

# Two guns, Arizona

(plus an extra about Rimmy Jim's)

I started this document after having been shown around the Two Guns area by Sean Evans and Jim Hinckley in April 2014. The last update was done in April 2021, adding more info about the latest Rimmy Jim's building plus some news on the future of the complex.

The area had always fascinated me and ever since Sean showed us around it became much more alive. Since then I have been collecting old photos of Two Guns and this document is the result of me trying to map those old photos on the current situation. The document contains a mix of old and new photos to show potential visitors what was where. I did not add many photos of the current situation, if you want to see those you can go to the Route66 picture archive on <https://www.pics66.com>.

Many hours were spent on this but I could not have done without the help of Sean Evans. His knowledge of the area is superb and his willingness to share is great. Other people I have to thank for their help are, Jim Hinckley, Jim Ross, Rich Dinkela, Nick Gerlich, Jerry McLanahan, Steve Rider, David Heward, Mike Ward and the people from Google Maps. Most likely I forgot to mention some people, if so I am truly sorry.

All the photos were either found somewhere on the internet or I made them myself. If there are photos that you own and that you want to be taken away or want to be recognized for please do let me know. Also, if you have any additions or corrections please do let me know.

*A final request: The Two guns area is fragile in a lot of places and has been there a long time before we came to visit. Hopefully it will still be there a long time after we visit so please follow the old saying: **Take only memories, leave only footprints.***

Enjoy!

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## Two Guns / Rimmy Jim's History, 1871-

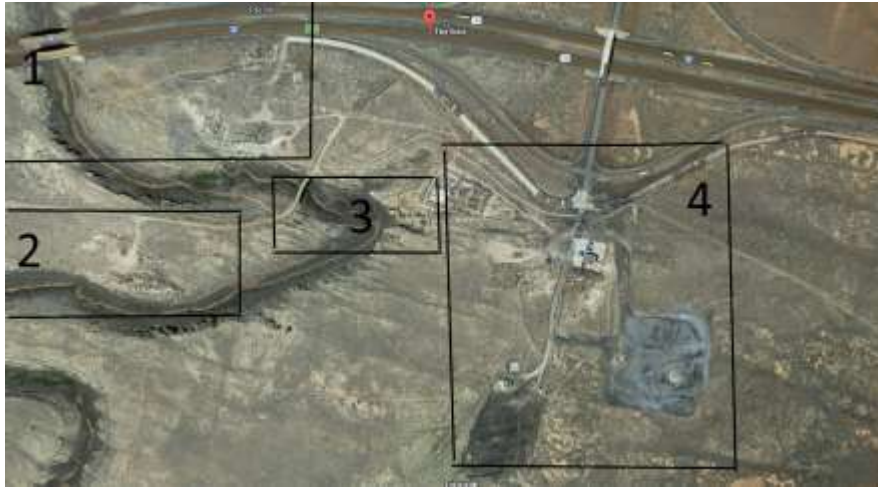
- 1871 (1878?) Raiding Apaches and ponies killed in fire set by Navajos in the "Death Caves". Research shows that this is a complete fake story, made up by Gladwell Richardson.
- 1881 Atlantic and Pacific Railroad reaches Diablo Canyon, about 3.3 miles north of where Canyon Lodge (a.k.a. Two Guns) would be founded in 1922
- 1914 Flagstaff-Winslow Highway is re-routed from Luepp to Diablo Canyon owing to construction of two reinforced concrete, Luten-span arch bridges at Padre and Diablo Canyons (the bridges cost about \$8,000 apiece)
- Early 1920's Harry Locke homesteaded 640 acres of land on the intersection of Meteor Crater road and what would become Route 66. Here he built the Meteor Station.
- 1922 Earl and Louise Cundiff file claim to 320 acres at Diablo Canyon on either side of bridge, and begin building "Canyon Lodge"
- 1925 Harry Edgar "Indian" Miller and Chief Joe Sekakuku arrive and lease lots from Cundiff. Miller builds the "Fort Two Guns" Zoo, and Sekakuku builds the "Apache Death Caves" attraction, and curio shop. Cundiff has a general store and camp grounds called Canyon Lodge. "Rimmy" Jim Giddings builds a Texaco Station and café in front of Miller's Zoo
- 1925 Somewhere around this time the name of the town changes from Canyon Lodge to Two Guns.
- March 3, 1926, Cundiff and Miller fight in Miller's home (in the Zoo), Cundiff is fatally shot with Miller's .38
- June 26, 1926, Miller is acquitted by the Coconino County Superior Court
- November, 1926, the Winslow-Flagstaff Highway becomes part of Route 66
- March 1927 Barney Bush, Art Lewis, and Louise Cundiff are charged with destroying Miller's Two Guns roadside signs along 66 between Winslow and Two Guns
- March 1928, Miller protests Louise Cundiff's homestead grant and loses in court
- July 1928 Miller stands trial in Holbrook for defacing Earl Marion Cundiff's grave marker with red paint. Cundiff's tombstone read "Killed by Indian Miller"
- 1929, the stone Cundiff store burns, and is replaced with a wooden one
- 1930 Miller and wife move to Petrified Forest National Monument where his sister had the "Painted Desert Park and Lion Farm". Later he moved on to his next venture: the "Cave of the Seven Devils" just east of Lupton, AZ in New Mexico. Louise Cundiff leased Miller's Two Guns Zoo to be run by a Flagstaff couple until 1932
- Early 1930s Henry Locke lease the Meteor Station to James Giddings (aka Rimmy Jim)
- December 1934, Louise Cundiff marries Canyon Diablo railway Signal Maintainer Phillip Hesch, and takes over the Two Guns Zoo
- Around 1937 Route 66 re-aligns off of the concrete bridge in favor of a steel canyon rim-level bridge just to the north and west
- 1938 the Louise and Phillip Hesch move the Zoo to a new building along the new alignment of 66 at Two Guns. They also moved their home physically to the site.
- Late 1930's the Meteor Crater Observatory opens.
- June 1943 Rimmy Jim dies.
- 1947 Route 66 re-aligns again moving 100 yards north
- 1950 Last zoo closes. In 1951 Two Guns is sold to Indian trader S.I. Richardson
- 1950s Rimmy Jim's Gas station, and café is built along the '47 alignment of Route 66
- Harry "Indian" Miller dies at Lupton, AZ. Dec. 20, 1951, and is buried in Gallup, New Mexico

