



REPORT

CRYSTAL PALACE SALOON

INVESTIGATION



*Tombstone
Arizona*

AZ003

SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

★ **SOLVED** | 2001 | COMBOLS
2005 | STAFF | ARDS

WWW.SGHA.NET



Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

Definition of Terms

Investigation Status: Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.

A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

Confidentiality Notice

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

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Part 1: Location Information

Crystal Palace Saloon

436 E Allen Street

Tombstone, AZ

Part 2: Location History



In 1879 Tombstone was nothing more than a few tents, a few more rude huts and the rugged home of more than ten thousand citizens crammed together in the sprawling mining camp. The Crystal Palace Saloon was first called the Golden Eagle Brewery featuring fine bock beer, a free lunch, and a display of wild animals. The Golden

Eagle Brewery was in business until the fire on June 22, 1881. a local saloon owner was pouring out a batch of bad whiskey when his cigar started the fire. May 26, 1882, Tombstone again suffered another fire which erupted in a water closet located in the rear of the Tivoli Saloon, destroying the original Golden Eagle Brewery building. Frederick Wehrfritz, with visionary optimism in the sprawling mining camp, built an imposing two-story building on the original site of the Golden Eagle Brewery, at the corner of the newly named streets of Fifth and Allen.

On July 23, 1882 the Crystal Palace Saloon opened its doors. The shining crystal ware and the affable management soon had a monopoly on those prominent citizens from all over town who wanted the best drink coupled with all the pertinent town news dispensed by the fortunate office holders above. The Crystal Palace became the place most frequented by those individuals prominent in the business and social registers of Tombstone. To have an office on the second floor of this building was tantamount to having the best address in Tombstone. The offices upstairs were crowded with those names now familiar to millions. The front office facing Allen Street was occupied by Virgil W. Earp. Virgil Earp was serving in the dual capacity as Marshal of Tombstone and Deputy United States Marshal. The records

reveal that his address in Tombstone was listed as the Office Building Above the Crystal Palace, Fifth and Allen, Tombstone, Arizona Territory



The adjacent office on the Allen Street side was occupied by the famed retired army surgeon, Dr. George Goodfellow, a firm friend of the Earp brothers, and destined to be remembered as Tombstone's greatest doctor. Dr. H.M. Matthews retained his office on the Fifth Street side with side entrance on that street. Dr. Matthews

will be remembered for his part as coroner in the decision for the cause of death that came to Frank and Tom McLaury and William Clanton on the afternoon of October 26, 1881. Since business depended largely, if not entirely on the mines, it was possible at any hour to find the owners and managers in the Crystal Palace indulging themselves with the finest spirits obtainable. Mine officials, gunmen, prospectors, rustlers, lawyers, stage coach bandits, cowboys, lawmen, gamblers, homesteaders and outlaws rubbed elbows day and night as they crowded along its lengthy bar. Big Nose Kate, the girlfriend of Doc Holiday, was rumored to spent a great deal of time at the saloon as well.

The proximity of the Crystal Palace to Tombstone's leading commercial houses, coupled with its superior decor and service along with strictly honest gambling rooms created its success as Tombstone's finest, best-appointed bar in a town of nearly a hundred saloons. The management in those early years wisely chose the course of action that kept the gambling games honest and the killers of men from making a slaughter house of the Crystal Palace.

From the 1920's to the 1940's when the relentless, uncontrollable underground water forced the closing of the mines, it also killed Tombstone's boom town prosperity and cut its population to a fraction of its heyday high. Through the years the Crystal Palace Saloon, which had gloried in the town's prosperity, resolutely shared its despair. The Prohibition Amendment finally closed the Crystal Palace. With gambling and drinking outlawed, the gaming tables, bar and back bar were removed.

According to local legend, the famous mahogany Crystal Palace bar found its way to a Mexican Cantina which was consumed by fire two years later. Much of the glory was gone. The second floor had been removed, and the interior of the saloon, which had been known from Chicago to San Francisco for its elegance, had been altered and filled with 20th Century trappings.

