

2032

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration FormNATIONAL
REGISTER

JUL 11 1991

OHP

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Armory Hall

other names/site number Odd Fellows Hall

2. Location

street & number 252 North Main Street

 not for publication

city, town Lake Elsinore

 vicinity

state California code CA

county Riverside

code CA 065

zip code 92330

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
 nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
 National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
 In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

*Kathleen Matherne*12/16/91
Date

Signature of certifying official

California Office of Historic Preservation

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

Entered in the
National Register

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Delores Byer

1/29/92

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/ Meeting Hall

EDUCATION/ School

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Government Office

7. DescriptionArchitectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)OTHER: Vernacular False - Front

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____

walls Woodroot Woodother Asphalt

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Summary

Armory Hall is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street and Franklin Street in the town of Lake Elsinore, California. This is a lightly wooded, hilly area directly south of the main commercial district. The building's west (front) elevation is set back approximately five feet from the Main Street sidewalk. Side yards to the north and south of the building include several narrow-leaved deciduous trees. A more spacious yard is located at the east (rear) of the building. Adjacent to the building site on the north are several one-story 1920s-era bungalows.

The two-story wood frame building, dating from 1887, is an example of the vernacular false-front style, a style frequently associated with the settlement of the west. The false-front style was often used to house services, small hotels, and as in this case, meeting halls for social or fraternal organizations. As the oldest remaining public building in Lake Elsinore, Armory Hall, even with visible alterations, retains a high degree of its original integrity of design.

Exterior Features

Armory Hall is a two-story rectangular structure clad in six-inch-wide horizontal redwood clapboard siding. The siding extends to grade level, below which the building sits on brick piers. A wood shingled gable roof covers the main building. A false front with a stepped gable extends the west (front) facade both vertically and horizontally so that the roof over the main body remains hidden from view. Redwood corner boards are carried up the false front to divide its stepped gable into two panels in which the redwood siding is diagonal.

Typical windows are 2/2 double-hung wood sash. Painted 1x6 trim is found on the exterior, with a drip cap at the head and a two-inch-wide sill. Windows usually occur in a symmetrical fenestration pattern, and are flanked by replacement wood shutters.

The west (front) elevation consists of the false front as described above, with two typical windows symmetrically placed on each floor. Located at the east (rear) elevation of the building is a small one-story addition with an asphalt shingled shed roof containing an air-conditioning unit. The addition, clad in redwood siding similar to the main building, contains a flush wood door with a concrete pad and a 1/1 low, wide double-hung wood window with Craftsman-style trim on the west elevation. One of these windows is also located on each side of the addition. A typical window (without shutters) is located on the second floor at the west elevation.

A small porch with a wood shingled gable roof, wood posts and rails, and brick steps frames the main entrance to the building at the west corner of the south (side) elevation. The porch and the paired wood panel and glass entrance doors are not original to the building. The remainder of the south elevation consists of symmetrically placed typical windows. A second floor window has been removed and replaced by a flush wood door with a metal fire escape stairway on brick piers leading to ground level.

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The north (side) elevation consists of four symmetrically placed typical windows at each floor, with the exception of the northeast corner first floor window. This is a pair of Craftsman-style fixed windows with eight small lights over a divided pane.

Interior Features

It can be assumed from early descriptions that the first floor of Armory Hall was originally unpartitioned open space. The Elsinore News in an article of July 2, 1887 on the Hall Dedication, describes the first floor dining hall, "where two long tables, the full length of the building... awaited the coming guests." The article describes the "walls and ceilings being decorated with rare good taste, presenting a brilliant and pleasing aspect." When the High School leased the building in 1907, according to Elizabeth James in Elsinore History Vignettes, they "put in a partition and papered and painted" on the lower floor.

The first floor was remodeled soon after Butterfield Escrow moved into the building in 1978. The space was partitioned into small offices, with a knotty pine wainscot, wallpaper, and period ceiling fixtures added. The original two-inch-wide tongue and groove hardwood floors remain under new carpet. The original wood stairs lead to the second floor. A bathroom under the stairs probably dates from the time of the school renovations.

