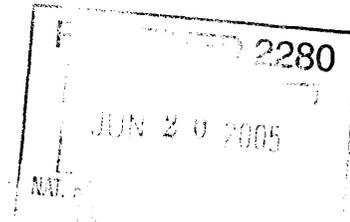


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98

other names/site number "N/A"

2. Location

street & number 2877 Bear Valley Road  not for publication "N/A"

city or town Hornitos  vicinity "N/A"

state California code CA county Mariposa code 043 zip code 95325

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 17 JUN 2005  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal Agency or bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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:)

[Signature] 8/3/05  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(ε)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
SOCIAL/meeting hall

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
SOCIAL/meeting hall  
"WORK IN PROGRESS"

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century  
"other:" unreinforced masonry bldg.

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)  
foundation stone  
walls stone  
roof metal  
other brick

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**See Continuation Sheet, Section Number 7, Pages 1 - 5**

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used or religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Social history

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1873 - 1930

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

"N/A"

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

"N/A"

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

"N/A"

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

"unknown"

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources use in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # CA-1523
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Hornitos Lodge archives

**Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98**  
Name of Property

**Mariposa, CA**  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acree of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

10 744220 4153880

1	100	744220	4153880	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

2 | 10 | 744220 | 4153880 |

4 | | | | |

See continuation sheet

**Vertical Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Kenneth N. Cooper (lodge historian)

organization Hornitos Lodge No. 98, F.&A.M. date April 8, 2005

street & number 2240 Yosemite Pkwy. Spc. #64 telephone (209) 726-6311 (wk)

city or town Merced state CA zip code 95340

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property. (See Continuation Sheet Section 11, Additional Documentation)

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Hornitos Masonic Temple Association (Kenneth N. Cooper – Lodge Trustee)

street & number 2240 Yosemite Pkwy. Spc.#64 telephone (209) 726-6311

city or town Merced state CA zip code 95340

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, 1849 "C" Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA

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## Narrative Description

### SUMMARY

The Hornitos Masonic Hall is a small one-story building that is located across the highway from a county park and south of The Plaza, which is the historic center of Hornitos. The town is only about one-quarter mile wide by one mile long at the junction of two county roads, and is remotely nestled in the oak tree foothills of Mariposa County. Hornitos today remains a sparsely populated community of sixty-five residents, and visually is a remnant of its boom-town days with structures of dilapidated wood homes, adobe ruins, and historic and contemporary buildings. The Hall is currently only used by Hornitos Lodge No. 98, Free & Accepted Masons in California, for meeting purposes. It is a privately-owned building that was purchased in August 1873 for \$220.00, and has been in continuous meeting use for 132 years. Its property is a rectangular area that partially slopes downward from Bear Valley Road to Low Street, and is covered with a concrete walkway adjacent to the Hall, an asphalt driveway, and a gravel parking lot. The only Masonic property existing during the period of significance was the lodge building, basement, and the north half of Lot 64. The only outside improvements made since that period were the walkway, driveway, roof and front porch awning, signs, restroom and pump house outbuilding, parking lot, fencing, landscaping, and utility relocation. Also since that time, the only changes to the building's interiors have been recent renovations of the lodge room and basement, and addition of mechanical heating and air conditioning. Overall, alterations to the Hall have preserved it structurally and cosmetically, but more importantly it has been left in a condition resembling historical appearances.

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Hall and outbuilding are presently the only two structures on its property. The Hall is a rectangular stone building that occupies a small footprint compared to its land area. A unique aspect of the building's footprint is that the east wall (entrance side of the building) is contiguous with the west property line of Bear Valley Road, the main highway through town; thus, the limestone flagging<sup>1</sup> embedded as a front porch is literally in the road right-of-way. Surrounding the building is its parking lot to the north, a semi-abandoned street along the west, and a driveway to the south.

An entrance shed leads down into a basement that has a smaller floor area the lodge room directly above. The shed was wood-framed and covered with shiplap wood siding, and attached to the lodge's west wall. The basement serves as a dining room and has a concrete floor and wainscot; above which are wood walls and ceiling. Lining the wall perimeter is a photo gallery of the lodge's past masters from 1857 – 2004. Tucked into the building's northwest exterior corner is a concrete enclosure installed in 1936 that houses a donated business safe that is accessed from the basement.

