

1064

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Oatman Drug Company Building
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1 Main Street not for publication _____
city or town Oatman vicinity _____
state Arizona code 015 county Mohave code _____ zip code 86433

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

James W. Gowen ASHP 12 AUGUST 2005
Signature of certifying official Date

ARIZONA STATE PARKS
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Current Functions

Cat: Commerce/Trade
Domestic

Sub: Specialty Store; antiques shop
Single dwelling; residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: Western Vernacular

Materials

foundation wood
roof corrugated tin
walls wood : board and batten, clapboard
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B. removed from its original location.
- C. a birthplace or a grave.
- D. a cemetery.
- E. a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F. a commemorative property.
- G. less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce
Community Planning and Development

Period of Significance 1915-1953

Significant Dates 1915

Significant Person (Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder M.H. Force (Builder)

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 11 | 3878855 | 738867 | 3 | | |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | |

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Fred R. Eck (edited by Carly Taravella SHPO intern, 8/5/05)

organization N/A date August 8, 2003

street & number 1782 Hualapai Road telephone 928-763-4229

city or town Bullhead City state Arizona zip code 86442

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Willa Noble Lucas

street & number 1 Main Street telephone 928-768-5513

city or town Oatman state Arizona zip code 86433

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Oatman Drug Company Building
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SECTION 7: DESCRIPTION

SUMMARY

The Oatman Drug Company Building is a 120'X30' two-story wood and tin building which fronts onto Main Street in downtown Oatman. The building sits at the eastern edge of town near a large outcropping of quartz in the Black Mountains known locally as the Elephant's Tooth. The building is Western vernacular in style with a "western boomtown" false front and board and batten/clapboard exterior. It has a front-gabled roof of corrugated tin, a second story balcony, and a porch which spans the second story façade of the building. The property's present condition is fair and it has not been greatly altered since its construction. The Oatman Drug Company currently houses a popular antiques and curio shop, and is celebrated locally as one of the few remaining buildings dating to the establishment of the mining town of Oatman, Arizona.

The Oatman Drug Company Building is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with the commercial development of the once thriving mining community of Oatman. The persistence of the building as a commercial enterprise after the boom and bust of gold mining lies, in part, with its prominent frontage along historic U.S. Route 66. The period of significance for the Oatman Drug Building spans from its construction in 1915, until 1953, the year in which Route 66 was bypassed by construction of Interstate 40. At this time, the volume of highway traffic was diverted off of U.S. 66, effectively turning Oatman into a "ghost town." Tourism in Oatman has in recent years experienced a revitalization, largely due to local and regional efforts to draw motorists off of the interstate and promote the towns along historic Route 66 as heritage destinations.

DESCRIPTION

The Oatman Drug Company Building is located on the eastern end of Main Street in downtown Oatman. The building and the town itself are situated in the southwestern edge of the Black Mountains, approximately 33 miles southwest of the Cochise County Seat of Kingman. The building is situated on the north side of historic U.S. Route 66, proximate to a quartzite outcrop and local landmark called "Elephant's Tooth". To the south of the building and town is an extinct volcano known as Boundary Cone. On the top of Boundary Cone, along the route to Needles, California is the 35th parallel marker.

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The 120'X30' two-story building is typical of many Western boomtown buildings and, for purposes of this nomination, is referred to as "Western Vernacular" in style. Like many late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings in the West, the Oatman Drug building is comprised of a modest wood frame with a front façade extension beyond the end gable, forming a "false front" upon which highly visible signage could be placed. The roof is front gabled and comprised of corrugated tin. The exterior materials are comprised of wood board and batten and clapboard. The false front consists of clapboard with some decorative corbels and molding.

The front of the building has prominent storefront bay windows. The streetside portion of these windows are three-over-three paned, with single light panes forming the side bays. Transom windows extend over the top of the storefront bays, as well as the large swinging entrance doors. The storefront windows are adorned with decorative moldings. The remainder of the building's windows are one-over-one wood casement, with the exception of several windows on the first story, which have been replaced with aluminum sliders.

The first story of the building has a wrap-around porch, supported by simple 4x4 wood posts with ornamental corbels. A second story balcony exists on the Main Street façade of the building. This balcony has a corrugated tin roof, and a recently added unadorned wood railing. Entrance to the balcony is obtained through a two-over-two paned door adjacent to a prominent four-over-four wood casement window. This balcony has been modified in recent years to restrict access to the Main Street façade, although historic photographs indicate that this balcony once wrapped the entire front and sides of the building, and for a time, was screened.