At the rear of the building, the shed addition (construction date unknown) is divided into two offices, with a small bathroom. Walls are wood paneled and floors are carpet and linoleum.

The second floor retains much of the historic fabric of the building. This floor contains primarily one large open space, with the circulation (stairs, entry hall) and storage (two closets) spaces located at the east end. There is an eight-inch-high wood platform on three sides of the large room. Elementary-age students had desks in the center of the room, while junior high and high school students had desks on the platform. The walls are plaster over wood lath, with two-inch-wide wood tongue and groove wainscot paneling up to a 42-inch height. The original six-inch-wide wood plank floor is in place.

Two of the original four-panel wood doors to the storage areas are existing, with the original hardware intact. In addition, there are six historic "schoolhouse" ceiling light fixtures and one historic glass globe center ceiling fixture in place.

The only visible non-historic alterations on the second floor are the fire escape door, which removed one window, and a vent opening which was cut into the east wall of the large room. The second floor is currently used for storage. The integrity of the space is well-preserved and the physical historic fabric, while in need of repair, is for the most part existing.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Architecture

Period of Significance
1887- 1922

Significant Dates
1887

Social History

Education

Exploration/ Settlement

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
McLeod (Builder)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Summary

Armory Hall is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion "A" for its original use from 1887 to circa 1907 as the headquarters of the local Grand Army of the Republic Post, a national Civil War veterans organization (the major period of significance of the building); for its varied subsequent roles in and contributions to the development and social history of Lake Elsinore; and for its status as the oldest non-residential building existing in the town.

The building is also eligible under criterion "C" as a locally significant example of the vernacular false-front style of architecture. Long associated with the settlement of the west, this style has virtually vanished from the towns of southern California. The false-front style gave Armory Hall, constructed as one of the first major buildings of the young town, an interesting "larger-than-life" profile, which helped town developers convey an image of progress and prosperity. As the newspaper accounts of the time show, the building provided symbolic evidence of growth and a progressive community to residents and new settlers. The historic fabric of Armory Hall has been well preserved allowing the building to retain its historic and architectural integrity to a high degree.

Background History

The shores of Lake Elsinore were originally inhabited by the Pai-ah-che Indians, who called the lake "Etengvo Wumoma", which translates loosely into "Hot Springs by the Little Sea". In 1797 Franciscan padre Juan Santiago left Mission San Juan Capistrano in search of a new mission site and became the first European to view the lake they renamed "Laguna Grande".

With hot mineral springs dotting its shores, the clear inland valley lake soon attracted Spanish ranchers and occasional American trappers. The establishment of a 2700-mile stagecoach route by John Butterfield in 1858, to connect St. Louis with San Francisco, had a major impact on the formerly placid valley, including an increase in trade and population.

The Civil War soon followed, and although the stage line had been abandoned, couriers of war continued to use the stage route. Union volunteers camped on the shores of the lake in 1862. Under the command of Colonel James Henry Carleton, the forces were en route to New Mexico, where they would join Union volunteers in resisting an expected invasion aimed at Santa Fe by Confederate forces from Texas. An express rider delivered a message to Carleton's encampment telling of a Union victory over Texans at Glorieta Pass, east of Santa Fe.

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After the war, the lake area became the destination for many immigrants from the east. This, in addition to the local involvement in the war, may account for the number of Civil War veterans - which was deemed large enough to create a local Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, which in turn led to the construction of Armory Hall in 1887.

In 1883, Franklin Heald, Donald Graham and William Collier purchased the 12,800 acres comprising Rancho La Laguna. The town of Elsinore was established in 1884. Margaret Collier Graham, wife of one of the town's founders, named the new venture Elsinore "not for the small city so named in Denmark, but rather from the immortality given it by Shakespeare and Campbell; and because it had a pleasant sound." (Hudson:25)

The town quickly became known as a resort area due to the lake and hot springs. The Crescent Bath House, which began construction in 1887, drew visitors from a wide area. Now known as The Chimes, the ornate Victorian building with Oriental influences is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The State of California assumed control of Lake Elsinore in 1956, and created a new State Park. The town assumed the name Lake Elsinore in 1972. Today the lake area has a population of over 10,000.