The outbuilding, which has restrooms and the property's water tank and pump, is a stucco-covered wood framed structure built in 1961, and thus is non-historical. The parking area (Lots 65 & 66) and metal fencing were built in 1992 and also have no historical association. The only vegetation on the property is a volunteer bull pine tree behind the outbuilding and a hedgerow of rosemary plants along the parking lot's highway frontage.

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<sup>1</sup> The limestone probably came from the exposures at or around Columbia.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2 Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA

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## Narrative Description

### TYPE, STYLE, AND METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION

The building was built ca.1855 from native schist rock, locally manufactured bricks and quarried limestone by Italian stonemasons who worked throughout the Mother Lode. The building's type appears to have been constructed for permanence and strength comparing the wall mass to its compact shell. The walls were set upon horizontally placed half-ton granite foundation slabs hewn approximately 24" in width and height, and four to five feet in length, and were raised from foundation to parapet to a uniform width of 22" utilizing random-sized ashlar<sup>2</sup> in a progressive dry stack-and-chink method. The smooth edges of dressed stone were favored to create flat exterior and interior surfaces, but which during construction created a rough vertical interior chamber that was filled with rock debris for strength. The oldest lodge picture showing the south wall suggests that the façade was covered with lime plaster and then white-washed. As there was no iron-work employed for shell construction, the structure is architecturally classified an unreinforced masonry building (UMB). Despite its 150-year age, the building maintains structural integrity and remarkably stands tests for plumb, square, and level.

The Hall displays an architectural style that was simple by execution and feature with its exposed rock walls, ornamented brick cornice, covered front porch, and iron doors. Its austere design is nevertheless quaint and personally inviting, and imparts an ambience that is particularly felt as one enters the nine foot double glass-paned doors into a comfortable interior. The glassed doors are located immediately inside only the right front iron doors, as there are no interior doors behind the left iron doors<sup>3</sup>. The heavy iron fire doors were built during the shell's construction and are intact and functional. The glassed wood doors were also part of the original construction as evidenced by their workmanship and woodwork. Each door has three panes, which due to fragility had to be replaced with safety glass; however, the tempering process nicely created an old glass appearance with material waviness.

The roof was originally made of local clay embedded with charcoal and floated over skip-sheathing. In 1875, tin sheeting was installed over the clay to stop water leakage, and is still in place and observable atop the cornice. In 1930, a new roof was built over the old one to hopefully stop water leakage, and is a 3:12 wood framed structure that was covered with corrugated tin. In 1994, that tin was replaced with solid metal sheeting to finally stop leakage, and the old evaporative cooler was removed from the roof for historical appearance purposes.

The nominal 2" x 14" wood floor and ceiling joists are not connected to the walls with any hardware. Floor joists simply rest upon 3" wide rock ledges offset into the wall's floor course, and ceiling joists nestle into wall pockets below the parapet. All wood elements are still fastened together with the original cut nails of various sizes. When the basement was excavated in 1925, its ceiling boards were nailed to the floor joists, and an opening had to be cut into the south wall for ventilation because the concrete was not curing.

The building was originally built with two entrance doorways in the east wall, one window opening in the south, and a proprietor's back door in the west. The front doors and side window opening are in original condition. The space in the side window currently houses hidden AC units. The back door was bricked in at an unknown time and a bookcase installed in part of the cavity, and its iron doors are still in place and operational.

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<sup>2</sup> The schist rock was transported from the Aqua Fria quarry near Mariposa and from exposures in Hornitos.

<sup>3</sup> The casing indicates that wood doors had also been originally installed, but were removed at some time and a storage cabinet installed in the doorway. The cabinet was later removed and the iron doors that can only be opened from the inside were again made operational.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3 Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA

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### Narrative Description

#### SIZE AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The most obvious feature of the building is its 'miniature' appearance, making it unique compared to 19<sup>th</sup> century Masonic Halls. The building is only 21'-3" wide, 39'-10" long, and 15'-2" high at the cornice, enclosing 846 sq. ft. of the smallest single-story Masonic Hall in California. Furthermore, its lodge room dimensions are only 29'-6" long by 17'-6" wide, which at 516 sq. ft. make it incredibly small in comparison to contemporary lodges averaging 2,500 square feet! While the size of the building may have been adequate for prior business purposes, its function as a Masonic Hall gives it a distinction of utilizing the smallest space imaginable for fraternal meetings.

