the economy and social structure of the Comstock Mining District began to change from mining to the present tourism base.

The Anglo history of the Comstock Mining District began in the mid-1850s with small discoveries in the lower reaches of Gold Canyon toward Dayton. As prospectors worked their way up the canyon they continued to find small outcroppings of gold, enough to create what was then termed "local excitement." This pattern of small discoveries and local excitement continued unbroken until World War II and Executive Order L-208 which effectively ended mining as an economic base on the Comstock. There were, however, two astounding periods of great wealth. The first began in the middle 1860s and ended a few years later but created a town of over 10,000 people in Virginia City as well as smaller villages in Gold Hill and Silver City. This was the bonanza period that created the first industrial town in the West, gave Samuel Clemens his first serious writing job (he took the name Mark Twain in Virginia City) and left a legacy of small boom-town miner's shanties that still scatter the contemporary landscape.

Following this initial boom the Comstock Mining District followed what was to become its traditional pattern. As production declined so did population and hundreds of inhabitants began to move away from what seemed a losing proposition, some even taking their houses with them. Others continued to believe in the presence of more ore, buying mines at low prices, building a water system as well as a railroad, and attempting to corner the market for milling facilities on the Comstock. With the discovery of what came to be known as the Big Bonanza, the fabulous wealth and booming growth of Virginia City created a place known throughout the world. Population in Virginia City alone may have reached 40,000 for two or three years and the others villages experienced similar, though reduced, growth. It was this period that created the infrastructure of a major city on the side of Mount Davidson.

It is essential to remember, however, that this Big Bonanza was not much longer in its period of achievement than was the first and by the late 1870s the same pattern of depopulation and declining production was repeated. The same pattern of small discoveries and local excitement continued up until World War II and Executive Order L-208. War Production Order L-208 terminated precious-metal mining during World War II. It is only after the war that tourism became a factor in Virginia City and it was several more years -- aided by the Bonanza television show -- before a new economy capable of sustaining the Comstock District was solidly established. Most recently, in the 1980s, active mining has reappeared on the Comstock, but the pattern remains one of small discoveries and local excitement even to this day.



**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 2Mining

As reflected in the mining history appended to this nomination, the Comstock has been a place of discovery, development and disappointment throughout its history, including the twentieth century. While the accomplishments associated with the two Bonanza periods are documented in the National Historic District nomination, later developments in electrical pumping late in the nineteenth century, as well as ore extraction methods and milling processes are not. Fronting on a lode nearly four miles long, as much as 3,000 feet wide and occasionally 3,000 feet deep, the mining efforts that followed the booms of the 1860s and 1870s continued to encounter small quantities of ore of sufficient grade to create local excitement and often local employment as well.

Following the sharp decline in production in the late 1870s and 1880s, two pumping associations, one in 1898 and a second in 1903 formed to again explore the lower levels with some success. Equally important, a new cyanide mill in Silver City (renamed the Donovan Mill in 1918) established the new process on the Comstock and became the pattern for the much larger Butters Mill in 1902, the American Flat mill in the 1920s and a series of mills built after the rise in gold prices in 1934: the Arizona Comstock in Virginia City, the Yellow Jacket and the Crown Point in Gold Hill and both the Donovan and Dayton mills in Silver City. Likewise, open pit mining of low-grade surface ores made possible by the steam shovel and the truck left their mark in the Ophir pit, the Loring pit of the late 1930s and the Donovan pit in Silver City. Today the Houston pit in Gold Hill and the now-closed Houston mill in American Flat (1979-1985) as well as the active small dredging efforts on the broad valley floor just above Dayton are hallmarks of a continuity of mining effort on the Comstock extending back to the earliest efforts in the 1850s.

Commerce

The commercial continuity of the long period of decline and survival again remained essentially unbroken until World War II. The Virginia and Truckee Railroad continued to service Virginia City and Gold Hill and many Dayton residents worked in the yards (now demolished) in Mount House. Stores and services listed in the early Sanborn maps of 1876 and 1890 continue to be listed in 1923 and 1930 and in later telephone books as well. Although diminished in number, all the commercial establishments of the Comstock towns of the nineteenth century continued in the twentieth, inhabiting building created during the Big Bonanza. An extensive examination of jury lists in Storey County for the entire 1900 to 1942 period showed virtually no significant change in the number of mining-related jobs among the selected jurors. Services continued to exist to meet the needs of this isolated mining community and again, their proportion of the total remained virtually unchanged.

Government

Both Virginia City and Dayton continued as the county seat of Storey and Lyon counties, respectively. Although Dayton lost its status as county seat to Yerington in

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1911, Virginia City continues to this day as the Storey county seat. It is also important to note that Dayton served as a major center for WPA activity during the Depression, small testimony to its continued importance to the county. The large number of WPA-constructed outhouses in Dayton and Silver City (both Lyon County) as well as the three WPA camp buildings now used as residences serve to remind the historian of this significant governmental program and its impact on the built environment.

### Transportation

The same major transportation corridors and the same means of transportation developed during the 1860s continued to be used throughout the rest of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Geiger Grade coming up to Virginia City from Reno was employed continuously until the late 1930s when the WPA paved what was then termed an all-new "high gear" road to Virginia City, largely in response to the transition from railroad to truck in mining operations and heavy transportation. Similarly, the original road up Gold Canyon from near Dayton through Silver City and Gold Hill to Virginia City remained in use and was paved in the 1930s. At the same time that the Geiger Grade was rerouted and paved, a new "truck route" paralleling the old road up from Silver City to Virginia City was constructed.

Sadly, it was this same period that saw the final demise of the famous V & T. While the railroad had served as the primary avenue of transportation, particularly for heavy goods, until at least the 1920s, the advent of the truck and the continuing financial difficulties of the railroad and the appetite of Hollywood for V & T rolling stock and engines finally spelled the end of the railroad in 1939. Although the roadbed still survives largely intact, the connection with Carson City and the outer world is no longer in use.

It is also important to note that Silver City, bypassed by the railroad in the 1860s, developed separately from the other towns on the Comstock. Never a major industrial center in the 19th or early 20th century, it became active in the 1930s when the increased price of gold, the access by truck and the presence of a number of small mines supported renewed activity.

### Architecture

As made clear in the appended history of Virginia City, the architectural and social histories of the Comstock are virtually inseparable. Equally significant in terms of building survival, the social stratification of the mining era that extended from the 1850s to 1942 was replaced by a similarly stratified tourist economy in place by the 1960s. Elites replaced elites, often living in the same houses, while workers remained the largest number of inhabitants of all four towns, living in former homes of millworkers and miners.

With easy access by railroad to San Francisco as early as the late 1860s, the wealthy of the Comstock quickly moved away to the big city and left behind them a "clipped pyramid" of social and architectural development. At the flat top were upper middle

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 4

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class mining superintendents (few in number and often living in a combination mining office and home) and the more successful merchants with their homes spread across the upper reaches of Virginia City. Below these, both literally and figuratively, spread the commercial center of Virginia City and then the far greater number of miners', millworkers' and small shopkeepers' homes. While some of these worker's homes survived from the 1860s, many more were added in the 1870s to accommodate the vast population increase. With other short-lived spurts in mining production in the late 19th and 20th centuries, homes were again constructed, most notably during the mining boom of the Great Depression that followed the increase in the price of gold in 1934. Many buildings initially constructed during the Big Bonanza as professional offices quickly became boarding houses and continued in that use until the Second World War.

As a place experiencing a slow de-evolution that extended from 1880 to 1942 and as a place populated almost universally by working people, the Comstock developed its own survival techniques. Because this pattern extended unbroken from the late 1860s through 1942, the district embodies examples of all these techniques used over this long span of time. It became an architectural pattern to add to that was already existing when the need arose, to move buildings from place to place as they were needed, and to maintain buildings by borrowing materials from abandoned structures or by using whatever was cheapest and most available at the time. In the 1920s and 1930s abandoned homes were sold for back taxes for as little as two dollars. Because there was so little demand, many structures were purchased as an inexpensive source of firewood.

The result, as seen in the photos of contributing buildings, is not a set of pristine examples of a single period of time, but, rather, a collection that represents the entire history of the mining Comstock. Ranging from virtually unaltered miners' shanties of the 1860s and 1870s to simple homes constructed in the 1920s and 1930s to accommodate yet another small population boom, the Comstock building stock represents the continuing evolution of this mining place from the 1860s to the early 1940s. It is the continuity of social and architectural history over this long period of time, a period of decline and survival, adaptation and reuse, of small discoveries and local excitement followed inevitably by disappointment that is the distinguishing characteristic of the National Historic Landmark area.

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Virginia City Historic District

Storey, Lyon Counties, NEVADA

66000 45-8

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

for Keeper Antoinette Rice 3/27/91

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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1978 Version

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Virginia City Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

Same as above

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Virginia City

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Nevada

CODE

COUNTY

Storey/Lyon

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☒ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☒ EDUCATIONAL☒ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☒ MUSEUM☐ PARK☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME various private and public owners

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Storey County Court House

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Virginia City

STATE

Nevada

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1937, 1940

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

1100 L Street

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.



## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 14,750 acres

UTM REFERENCES

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

A 

ZONE	EASTING					NORTHING			

B 

ZONE	EASTING					NORTHING			

C 

ZONE	EASTING					NORTHING			

D 

ZONE	EASTING					NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		Storey	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
		Lyon	

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles Snell; boundary form by Marilynn Larew

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey Division, HCRS

DATE

4/21/78

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

## 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

Landmark July 4, 1961  
Designated: .....  
date

Boundary Certified: .....  
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: Robert B. Ketting  
Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9/18/78

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS

NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

\_\_\_EXCELLENT  
XGOOD  
\_\_\_FAIR

\_\_\_DETERIORATED  
\_\_\_RUINS  
\_\_\_UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

\_\_\_UNALTERED  
XALTERED

### CHECK ONE

XORIGINAL SITE  
\_\_\_MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

#### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Virginia City, Nevada, lies almost equidistant between Reno and Carson City, on the face of Mount Davidson, 6,205 feet about sea level. Access from Reno is up the breathtaking and serpentine Geiger Grade; the road from Carson City is less terrifying but equally scenic.

The town is plastered in an unlikely grid some 1,500 feet below the summit of Mount Davidson, the lettered streets running roughly north and south, the named streets east and west. C Street is the main business thoroughfare with the site of the former red-light district below on D Street, and the Catholic and Episcopalian churches farther down the hill. The farthest down of the lot was the Chinese quarter. The county courthouse, Piper's Opera House, the Miners' Union Hall, and middle-class residences occupy B Street. The mansions--the Mackay House, the Castle, the Savage Mining Office--are scattered about without regard to their neighbors, giving a cachet to their locale rather than huddling together on some Nob Hill from which they would have taken strength from exclusivity.

There never was a mining town that did not burn; their flimsy construction and a taste for 24 hour hell-raising combined with awful regularity to wipe the towns out. If the diggings were good, the towns were rebuilt before the ashes cooled--in the same jerry-built way. Virginia City burned four times before the Great Fire of 1875--in 1863, 1865, 1866, and 1873--causing over a million and a half dollars worth of damage. The Great Fire of 1875 (October 26) caused \$12,000,000 in property loss. The great center section of town, from high above A Street through the Chinese quarter below and from Taylor Street on the south to Carson Street on the north, burned. Most of the buildings in that section date from after the fire. Today's town with its wooden sidewalks and garish signs reflects the hey-day of Virginia City's bonanza with an admixture of modern honky-tonk, thanks to Nevada's gambling laws, and all around linger the reminders of Comstock glory--now crumbling head-frames and tailings piles. Many of the faded residences are taking on a new life as they are rehabilitated and returned to their former brilliance.

#### Important Buildings

1. The Storey County Courthouse (1876). This rectangular brick building dates from after the Great Fire. Plain brick on three sides, the building has a front facade which is a lively Italianate wedding cake, the background brick, the confectionery stone. It is a five bay, two-story structure with a slightly projecting central pavilion composed of a round-arched entry framed with double flat pilasters and terminated by stone quoins. A projecting balcony supported by decorative double brackets is topped on the front corners by double urns. The porch serves to frame the triple, flat-arched window in the second story of the central pavilion. This window complex is topped by a carved segmental pediment with a central cartouche, the whole supported by ornamental brackets. The center window embrasure is blind and shelters a unique statue of Justice without a blindfold. The right and left wings are composed of two bays each,

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Virginia City Historic District

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the first floor windows being double and round-arched with pediments matching the one over the statue of Justice. The second story windows are also double, with flat arches surmounted by triangular carved pediments with central cartouches. The cornice is supported by decorative brackets and topped by a pediment broken by a heavily ornamented chimney bearing the date of the building on its front face. The brick is painted white and the applied decorations are picked out in yellow and white, giving the building a lively and sophisticated look. The courthouse is still in use including the old jail and the second floor courtroom.

2. The Fourth Ward School (1876). This large rectangular wooden building of the Second Empire Style stands on a raised stone foundation and rises through two stories to a shingle Mansard roof pierced by dormers carrying double round-arched windows and semi-circular "eyebrow" roofs. Each facade of the building has a projecting central pavilion. The central pavilion of the front facade rises three stories in a tower-like projection with its own Mansard roof pierced by louvered ventilator dormers with semi-circular roofs. A ten step staircase with one baluster to each step leads to the first floor entrance which is flanked at the top by curious carved rosettes giving the impression of volutes. The right and left wings of the front facade are three bays each, having round-arched windows and semi-circular pediments supported by decorative brackets. The side facades have a projecting central pavilion and wings, three bays total, with double round-arched windows and semi-circular pediments with decorative brackets. The building is painted white with maroon trim including the water table, double belt course, cornice and cornice brackets. It was used as a school, first grade through high school, until 1936. It has recently been renovated and is now a community center.

3. St. Mary's in the Mountain Catholic Church (1876). This Victorian Gothic church of brick with stone trim is, with the possible exception of the courthouse, the most architectonic structure in Virginia City. Basilican in form with the steeple at the entrance end, the church has steep pointed arches over the three portals, double lancet windows above the right and left portals, and buttresses on the corner of the facade and framing the portals and rose window (eight in all). Machicolations line the eaves. The bell in the tower is of silver as befitted the premier silver town in America. The interior walls are plain plaster, a fine hammer-beam roof, carved pews, and the vari-colored light filtering through the stained glass of the double-lancet windows being the only decoration save for the Stations of the Cross and a painting over the altar. St. Mary's is an active parish church.