Elsinore in 1887

The following passage gives a brief description of Elsinore as it appeared in 1887, the year of Armory Hall's construction. This was also notable as the year of construction of the Crescent Bath House and Consolidated Bank, the first bank in the town. The article was written by Douglass Gunn, former publisher of the San Diego Union, and was issued in 1887 in a book titled San Diego Illustrated.

Elsinore is the name of the colony started on the Laguna Rancho a little over three years ago. It is on the line of the California Southern Railroad, 87 1/2 miles from San Diego, twenty miles south of Riverside, thirty-seven miles south of San Bernardino and ninety miles east of Los Angeles.

The tract comprises about 10,000 acres around the "laguna" or lake, from which the rancho took its name. A flourishing town has been built here, at which there is a railroad station, postoffice (with daily mail service), express and telegraph offices, hotels, stores, lumber yards, livery stables, etc. There are several brick buildings. The population of the town and vicinity is about 1000.

Elsinore is one of the most rapidly growing and successful colonies of Southern California. Its advantages of soil, climate, water and cheapness of land have attracted the best class of settlers, forming a progressive community.

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The exhibit made by Elsinore at the County Fair in October 1885, sufficiently showed the capacity and productiveness of the soil in fruit and vegetable growing.

Clay of the finest quality for the manufacture of pottery-ware has been developed here, and a pottery has been established, whose wares find a ready market. There is a coal mine, an eight-foot vein, which yields coal which, though not of the best quality, is still very good fuel and shows better and better quality as the mine is developed. It is used in the blacksmith shops and furnaces with satisfactory results.

The hot mineral springs and the lake are features which enhance the value of the place as a pleasant resort for health and pleasure seekers and it is the intention of the managers of the colony lands to improve these advantages. Lands are quoted at from \$25 to \$75 an acre.

Grand Army of the Republic

The following brief history of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) is excerpted from an address delivered by Captain L.B. Peck before the G.A.R. at their 25th Anniversary meeting held in Armory Hall, Lake Elsinore, on April 6, 1891. The address was reported in the Elsinore Press on April 18, 1891.

The G.A.R. was an organization of Civil War veterans of the Union Army. Members were recruited from the ranks of those who could produce an Honorable Discharge from the service of the United States. Major B.J. Stephenson of Springfield, Illinois instituted the first Post at Decatur, Illinois, on April 9, 1866. Post No. 1 was organized with twelve charter members, and in the following 25 years, the G.A.R. grew to have 450,000 members at Posts throughout the nation.

In his address, Captain Peck emphasized the importance of the organization by reciting the more prominent accomplishments of its members: the overthrow of the institution of slavery and the restoration of the Union.

T.B. Stevens Post, No. 103, was the Post for which Armory Hall was constructed. General T.B. Stevens, for whom the Post was named, was killed at the battle of Chantilly, Virginia. Stevens Post was instituted on January 30, 1886, with 12 charter members. The highest membership the Post had at any time was 36. In 1891 the Post had 25 members.

Announcement of Construction

Construction of Armory Hall was announced on page one of the Elsinore News of May 14, 1887:

The G.A.R. Boys contracted with Mr. McLeod Thursday for a handsome two story building to be erected on their lot east of the drug store. The building is to be devoted to the meetings of the G.A.R. The lower floor will be set apart for that purpose, while the upper floor will be utilized as a lodge room by the K of P and Odd Fellows. The building will cost \$2,000.

Dedication of the Building

The following account of the dedication of Armory Hall appeared in the Elsinore News of July 2, 1887:

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HALL DEDICATION

The G.A.R. Boys Christen Their New Building
The New and Handsome Edifice
Filled to Overflowing With Elsinore's
Representative Citizens and
Gallant Boys From
Abroad