The Crystal Palace has served as a Greyhound bus station, warehouse, and as movie theater. With the repeal of prohibition and the subsequent



prosperity of the war and postwar years, the Crystal Palace was again doing business at the same location. In 1963 the Crystal Palace still was in business when Historic Tombstone Adventures, an organization formed to preserve and restore many of the town's fabled landmarks, purchased

the world-famous bar. After accumulating all the old photographs and records that were available, the organization commissioned craftsmen to restore the Crystal Palace exactly as it had been in the turbulent days. The massive, nearly room-length mahogany front and back bars were replicated to inch-by-inch specifications, using old photographs. This was the only way it could be done as the original blueprints had been destroyed years ago. The eagle-bedecked wallpaper was custom made as symbolic of the historic building's original "Golden Eagle Brewery" name.

On the outside, the wooden sidewalks and wooden overhang were restored around the building, and a false-front second story, authentic in measured detail, was built. The original Crystal Palace was a two-story building when it was built in 1879. It burned to the ground in the fire of 1882. It was rebuilt with only one story. Even the names of some of the more illustrious tenants were painted, in period style, on windows of the offices they occupied.

The Crystal Palace today remains a symbol of the true "Old West", by retaining its 1880's integrity. The original copper ceiling, adobe walls, and

the beautiful replica of the massive bar make this the only authentic saloon still operating in Tombstone.

CRYSTAL PALACE SALOON !
FORMERLY GOLDEN EAGLE BREWERY.
Ben Wehrfritz, - - Proprietor.
FINEST WINES, LIQUORS & CIGARS.
Fredericksburg Beer Always on Tap, Ice Cold.
First Class Caterers and Courteous Attention.
SEE THE FOUNTAIN !
A SPLENDIDLY APPOINTED GAMING HALL. 1892

Part 3: Reported Phenomenon

Activity of the paranormal variety varies, depending on who you talk to. Many of the employees have seen ghostly cowboys waiting to be served at the bar. When the bartenders turn to take an order, they note that the phantom patron has vanished. Guests have witnessed the ghosts sitting alone at the tables, on stage, or moving in different locations near the bar. Photographs have captured the wispy-film likeness of Tombstone's former residents.

Customers frequently report that they see an elderly man rise from a table and slowly enter the restroom, or have seen him standing in the hallway near the facility. The part that puzzles most guests is the fact that the man is never seen returning to the saloon from the restroom. Concerned employees have gone in the restroom to check on the well-dressed, elderly

man only to find nobody there. And to make things even more phenomenal, there is only one way in or out. There is no back door entrance.¹

Part 4: Investigation

We performed two investigations at the Crystal Palace saloon. The first was in 2001 and the second was in 2005. The contradicting information we obtained during both investigations was very insightful when the facts are compared against each other.



"Many of the employees have seen ghostly cowboys waiting to be served at the bar. When the bartenders turn to take an order, they note that the phantom patron has vanished."

We were told about these occurrences during our visit in 2005. However, the employees that were working that evening had never had such a thing happen to them. They were also unable to tell us the name of any bartender that this type of incident occurred to. It was a story that was often circulated among the staff.

Oddly enough, in 2001, we were not told this part of the story. The bartender we talked to then said that he had never had "anything weird"

¹ <http://www.crystalpalacesaloon.com/index.html>

ever happen to him while working at the saloon. We also talked to the cook who had a similar reply.

The contradictory information between what is actually happening and the stories indicate that some myth building has taken place.

Part 5: Hypotheses

"Guests have witnessed the ghosts sitting alone at the tables, on stage, or moving in different locations near the bar. Photographs have captured the wispy-film likeness of Tombstone's former residents."

When you scrutinize these claims you discover that they are actually based on photographs that have been taken by guests. An example of some of these photos can be [found here](#). A proper analysis of these photos shows that the culprit is actually a strand of hair that has fallen in front of the lens and is illuminated by the flash of the camera. Other photos show orbs (airborne pollutants, smoke, dust and insects) and reflection effects from the camera flash bouncing off a number of reflective surfaces that adorn the saloon. All of the "ghost" photos that we have seen have logical explanations and are not ghosts.

"Customers frequently report that they see an elderly man rise from a table and slowly enter the restroom, or have seen him standing in the hallway near the facility. The part that puzzles most guests is the fact that the man is never seen returning to the saloon from the restroom. Concerned employees have gone in the restroom to check on the well-dressed, elderly man only to find nobody there."

During our visit in 2001 we were told a slightly different version. An employee noticed the well dressed elderly man, who went to the restroom and did not return. We asked for specific details about the man's appearance.

"About 70 years old, bald, wearing a contemporary black three piece suit with a white shirt".

