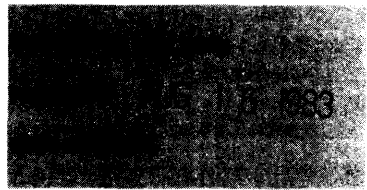


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



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Final

MAY 04 1983

1. Name

historic Peter Gano House (Lookout Cot) **OHP**
and/or common Holly Hill House (since 1920s)

2. Location

street & number 718 Crescent Avenue **N/A** not for publication
city, town Avalon **N/A** vicinity of congressional district 21
state California code 06 county Los Angeles code 037

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>historic tours</u>

4. Owner of Property

name Victor A. Kreis
street & number 844 E. Potrero Rd.
city, town Lake Sherwood **N/A** vicinity of state CA 91361

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Recorder, Los Angeles County
street & number 227 North Broadway
city, town Los Angeles state CA 90012

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Land Use Plan/Significant Structures has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date City of Avalon, Local Coastal Program (1981) federal state county local
depository for survey records City Hall, 209 Metropole Avenue
city, town Avalon state CA 90704

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Situated on a bluff overlooking Avalon Bay, Santa Catalina Island, the Peter Gano house (commonly called Holly Hill House) is a three-story Queen Anne style building topped by a large circular open cupola with a high pointed roof and one brick chimney. The basement floor of the generally rectangular building (with bays and wings), which is approx. 60 feet long and 40 feet wide, is made of local stone; the upper floors are of wood, with shingle roofs. The interior walls are of lathe and plaster strengthened with horsehair and retain extensive fine woodwork and decorative trim hand-crafted by Gano. The exterior trim, including posts and pebble and shell fill, were also made by Gano, as well as two cisterns and a sundial, which are still intact. The house retains its historical use and integrity, the only major alteration being glass enclosure of the west veranda and south porch in 1957. The present owner is restoring the home to turn-of-the-century period, including antique furnishings, and has removed most other previous alterations.

No architect has been recorded for this highly picturesque Queen Anne structure, and it is assumed that builder-owner Peter Gano adapted it to the site from a pattern book. Gano was a civil engineer and a skilled carpenter and would have been familiar with the many pattern books circulating at the time. Although employing some help, Gano participated in the building operation from first to last. He was an especially accomplished wood-carver, which accounts for the fine details and woods particularly evident on the interior of the house. Except for the foundation stone, materials were supplied from the mainland on Gano's sailboat, "Osprey." They were carried up the hill by an elaborate pulley system powered by his horse, "Mercury," a former circus performer who tirelessly walked down the other side of the hill on signal, thus pulling the load up. Mercury was stabled at the foot of the hill and learned to ring a bell to warn Gano of approaching visitors. The horse has been memorialized by a weathervane in the shape of a horse erected by the present owner at the top of the cupola.

The basement, now used as a caretaker's apartment, was originally Gano's workshop where he turned out on his hand-powered lathe the posts, balustrades, furniture and other woodwork for the house. The exterior is made of multicolored varieties of local stone, some with marine encrustations, interspersed with abalone and other marine shells, as well as Indian artifacts (stone bowl fragments, donut stones, etc.) all garnered from the canyon and bay below. Four porthole windows that roll back on an inclined track are built into the stone walls. An additional room (in stone) was added on the south side in the 1920s and is now part of the apartment.

The first floor has four rooms (living, dining, parlor, kitchen) and bath; two glass enclosed porches now serve as additional living areas. Distinctive features include a curly-burl redwood fireplace with French tiles, a screen of spindle posts on the staircase by Gano, this motif being repeated in the arch over an alcove in the parlor. The floor consists of six-inch wide pine boards alternately stained light and dark, restored to the original by the present owner. The same floor treatment is repeated on the second floor, which consists of three bedrooms and a bath. The original woodwork, wainscoting, and windows with small panes on top are intact on both floors.

See continuation sheet.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Peter Gano House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The cupola roof, comprised of alternating bands of straight and fishscale shingles, burned in a 1964 fire that did not otherwise affect the house. The exact contour of the roof was restored in 1972, but the shingles are all straight. The present owner had just purchased the house at the time and was unaware of the original shingle design.

The exterior, originally probably yellow but painted white for at least fifty years, remains largely intact. The roof, originally, bands of red and green, is now red. The house has the usual Queen Anne gables and dormers, eyelid windows, curved walls, shingles of fishscale, diamond, and hexagonal design, with posts and other decorative elements all hand-crafted by Gano, along with occasional decorative fill made of pebbles and shells. The west veranda and south porch were glassed in about 1957 and in doing this the remodeler removed the curved railing on the veranda. This is the only major change in the house.

The present owner is carefully restoring the building to the turn-of-the-century period. On the interior, he has stripped the paint (baby blue) from the woodwork and floors and restored the original wood. On the exterior, he has stripped the paint from most of the shell and pebble decorative details, exposing in the process Gano's shell and stone mosaic sign, "Lookout Cot," over the main entrance porch. The second floor balcony, removed by a previous owner, has been rebuilt exactly to its original form.