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4. St. Paul's Episcopal Church (1876). A charming Gothic Revival building somewhat dwarfed by its more elaborate neighbor St. Mary's, St. Paul's is constructed of wood with wooden quoins, a steep-pitched gable roof and corner tower with its own quoins and topped by a steep, shingled spire. The portal is flanked by double lancet windows surmounted by a drip mould. Over the portal is a triple-lancet window with a drip mould. The tower fenestration consists of a wide lancet on the first level, a double lancet on the second level, and a triple-lancet louver in the bell-chamber, all with drip moulds. St. Paul's is an active church.

5. The First Presbyterian Church (1867). This stick style structure is one of the few buildings in Virginia City to have survived the Great Fire. The central pavilion projects slightly and the portal and double-lancet window above it are framed in Tudor arches. A wooden bull's-eye is centered above the window, and the gable roofed campanile holds a small bell. Single gothic-arched windows with drip moulds flank the portal. The building is painted white and the stick trim, the drip moulds and the eaves of the steep-pitched gable roof are painted a rich chocolate. The church is an active one.

6. Piper's Opera House (1883). Built after the Great Fire, this three story frame theater with arcaded brick facade was one of the finest houses in the West, with a rake stage, spring dance floor, and suspended balcony. The house is dark today, but it once rang to applause for the likes of Maude Adams, Edwin Booth, and Lily Langtry.

7. Knights of Pythias and Miners' Union Halls (1876). These brick buildings are good examples of the commercial styles of a century ago, with their tall ground floor doors. The Knights of Pythias Hall has, in the second story, three tall windows encased in round arches with elaborate imposts and keystones. The cornice is now missing; the facade terminates in a false front with classical detailing. The Miners' Union Hall still has its steel fire doors on the first floor, four windows topped by segmental arches with keystones in the second floor, and the false front continuing through a dentil and a pleasantly curved parapet. The first floor is shaded by a porch supported by four Doric columns and surmounted by a balustrade. Both buildings are under restoration.

8. The Territorial Enterprise (1862). Mark Twain made this the most famous newspaper in the west. The plain brick facade of this building is enlivened by an eclectic arcaded porch with superimposed Corinthian capitals 3/4 of the way up the posts, the whole crowned by a balustrade. The four windows of the second story are cleanly set in, and the cornice is supported by decorative brackets. The building houses a newspaper museum.

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9. The Castle (1868). This charming wooden Victorian cottage was built by mine superintendent Robert Graves behind a massive retaining wall topped by a balustrade. The front facade is composed of three sections, the center being a three-story tower with mansard roof pierced by a dormer in each face. The left section is a two story rectangular block with a bay-window on the ground floor and a double window topped by a bull's-eye on the second floor. To the right a stepped-back two-story section includes the entrance set in a semi-circular arch and sheltered by a porch supported by a pillar and two engaged columns, decorated by an ox-yoke curved opening and dentilled cornice, and topped by a balustrade. Scrollwork decorates the corners of the eaves of all sections, and the edges of each section are emphasized by wooden quoins enclosed in moulding. Each of the sections has a dentilled cornice. The house is currently a museum.

10. The Savage House (1876). This wooden Second Empire structure was once the Savage Mining Company office and later the mine superintendent's residence. Two stories and the mansard roof high, the building is notable for the elaborate treatment of the window and door surrounds, the cornice and decorative brackets, the porch columns with intricate scrollwork, and the balustrades which surround the house at the ground floor and second story on three sides of the house. Built into the side of the hill, the house shows only its second story and mansard to C Street, while the full two and a half stories are visible on D Street. The house is a museum and private residence.

11. The Mackay Mansion (1860's). This rectangular red brick house rises through two stories to a hipped roof with central chimney decorated with recessed arches and a corbelled cap. The entrances are tall wood and glass doors with transoms set, like the double hung four over four windows, into embrasures capped with stone lintels. The windows have green louvered shutters. The building is surrounded by a colonaded porch supported by square columns nearly Tuscan in style. The springs of the arches are inset with elaborate millwork, and the whole porch is topped by a balustrade. The house is a museum.

The central business district of Virginia City is made up of two and three story brick buildings. The first floors contain shops and saloons. They have tall windows and doors with transoms over them. The second story windows are usually tall and set in arched openings of one kind or another. Occasionally they are set in cleanly. Most of the buildings have ornamental cornices supported by brackets, and nearly all of them have porches over the wooden sidewalks supported by pillars occasionally ornate. Often the porches are topped by balustrades. Despite the decay of an occasional building, the business district is a good example of the 1870's and 1880's style of commercial architecture.

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The tiny villages of Silver City, Gold Hill, and Dayton are also included in the boundary. They have a few buildings left like those in Virginia City. When the Comstock was in bonanza, buildings stretched from Virginia City to Silver City with hardly a break. Almost all are gone now, and the restless surge of men and mining equipment is stilled. All up and down the sides of the hills amidst the sparse brush cover are yellow piles of tailings as if some giant insect had passed that way chewing up the earth and spitting it out. The mines are closed and the sound of the tourist is heard in the land.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Mining
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1859

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Virginia City, on the Comstock Lode, was the first silver rush town; it was also the first area in the West where the methods of large-scale industrial and corporate enterprise were intensely applied and developed. As the experimental laboratory for these techniques, which were introduced with such success between 1860 and 1864, Virginia City thus became the prototype of the subsequent important mining towns that appeared on the mining frontier in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and eastern Nevada.

As Rodman W. Paul has aptly expressed it: "Technologically, economically, and sociologically the Comstock Lode represented a big and abrupt stride beyond the farthest limits reached in California during the 1850s. No California mining venture of the 1850s had demanded such a huge investment, none had been conducted on such a flamboyantly large scale, none had required such a rapid advance in engineering and technology. Nor had California mining, even in the field of quartz, led to the factorylike industrial relations that so soon characterized Virginia City and Gold Hill.<sup>1</sup>"

Finally, the great bonanzas of the Comstock Lode and Virginia City mines, totaling \$292,726,310 and paying \$125,335,925 in dividends, from 1859 to 1882, dominated western mining history from 1870 to 1879.<sup>2</sup>

## History

In the western Nevada desert country the Washoe Mountains extended eastward in the Great Basin from the Sierra Nevada. About 2,000 feet below the summit of Mount Davidson lay a great vein of decomposed gold and silver quartz, which extended for two-and-a-half miles through the eastern face of Mount Davidson and underneath the future sites of the cities of Gold Hill and Virginia City. Ever since 1850 a small group of prospectors from California had been searching with indifferent success for placer gold in this region. On January 28, 1859, however, Peter O'Riley and Patrick McLaughlin hit pay dirt.<sup>3</sup> Passing by shortly afterward, Henry Comstock

<sup>1</sup>Rodman W. Paul, Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880 (New York, 1963), 57.

<sup>2</sup>Of the total bullion produced and reported for tax purposes in Nevada during the period November, 1864 to December 31, 1880, the Comstock Lode provided \$259,530,227 out of the Grand total of \$365,341,583.

<sup>3</sup>The discoverers included Henry T. P. Comstock, James Fennimore, Peter O'Riley, and Patrick McLaughlin

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talked himself into a share in the claim, and so loud was his boasting, that the whole lode finally bore his name: the Comstock Lode. Believing they had placer claim, the prospecters were disappointed when the "blue stuff" clogged the cleats of their cradle and yielded only a small amount of gold. About June 12, 1859, however, they hit a quartz vein, which they named the Ophir Mine. Later that month samples of the blue quartz were sent to Nevada City, California, where assays revealed the ore to be three-fourths silver, a metal with which the miners were then unfamiliar. The news spread instantly and triggered the first silver rush in American history. By April 1860, some 10,000 hopefuls from California had arrived and Virginia City and Gold Hill were laid out as cities.

Unlike the gold placer deposits in California, which had been easily mined by the unexperienced with few tools, the Comstock Silver was locked in quartz veins which required expensive machinery to extract. Unable to mine, the men then turned instead to speculation; nearly 17,000 claims were located, 37 mining companies were organized in 1860 with paper stock values exceeding \$30,000,000 and 49 more were incorporated in 1861, these were the popular activities. Every miner was a potential millionaire, although few had sufficient cash to pay their grocery bills. Of the vast number of claims filed, only a dozen were to be worked profitably, and one-half of the total production of the Comstock and four-fifths of the dividends were to come from four mines located in adjacent pairs: namely, the Crown Point and Belcher, and the Consolidated Virginia and California mines.

By August, 1860 many disappointed miners had returned to California, but Virginia City still had 42 stores, 42 saloons, 2 stamp mills, 5 lumber yards, 3 hotels, 5 boarding houses, many other business establishments, 6 restaurants, and 868 dwellings, as well as a population of 2,345. The adjacent town of Gold Hill had 638 people and 179 houses. Total population in Nevada was then 6,857.

In 1860-62 period Virginia City mine owners struggled with the new problems that confronted them in mining silver. These included the necessity of driving deep shafts to follow the veins and also of devising machinery that could profitably work the ore.

George Hearst, a quartz mine operator of Nevada City and Grass Valley, California, acquired a one-sixth interest in the Ophir Mine at Gold Hill. At the depth of 175 feet Hearst found that his men were unable to proceed deeper, because even the strongest timbers broke under the weight of the earth. In November, 1860, Hearst brought in Philip Deidesheimer, an engineer and manager of a quartz mine in El Dorado County, California, to work on the problem. By December Deidesheimer had invented the famous "square set" plan to timbering, which

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enabled mines eventually to be pushed down even to the 4,000 foot level on the Comstock Lode. In 1862 Almarin B. Paul, of Nevada City, California, who had been working in Nevada since 1860, devised highly improved versions of the basic California stamp mill and also a chemical method that became known throughout the mining world as the "Washoe pan process," or "Washoe pan amalgamation," to extract silver from the ore. Blowers for ventilation and powerful pumps also had to be improved as the shafts went even deeper, to provide air and to prevent underground streams from flooding the mines.

In 1861 the Comstock Mines began yielding their bullion in quantity and San Francisco capital poured into Virginia City to build roads and provide machinery. The San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board was organized on September 11, 1862, and stock shares in the Comstock Mines were sold to some 30,000 people, thus making Virginia City a true industrial suburb of San Francisco. By 1863 Virginia had a population of 15,000. Home and office buildings were erected in great number; gas and sewer pipes were installed, and eighty stamp mills were in operation. Next to San Francisco, Virginia City was the most important metropolitan center in the Pacific Coast.

In 1863 the Comstock mines were also unionized. The "Miners Protective Association," formed at Virginia City in 1863, became the larger "Miners' League of Storey County" in 1864; which had as their purpose the establishment of a standard wage of \$4.00 a day for miners. The hard times of 1864-75, however, resulted in the dissolution of the unions. With the return of prosperity, however, a new and much more powerful "Miners Union" was established on July 4, 1867. Most of the Comstock's 3,000 miners joined this union, which successfully established the \$4.00 rate in 1867 and the eight hour day in 1872. From Virginia City similar unions were subsequently organized in other Nevada and California mining towns.

When decreased bullion production caused hard times at Virginia City in 1864, William C. Ralston, president and founder of the San Francisco Bank of California, and William Sharon, his agent at Virginia City, made a series of large loans to desperate Comstock mill operators and mine owners. When these notes came due, Ralston foreclosed and the stamp mills, together with many of the mines and much other property, came into the hands of the Bank of California. Ralston organized the Union Milling and Mining Company in 1867 thereby consolidated a number of mills and relocating them on the Carson River, where water power could operate the mills at less cost. Efficiency was increased and competition was eliminated by his monopoly of milling facilities. Ralston also acquired ownership of the water companies and lumber firms that served the Comstock mines. In 1869 he constructed the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to carry the ore from mines the twenty-one miles to the mills on the Carson River. In 1872 he next extended the railroad north to Reno, where it connected with

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the new transcontinental line of the Central Pacific-Union Pacific railroad. Under Ralston's direction, the "bank crowd" were the "Kings of the Comstock" from 1864 to 1875. They had rationalized the Comstock operations, and in doing so, had provided increased efficiency at the cost of monopolizing milling and transportation and forcing their way into most of the profitable mining operations.

Ralston's monopoly was not impregnable. In 1870 John P. Jones and Alvinza Hayward brought in a bonanza of \$60,000,000 at the Crown Point and Belcher mines before Ralston was aware of their find. A second group successfully challenged Ralston's control in 1874-75. Testing a theory that deep in the earth the Comstock Lode grew wide and deep, James G. Fair, James C. Flood, John W. Mackay, and William S. O'Brien of San Francisco quietly acquired the Consolidated Virginia and California mines in 1871 by buying stocks at reduced prices. In 1872 they began driving shafts deep in the rock of Mount Davidson. In March, 1873, they struck highly favorable signs, and in October, at the 1,167 foot level, they struck the "Big Bonanza," a lode of gold and silver 54 feet wide. Yielding a total of \$105,168,859 from 1873 to 1882, and paying \$74,250,000 in dividends, this was the greatest single bonanza in mining history. The mad speculative wave that followed the discovery of this bonanza ruined William Ralston and broke the Bank of California's control of the Comstock Lode. Fair, Flood, Mackay and O'Brien became the new "Silver Kings" and built their palaces on Nob Hill in San Francisco. But even the fabulous wealth of the Comstock Lode could not last forever. Production reached an annual high of more than \$38,000,000 in 1876, but by 1878 it had fallen to \$20,500,000, then decreasing to \$7,500,000 in 1879, \$3,600,000 in 1880, and dropping to only \$1,400,000 in 1881. Comstock stocks which had been valued at \$3000,000,000 in 1875, were only worth \$7,000,000 in 1880. The population of Virginia City which had increased from 11,359 in 1870 to 20,000 in 1875, then fell to 15,448 by 1880, and to 9,000 by 1889.