The Hall enjoys another Masonic distinction that during the period of significance most Masonic lodge rooms met on second or third floors. Lodges then were usually multi-story buildings with spacious lodge rooms, and though the Hornitos Hall was not originally built as a Masonic Hall, it was unusual for the Lodge to buy such a small place. Building ground floors were usually occupied by commercial businesses or the lodge's dining room; thus, for Hornitos Lodge to survive after the 1873 fire, it had no choice but to purchase what was apparently one of the very few buildings available in town, albeit one that was not sanctioned for fraternal use.

Hornitos Hall is famous throughout the state, and not only have lodges from all over California met there to confer the degrees of Masonry, but it has also had Masonic and public visitors from around the world. The lodge's 1880s wood stove is the only one in a California Masonic lodge that came from a gold mine's hoist house, and is regularly used every winter to the comfort of all.

#### ORIGINAL BUILDING USE AND FORMATION OF THE LODGE

The building was built for business purposes based on its architecture and proximity to The Plaza and stage stops. The first eighteen years of commercial operation coincided with the establishment of Hornitas<sup>4</sup> and nearly two decades of California's new statehood. The building's original ownerships were noted in the newspapers of the day describing them as a photography studio, watchmaker, tailor shop, jewelry store, and lastly the Fashion Saloon.

During that time in nearby Quartzburg, the lodge was chartered in 1856 as Quartzburg Lodge No. 98. Two years later the lodge moved to Hornitas, and in 1859 purchased a two-story adobe building (The American Bakery) for its meeting hall. In 1860, the lodge changed its name to Hornitas Lodge No. 98, and the following year revised it to Hornitos Lodge, which is its present spelling. In June 1873, a fire destroyed their building, probably from an unattended oven on the first floor, and all property and records were lost. Two months later the lodge trustees purchased its currently owned building and began renovating it for a Masonic Hall. (See photos BW-2 and -3 for comparative views between 1875 and 2005)

The oldest known picture of the Hall is a postcard ca.1875 of Main Street, Hornitos, that fortunately shows a south view of the Hall. Apparent are its white-washed walls, original roof, and stove chimney. Another postcard ca.1925 shows its first tin roof, porch awning, lodge sign, plastered walls, and first electric meter panel.

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<sup>4</sup> The town was originally spelled and incorporated under the name of Hornitas. The lodge adopted that spelling after it moved from Quartzburg, but somehow in 1861 the name got changed to Hornitos, and regardless of the fact that the town's name was still Hornitas at least until 1871.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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## Narrative Description

### EVOLUTION OF THE PROPERTY (1855 – 2005)

#### 1855 to 1873

Examination of the building indicates no structural or cosmetic changes were made during this period.

#### 1875

The original clay roof and cornice were covered with a square-patterned tin. Two partition wood walls were built to create a candidate's room, anteroom, and lodge room. The lodge room flooring was raised along the perimeter for officer use and member seating.

#### 1890

A wood stove from the Number Nine gold mine hoist house was installed for lodge room heating.

#### 1900

The exterior of the building was covered with another plaster coat and scored to simulate ashlar courses. Clear heart redwood paneling and wainscoting were installed in the lodge room.

#### 1925-26

Electrical lighting replaced kerosene and candles, and a basement dining room was excavated. It was a remarkable feat by those lodge members who were miners to use small charges of dynamite beneath a rock-walled building to facilitate excavation. Their labors were rewarded as the subterranean soil was worked for gold in nearby Burns Creek and which paid for the project. Lodge records indicate damage to the floor by blasted rock.

#### 1930

A porch roof was built over the front iron doors to prevent rain from entering the doorways, a corrugated tin roof was installed over the original roof, and an evaporative cooler installed on the roof.

#### 1976

The plaster was removed from the north and east walls. There was no damage to the rock as the plaster had virtually disbonded from the rock. For environmental seal, only the joints in the front wall rocks were filled with mortar, whereas the north wall was completely mortared over. A bronze plaque cast by one of the members was installed between the front iron doors.