The present owner plans to continue restoration of the house, working from historical photographs, retaining only inconspicuous improvements such as the glassed-in areas. He is planning to restore the curved railing on the west veranda.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1890 **Builder/Architect** Peter Gano

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Peter Gano House, begun in 1888 and completed in 1890, is significant for its historic associations with the development of Avalon, Santa Catalina Island, as a vacation resort during the great land speculation that followed completion of the transcontinental railroad to Southern California. The third oldest home extant in Avalon, the house is the most outstanding example of Queen Anne architecture on the island and is significant for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing. After a fire in 1915 destroyed a large portion of the town, Avalon experienced a second wave of development in the 1920s in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The Peter Gano House, now commonly called "Holly Hill House," is one of the few homes remaining from the earlier period of development.

Peter Gano was a Midwestern civil engineer who migrated in the late 1870s to Pasadena where he purchased water rights and a 350 acre tract of land, engineered the water system for the tract, planted 26 acres of grapes, and built a home. At that time, Santa Catalina Island was populated by a few sheep herders. Along with other Pasadenans, Gano sailed to the island for camping vacations. In late 1887, a town was surveyed in Avalon Canyon for development as a resort and a hotel was built. In 1888, Gano purchased several choice lots overlooking Avalon Bay and retired to the island to begin construction of his home. He engineered the piping of water from local springs for the hotel and his new home. He also built cisterns on the hill behind his house and a very accurate sundial at the west entrance. A bachelor, Gano lived alone in the house that he had built largely by himself, while he enjoyed the island recreational activities of fishing and sailing and practiced his hobby of fine woodworking in his basement workshop. He was typical of the self-reliant, middle-class pioneers who imposed their genteel lifestyle on the rugged and isolated island. The house in its prominent location quickly became an island landmark and has been featured on postcards since the 1900s.

In failing health, Gano subdivided and sold his property in 1921 and returned to Pasadena to be cared for by a friend. The home was purchased by the Joshua Reed Giddings family, also Pasadena pioneers, who had been vacationing on the island for years. The home was renamed "Holly Hill House," and a stone wing was added to the basement level for cook's quarters. The house served as the family vacation home through two generations in the continuing tradition of middle-class Southern California families seeking the sea to find relief from the heat of inland summers. Prior to World War II, an estimated one-fourth of the summer homes on Catalina were owned by Pasadena families, whose manners, morals, and social structure dominated the social life of the island.

See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.23 acres

Quadrangle name Santa Catalina East Quadrangle

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	3	7	6	9	6	0	3	6	8	9	8	8	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

a portion of Lot 93 in Block 15,

The property nominated is an irregularly shaped lot, in the City of Avalon, listed by the Los Angeles County Assessor as number: 7480-05-21. It contains the house and grounds. Boundaries are shown on the attached Assessor's map.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code NA county N/A code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia Anne Moore, Curator

organization Catalina Island Museum Society

date April 29, 1983

street & number Casino Building, P. O. Box 366

telephone 213-510-0955

city or town Avalon

state California 90704

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date AUG 9 1983

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

entered in the National Register

date

9/15/83

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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CONTINUATION SHEET Peter Gano House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

The home and adjoining bay frontage were purchased by the John Smith family in 1961. They formed the Holly Hill Development Co. with plans to develop the bay frontage, but excavation of the hill undermined the stability of the house. Excavation was stopped and the hill reinforced; no further cracks have appeared in the basement. The roof of the cupola burned in 1964. The house was rented for several years and became delapidated.

Victor A. Kreis purchased the house, but not the bay frontage, in 1971. He is restoring the house as nearly as possible to its turn-of-the-century style, working with historic photographs and local memory. Kreis has replaced the cupola, restored the original floors and woodwork, much of the exterior decoration, and the second floor balcony. His major alteration has been expansion of the kitchen alcove in keeping with the style and proportions of the house. The house, including kitchen and bathrooms, has been furnished with turn-of-the-century antiques (including stove and other fixtures), thus enhancing the character of the home. Furnishings include a dining room table made by Gano and some of his tools and hand-made utensils, as well as a small chair with needlepoint seat made by a Giddings.

The house retains most of its original fabric and character and continues in its original use as a vacation home. The cisterns and sundial are still intact. The Holly Hill Docent Council of the Catalina Island Museum Society conducts guided tours for groups by appointment. The house serves as an excellent illustration of the ingenuity of the early settlers and the prevailing lifestyle on the island for fifty years. It remains a prominent landmark within view of a large percentage of the town. All visitors arriving by boat walk past it as they enter the town. It forms one of their first impressions of Avalon.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET Peter Gano House ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Giddings, Paul. "Holly Hill House," Oral history interview. Catalina Island Museum, Avalon, CA (1981).

Loud, Catherine MacLean. "History of Avalon, 1887-1915." Unpublished Manuscript. Catalina Island Museum, Avalon, CA (1973). Mrs. Loud's father helped Gano build the house.

Kreis, Sherri. Holly Hill House, A Pictorial and History. Westlake Village, CA: IPS International Publishing Services, 1981.

Peter Gano House (Holly Hill House)
718 Crescent Avenue
Avalon, Los Angeles County, California

Assessor's No. 7480-05-21

7480 | 5
SCALE 1" = 60'

OFFICIAL MAP OF
THE CITY OF AVALON
O.M. 1-31-46