During the 2005 visit we were told the present version. Now the well dressed man is noticed by customers and the employees go back to check on him. Again we asked for details of the man's appearance.

"He was wearing a dark gray suit with a vest and a bowler hat. He had gray hair."

The problem here is that the witnesses are not seeing the same thing. They are describing two different people. This may be due to the rather vague description of the "well dressed elderly man" in the ghost stories.

Part 6: Conclusion

The activity at this location does not meet the Gurney/Myers Standard for Ghost Investigations and there is not any sufficient evidence to support the claims of paranormal activity.

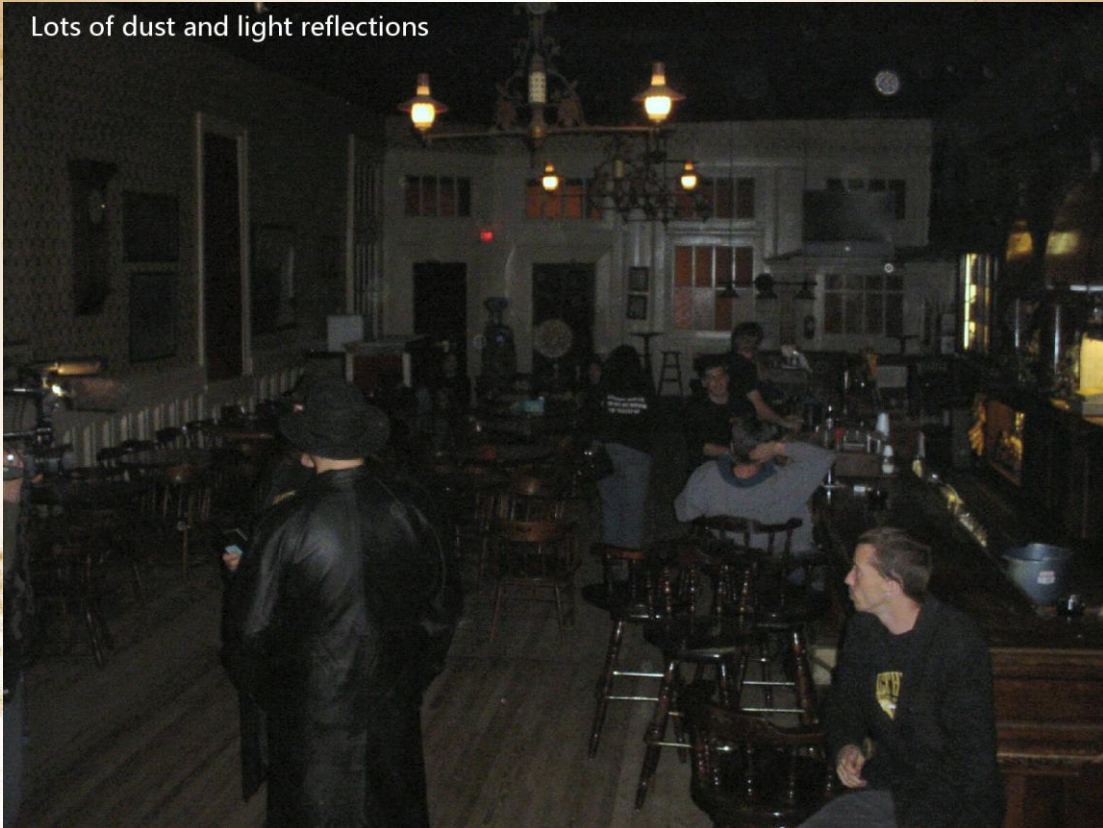
Part 7: Photographs







Lots of dust and light reflections





Historical images





ARIZ., 2. Tomba, 1-3

HABS



Historical photos from the Library of Congress

A Disgraceful Scene.

On Wednesday evening a most disgraceful scene was enacted in the Crystal Palace saloon. A Mexican street walker was given enough whisky to make her drunk, whereupon, urged on by a crowd of drunken men, she danced the "can-can," making disgustingly indecent exposures of her person. Notwithstanding the fact that two officers were present, one a city official and the other a precinct officer, and were "admiring" spectators of the unseemly exhibition, no arrests were made. These two officers disgraced themselves and their positions by being present at such an affair and making no effort to stop it. Among the crowd were also a lot of boys. If there is no ordinance on the subject, one should be passed by the City Council prohibiting the presence of women in saloons.