#### 1994

The corrugated tin was replaced with a metal roof to eliminate water leakage. The front porch roof was rebuilt and shortened for two reasons: it was a traffic hazard by being in the county road vertical right-of-way, and structurally it was weakening the cornice. The evaporative cooler was removed and modern air conditioners installed in the south window opening. A new lodge name sign was installed. The building was certified a California Point of Historical Interest (MAR-001), and a commemorative brass plaque was set into the building's northeast corner.

#### 2002

The building's entire electrical system was replaced and upgraded to code compliance. The overhead electrical service, meter, and circuit panel were removed from the front of the building and relocated in back for appearances.

#### 2003

The lodge room, ante and candidate's rooms were completely restored in a seven-month project. Restoration involved woodwork and hardware repair, glazing, painting, staining, varnishing, polishing, firewall replacement, and furniture repair. All items of Masonic paraphernalia and furniture were restored to original appearances in painstaking detail. Lighting was replaced with antique 19<sup>th</sup> century fixtures that had been converted from kerosene to electricity. Candidate and ante room flooring replaced due to deterioration.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5 Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA

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## Narrative Description

### EVOLUTION OF THE PROPERTY (Cont)

#### 2004

The basement dining room and entrance shed were fully renovated by repairing and repainting woodwork, furniture, floor, walls, ceiling, and cabinetry, and returning hardware to original appearances.

#### 2005 (planned)

The south and west wall plaster will be removed from the building. The north, south, and west walls will then be covered with a masonry product and painted for environmental and material protection of the shell. The exposed rock on the front east wall will remain as is.

#### 2006 (planned)

The outbuilding's stucco will be removed and replaced with shiplap siding to match the basement entrance shed.

### CURRENT CONDITION

During the building's 150-year existence there has only been approximately two years of restorative work done. The minimal public and fraternal uses of the building have favored an aging building that generally needed only operational and cosmetic enhancements. To maintain original condition and appearance, the lodge has made every effort to restore the building as an authentic representation of 19<sup>th</sup> century Masonic décor and 1850s Mother Lode architecture. As one interacts with the building, that theme is obvious in its original and modern workmanship. The Hall is currently in excellent condition and will be maintained as such under the preservation of its Trustees.

### HISTORIC INTEGRITY

The nominated building is a time-portal into the past through which to reminisce on the life of early Hornitos. It is an enduring reminder of the ranchers, homesteaders, immigrants, miners, tradesmen, merchants, officials, and Freemasons who passed over its threshold for business, social gatherings, and fraternal meetings. Its historic functions originally as a commercial business and then later as a Masonic hall both served the settlement of its new town. The Hall's antique furnishings and historical archives are a source of fascination and study by the public who visit the lodge during its annual open-house. They essentially serve as an education and resource for students of genealogy, town history, Masonic history, or simply for public appreciation of a well preserved Gold Rush building. All these aspects give the Hall an historical integrity not only as a preserved building of that time, but also as an extant museum that associates the people of today with their pioneers of old.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### SUMMARY

The significance of the Masonic Hall was primarily demonstrated during an almost sixty-year association with the social and business development of Hornitos. From that lodge came men who were to shape the destiny of Hornitos, but as a whole the Masonic Hall represented that institution in town which people could find leadership and friendship. The theme of the Hall's social history, then, would be the prominent community involvement by its membership from 1873 – 1930. That period of time coincided with the town's peak of business and industry. Geographically, the lodge's influence essentially centered in Hornitos, though its involvement extended wherever its members worked and lived.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SOCIOLOGY

The Masonic Hall being proposed for the National Register is a nugget from California's Gold Rush era. Its heritage has significance as a structure that is a memorial to the greatest movement of a people ever to have happened within America: the Gold Rush. Men left their families and braved the hardships and unknowns of travel by sailing ship and wagon train bound for California in search of wealth. For those adventurers who happened into Hornitos<sup>1</sup> either by accident or intention, they found a community mostly composed of immigrants – all of whom having the same aspiration of improving their lives. The (Hall) building was one of the first generation businesses established in town that would begin to replace a tent community and formally meet the needs of the town's new residents.