ALTERATIONS

The building has had few alterations since its construction in 1915. The most notable change occurred around 1950 when the wrap-around balcony and rear staircase were removed for safety reasons. At some point in the building's history, the first story windows along the west and east sides of the building were replaced with aluminum sliders. The windows on the second story are original as are the wood floors, doors and brass knobs, stairway, balcony, and porch.

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A historic photograph of the Oatman Drug Company Building taken in 1916 indicates that the balcony porch had a very similar appearance to its modern appearance. However, a historic photograph of the building dated ca. 1917-1918 shows the balcony screened. This picture also indicates that there were originally two four-over-four paned windows on the front façade. The east window has since been replaced by a wood door. A third photograph dating 1933 reveals that by this date, the screening on the balcony had been removed and wood railing installed.



East Side of Oatman Drug Company Building, 1916 (Source: Willa Lucas)

The only recorded modification to the interior involved the 1916 installation of a concrete vault on the ground floor in 1916 when the building housed the Arizona Central Bank. More recently (within the last two decades) the Main Street facade of the lower story, including the front porch posts, has been painted.



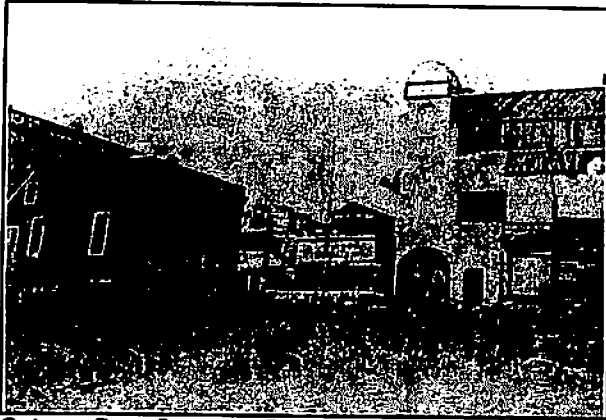
Oatman Drug Company Building, ca. 1917-1918 (Source: Willa Lucas)

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Oatman Drug Company Building, 1933 (Source: Willa Lucas)

INTEGRITY

The Oatman Drug Company Building is in fair condition; however, the building possesses a high degree of architectural integrity in keeping with its appearance during its period of significance. With the exception of several window replacements, the materials and workmanship of the building are well preserved. Although loss of the adjacent Arizona Hotel and addition of parking along the front and east sides of the building have somewhat compromised its bustling "Main Street" setting, the Oatman Drug Company Building, with its false front, covered balcony and rustic board and batten, still retains the feeling of the "boomtown" west. Its continued use as a commercial enterprise with residential quarters, along with the interpretive efforts of the Oatman Chamber of Commerce, also provides the building with a high degree of historical association.

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SECTION 8: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The Oatman Drug Company Building has achieved historical significance on the local level under Criterion A through its association with commercial activity in early twentieth century Oatman, a prominent gold mining community located in northwestern Arizona. The building was constructed in 1915, soon after the town's founding, and is one of the few remaining buildings in Oatman from the town's boom years, (ca. 1913-1934), as many buildings were destroyed by fire in 1921. In addition, the building is also significant for its association with early vehicular tourism along historic U.S. Route 66. Oatman was a popular stopping and refueling point on Route 66 before motorists reached Needles, California. It is highly likely that more than a few tourists and migrants on their way to California stopped in at the Oatman Drug Company Building since it remained a drug/general store during the years in which the highway experienced the most traffic. The period of significance for the Oatman Drug Company Building extends from 1915, its date of construction, to 1953, the year when the construction of multilane Interstate-40 drew automobile traffic off of U.S. Route 66, effectively bypassing the Town of Oatman.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The former gold mining town of Oatman is located, roughly, 33 miles southwest of Kingman on the southwestern slope of the Black Mountains. The town began as a small mining camp known as the Vivian mining camp. In 1902 gold was discovered in the Vivian ledge in the Black Mountains. Then, in 1903 the Mount Mohave Gold Mining Company consolidated several small individual claims and invested nearly one-half million dollars in the development of mining facilities in the area. As a result, the mining camp, and later town of Vivian appeared. The town of Vivian contained several businesses, a Chamber of Commerce, and, as of 1904, a post office. However, after a year's efforts only 4,500 tons of ore were milled and due to this poor initial return on its investment, the Mount Mohave Gold Mining Company shut down operations.