The influence of the Comstock Lode, 1860-1880, was enormous. Wealth was poured into San Francisco, establishing that city as the Queen City of the Pacific Coast. Unlike the California gold rush, which distributed the money widely, a small number of individuals accumulated immense fortunes from the Comstock Mines. These wealthy men were to be prominent in subsequent chapters of California's, Nevada's, and the nation's history. Both mining and speculation were organized as large scale business operations for the first time in the West on the Comstock. The great influx of silver, which prompted the government to establish a branch mint at Carson City and the large new mint at San Francisco, altered the ratio between gold and silver. Because of the Comstock rush, Nevada became a territory in 1861 and a state on October 31, 1864. Freightage, farming, and

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ranching were greatly stimulated<sup>4</sup> and the construction and location of the first transcontinental railroad was also affected. Finally, some of the most important technological achievements in the mining industry were worked out at the Comstock. These included Deidesheimer's squire set system of timbering, Paul's Washoe process of reducing ores, and in 1878 Adolph Sutro also completed his great engineering project, the 20,480 foot Sutro tunnel which was constructed to drain the Comstock Mines, at a cost of \$6,500,000.

Of all the people who took part in the rush to Washoe, only a handful ever grasped, much less held on to, the Big Bonanza. Neither McLaughlin, who sold out for \$3,500 and later lost his life wandering, or O'Riley, who died in an insane asylum, ever benefited. Comstock, who in promoting the strike promoted himself, died in 1870 outside Bozeman, Montana, still prospecting. He was probably murdered. Ralston, as his Bank of California closed its doors in 1875, was found floating in San Francisco Bay, probably a suicide. The bank reopened six weeks later and paid off its depositors. William O'Brien, one the Big Four of the Consolidated Virginia, died of Bright's disease in San Rafael, California, in 1878 without having much time to enjoy this new wealth.

And then there were the winners. From the small beginnings in Virginia City and the Ophir Mine, George Hearst went on to found one of the great American fortunes based on mines in Mexico and the Homestake and Anaconda mines in South Dakota and Montana. The Hearst name is perhaps best known today for its newspaper chain, but the San Francisco Examiner was merely a toy Hearst bought to forward his political ambitions. The money was from mining.

Adolph Sutro was a loser who won. His famous tunnel, completed after the boom was over, never paid its costs, but he sold out at the peak and retired to San Francisco where he made a fortune in real estate (he owned one-twelfth of the city at one time) and was elected Mayor of the City in 1894 on the Populist ticket.

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<sup>4</sup>For example, the number of cultivated acres in Nevada increased from 14,560 acres in 1860 to 81,106 acres by 1880. The population of Nevada in 1860 was 6,857; of these 194 were farmers and ranchers. Population of Nevada increased as follows: 16,374 in 1871, 42,491 in 1870, 62,266 in 1880 and fell to 47,355 in 1890.

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James G. Fair was another Silver King who held on to his money, investing in land, buildings, and railroads. In 1881 he was elected to a term in the Senate, but he was chiefly known for the gaudy ambition of his family.

Of all the Silver Kings, James Mackay was the most popular. After his spectacular success in Virginia City, he acquired much western real estate and became a director of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Moving first to San Francisco, then to New York City, and finally to Europe, Mackay fought a spectacular battle to break the telegraph and cable monopoly of Jay Gould. He laid two submarine cables to Europe in 1884 and, in 1886, he began a battle on land to break the Gould-Western Union monopoly. Mackay was planning a Pacific cable when he died in London in 1902.

Part of the town of Dayton forms a non-contiguous segment of the Virginia City Historic District because of its close connection with the Comstock Lode.

Dayton is the oldest town in Nevada. In 1849 Spofford Hall set up a trading post there to provision Forty-niners. Most travelers stopped along the Carson River to recruit their animals after the terrible Forty Mile Desert, and many improved their time by prospecting, but although some gold was discovered, most of the men moved on to the California fields. Some men stayed to work placer deposits up Gold Canyon to the northwest, however, and a settlement grew up around the trading post. Because of the availability of a more or less constant water supply in the Carson River, a stamp mill was located there.

It was miners working up the gulch from Dayton that found the fabulous Comstock Lode. When the rush to Washoe began, many of Dayton's residents took themselves and their houses up the hill to Virginia City, but the town did not die, because the water remained. Eventually Dayton came to be the milling center for the whole Comstock Lode, as well as a lumber, timber, and supply center for the region. At its height, in 1865, it had a population of 2,500. By 1900 the population was down to 500.

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List of Historic Structures in Virginia City, Nevada. See accompanying map  
(List prepared by Charles W. Snell, February 20, 1961).

- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Open Pit Mine         | 22. Crystal Bar               |
| 2. 4th Ward School       | 23. Virginia Club             |
| 3. Savage Mng Co. Office | 24. Rock Shop                 |
| 4. J. W. Mackay Home     | 25. Tourist Bureau            |
| 5. Presbyterian Church   | 26. Old Mr. Comstock Bar      |
| 6. 62 Bar                | 27. Totem Trading Post        |
| 7. Old Washoe Club       | 28. Pioneer Drug Store        |
| 8. Post Office           | 29. Tel. Office & Book Store  |
| 9. Sazarac               | 30. Delta Saloon & Cafe       |
| 10. Graves Castle        | 31. Sawdust Saloon & Cafe     |
| 11. Cole Mansion         | 32. Bomund's Art Gallery      |
| 12. Mt. Davidson-Sun Mt. | 33. Territorial Enterprise    |
| 13. Fire House           | 34. Bucket of Blood Saloon    |
| 14. Catholic Church      | 35. Museum of Memories        |
| 15. Episcopal Church     | 36. 39 V & T RR Tunnel        |
| 16. Osbiston Shaft       | 37. Chinatown Ruins           |
| 17. Combination Shaft    | 38. KP & Miners' Union Halls  |
| 18. King Mansion         | 39. Site--International Hotel |
| 19. Lucius Beebe Res.    | 40. L O O F Hall              |
| 20. Court House          | 41. Capitol Bar & Cafe        |
| 21. Piper's Opera House  | 42. Molinelli Hotel           |

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43. Silver Stope
44. Comstock Hotel Dine-Bar
45. Masonic Hall
46. Sky Deck Bar
47. Silver Dollar Hotel
48. Virginia Garage
49. Brass Rail Saloon
50. Union Brewery Saloon
51. Idle Hour Ceramics
52. Ruins V&T RR Pass Depot
53. V&T RR Freight Depot
54. City Gas Tank
55. Power Sub. Sta.
56. C & C Shaft Ruins
57. Ruins Gasworks
58. Nevada Brewery
59. Area Disc. Comstock Lode
60. Con. Virginia Mill
61. Site of Ophir Shaft
62. Evans Stamp Mill
63. Capt. Storey Mnt.
64. Cemeteries
65. Union Shaft Ruins

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William Wright, (Dan De Quille, pseud.) The Big Bonanza: An Authentic Account of the Discovery, History and Working of the World - Renounced Comstock Lode of Nevada (San Francisco, 1876) reprinted under the title The Big Bonanza, Oscar Lewis, ed. (New York, 1947); William S. Greever, The Bonanza West, The Story of the Western Mining Riches, 1848-1900 (Norman 1963), 87-156; Oscar Lewis, Silver Kings, the Life and Times of Mackay, Fair, Flood and O'Brien, Lords of the Nevada Comstock Lode (New York, 1947); George D. Lyman, Ralston's Ring: California Plunders the Comstock Lode (New York, 1937); Rodman W. Paul, Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880 (New York, 1963), 56-108; Grant H. Smith, The History of the Comstock Lode, 1850-1920 (University of Nevada, "Bulletin", XXXVII, No. 3, Geology and Mining Series No. 37, Reno, 1943); Eliot Lord, Comstock Mining and Miners (U. S. Geological Survey, "Monographs," IV, Washington, 1883), reprinted with an introduction by David F. Myrick (Berkeley, 1959); Myron Angel, History of Nevada, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men and Pioneers (Oakland, 1881) reprinted with an introduction by David F. Myrick (Berkeley, 1958); Mark Twain, Roughing It (Hartford, 1872). Cecil G. Tilton, William Chapman Ralston, Courageous Builder (Boston, 1935).



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The National Historic Landmark for Virginia City includes selected portions of the Virginia City Historic District as set up by the Virginia City Historic Commission. This includes Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, the Sutro Tunnel, the town of Dayton, and the surrounding mining district.

The District is in two units. The western boundary of the first unit is the Washoe County-Storey County line. The district includes, from north to south, the following sections of Township 17 north, Range 21 east: partial sections 19 and 30, full sections 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29; the following sections of Township 16 north, Range 21 east: the western half of section 1, full sections 2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 9, 10, and 16; also partial section 36 of Township 17 north Range 20 east; and sections 1, 12 and partial section 11 of Township 16 north, Range 20 east.

The second unit is part of the town of Dayton. The verbal boundary description for the Dayton unit is keyed to the accompanying verbal boundary description sketch map. Beginning at the corner of Fifth Avenue and U.S. 50, proceed in a southerly direction along the western curb of U.S. 50 circa 19,000 feet to the junction of U.S. 50 and River Street; thence in a northerly direction along the western curbs of River and Shady Lane Streets to a point about 75 feet from the junction of Shady Lane and Logan Alley; thence in a westerly direction circa 90 feet to the back of the Bob Johnson property; thence in a northerly direction circa 110 feet to the northwest corner of the Dawton Sand and Gravel property; thence in an easterly direction 240 feet along the north curb of Logan Alley to the junction of Logan Alley and Second Street; thence in a northerly direction 50 feet along the western curb of Second Street to the corner of the Church property; thence around the Church property; thence in a northerly direction circa 380 feet along the western curb of Second Street to the junction of Second Street and Fifth Avenue; thence in an easterly direction 360 feet along the southern curb of Fifth Avenue to the junction of Fifth Avenue and U.S. 50, the point of beginning.

UTM'S

Unit One

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- B. 11.278030.4351740
- C. 11.278000.4350120
- D. 11.275510.4348560
- E. 11.273860.4347000
- F. 11.272260.4347000
- G. 11.266280.4348820
- H. 11.299720.4356770

Unit Two (Dayton)

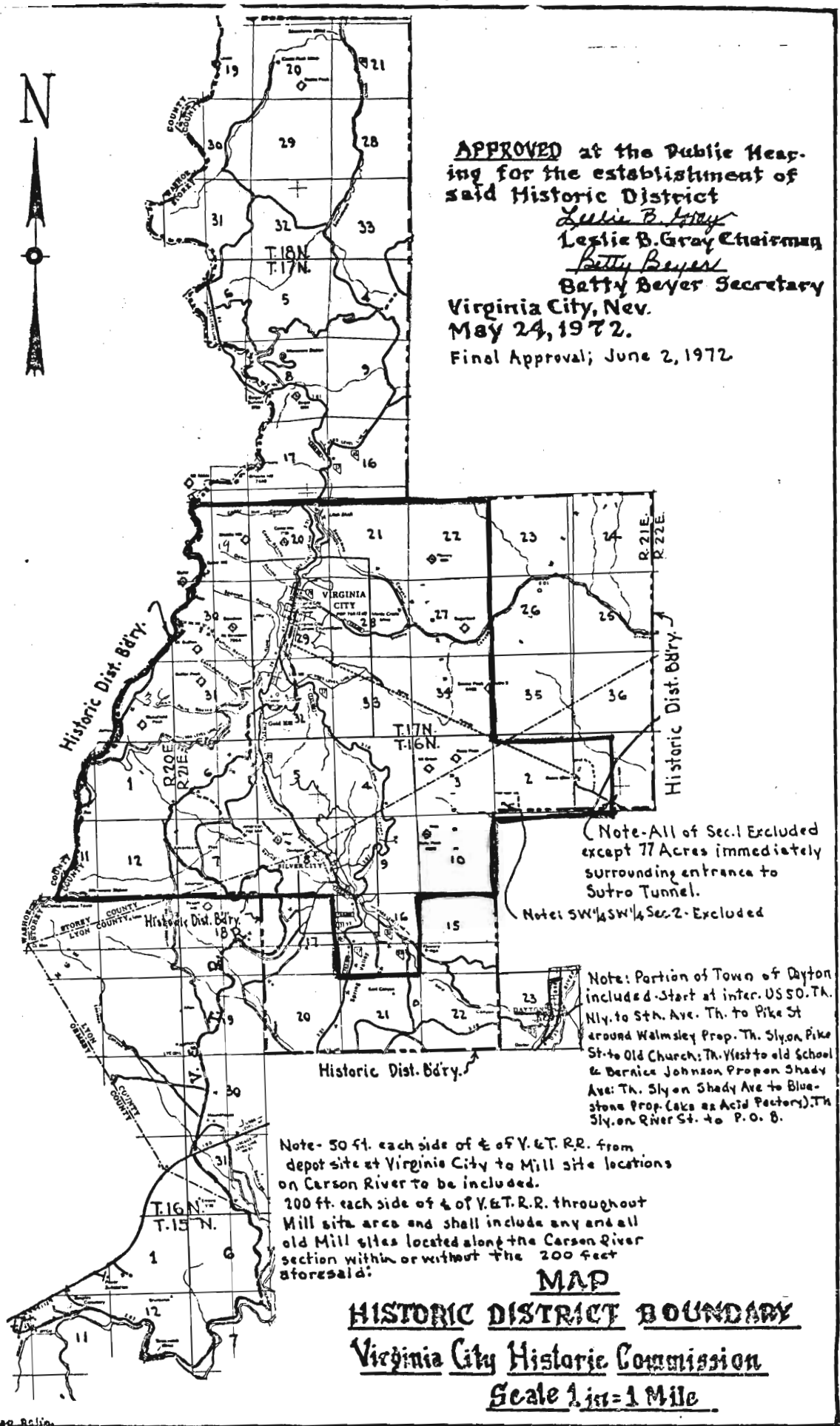
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- C. 11.276300.4345600
- D. 11.276350.4346650



