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A Collection Of Bizarre Solved & Unsolved  
Mysteries Associated With the University Of  
Arizona - UArizona - UofA  
Located In Tucson, Arizona U.S.A.  
From 1885 To The Present Day  
Not a website of the University of Arizona  
Old Main's Ghost



Old Main, the first erected building of the original Territorial University of Arizona College of Mines, is located on the original site of an ancient Indian village dating back well over 10,000 years.

One of the workman supervising the buildings construction was Carlos Maldenado, who lived in Tucson from 1841 until his death in 1888. Although he may be gone now in body, Carlos is far from forgotten and many believe that his spirit still continues to live on.

Carlos Maldenado came up to Tucson in the summer of 1841 from Sonora Mexico on the daily afternoon stagecoach and was already famous both as a Sonoran businessman and a professional gambler. His talents however also included those of being very well seasoned in construction management.

Maldenado took a very keen personal interest in the building of the college's first structure, the ideas of college educations.

He was even known to stay in the unfinished building overnight on many occasions talking

with local Indians who would stop by to see the big construction event 'way out in the desert so very far away from town' as it was in 1888.



Carlos Maldonado

Another more important reason Carlos was to often stay inside the unfinished building overnight was the still unfinished building had no doors or windows in it at the time.

That combined with some very disgruntled Tucson citizens that were still very upset at

having lost out on again being the territorial capital city, and also not getting the lucrative 'Arizona Asylum For The Insane' all of which went to Phoenix instead.

The rumors had it in more than a few circles at some of the popular saloons located along the Congress Street area in downtown Tucson, that plans were secretly being talked about to burn the building to the ground late one night under the cover of the deserts darkness.

One morning as the workers arrived by foot, on their horses, and in their buggies & wagons, they noticed as usual that Maldenado's wagon and horse were already tied to the hitching post outside of the unfinished building.

The loud rough burly workers yelled out Carlos's name but there was no answer back.

Curious, the workers found the 1st floor to be empty, so they made their way up to the unfinished 2nd floor where a hot eerie morning breeze was blowing through the large wooden rough sawed timber structure.

Carlos Maldenado who was known all over town to have a real sense of humor and the player of constant numerous practical jokes on others was seen sitting quietly in a wooden chair with his back facing the workers.

Figuring that it was just yet another of Carlos's long line of many practical jokes, the men crept very slowly up behind their boss in the chair, and then suddenly let out a roaring chorus of "Ya-Hoo's and Ye-Haw's" to scare Carlos.

Seemingly true to the real joker that he was Maldenado did not move a muscle.

As the men then stepped around to talk to their boss, they instantly saw it.....

A very large buffalo skinners knife was sticking deep into Carlos Maldenado's throat and had cut an artery.

All down the front of the dead man's clothes was saturated in the eerie unmistakable dark crimson red color and the smells of both mingling dried and still wet human blood.



The Murder Weapon [showing dried blood]  
(Courtesy of the Tucson Museum)

Tucson's Sheriff Mathew F. Shaw (the brother of the last Tucson Sheriff Eugene O. Shaw who had suddenly and mysteriously left town in April of that same year for 'health reasons' then however showed up 3 months later in Faison, North Carolina (only then telegraph-

ing in his resignation) rode out on horseback to investigate.

Not wanting to alarm the townspeople, the sheriff first ruled the death as a heart attack.

But, the workers let him know that they would have no part of hiding what had happened to their beloved boss, and that they would tell all of the town what they had seen when they arrived at work that morning.

It was believed that Carlos had attempted to scare off some very desperate local men who were mirroring the towns lingering and less than happy sentiments of only getting one college building from the Arizona Territorial Legislature instead of Tucson remaining the state's capital. Those disgruntled townsfolk had come to burn the unfinished building down to the ground into a pile of smoldering ashes.

Although the tracks of horse's hoofs were followed right to the back door of a Congress Street Saloon known for its 'less than

upstanding patrons' not one person was ever arrested or one person ever charged with the murder and it remains a mystery to this very day.

Not so many years after the murder of Carlos Maldonado in 1938, the Old Main building was declared to be unsafe by local Tucson city officials and was abandoned.

