

5th Bird Cage Theatre
6th and Allen Streets
Tombstone
Arizona

HABS No. ARIZ-10

HABS
ARIZ.
2-TOMB
18.

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Arizona

Historic American Buildings Survey
Prepared at Headquarters Office for
Arizona District

BIRD CAGE THEATRE.

Tombstone, Ariz.

I.

The Bird Cage is on the south side of Allen Street near the corner of 6th, and was not in the area burned in the fire of 1882, which did not extend further east than 5th Street.

It was opened as a Variety Theatre and Saloon on the 21st of December 1881. Billie Hutchinson managed the house assisted by his wife Lotta.

The tiny stage knew many of the notables of the theatrical world of the "Gay Nineties", such as Eddie Foy, Lotta Crabtree, who sang there while on a visit to her brother John, and Collier in this memoirs mentions a four weeks engagement.

The orchestra was a seven piece one that played for dances after the show when the auditorium had been cleared of chairs, and was directed by Ed Wittig.

The interesting old lithographs decorating the boxes were placed there by Joe Bignon a circus clown. The boxes are suspended around three sides of the auditorium and are dark little cubicals hardly high enough for a man to stand. Liquor from the bar for the patrons in the boxes was sent up on a dumb-waiter located at the end of the bar on the first floor.

In the left-hand box a drunken Cowboy had his boot-heels shot off by the famous Buckskin Frank Leslie.

This building like many others in Tombstone was illuminated by gas and has the original gas fixtures.

At the period when Tombstone was the center of attraction, the little bar in front of the theatre was never closed night or day.

The theatre was reopened to the public for the first time in many years, by the management of Tombstone's Hellorado, an out-door attraction in October of 1929 .

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BIRD CAGE THEATRE

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The Theatre portion is used today as a museum, while the old bar room serves as a cheap Cafe. The bar fixtures have never been removed and are still the center of attraction in this room.

The woman who operates the Cafe and Museum claims to be the owner of the building, but it is questioned by several in Tombstone, and I did not have a chance to check the records at the county seat, as it is no longer located in Tombstone.

(Signed)

Data Collected By, Miguel J. Slack,

Junior Architect in charge of
Arizona Unit.

1940

Data from:-

Koitaph, Tombstone Newspaper
History of Arizona Territory
Mrs. J. E. Macia, Tombstone, Pioneer.