- 1963 Ben Dreher buys Two Guns with plans to re-open the zoo and make improvements
- Circa 1967, I-40 replaces Route 66 at Two Guns
- 1971 Rimmy Jim's is destroyed when the underground gas tanks catch fire
- Circa mid 1970s, a Shell station and KOA open at Two Guns. Part of the KOA physical plant is built over the Apache Death Caves part of old Two Guns
- Shell Station and KOA are out-of-business by the mid-1980s
- 2011 word goes out that Russell Crowe purchases Two Guns- possibly to re-make "*West World*". In fact, Two Guns is purchased by a consortium of lawyers in Flagstaff

Timeline mainly thanks to Sean Evans!



For convenience I have split the area up in 4 parts:



Area 1 contains the 2<sup>nd</sup> zoo plus various buildings like Rimmy Jims and a petrol station.

Area 2 contains the 1<sup>st</sup> zoo and the first Rimmy Jims store.

Area 3 covers the Apache Death Cave, Cundiff's store and the bridge

Area 4 is the 'modern area' with the new petrol station and the KOA.

## Area 1



This area is where the 2<sup>nd</sup> zoo is, where a Rimmy Jims store was but also where the big fire of 1971 destroyed most buildings

### 1.1 The main entrance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> zoo.

Unfortunately I have not been able to find any pictures of the front in it's original state.



When you enter the ruins there is a staircase at the rear which will bring you to the remains of the animal cages.





### 1.2 The petrol station.

Not much is left from the station but the foundations and 3 petrol pumps. No old picture was found.



### 1.3 unknown ruin

An intriguingly shaped but unknown ruin.

### 1.4 Electricity

Modern electricity building behind what was the store.



### 1.5 Billboard area

The base you see here has been thought to be the foundation of a building but it was in fact a sort of fence around a large billboard advertising the town of Two Guns.



## 1.6 Two stone pillars

These two pillars must have seen a lot of history of the town.



In an early undated picture we see them when they were part of a service and petrol station.



In a picture from the 1940s we see them back



Somewhere during those years the two buildings became three.



In the 1950s we see the first colour pictures and the pillars are still there.