N/ AP. 2



NHL  
boundary  
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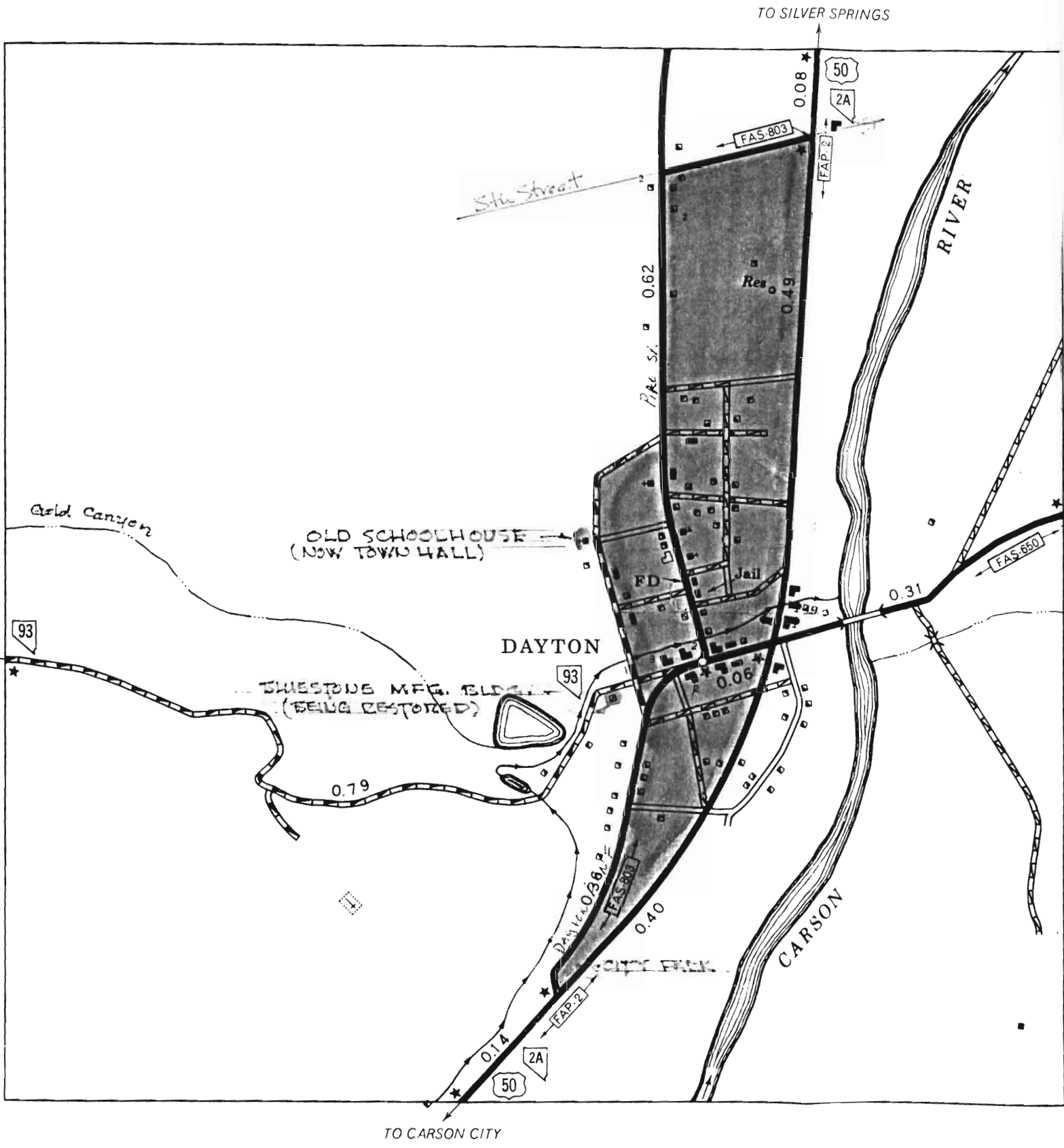
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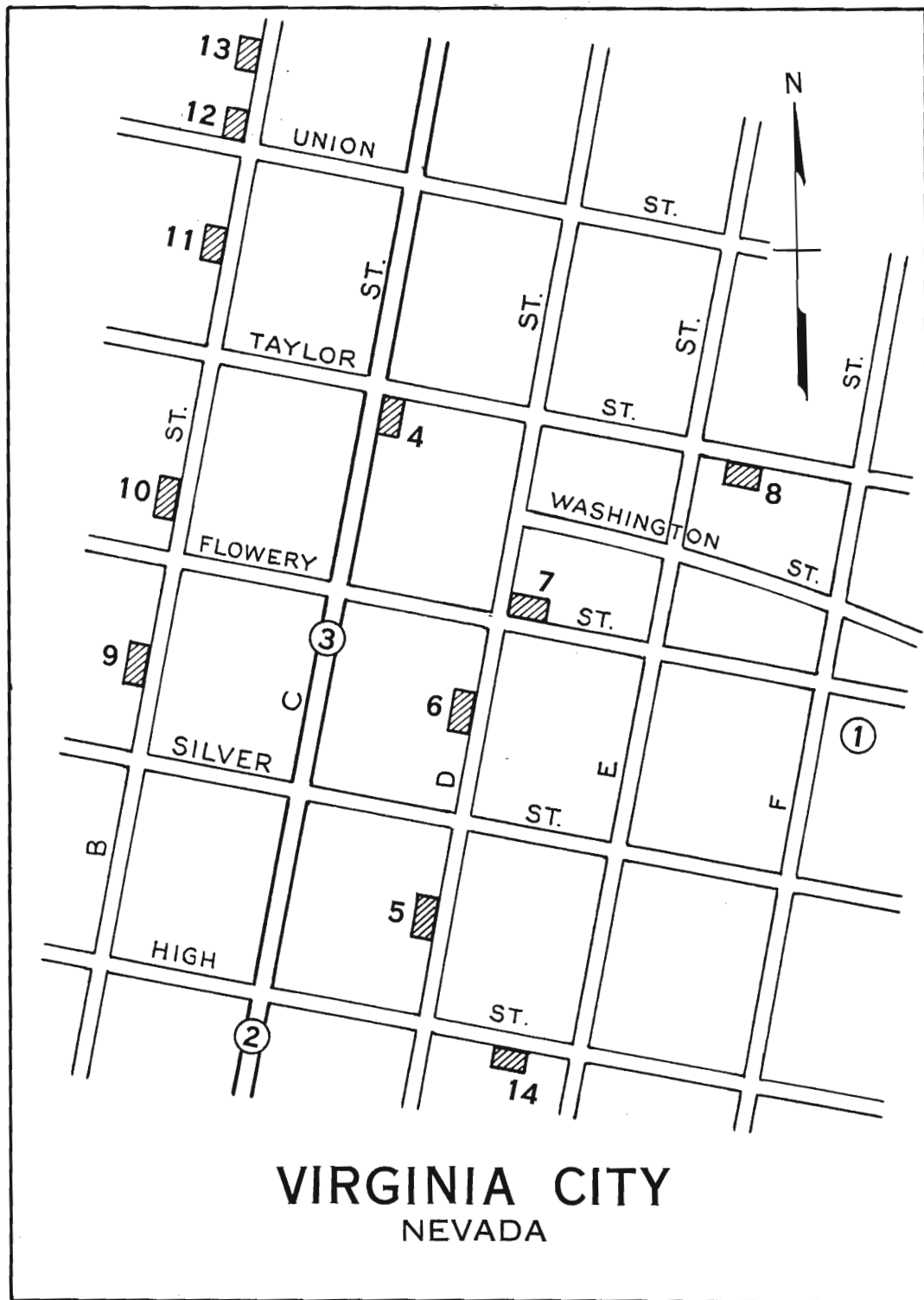
STOREY  
COUNTY  
NEVADA





10621

A. 11.276600.4346700  
B. 11.276550.4345850  
C. 11.276300.4345600  
D. 11.276350.4346650





UNITED STATES  
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Revised

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Nevada	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XV - Mining Frontier	3. APPROX. ACREAGE 1,000 acres
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Virginia City (Historic District)		4. APPROX. ACREAGE Carson City
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Storey County, on State Highway 17, 23 miles south of Reno, or 15 miles north of /.		
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (If no administrator, list different from owner) Unincorporated town of Virginia City and various private owners.		
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)		

Virginia City, on the Comstock Lode, was the first silver rush town; it was also the first area in the West where the methods of large-scale industrial and corporate enterprise were intensely applied and developed. As the experimental laboratory for these techniques, which were introduced with such success between 1860 and 1864, Virginia City thus became the prototype of the subsequent important mining towns that appeared on the mining frontier in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and eastern Nevada.

As Rodman W. Paul has aptly expressed it: "Technologically, economically, and sociologically the Comstock Lode represented a big and abrupt stride beyond the farthest limits reached in California during the 1850s. No California mining venture of the 1850s had demanded such a huge investment, none had been conducted on such a flamboyantly large scale, none had required such a rapid advance in engineering and technology. Nor had California mining, even in the field of quartz, led to the factorylike industrial relations that so soon characterized Virginia City and Gold Hill."

Finally, the great bonanzas of the Comstock Lode and Virginia City mines, totaling \$292,726,310 and paying \$125,335,925 in dividends, from 1859 to 1882, dominated western mining history from 1870 to 1879.<sup>2</sup>

In the western Nevada desert country the Washoe Mountains extended eastward in the Great Basin from the Sierra Nevada. About 2,000 feet below the summit of Mount Davidson lay a great vein of decomposed quartz, comprised of gold and silver, which extended for two-and-a-half miles through the eastern face of Mount Davidson and underneath the future sites of the cities of Gold Hill and Virginia City. Ever since 1850 a small group of prospectors from California had been

(Continued)

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

See page 6.

## 9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Attention: list reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.)

Historic American Building Survey; Olaf T. Hagen, "Report on Planning for the Preservation and Development of Virginia City, Nevada," (W.P.S. Typescript, San Francisco, April 12, 1940), 10 pp. #568, 595-599, 608-10, 1698-1730, 1808,

10. PHOTOGRAPHS - See pp. 9-11. CONDITION ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Tourist town	13. DATE OF VISIT June 22, 1958
14. NAME OF RECORDER (NAME AND ADDRESS) Charles W. Snell <i>Charles W. Snell</i>	15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE April 17, 1964

\*COPY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/4 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)

A

searching with indifferent success for placer gold in this region. On January 28, 1859, however, a small group of prospectors finally discovered at Gold Hill in Gold Canyon an outcropping of the vein later famous as the Comstock lode.<sup>3</sup> Believing they had a placer claim, the prospectors were disappointed when the "blue stuff" clogged the cleats of their cradle and yielded only a small amount of gold. About June 12, 1859, however, they hit a quartz vein, which they named the Ophir Mine. Later that month samples of the blue quartz were sent to Nevada City, California, where assays revealed the ore to be three-fourths silver, a metal with which the miners were then unfamiliar. The news spread instantly and triggered the first silver rush in American history. By April 1860, some 10,000 hopefuls from California had arrived and Virginia City and Gold Hill were laid out as cities.

Unlike the gold placer deposits in California, which had been easily mined by the unexperienced with few tools, the Comstock Silver was locked in quartz veins which required expensive machinery to extract. Unable to mine, the men then turned instead to speculation; nearly 17,000 claims were located, 37 mining companies were organized in 1860 with paper stock values exceeding \$30,000,000 and 49 more were incorporated in 1861, these were the popular activities. Every miner was a potential millionaire, although few had sufficient cash to pay their grocery bills. Of the vast number of claims filed, only a dozen were to be worked profitably, and one-half of the total production of the Comstock and four-fifths of the dividends were to come from four mines located in adjacent pairs; namely, the Crown Point and Belcher, and the Consolidated Virginia and California mines.

By August, 1860 many disappointed miners had returned to California, but Virginia City still had 42 stores, 42 saloons, 2 stamp quartz mills, 5 lumber yards, 3 hotels, 5 boarding houses, many other business establishments, 6 restaurants and 868 dwellings, as well as a population of 2,345. The adjacent town of Gold Hill had 638 people and 179 houses. Total population in Nevada was then 6,857.

In 1860-62 period Virginia City mine owners struggled with the new problems that confronted them in mining silver. These included the necessity of driving deep shafts to follow the veins and also of devising machinery that could profitably work the ore.

George Hearst, a quartz mine operator of Nevada City and Grass Valley, California, acquired a one-sixth interest in the Ophir Mine at Gold Hill. At the depth of 175 feet Hearst found that his men were unable to proceed deeper, because even the strongest timbers broke under the weight of the earth. In November, 1860, Hearst thus brought in Philip Deidesheimer, an engineer and manager of a quartz mine in El Dorado County, California, to

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work on the problem. By December Doidesheimer had invented the famous "square set" plan of timbering, which enabled mines eventually to be pushed down even to the 4,000 foot level on the Comstock Lode. In 1862 Almarin B. Paul, of Nevada City, California, who had been working in Nevada since 1860, devised highly improved versions of the basic California stamp mill and also a chemical method that became known throughout the mining world as the "Washoe pan process," or "Washoe pan amalgamation," to extract silver from the ore. Blowers for ventilation and powerful pumps also had to be improved as the shafts went even deeper, to provide air and to prevent underground streams from flooding the mines.

In 1861 the Comstock Mines began yielding their bullion in quantity and San Francisco Capital poured into Virginia City to build roads and provide machinery. The San Francisco Stock and Exchange Board was organized on September 11, 1862 and stock shares in the Comstock Mines were sold to some 30,000 people, thus making Virginia City a true industrial suburb of San Francisco. By 1863 Virginia had a population of 15,000. Home and office buildings were erected in great number; gas and sewer pipes were installed, and eighty stamp mills were in operation. Next to San Francisco, Virginia City was then the most important metropolitan center in the Pacific Coast.

In 1863 the Comstock mines were also unionized. The "Miners Protective Association," formed at Virginia City in 1863, became the larger "Miners' League of Storey County" in 1864; which had as their purpose the establishment of a standard wage of \$4.00 a day for miners. The hard times of 1864-65, however, resulted in the dissolution of the unions in 1864. But with the return of prosperity, however, a new and much more powerful "Miners Union" was established on July 4, 1867. Most of the Comstock's 3,000 miners joined this union, which successfully established the \$4.00 rate in 1867 and also eight hour working day in 1872. From Virginia City similar unions were subsequently organized in other Nevada and California mining towns.