In 1906 the Tom Reed Gold Mining Company bought the Mount Mohave Gold Mining Company property and two years later they discovered what eventually became a \$13,000,000 ore body. Shortly after the discovery of the Tom Reed mine the town's name was changed from Vivian to Oatman. The exact reason for this name change is not known,

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but it is generally believed that the town was named in honor of then-popular folk heroine Olive Oatman. Olive had been a captive of the Mohave Indians in the area for many years and was released around the time of the Tom Reed discovery.

While the Tom Reed mine was productive, Oatman did not experience a boom until 1913 when the United Eastern mine opened after the discovery of another rich gold vein. In 1916 the weekly *Oatman Miner* boasted that within a year the town's population had grown from a few hundred to more than 3,500 inhabitants. The population continued to increase and peaked at ten thousand in the late 1920s and 1930s. Thus, Oatman quickly became a prominent gold mining center in Mohave County. It was during this boom, in 1915, that the Oatman Drug Company building was constructed to meet the needs of Oatman's burgeoning population. According to the July 31, 1915 issue of the *Mohave County Miner* (pg. 6) the builder was M.H. Force. The bottom story of the building originally served as a drug (general) store and the second story contained various offices, including law offices and either a doctor's or dentist's office (or both).

Unlike many other buildings from Oatman's early boom days, the Oatman Drug Company building survived a fire which swept through the town in 1921. Thus, the building is one of the only surviving examples of those constructed in Oatman at the outset of the town's prosperous years. The building continued to operate as a drug store well into the 1950s and throughout this time it provided valuable resources to the miners and other inhabitants of Oatman. It is also probable that the Oatman Drug Company building provided similar resources to tourists and migrants traveling along Route 66 between 1926 and 1953.

U.S. Route 66 had its origin in the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921. This act was passed in response to the demands made by the nation's motorists for better roads. By the early 1920s more and more Americans were traveling by automobile; America was becoming an increasingly mobile society and new and improved roads were needed to assist this mobility. After the passage of the 1921 Highway Act, work was begun immediately to improve the road which would eventually be designated Route 66 in 1926. In Arizona, the road followed much of what had been the National Old Trails Highway. Route 66 was touted as a tourist highway in Arizona, and elsewhere, and it became one of the most traveled highways in the state and nation. Route 66 not only made the wonders of Arizona accessible to tourists it also connected isolated towns, like Oatman, to larger communities.

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In the 1930s, the tourists traveling along Route 66 were replaced by migrants heading for California after fleeing the drought devastated areas of the "Dust Bowl". The post-World War II years saw hundreds of people, many of them former servicemen and their families, heading to the West. Route 66 was important in facilitating this movement. The late 1940s and 1950s also saw the revival of tourism along Route 66 as more Americans wanted to see the wonders of the country for which they had fought. This period saw the erection of numerous businesses and other tourist facilities in towns all along the route. Oatman was no different. Oatman had long been a popular refueling and stopping point along Route 66 before tourists went on to California. However, it was not until after World War II that tourism became Oatman's main business.

In 1942, the government shut down all gold mines in order to focus on the mining of minerals deemed more essential to the war effort. After the war, the gold mines were not reopened and Oatman's population dwindled. However, because Oatman was located on Route 66, the town was able to gain a new livelihood from tourism. Gas stations, shops, and other businesses catering to tourists appeared along Main Street (Route 66). The Oatman Drug Company building remained a drug store into the 1950s and, due to its location on Main Street, and more than likely provided the necessary convenience items to tourists, not unlike those it once provided to miners.

Unfortunately, Oatman's new life as a Route 66 tourist stop was not to last. The early 1950s saw an increase in the development of an Interstate system which involved the improving and, often, rerouting of roads in order to make travel faster. Oatman was the first town in Arizona to be bypassed when part of Route 66 (later I-40) was rerouted in 1953. In 1956, more towns were threatened by the passage of the Interstate Highway Act which gave even more funding to highway construction. Slowly, community after community was bypassed until finally, in 1984, Williams, Arizona became the last town in Arizona- and furthermore the Nation- to suffer this fate.