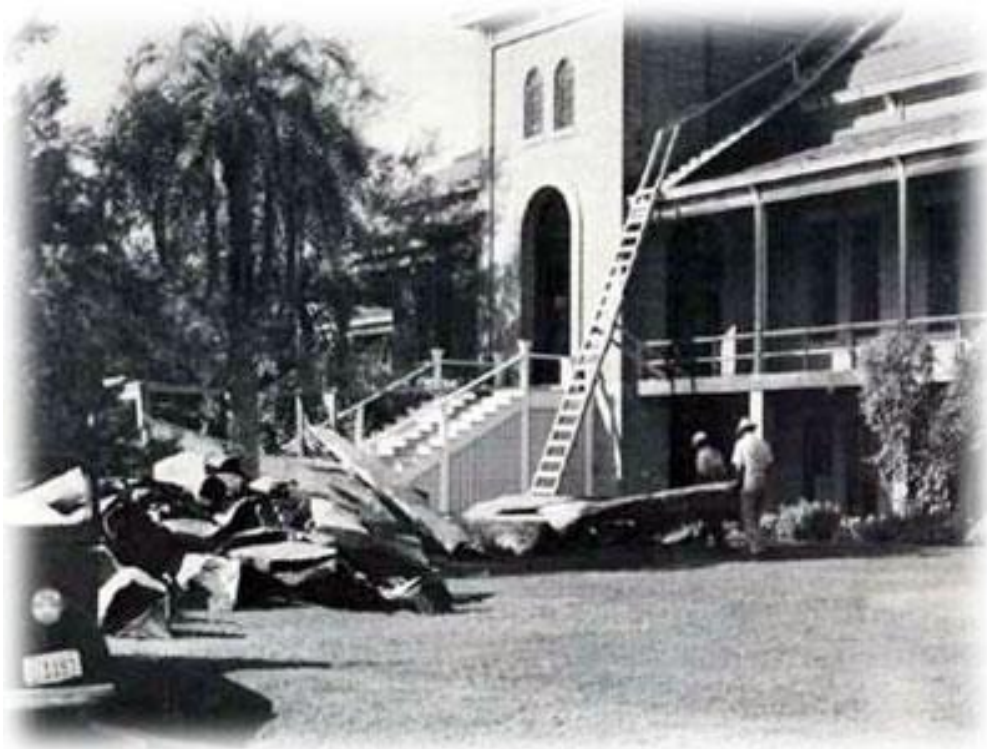
Many years of neglect had taken their toll on the original building, termites had nearly destroyed some of the wooden structural beams as well as the very old hand cut thick long wooden timbers hauled in by wagon from the forest in Madera Canyon that were originally used up in the ceilings.

The majestic building silently remained closed up as the gathering desert dust soon penetrated deeply blanketing every single square inch of its unseen interior areas.

Then on one fateful morning at 7:38AM in 1941 the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, the deaths of over 2,000 U.S. citizens,



and the United States suddenly jumping into World War 2 both saved and suddenly saw the Old Main building pushed into service for training military officers after some rather extensive remodeling with funding paid entirely by the United States War Department back in Washington D.C.



1941 Old Main Restoration By The United States War Department

Just as the renovations had started, some startled workers were reporting that they saw the head and shoulders of a Mexican man

floating up in the air in various rooms of Old Main being worked on.

Although all the rooms were very dark due to the entire old electrical wires and fixtures having been torn out, workers got a good look at the phantom ghostly figure.