When decreased bullion production caused hard times at Virginia City in 1864, William C. Ralston, president and founder of the San Francisco Bank of California, and William Sharon, his agent at Virginia City, made a series of large loans to desperate Comstock mill operators and mine owners. When these notes came due, Ralston foreclosed and the stamp mills, together with many of the mines and much other property, came into the hands of the Bank of California. Ralston organized the Union Milling and Mining Company in 1867 thereby consolidating a vast number of mills and also relocating the stamp mills on the Carson River, where water power could operate the mills at less cost. Efficiency was increased and competition was eliminated by his monopoly of milling facilities. Ralston also acquired ownership of the water companies and lumber firms that served the Comstock mines. In 1869 he constructed the Virginia and Truckee Railroad to carry the ore from mines the twenty-one miles to the mills on the Carson River. In 1872 he next extended the railroad north to Reno, where it connected with the new transcontinental line of the Central

Pacific-Union Pacific railroad. Under Ralston's direction, the "bank crowd" were the "Kings of the Comstock" from 1864 to 1875. Facilities at Virginia City were thus consolidated, improved, and efficiency increased. In short, mining was placed on a large scale business basis.

In spite of all these precautions, however, Ralston's monopoly was not impregnable. In 1870 John P. Jones and Alvinza Hayward brought in a bonanza of \$60,000,000 at the Crown Point and Belcher mines before Ralston was aware of their find. A second group successfully challenged Ralston's control in 1874-75. Testing a theory that deep in the earth the Comstock Lode grew wide and deep, James G. Fair, James C. Flood, John W. Mackay, and William S. O'Brien of San Francisco quietly acquired the Consolidated Virginia and California mines in 1871 by buying stocks at reduced prices. In 1872 they began driving shafts deep in the rock of Mount Davidson. In March, 1873, they struck highly favorable signs, and in October, at the 1,167 foot level, they struck the "Big Bonanza, a lode of gold and silver 54 feet wide. Yielding a total of \$105,168,859 from 1873 to 1882, and paying \$74,250,000 in dividends, this was the greatest single bonanza in mining history. The mad speculative wave that followed the discovery of this bonanza ruined William Ralston and broke the Bank of California's control of the Comstock Lode. Fair, Flood, Mackay and O'Brien became the new "Silver Kings" and built their palaces on Nob Hill in San Francisco. But even the fabulous wealth of the Comstock Lode could not last forever. Production reached an annual high of more than \$38,000,000 in 1876, but by 1878 it had fallen to \$20,500,000, then decreasing to \$7,500,000 in 1879, \$3,600,000 in 1880, and dropping to only \$1,400,000 in 1881. Comstock stocks which had been valued at \$300,000,000 in 1875, were only worth \$7,000,000 in 1880. The population of Virginia City which had increased from 11,359 in 1870 to 20,000 in 1875, then fell to 15,448 by 1880, and to 9,000 by 1889.

The influence of the Comstock Lode, 1860-1880, was enormous. Wealth was poured into San Francisco, establishing that city as the Queen City of the Pacific Coast. Unlike the California gold rush, which distributed the money widely, a small number of individuals accumulated immense fortunes from the Comstock Mines. These wealthy men were to be prominent in subsequent chapters of California's, Nevada's, and the nation's history. Both mining and speculation were organized as large scale business operations for the first time in the West on the Comstock. The great influx of silver, which prompted the government to establish a branch mint at Carson City and also the large new mint at San Francisco, altered the ratio of gold and silver and probably caused European nations to demonitize silver. Because of the Comstock rush, Nevada became a territory in 1861 and a state on October 31, 1864. Freightage, farming, and ranching were greatly stimulated and the construction and location of the first transcontinental railroad was also affected. Finally, some of the most important technological achievements in the mining industry were worked out at the Comstock: These included Deidesheimer's square set system of timbering, Paul's Washoe process of reducing ores, and in 1878

dolph Sutro also completed his great engineering project, the 20,480 foot Sutro tunnel which was constructed to drain the Comstock Mine.

#### Present Appearance:

Fire, the enemy of all mining towns, largely destroyed the structures erected in Virginia City prior to 1875. Serious fires swept through the city in 1863, 1865, 1866, and 1873, burning an estimated total of \$1,625,000 in property. But the great fire which virtually changed the face of Virginia City occurred on October 26, 1875, and resulted in a loss of about \$12,000,000. The burned district included all of the city between Taylor Street on the south, and Carson Street on the north, Stewart Street on the west and the Chinese quarter on the east. Some 300 business houses, 1,000 dwellings, and the \$500,000 mill of the Consolidated Virginia Mine was destroyed.

Occurring during a boom period, Virginia City was soon rebuilt and the present appearance of the town therefore largely dates from after 1875-76.

Virginia City possesses to a considerable degree the atmosphere and appearance of its 1875-1878 boom period. The town is located 6,205 feet above sea level, on the side of Mount Davidson, and about 1,622 feet below the summit of that mountain. Both high above and far below "C" street, the main street, are a substantial scattering of original buildings, interspersed with yellowing mine dumps and the ruins of mine works. "C" Street itself is still lined with two and three-story brick structures and rough board sidewalks. These buildings were once ornate houses of chance, saloons, and restaurants; today many have retained their original function and flavor, thanks to Nevada's gambling laws, and make lured bids to attract the throngs of visitors with window displays of faded photographs, chunks of Comstock ore, and similar curios. Of particular interest on "C" Street is the "Territorial Enterprise" building, erected in 1862. Here, Mark Twain took his first job as writer, working as a reporter from May, 1862 to May, 1864, and adopting his pen name. He later described his experiences in Virginia City in his classic book, "Roughing It", published in 1872. Another interesting building on "C" street is the Fourth Ward School House, completed in 1876; this frame structure is four stories high and served as a combined grammar and high school until 1936. Its 18 rooms could accommodate 1,025 students.

Above "C" Street, on A and B Streets, are fine (but unpainted and often crumbling) mansions of the former Silver Kings. On B Street is located Piper's Opera House, a splendid example of a mining frontier theater. Built in 1883, this is a long, three-story, frame building with a two-story enclosed porch on the front. Among its unusual architectural features are a suspended balcony, the rake or sloping stage, and the spring dance floor. The stage boxes are now tarnished and many of the old interior fittings are gone, but the theater itself

CARSON CITY

(ph=photograph  
phc=photocopy) **HABS** COLLECTION

Alfred Chartz House (1876)

2 ext. ph. '72  
1 int. ph. 72  
7 data pp

Abraham Curry House (1871)

4 ext ph 72  
1 ext phc  
10 data pp

GWG Ferris House ca. 1869

2 ext ph 72  
3 int ph 72  
11 data pp

General Views 1860-70

2 phc from top of stage house, from 2nd and Carson Streets

Lew M. Meder House ca. 1875

5 sheets 1973 (site, plan, elevations)

Methodist Church 1865 and additions

1 ext ph 72  
6 int ph 73  
2 ext phc (1 pre-1909, 1 post-1909)  
8 data pp

James D. Roberts House 1859 (moved 1873)

restored 1971-3  
5 sheets 1973

St. Peter's Episcopal 1867 and additions

7 sheets  
4 ext ph 73  
2 int ph  
1 int phc ca. 1880  
10 data pp

David Smaill House c. 1876

3 ext ph 1972  
1 int ph  
1 ext phc c. 1885  
7 data pp

Steward Nye House ca. 1860

3 ext ph 72  
1 int ph 72  
11 data pp 72

Nevada State Capitol

5 ext ph 1940, 1972  
8 int ph 1972  
2 ext phc 1872, 1875  
1 ext phc of engraving n.d.  
6 phc of arch. drawings 1869-  
15 data pp

CARSON CITY (CONT'D)

Mathias Rinckel Mansion

4 ext ph 72  
2 int 72  
13 data pp

E. D. Sweeny Bldg 1860 ca.

1 ext ph 73  
3 ext phc 1868, 75, 68  
8 data pp

Mark Twain's House late 19th c.

1 photo 1940

U.S. Mint 1866-69 and additions

6 ext ph 1940, 1972  
2 int ph 72  
1 ext phc 1879  
2 ext phc 1971  
3 ext phc of arch drawings 1874  
12 data pp

U.S. Post Office 1889-91

4 ext ph 1940, 72  
9 data pp

Virginia and Truckee RR shops 1872-4

8 sheets 72  
7 ext ph 39, 72  
3 ext phc 1882, c. 1900, 1949  
k int phc 1938  
11 data pp

Henry Yerington House c. 1870 and additions

4 ext ph 72  
5 int ph 72  
2 ext phc 1870, 1872  
1 int phc 1889  
13 data pp

## DAYTON

Bluestone Manufacturing Company 1860's (ruinous)  
1 sheet 1973

Sutro Tunnel Entrance 1869-88 (to facilitate work in mines)  
1 ph n.d.

## WEEKS vicinity

Fort Churchill, now state park  
19th century (built to protect miners on Comstock Lode and  
emigrants to California)  
records

## AURORA

General view along Main Street  
1 ph ca. 1934

## GOLD HILL

Liberty Fire House late 19th c.  
2 ph 1937 (1 int)

Miner's Union Hall late 19th c.  
4 ph 1940

## VIRGINIA CITY

Blaubelt Mansion  
2 ph n.d.

Cemetery  
6 ph 1940

1st Street Commercial Buildings  
1 ph 1940

C Street Commercial Bldgs 19th c.  
21 ph 1937, 38, 40

Comstock House 19th c.  
1 ph 1937

Crystal Saloon late 19th c.  
1 ext. ph 37  
e int 40

Episcopal Church late 19th c.  
2 ph 1936, 40

Evening Chronicle Bldg. late 19th c.  
1 ph 1936

Fire House  
1 ph 1940

Fire Station  
1 ph 1940



VIRGINIA CITY (cont'd)

4th Ward School

9 sheets 73  
3 ext ph 37

Frame Store

1 ph 40

Frederick House

2 ph n.d.

General Views

panoramas mid and late 19th c.  
11 ph, 37, 40

Hall of Records

2 ph n.d.

Hardward and General Store

1 ph 1937

Harness Shop 19th c.

1 ph. 40

House

4 ph n.d.

Hose House

1 ph 1940

King House

8 ph 37 ( 7 interior)

Knights of Pythias Hall 1876

5 sheets 73  
1 ext ph 37

Jail

int details  
3 int ph

Masonic Hall 1875

1 ph 37

Mine General View

1 ph n.d.

Miners' Union Hall 1876 (for measured drawings, see Knights of Pythias)

2 ext ph 37, 40

Molinelli's Hotel

1 ph 37

Norcross Mining Office

3 ph 37, 40

VIRGINIA CITY (cont'd)

Old Bar

1 ext ph 37

Palace Clothing Store

1 ph 37

Pipers Opera House

7 sheets 73

8 ext ph 39, 40 (ruinous)

Safe Vaults office of Consolidates Virginia Mining Company

1 ph 37

Shaft House distant view

1 ph 40

Shaft House

1. ca. 1934 ph

Silver Hotel

1 ph 37

St. Mary's in the Mountains

10 ph 37, 40

~~Salvage~~ Mining Office

2 ph 40

Storey County Court House

5 ph 37, 40

Mark Twain "Enterprise"

1 ph 37

Sutro Mansion

1 ph 40 distant view

Union Brewery

1 ph 37

Virginia Hotel

1 ph 37

Virginia City News Bldg

1 ph 1937

Virginia City Union Sunday School

1 ph 37

Wells Fargo Bldg

9 ph and phc, 1865, 98, 15, 38

Rhodes Cabin

3 pp. report

7 ph

3 drawings



"Evening Chronicle" Building, "C" Street  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-39  
HABS [Cal 186]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
14-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

1936-1937

Molinelli's Hotel, "C" Street  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-38  
HABS [Cal-187]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
13-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

March 1937

Norcross Mining Office  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-41  
HABS [Cal 183-3]

HABS  
NEV  
IC-VIRG  
20-3



March 1937

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

Union Brewery  
Virginia City, Nevada

NEV-15-37  
HABS [Cal 181]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
29-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

1937

King House  
Virginia City, Nevada

NEV-15-31  
HABS [Cal 1263-1]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG-  
28-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

March 1937



Frederick House  
Virginia City, Nevada

HABS <sup>NEV-15-26</sup>  
[Cal-1261-1]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
25-1