Currently, the town of Oatman, with a population of around one hundred, is nearly a ghost town. However, it is still popular among tourists in search of the "Old West" and those nostalgic for travel along old Route 66. This "Old West" nostalgia also stems from Metro Goldwyn Mayer Studio's 1962 decision to film the now classic western, "How the West Was Won" along Main Street in Oatman. The Oatman Drug Company building was used as a backdrop for several scenes. The building still remains in use as an antiques store and private residence.

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SECTION 9: BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Books

Florin, Lambert. *Arizona Ghost Towns*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1971.

Greeley, Michael N. and M. Canty, eds. *History of Mining in Arizona*. Vol. 2. Tucson: Mining Club of the Southwest Foundation, 1987.

Malach, Roman. *Mohave County Album*. Kingman: Mohave County Board of Supervisors, 1979.

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Messersmith, Dan. *The History of Mohave County to 1912*. Kingman: Mohave County Historical Society, 1991.

Miller, Donald. *Ghost Towns of the Southwest: Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico*. Boulder, CO.: Pruett Publishing Company, 1980.

Murbarger, Nell. *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls*. Los Angeles: Western Lore Press, 1964.

National Park Service. *Special Resource Study: Route 66*. Denver: National Park Service, 1995.

Paher, Stanley. *Northwestern Arizona Ghost Towns*. Las Vegas: Gateway Press, 1970.

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Varney, Philip. *Arizona's Best Ghost Towns*. Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1982.

_____. *Arizona Ghost Towns and Mining Camps: A Travel Guide to History*. Arizona Highways Book. Phoenix: Arizona Department of Transportation, 1994.

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Stein, Pat. *Historic US Route 66 in Arizona*. National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Flagstaff, 1996.

Housley, Harold Ray. *A History of United States Highway 66 in Arizona*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, Arizona State University, December 1996.

The Mohave County Miner, "Oatman Booming Camp," pg 6, July 31, 1915.

Desert Life Magazine, November 1987.

Frontier Chronicles Magazine, September 1992.

Las Vegas and Laughlin Nevada Tour Book, AAA Club of Southern California, 1988.

River Reporter Magazine, Vol. 3 #8, 1988.

Sunset Magazine, November 1982.

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SECTION 10: GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Oatman Drug Company Building lie within Lot "G", Block 2 the Tip Top Lode Claim and are described as, "the part of the Tip Top Lode Mining Claim in the San Francisco mining district, survey no. 2710 described as follows: Beginning at a corner which is North 51 degrees 23 minutes West 433.20 feet from the Southeast corner of said Tip Top Mining Claim; thence South 62 degrees 30 minutes East a distance of 37.50 feet; thence North 29 degrees 54 minutes East a distance of 49.12 feet; thence North 27 degrees 30 minutes East a distance of 50.88 feet; thence North 62 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 39.10 feet; thence South 29 degrees 49 minutes West a distance of 100.97 feet to the point of the beginning."

Said parcel includes Lot G, Block 2 and a part of Lot 15, Block 5 of Lovin's Subdivision of the town of Oatman, a recorded subdivision of the town of Oatman filed in Book 221, Map 16 with the office of the Mohave County Recorder March 15, 1930.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Oatman Drug Company Building.



1. Oatman Drug Company Building
2. Mohave County, Arizona
3. Kathryn Leonard
4. February 2006
5. State Historic Preservation Office
1300 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007
6. Views to North
7. Photo #1

1. Oatman Drug Company Building
2. Mohave County, Arizona
3. Kathryn Leonard
4. February 2006
5. State Historic Preservation Office
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6. Views to North
7. Photo #1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: RESUBMISSION

PROPERTY NAME: Oatman Drug Company Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARIZONA, Mohave

DATE RECEIVED: 3/31/06
DATE OF 16TH DAY:
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/14/06

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001064

DETAILED EVALUATION:

___ACCEPT ___RETURN ___REJECT _____DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Re. 66
Significance is based on association with commercial activity in Oatman, AZ and is one of few buildings remaining from the town's boom (1913-1934). Also a stopping point on Rt 66.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept A

REVIEWER L. McClelland

DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____

DATE 4/6/06

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N