Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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 & NUMBER

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Virginia City

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE
Nevada

CODE

COUNTY
Storey/Lyon

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	__PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	X MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	__UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	__PARK
__STRUCTURE	X BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	X ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	X GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME various private and public owners

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Storey County Court House

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Virginia City

STATE
Nevada

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE
1937, 1940

X FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS 1100 L Street

CITY, TOWN
Washington

STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

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,

(CONTINUED)

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 entrace 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 balustrate. 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 balustrates 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 balustrate. 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. Depsite 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			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	X COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X OTHER (SPECIFY) Mining
		__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.[1]"

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.[2]

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.[3] Passing by shortly afterward, Henry Comstock

[1]Rodman W. Paul, Mining Frontiers of the Far West, 1848-1880 (New York, 1963), 57.

[2]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.

[3]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 deposts 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 in1880, 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. Freighting, farming, and

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ranching were greatly stimulated[4] 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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[4]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.

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

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

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

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 14,750 acres

UTM REFERENCES

(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A				B			
C				D			

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 DATE

Landmark Designated: July 4 1961 date

Boundary Certified: Sept 5, 1978

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. Ketteg DATE 9/18/78

Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Bibliographical References

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).

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 sectiol 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
A. 11.275830.4356610
B. 11.278030.4351740
C. 11.278000.4350120
D. 11.275510.4348560
E. 11.273860.4347000
F. 11.2722604347000
G. 11.266280.4348820
H. 11.299720.4356770

Unit Two (Dayton)
A. 11.276600.4346700
B. 11.276550.4345850
C. 11.276300.4345600
D. 11.276350.4346650