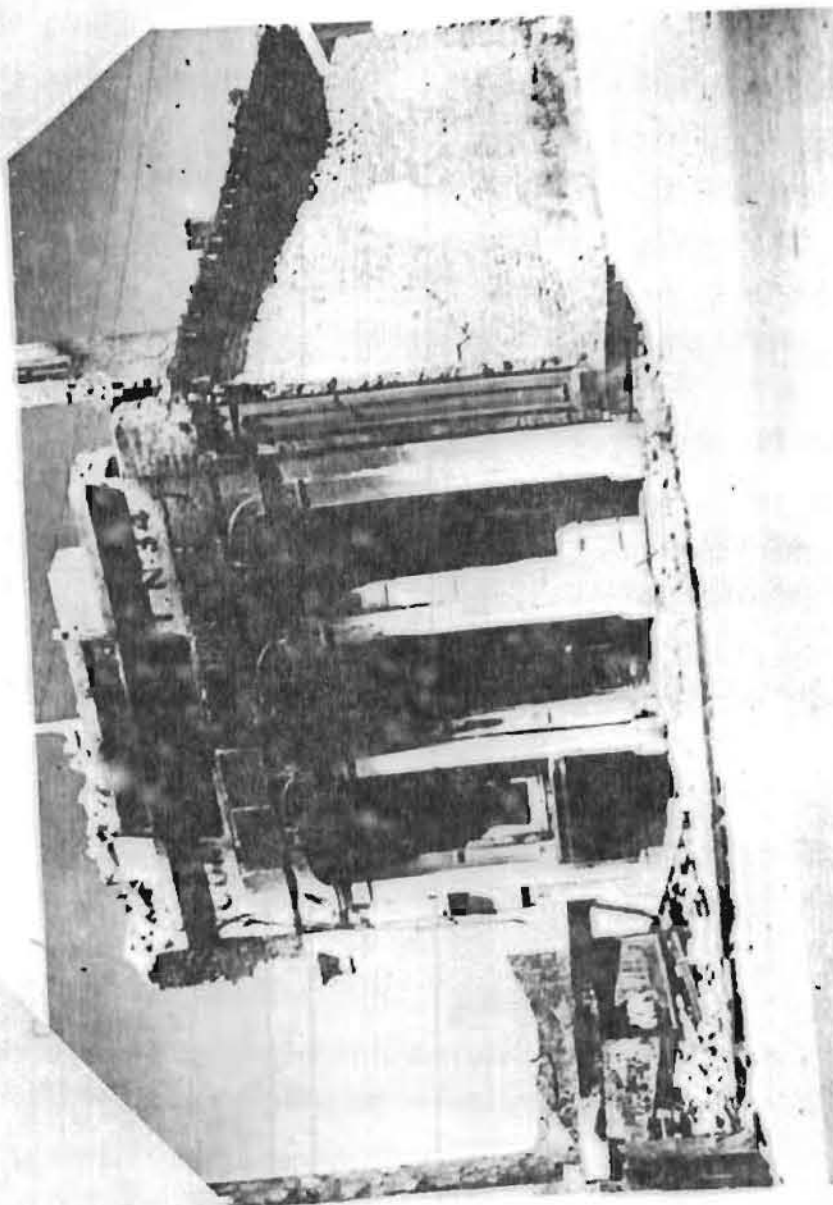


Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, San Francisco

Fire Station  
Virginia City, Nevada

HABS [NEV-15-88  
Cal 1856-2

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
44-2



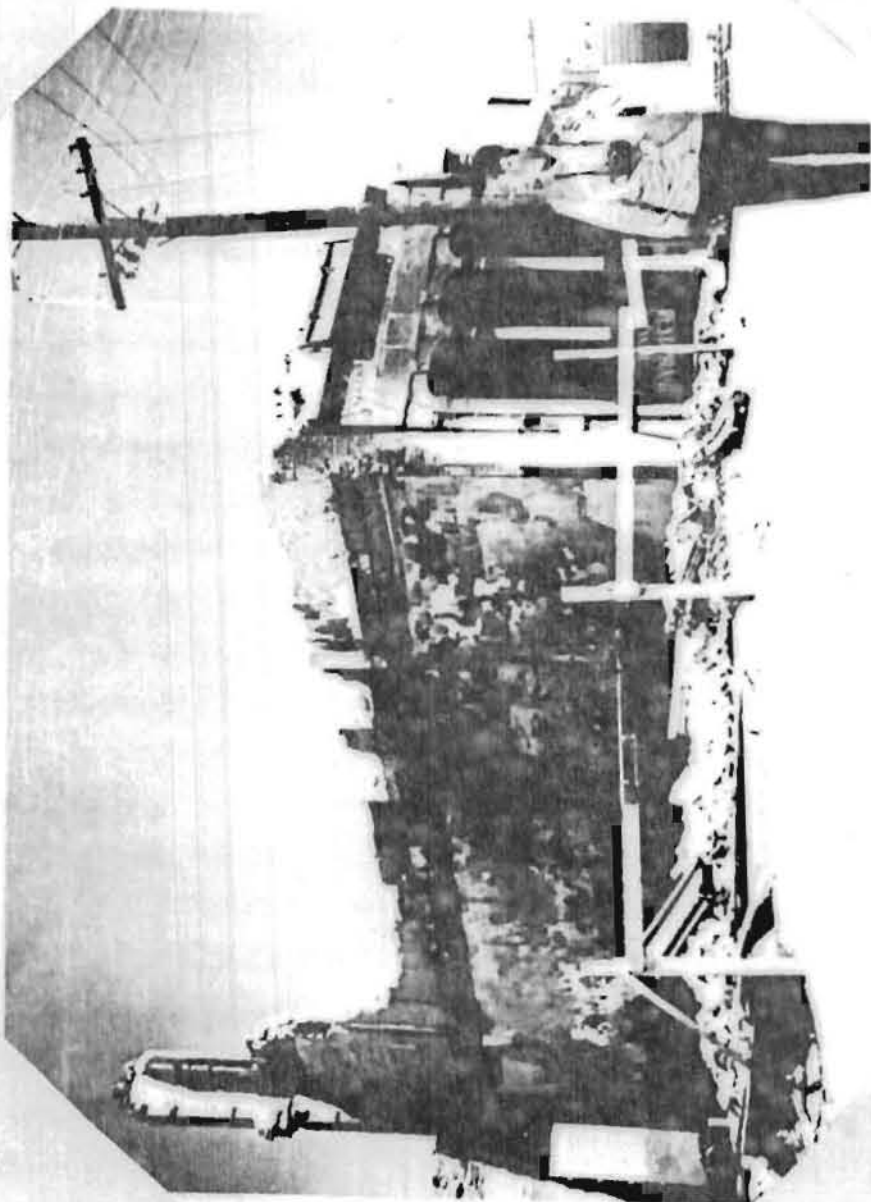
June 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Photo by N. L. McAfee, San Francisco

Fire Station  
Virginia City, Nevada

NEV-15-88  
HABS [Cal-1856-1]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
44-1



June 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Photo by N. L. McAfee, San Francisco

DAMAGED BY FIRE ABOUT APRIL 1940



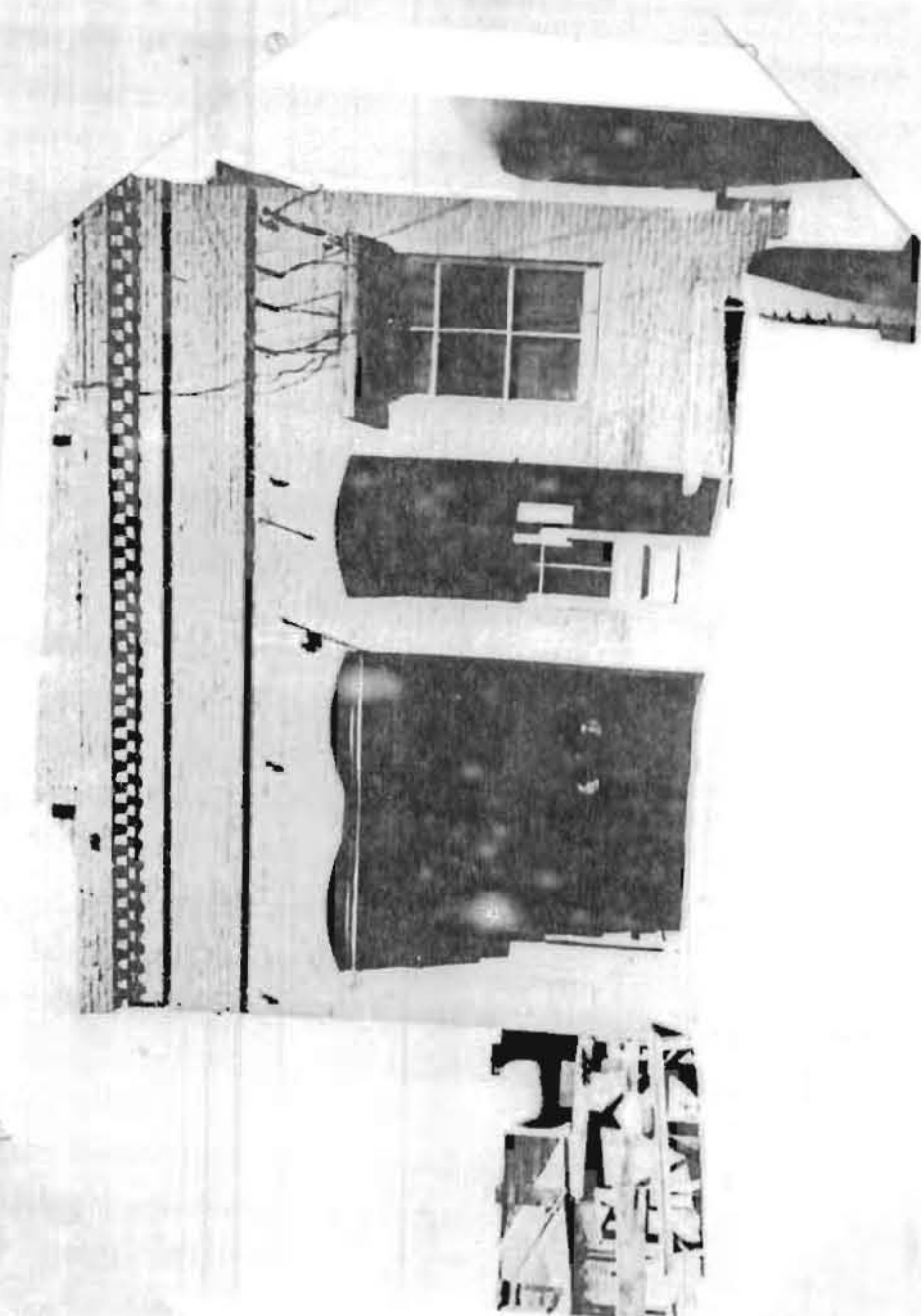
Fire House (present)  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nev.

NEV-15-87  
HABS [Cal 1855]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
43-1

June 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Photo by N. L. McAfee



Hose House  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-82  
HABS Cal 1341

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG-  
38-1



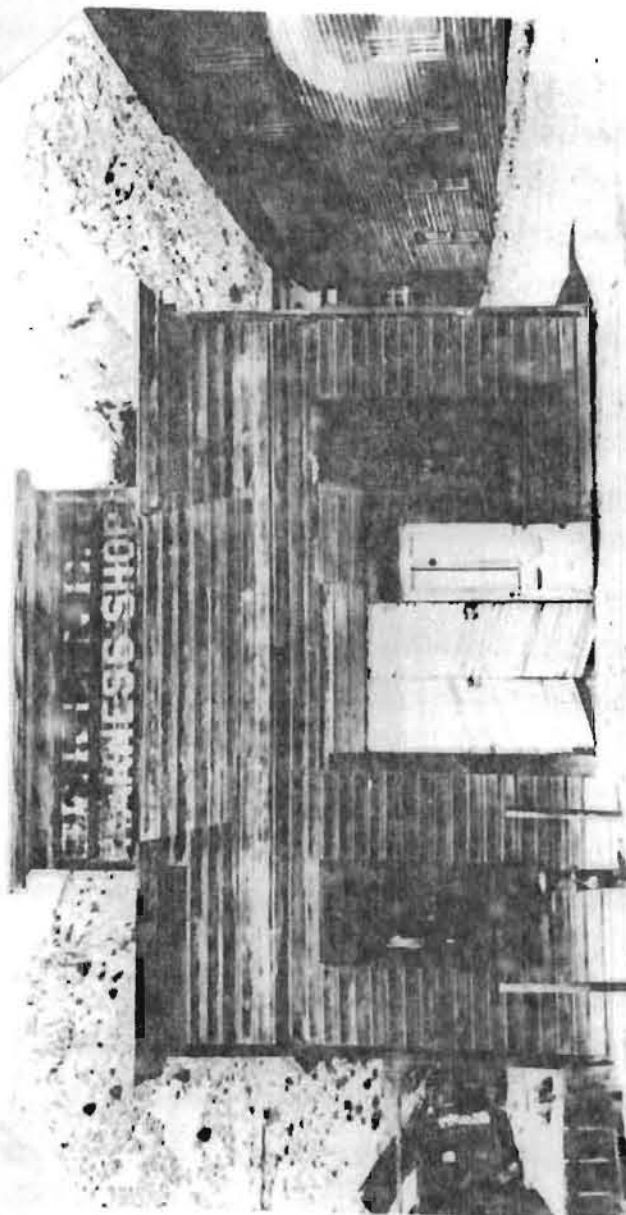
Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, San Francisco

Re-photo: May 1940

Harness Shop  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

HABS <sup>NEV-15-81</sup>  
[Cal 1340]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
37-1



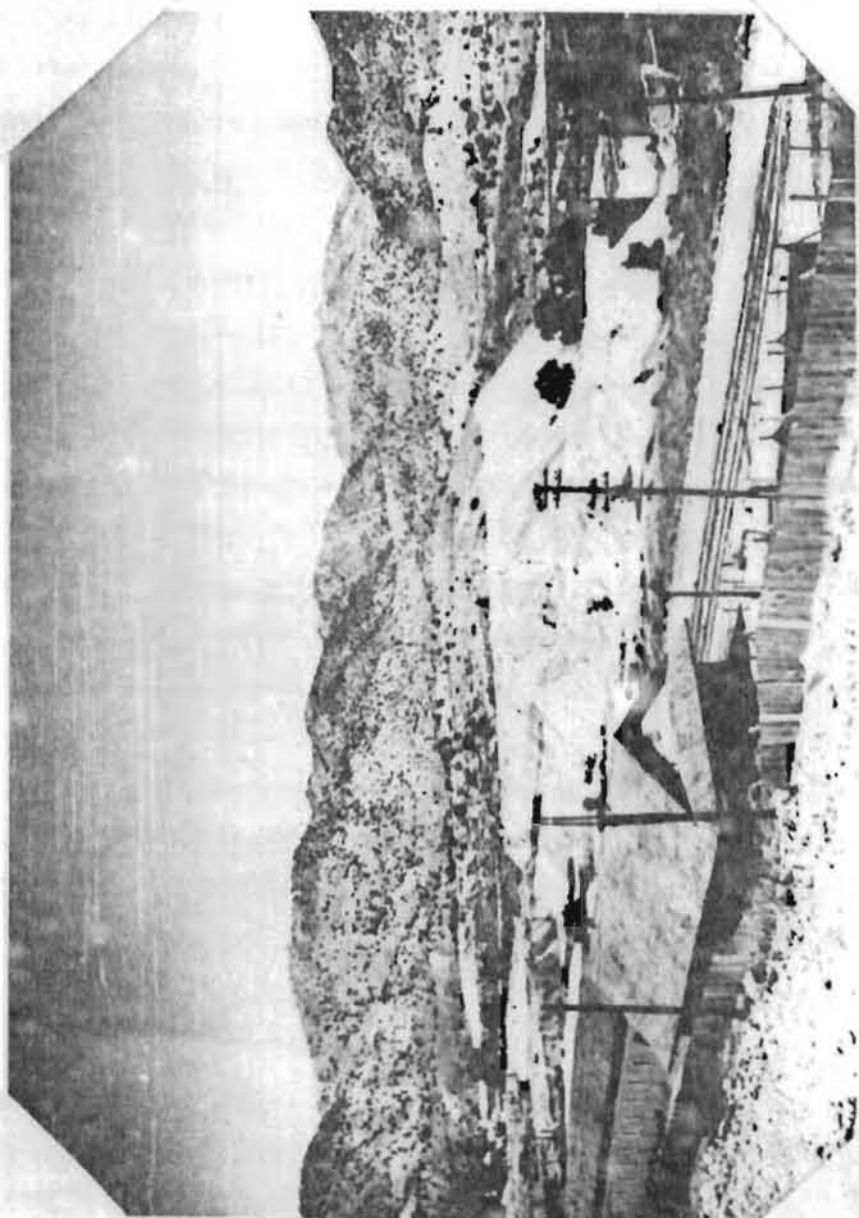
Re-photo: May 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, San Francisco

Cemetery  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nev.