Somewhere in the 1960s the old petrol station was demolished and a new building (the 'Red Building') was built, incorporating the two stone pillars. Next to the building, in the picture underneath the billboard, you see the petrol station.



These buildings including the sign were all destroyed in the fire in 1971 when the tanks from the petrol station went up in flames. Only the pillars survived.

## Area 2

Area 2 contains the 1<sup>st</sup> zoo and the first shop from Rimmy Jim in Two Guns.



### 2.1 Rimmy Jim's store

The first two pictures are both claimed to be of Rimmy Jim's first store in 1925 at Two Guns.





At first glance they seem to be the same but when you look closer a number of things do not seem to match. The chimney configuration is different and so is the entrance. The second picture seems to be from a later version of the building whereby they built the wooden part on the left and the petrol pumps and they moved the chimney.

Besides, the first picture has to be older as it has the Canyon Lodge name on the building. Somewhere around 1925 the name of the town was changed from Canyon Lodge into Two Guns.

**Is there anybody that knows when exactly the name changed from Canyon Lodge into Two Guns?**



The round lookout tower which housed gas station and curio shop, in front of the animal farm, when the post office at Two Guns was officially known as Canyon Lodge. Hopi Indians: 1 unknown, Bill Woods to right. (Courtesy of Louise Cundiff-Hesch)

Nowadays it looks like this:



## 2.2 The 1<sup>st</sup> zoo

The 1<sup>st</sup> zoo looked different over the years. The pictures are all of the same building and we can deduce the relative age when we look at details.



This is the earliest version. The sign above the door is not seen in the other pictures and there are no cages underneath the windows. Also, the name is 'Canyon Lodge Indian Zoo'.





This picture probably dates from about the same time and shows Indian Miller (the man in the middle) in front of the zoo.



In this picture the petrol station still says Canyon Lodge but the sign over the door of the zoo has been changed.



The name Canyon Lodge has been replaced by Two Guns (see the sign on the far left) and there are cages built underneath the windows.





With these two pictures it is hard to decide which one is earlier. At some stage a small cabin like structure was built in front of the main building. Since in the previous pages there were cages there and in the top one they have been removed I'd like to think the picture with the cabin is the last one but that is not sure.

Below two more pictures from Harry 'Indian' Miller, in the left picture you can also see chief Joe Sekakuku :



L. Indian Miller, Elizabeth Crompton (Later Hagenmire) and Chief Joe Sekakuku. (From snapshot made at Two Guns, 1929).



The main building now looks like this:



When you step inside you will see a room on both sides. The room on the eastside is where Indian Miller shot Earl Cundiff (in the doorway with the big stone in the middle of it)



Behind the buildings you can find many remains of the animal cages plus a footpath along the rim, heading towards the trading post next to the bridge.



If you go to the far west end of the complex you will see this small building.





Go inside and you will see this roof. It is made of old advertisement signs. Rumor has it these were signs from Indian Miller, they were taken down by Louise Cundriff and re-used.

### 2.3 The toilet building



It is unclear if this was the toilet building from Rimmy Jims or from the 1<sup>st</sup> zoo, possible it was used by both. Story goes that Rimmy Jim liked playing tricks on people: *"He also disliked Eastern women, whom he considered snooty. He built a two-seater outhouse for women and wired it with a speaker hooked to a microphone in the café. When a female customer he didn't like used the facility, a voice beneath her would ask her to move to the other seat because he wasn't done painting the underside of her seat."*

I am not sure if that was this toilet building but it is fun to think so.



#### 2.4 Ruins

After the store (area 3, ruin 1) burned down Louise Cundiff built a new wooden store and house. These are most likely the remainders of that building.

### Area 3

Here we find the ruins of the old general store, the bridge and the Apache Death Caves.



#### 3.1 Earl Cundiff's store and the bridge

The bridge as seen from the 2<sup>nd</sup> zoo with the store on the right.







The bridge as seen from the store with the 2<sup>nd</sup> zoo on the left.



The bridge as seen from the Ticket Office (3.3)



The ruins of the Cundiff's store:



Be careful in the ruins of the store and do not fall in!



### 3.2 The Apache Death cave

The Apache Death Cave area is confusing but also dangerous. Be aware of loose rocks, scorpions and rattlesnakes!