The day was a gala day in Elsinore. It had been set aside by Stevens Post as the occasion for dedicating their handsome new hall. In honor of the event the business houses and offices were profusely decorated with flags until the streets presented quite a holiday appearance. Shortly before the hour of the arrival of the noon train the Lake Shore band, in their handsome new grey and black uniforms, formed in line and accompanied by the Post proceeded to the depot, where they met a detail from Cornman Post, number 57 of San Bernardino. The guests were taken to the hotels, and the afternoon given over to war talk and the renewal of "auld acquaintance". In the evening the clans gathered at the hall, a handsome two story brown front building just erected for the use of Stevens Post. The upper floor is devoted to the meetings of the Post, the lower for a general public use. [unintelligible] room is finished, but it presents a handsome and tasteful appearance, walls and ceilings being decorated with rare good taste, presenting a brilliant and pleasing aspect. Long before the commencement of the exercises the hall was filled to overflowing with the representative people of Elsinore and their guests, gathered together, to participate in the services and as an evidence of their appreciation of the grand old boys who marched behind the stars and stripes. The audience was one any community might well be proud of... The handsome hall was a surprise to everybody not previously admitted to its sacred precincts. It demonstrated the fact that the pioneers of Elsinore come from good stock and have been accustomed to elegant surroundings.

... Commander Gruwell announced the object of the gathering to be the dedication of the new hall. He then called upon Comrade Seymour, of San Bernardino, for an address. Mr Seymour responded as follows; "Ladies and gentlemen and comrades - Something over a year ago I had ordered from the Post Commander to accompany him here to institute a Post. Here we found a little handfull of our comrades, numbering fourteen in all, and here in this, the then little hamlet by its beautiful lake, we mustered in Stevens Post in a little unplastered, unpainted, unfinished hall. A short time since, my commander again ordered me to Elsinore. I asked him what was the matter this time. 'Oh', he said, 'the boys are going to dedicate a hall.' I came and instead of the fife and drum that met us on the former occasion we found a splendid band waiting to greet us with their perfect harmony. Instead of the handfull of old soldiers we find what the boys claim the grandest Post in all Southern California. I am somehow reminded of how some twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago that Grand Army we now represent was mustered from the farm houses and homes of the North. From the farms and shops and busy marts North of the Mason and Dixon line they came until 800,000 were mustered in. Over half that number we left on the bloody field of battle. Since that time over four fifths of that number have passed away. Day by day our number grows less, soon all that will be left of the Grand Army of the Republic will live only in the memory and the gratitude of a nation saved. We, the remnant of that

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glorious army of Freedom, must cling closer to each other; must love each other more and more. We must own our own halls or some day the landlords will turn us out, as the President of the United States has turned us out."

[At the conclusion of the program the audience gathered] in the spacious dining hall beneath, where two long tables, the full length of the building ... awaited the coming guests. The tables were bountifully provided with eatables and handsomely ornamented with flags and flowers. Beautiful iced cakes in the center of each, representing the headquarters of Generals Logan and Sherman. The feast... was perfect as was attested by the 300 guests who partook of it. After the banquet the hall was cleared and to the dulcet strains of stringed instruments, the young people flitted through the night. And thus ended the grand dedication of Armory Hall.

Functions of the Building

As the ranks of the Civil War veterans in the Grand Army of the Republic thinned, Armory Hall became used more as a meeting hall for the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.), who eventually purchased the building. The Elsinore News reported on May 1, 1908 that an Odd Fellows Social was held in "I.O.O.F. Hall". Armory Hall was also used for social functions of various groups such as the Good Templars.

The building was used as a school from 1907 to approximately 1912. Elizabeth James, in a chapter titled "Early High School History" relates the following:

In the fall of 1907 the Elsinore School Board rented the lower floor of the Armory Hall, now Odd Fellows Hall, Main and Franklin, put in a partition and papered and painted. There were no screens, and the flies were so bad school was dismissed for half day until screens could be put in. A.J. Olson, principal, was bald headed and couldn't take it.

In 1909 the school district electors met and necessary steps were taken to vote bonds for a new high school. Odd Fellows Hall was the polling place for the bond election. The new school was authorized and by 1912 the building was ready for use. Odd Fellows Hall was no longer used as classrooms.

Concurrent with and subsequent to the school use, the building continued to be used as the Odd Fellows meeting hall. Several church groups also used the building as their meeting hall until their own buildings were constructed.