HABS ~~NEV-15-79~~  
~~Cal-1338-5~~

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
35-5



June 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
N. L. McAfee, Photographer

Miners' Union Hall  
Gold Hill, Storey Co., Nevada

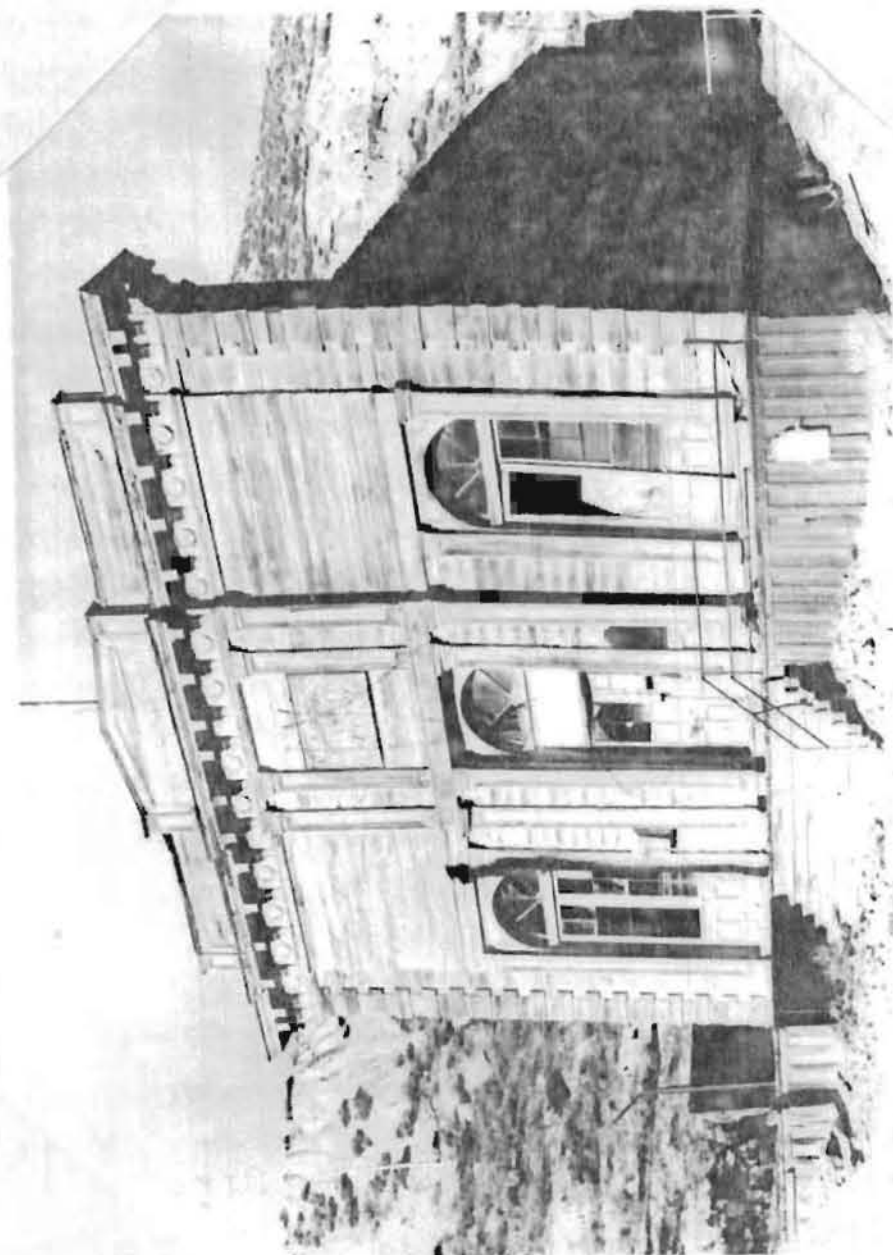
NEV-15-14  
HABS [Cal-1259-1]

HABS  
NEV  
15-GOLD  
2-4

Re-photo: May 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, San Francisco

8-8

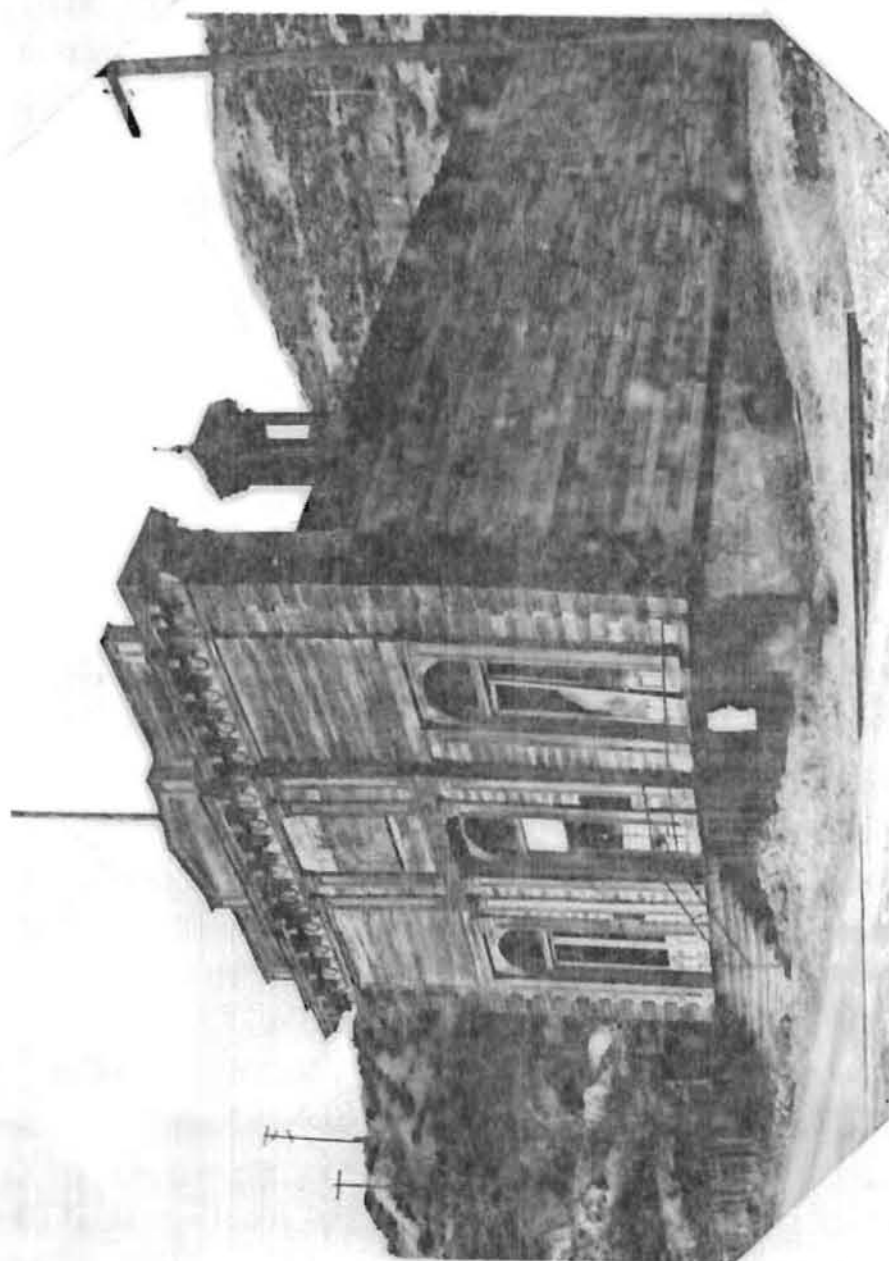




Miners' Union Hall  
Gold Hill, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-14  
HABS [Cal-1259-2]

HABS  
NEV  
15-GOLD  
2-1



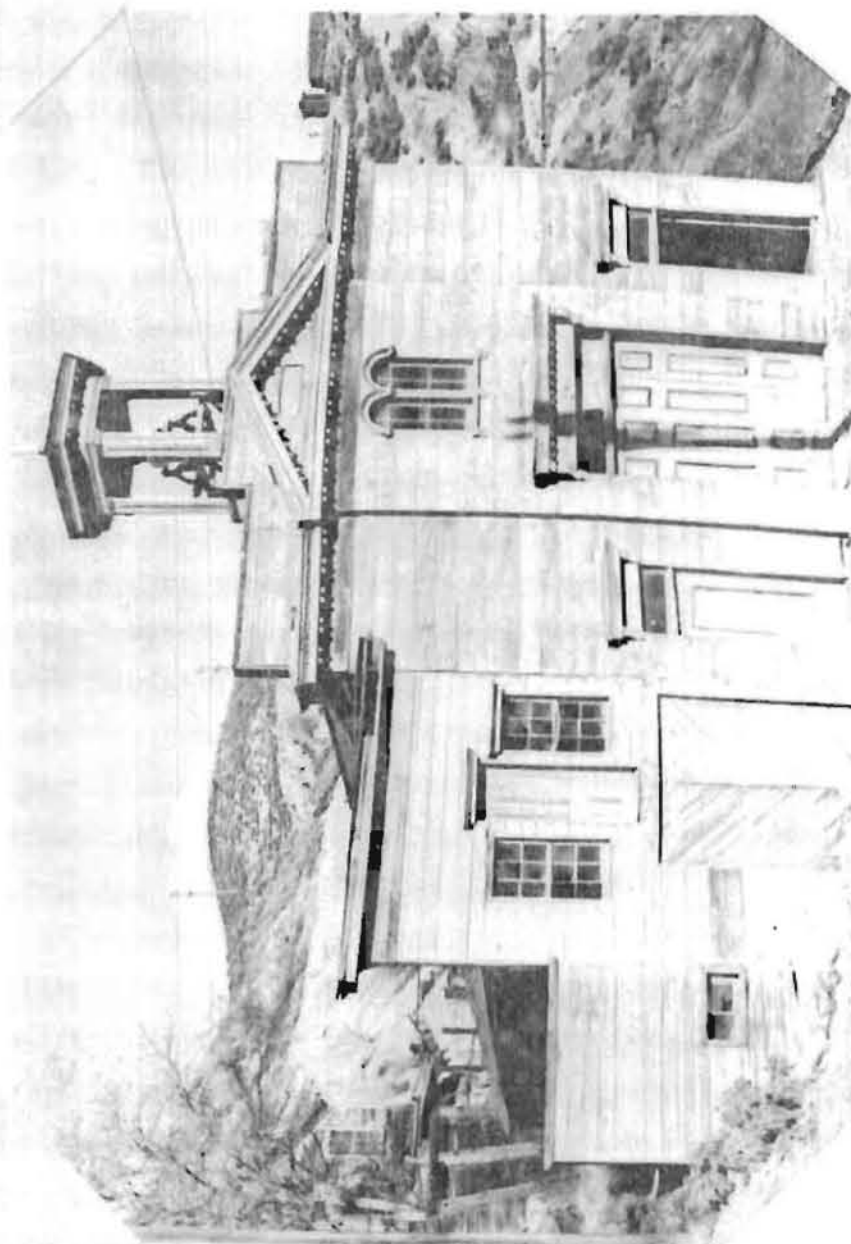
Re-photo: May 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service, San Francisco

Liberty Fire House, Liberty Fire Dept.  
Gold Hill, Storey Co., Nevada

HABS <sup>NEV-15-13</sup> [Cal-1250-1]