The ticket office is the highest building. From there a path went down to another building and then went around a small stone outcrop. There you would use wooden bridges to reach the actual cave. The outline of the path is still visible but the wooden bridge has collapsed.

This shows the ticket office, the lower building and the bridge.



The path from the 'ticket office' around the rock to the entrance of the cave.



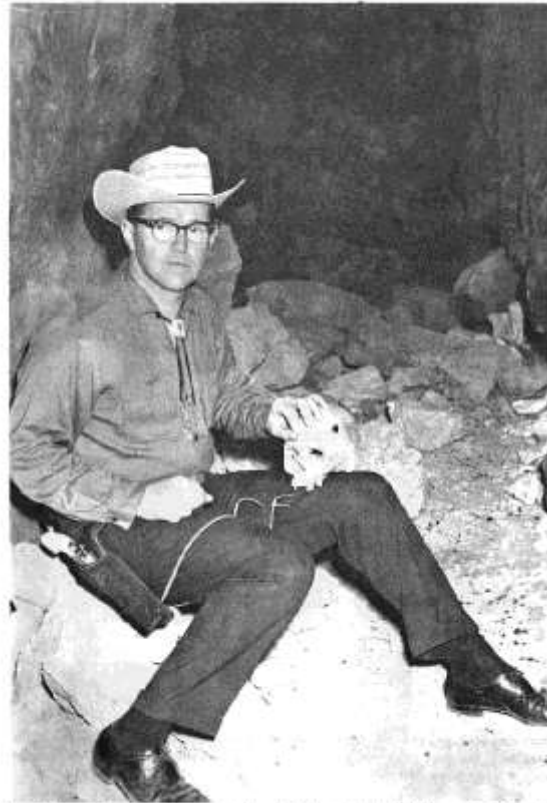
The wooden bridges



The entrance to the cave (left is current, right is older)



The inside of the cave (don't worry, all human remains have been removed long ago):



Ben Dreher, Two Guns manager, with a skull, showing bullet hole, recently found at Two Guns cave.

The picture on the right claims to show that skulls and other human bones were found inside the cave well into to 1950s'

### 3.3 The ticket office



This building is actually quite well preserved and looks virtually the same.



On the slope between the ticket office and the actual path are some more ruins but I failed to find out what they were. If you have any more information on them I would love to hear it!

#### Area 4

This is the area that I call 'the modern area'. The buildings here are mainly modern, around 1970's and, to me at least, often not that interesting.



#### 4.1 Large Unknown structure

No idea what this was.



#### 4.2 Petrol station

These are the remains of the modern petrol station.



#### 4.3 modern shack with stone works

A more modern shack, probably from the same time as the KOA with some unidentified stone works on front of it.





4.4 KOA building plus swimming pool





In 2015 the building was in a bad state and local (?) people were removing timbers to take away. In 2019 the destruction was almost complete:



In may 2020 it had lost all resemblance of a building:



The swimming pool is still there but the amount of grafitti is astounding:



Along the road from the petrol station to the KOA building are these large watertanks with western themed paintings on them



4.5 unknown area

No idea what causes the discoloration.

## 5 Rimmy Jim's

There is a lot of talk and speculation about James Giddings a.k.a. Rimmy Jim and his trading posts. Many people confuse them with both the Meteor Crater Observatory and with Two Guns while Two Guns is often confused with Canyon Diablo.

This map shows the right locations for the three different places:



It seems he started his first store in Two Guns at around 1925 opposite the 1<sup>st</sup> zoo (see 2.1). Then in 1933 he moved to a new store leaving behind his name to be used in Two Guns until the last Rimmy Jim's store (The Red building, see 1.5) burned down in 1971.

In 1920 Harry and Hope Locke started the Meteor Station on the corner of Meteor Crater Road and the road that would later become Route66.



They built it on the south-east corner (bottom right in this picture). With some fantasy (well, actually quite a lot of fantasy!) you can see where the property and building were.

When they had built it they decided to start the Meteor Crater Observatory and to fund that they leased the Meteor Station in August 1933 to Rimmy Jim who moved here from Two Guns..