The period of significance has been ended at 1922 when the building took on a new use. The Elsinore News of August 4, 1922 indicated that the Odd Fellows installation of that year was held in Armory Hall, but the closing paragraph of the newspaper account said:

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The next meeting will be held in the lodge rooms at the new Masonic Temple, the lodge having leased their present building [Armory Hall] for three years to A.E. Watson for an undertaking parlor.

At some time after this, Armory Hall became the American Legion Hall. The building then went into commercial use for many years as the home of Hall's Feed Store until 1978. In that year, Bob Williams purchased the building as a location for his company, Butterfield Escrow. In 1987 the Ortega Trail Recreation and Park District purchased the building, which currently houses their offices.

The Armory Hall of Lake Elsinore is the town's earliest building relating to its social history, its educational institutions and its non-residential development.

9. Major Bibliographical References

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Blumenson, John J.G. Identifying American Architecture. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jennings, Jan. American Vernacular Design 1870 - 1940. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988.

Gunn, Douglas. San Diego Illustrated. San Diego, 1887.

Hudson, Tom. Lake Elsinore Valley: Its Story 1776 - 1977. Lake Elsinore: Lake Elsinore Downtown Business Association, 1988.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:
Historic Resources Inventory

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A [11]	146,9181,01	3,712,55,21,0
Zone	Easting	Northing

c [] [] [] [] [] []

B [] [] [] [] [] []	Easting	Northing
D [] [] [] [] [] []	Zone	

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Parcel 1: That portion of Lot 7 in block 500 of Smith's addition to Elsinore as shown by map on file in book 2, page 135 of maps, San Diego County records lying southerly of a line parallel with and 58 feet southerly of the northerly portion of Lot 7: except any portion included within Franklin Street.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Leonard M. Kliwinski, Project Manager, and John C. Loomis, Principal
organization	Thirtieth Street Architects, Inc.
street & number	2821 Newport Boulevard
city or town	Newport Beach
date	5/30/91
telephone	(714) 673-2643
state	California
zip code	92663

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James, Elizabeth (ed.). Elsinore History Vignettes. (n.d.)

Lake Elsinore Chamber of Commerce Directory 1990.

Isaaks, Frank and Nella. My Book About Elsinore. Lake Elsinore: Lake Elsinore School District, 1984.

NEWSPAPERS

"Hall Dedication", Elsinore News, July 2, 1887.

"Odd Fellows Install", Lake Elsinore Valley Press, August 4, 1922.

"Historic Building to House Park District Office", Riverside Press-Enterprise, (n.d.)

"Societies and Churches", Elsinore News, January 29, 1887.

"Lakeside Musings", Elsinore News, May 14, 1887.

"The Lincoln Observance", Elsinore Press, February 19, 1909.

"T.B. Stevens Post", Elsinore Press, April 18, 1891.

"Group Seeks to Protect Elsinore's Heritage", Riverside Press-Telegram, (n.d.)

"103-Year Old LE Building May Get Historical Status", Lake Elsinore News, May 2, 1990.

"Lake Elsinore High School Possesses a Storied History", Lake Elsinore News, August 29, 1990.

OTHER

Historic Resources Inventory. Butterfield Escrow/Grand Army of the Republic Building. State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1982.

Assessor's Map BK 373PG02 (Rancho La Laguna), Riverside County, California.

Grant Deed, Escrow No. 90-9709-TB, Riverside County, California, 1990.

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Parcel 2: Lot 1 in block A of Jones addition to Elsinore as shown by map on file in book 4, page 177 of maps, Riverside County records: except the southerly rectangular 50 feet as conveyed to the City of Elsinore by deed recorded February 1, 1912 in book 344, page 92 of deeds, records of Riverside County, California.

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Photographs 1
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PHOTOGRAPHS

- A. Armory Hall
- B. Lake Elsinore, California
- C. Leonard M. Kliwinski
- D. May 15, 1991
- E. Location of Negatives: Ortega Trail Recreation and Park District
252 North Main Street
Lake Elsinore, California 92330

F. Description of view:

1. View showing west (front) and north (side) elevations.
2. View showing west (front) and south (side) elevations.
3. View showing east (rear) and south (side) elevations.
4. Detail of typical window.
5. Interior view of large room on second floor - looking west.