HABS  
NEV  
15-GOLD  
1-1



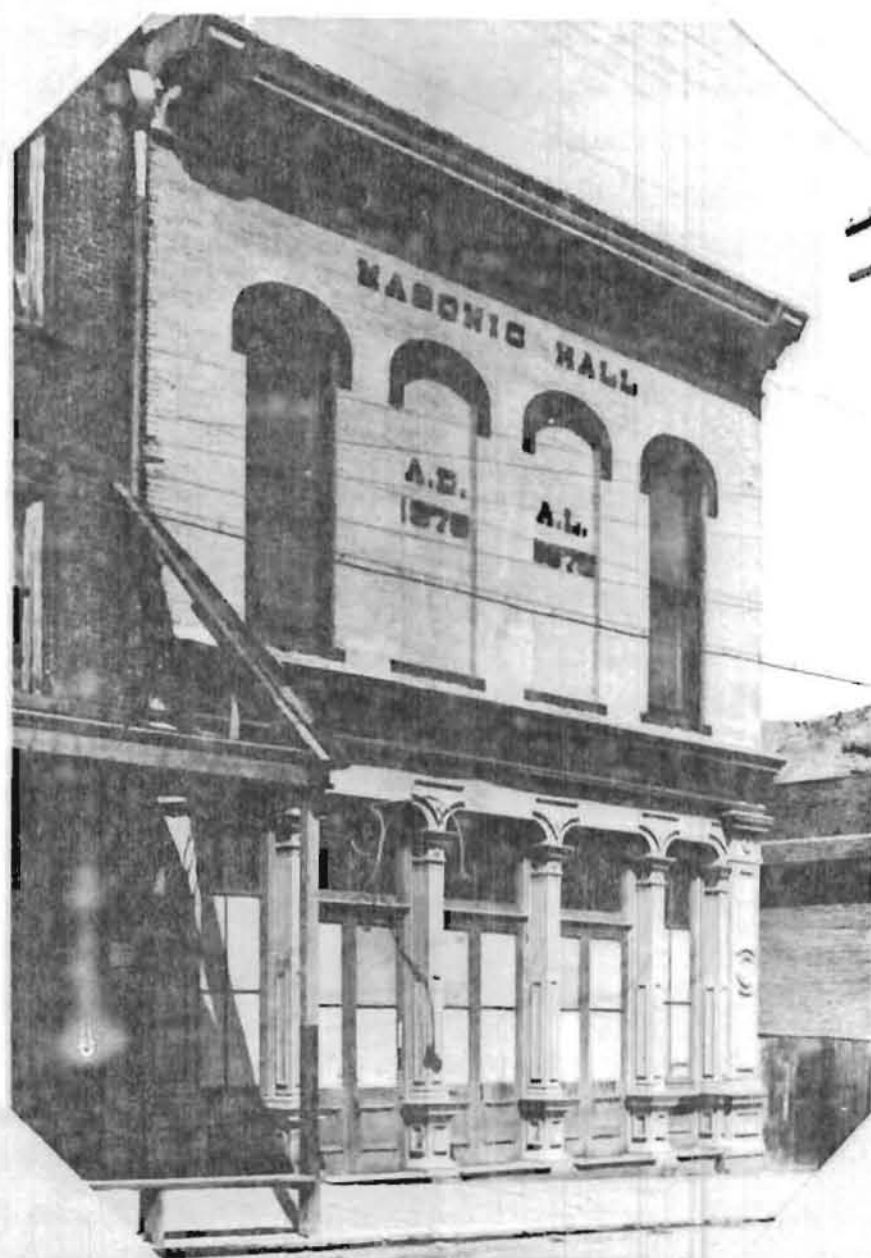
March 1937

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

Masonic Hall, "C" Street  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-18  
HABS [Cal-193]

HABE  
LEV  
15-VIRG  
7-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

March 1937

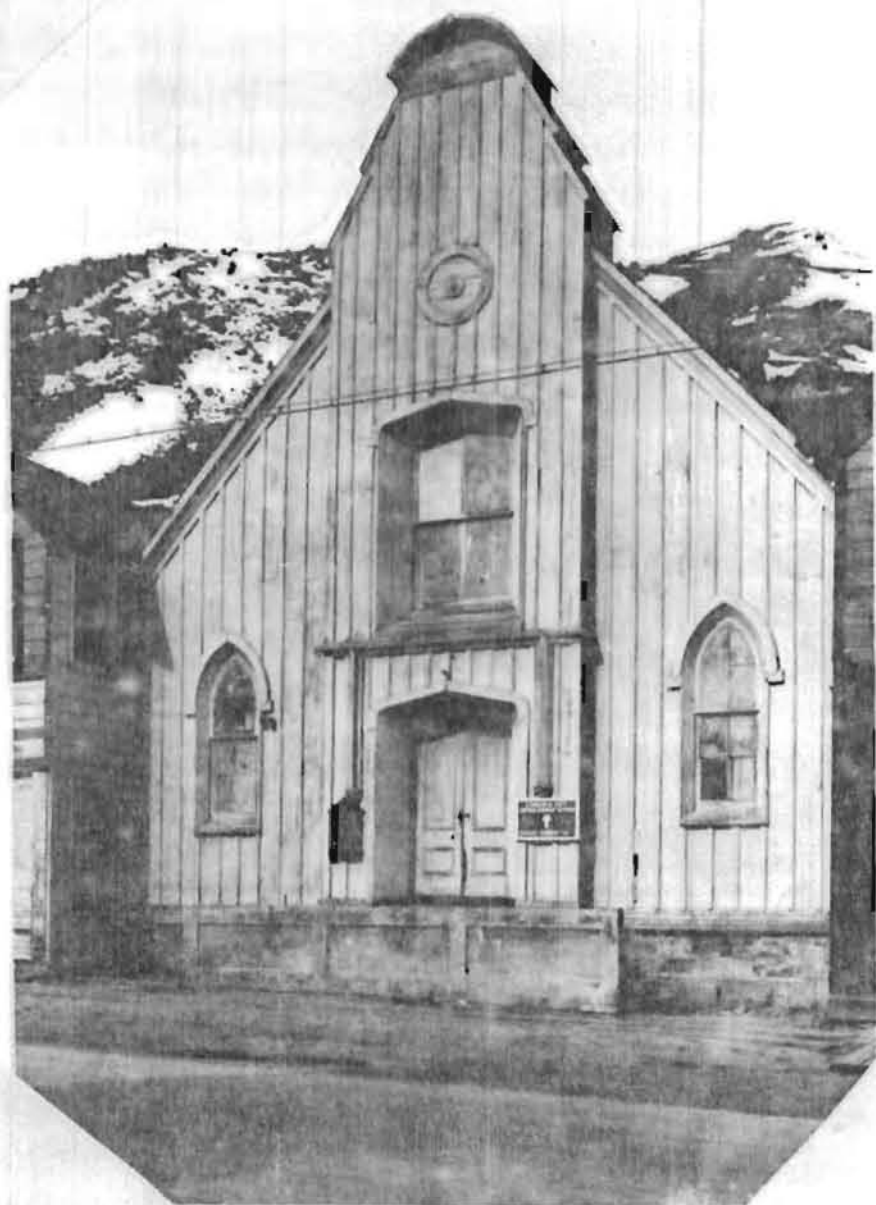
VIEW OF FRONT



Virginia City Union Sunday School  
"C" Street, Virginia City, Storey Co.,  
Nevada

HABS <sup>NEV-15-4</sup>  
Cal-1967

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
4-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

March 1937

Virginia Hotel, "C" Street  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-3  
HABS [Cal 199]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
3-1



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

March 1937

Building on "C" Street  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

HABS <sup>NEV-15-1</sup> ~~Cal-190-21~~

HABS  
NEV  
15-NRG-  
2-21



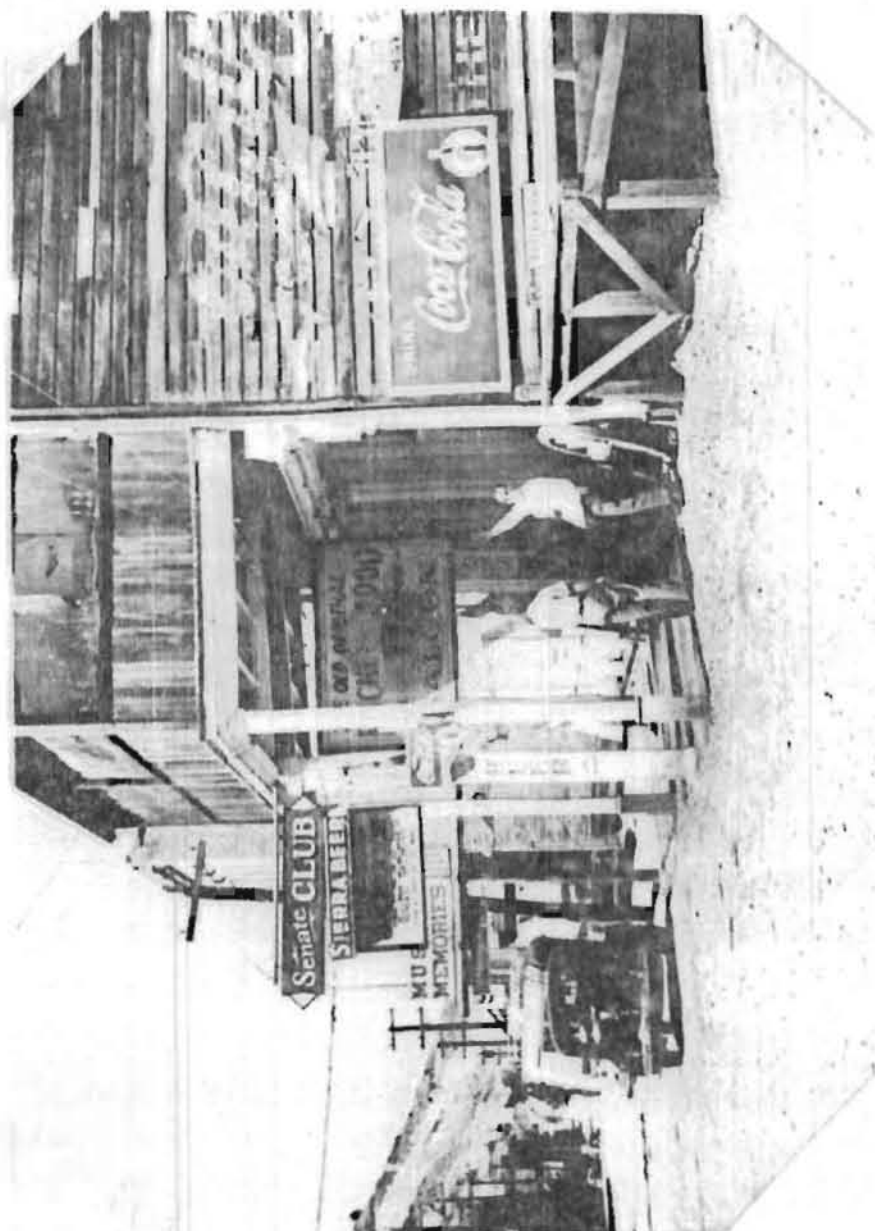
Historic American Buildings Survey  
Photo by Robert W. Kerrigan

March 1937

Commercial Buildings  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-1  
HABS Cal 190-18

HABC  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
2-18



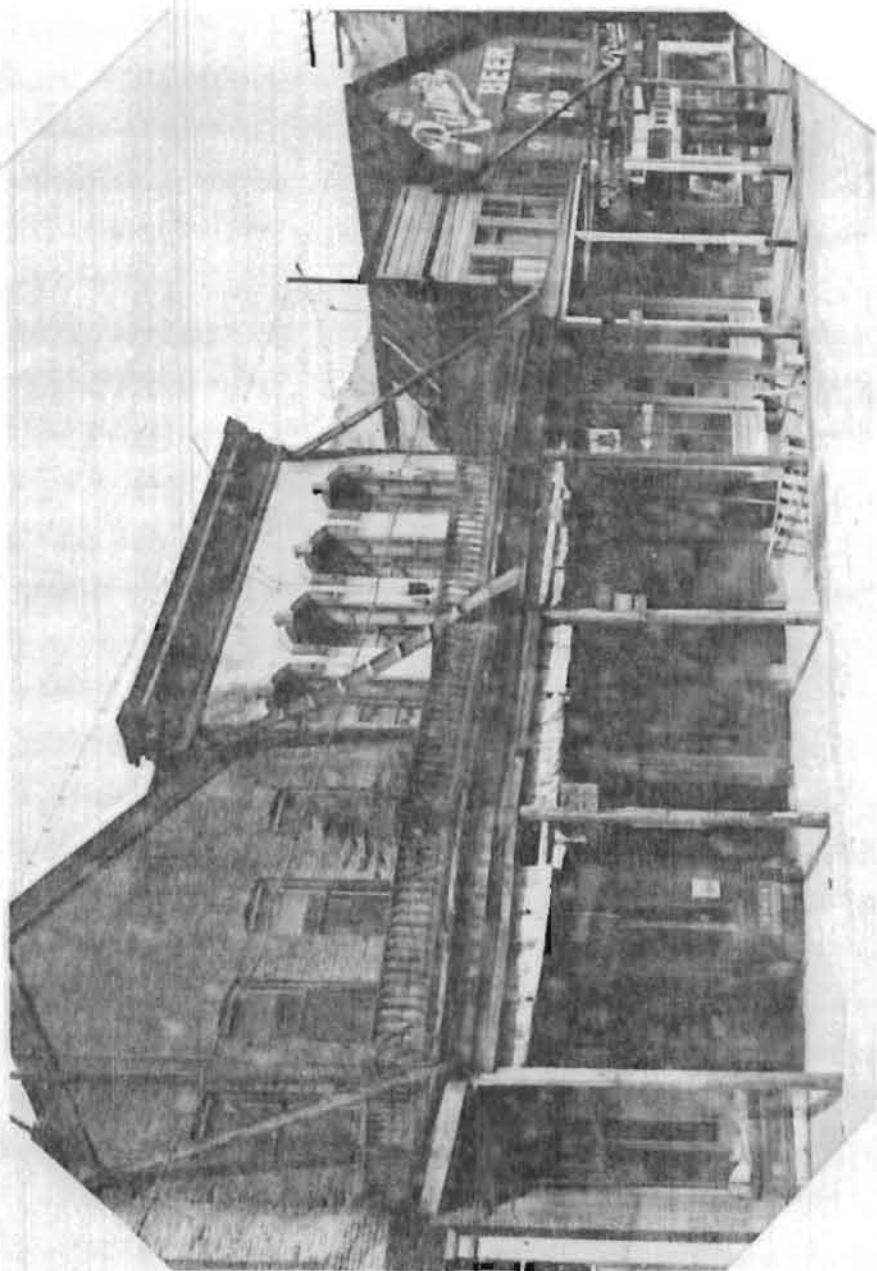
June 1940

Historic American Buildings Survey  
N. L. McAfee, Photographer

Commercial Buildings, "C" Street  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-1  
HAB9 [Cal 190-11]

HAB9  
NEV  
15-VIRG-  
2-11



Original: March 1937

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer



K of P Hall  
Virginia City, Storey Co., Nevada

NEV-15-11  
HABS [Cal-1256]

HABS  
NEV  
15-VIRG  
13-



Historic American Buildings Survey  
Robert W. Kerrigan, Photographer

March 1937

VIEW FROM NORTHEAST