This was the front of the building in 1938:



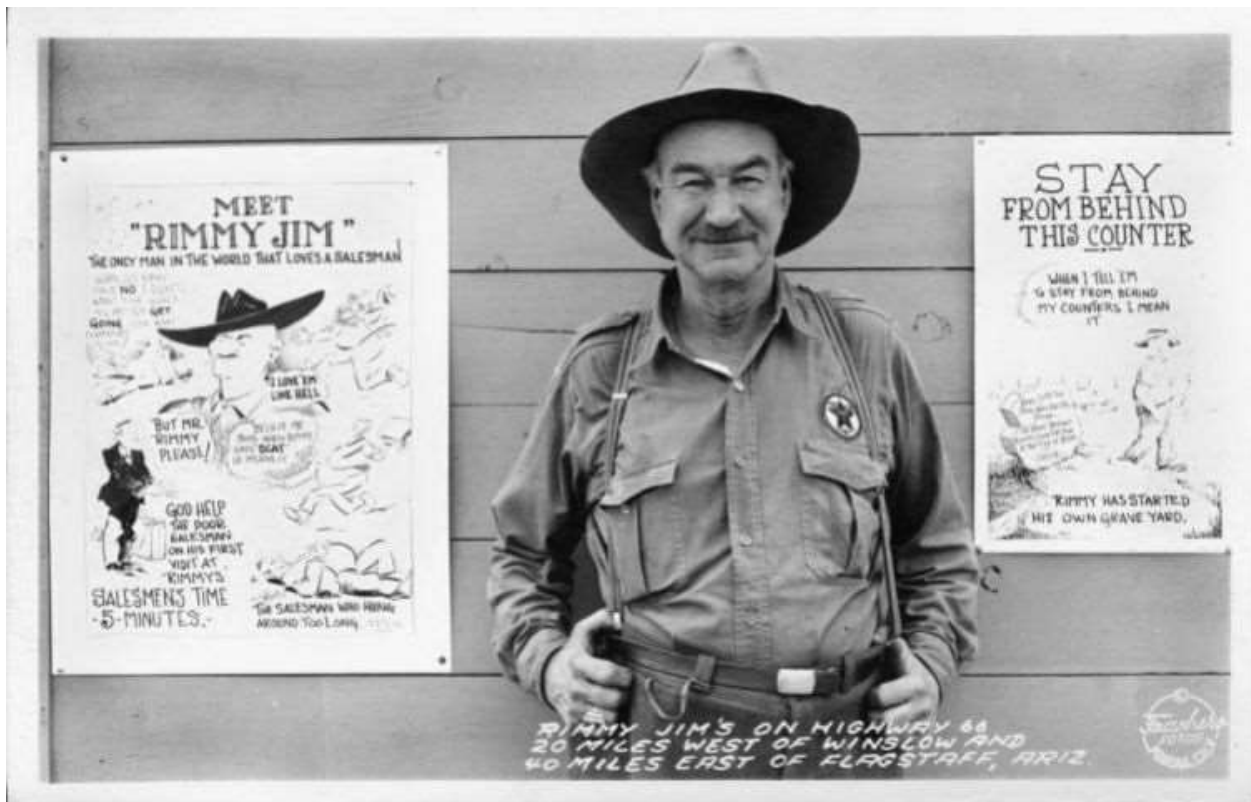
This picture was taken inside (note the configuration of the door and windows plus the writing on the window).