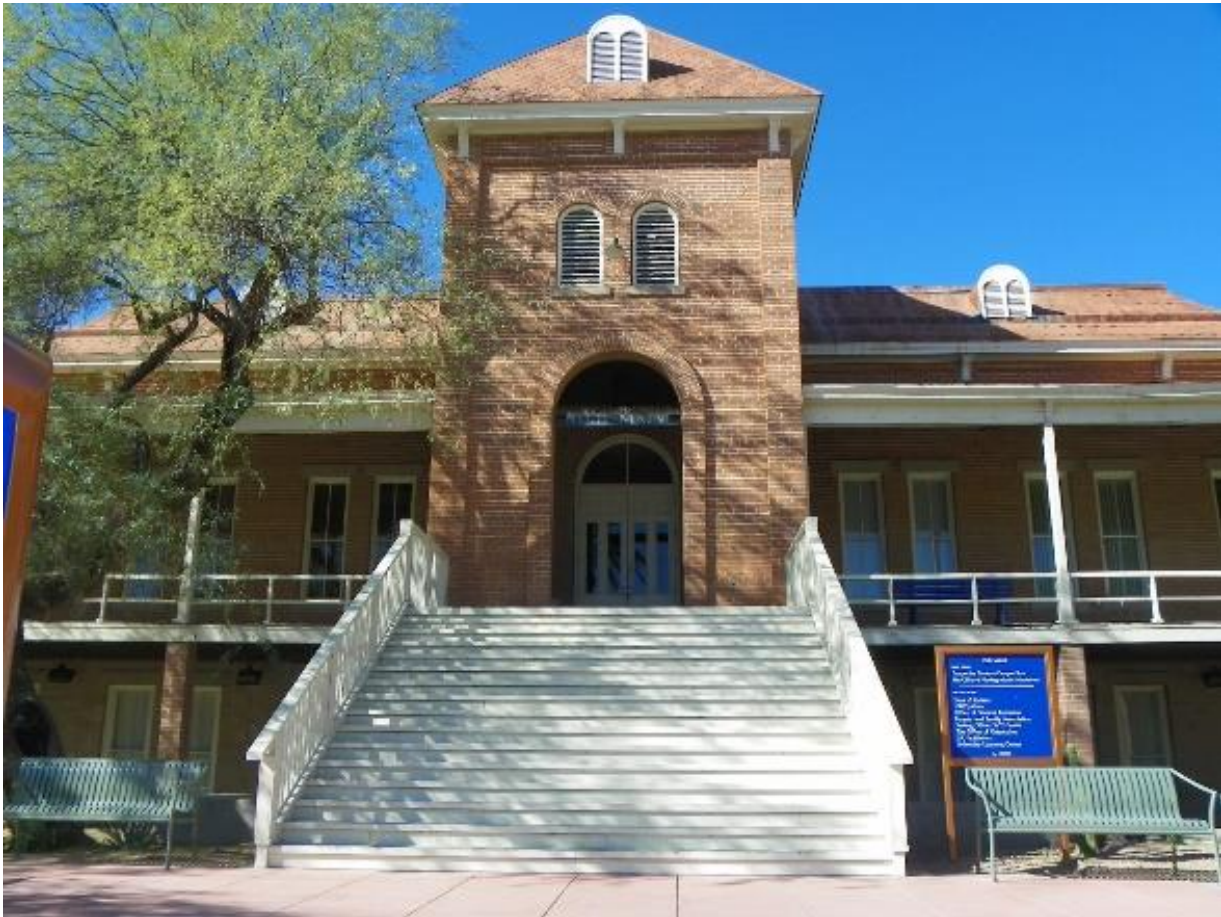
Each man later identified the ghost he had seen as that of Carlos Maldonado from a photo of Carlos taken at a Tucson social event in 1883.

After those incidents, witnesses have also reported experiencing Carlos's same spirit apparition at the Old Main building on many other occasions.

In one sighting, it was one of the University of Arizona Regents and a female office clerk who spotted the ghostly apparition standing in a doorway.

The ghost reportedly first looked straight at both of them and then suddenly vanished.

Students, office workers, and faculty have still regularly reported seeing the shadowy form of a man at Old Main.



Old Main Today

The ghost of Carlos Maldonado it seems was not pleased with the state of the neglected and

deteriorated building in the reported sightings of him up to 1938.

However, later by December 7, 1941 and beyond that in all the subsequent renovation projects at Old Main the renovations had somewhat changed the ghostly spirits demeanor.

Maldenado's ghost had put in some appearances after his death, but when the first renovations began on the Old main building his spirit became even much more active.

Possibly, the ghostly spirit of Carlos Maldenado is still merely trying to show his pleasure ...

From the other side of yet still unknown dimensions!

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