Jimmy Rim himself with a detail of the front of the building





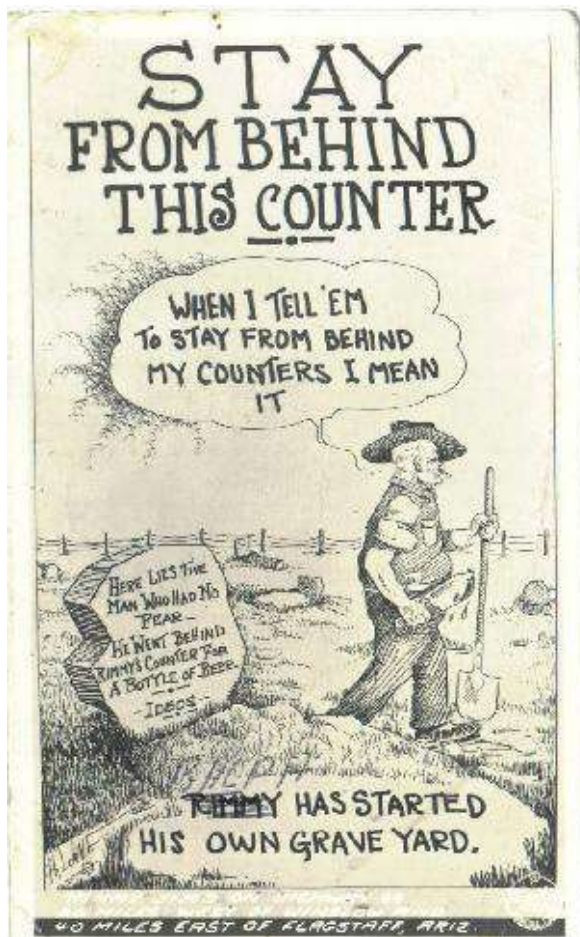


Given the fact that on the old postcard it says 20 miles west of Winslow this photo must have been taken at the Meteor Crater Road and not in Two Guns. It was supposedly taken in 1938.

He died of a heart attack in Winslow in June 1943.



In 1949 Route 66 was moved further to the north and the Meteor Crater Observatory and the Meteor Station were abandoned.



RIMMY JIM'S ON HIGHWAY 66  
40 MILES WEST OF WINSLOW AND  
40 MILES EAST OF FLAGSTAFF, ARIZ.

### Modern Rimmy Jims

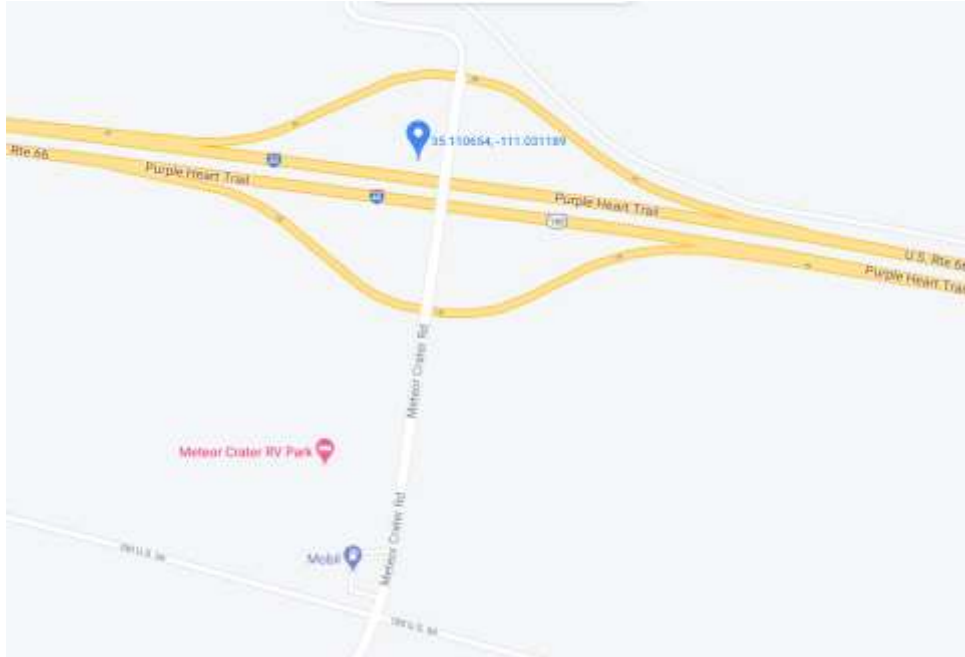
Even though this building carries the name of Rimmy Jim he had already died when these pictures were taken. Given the likely build year of the cars in front of the building this picture seems to date from 1945 and 1955.



In this picture the Camaro in the picture seems to be from 1968 or 1969 so the picture must be later than that.



Recent research (Thank you Nolan Stolz and Jim Ross!) shows that this was built on the north side of what is now the interstate, just to the west of the flyover to the Meteor Crater



## 6 Great unknowns

There are a few unknowns about buildings (supposedly) in Two Guns. If you know of any information regarding this building I would love to hear from you.

### 6.1 Wooden cabin

This picture was labelled as the Two Guns curio store in 1925 but nothing else is known.



## The future of the Two Guns area

For a long time Two Guns was for sale and the abandoned buildings became victims of the harsh climate but also vandalism and graffiti fools. This however might change and the future might bring a lot of improvements.

If you are interested in the plans please check this website: <https://www.historic2guns.com/>