Old Hornitos essentially split into two types of citizenry: those who served the needs of miners and those who worked the diggings. The businesses that then operated from the (Hall) building, prior to Masonic ownership, provided the material and social needs of its customers. Its proximity across the street from the Wells Fargo stage stop would have served as a place for local information, travelers' necessities, and customer goods and services. Then in 1873 when the building changed ownership, the Masons would perpetuate their centuries-old fraternity and continue to serve their community in many capacities.

One of the most significant ways that the lodge helped its community was something inherent in the Order: it welcomed men into an ancient fraternal brotherhood that promoted free association and equal participation. It initiated men from all walks of life and helped integrate them into the rough and tumble era of the Gold Rush. The lodge also served as a place to socialize, exchange information, find employment, and develop friendships. Through Masonic teachings, brother taught brother the ways of new California, and gave initiates a sense of accomplishment and confidence to become better men. The lodge would have also assisted men, and in turn their families, by language assistance, resource sharing, and financial relief. Thus in summary, within the context of the Gold Rush and Hornitos' community development, the lodge served the first generation citizenry of California in public and fraternal ways.

Freemasonry was the principle fraternal society of the day. It was an attraction by virtue of its apparent secrecy, antiquity, organizational character, and member reputation; thus, men sought membership to enjoy its benefits and share in its responsibilities. Men from all walks of life could enjoy a commonality of purpose by their Masonic assembly, and could aspire to personal edification through Freemasonry.

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<sup>1</sup> Hornitos (Spanish: "little ovens") was established by the Mexicans just a few months after Marshall's discovery of gold in 1848.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SOCIOLOGY

In the early boom-town environments of Quartzburg and Hornitos where lawlessness and disreputable elements affected town life, the Lodge provided civility, safety, and democracy. Eventually, it became influential in community life, town government, and affairs of business because many of the town's officials and businessmen were Freemasons. To be known as a Freemason was identification as one who was honest and respectful; an esteem that was not a badge, but a tenet of Freemasonry that manifested through its members. Though Masonry was a private fraternity, the Lodge relied on its members to exemplify the principles of Freemasonry in public.

In Hornitos from 1850 to 1905, there were five known fraternal societies: the Hornitos Masonic Lodge No. 98, a Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor (NSGW), Buena Vista Lodge No. 369 Ancient Order of the United Workmen (AOUW), and the International Order of Odd Fellows Lodge No. 99 (IOOF). The Masons sponsored the Olive Branch Chapter No. 22, Order of Eastern Star (OES), which was the only known women's organization in town. Of these five organizations, only the Masonic Lodge would survive until the present day. The N.S.G.W. and I.O.O.F. halls would be destroyed by fire, and the O.E.S. chapter and A.O.U.W. lodge surrendered their charters. These societies served as a counter-culture to the prolific saloons and Chinese opium dens in town.

Old Hornitos was a violent town in its early years, and some of its inhabitants were miscreants who had been run out of neighboring Quartzburg by Colonel Thomas J. Thorn and his town vigilantes<sup>2</sup>. The irony of those evictions was that Quartzburg would ultimately become an extinct mining town and Hornitos would transform into the mining district's business and cultural center as an upstanding community. As more businesses established in Hornitos, its citizenry demanded law and order so that their community would be attractive to investment and residency. This 'civilizing' of Hornitos succeeded, and the town was home to the prominent families<sup>3</sup> of Ghiradelli (later the San Francisco chocolate magnate), Giannini (later the Bank of America), and Studebaker (a future auto maker).

The Hornitos Masonic Lodge was very influential in the transformation of their town, and to understand how that occurred, one has to know something of Freemasonry. There are hundreds of definitions about the Craft, but since 10<sup>th</sup> century Scotland, the following purposes and objectives have been passed down through Masonic lodges essentially unchanged through what are called Landmarks, Obligations, and Charges:

*The primary purpose of Freemasonry is to build character, and this is taught and exemplified through a degree advancement system whereby tools and implements of architecture are presented with moral instruction. Of supreme importance through his obligations, a candidate is required to respect life, honor women, aid a lodge brother, and regard the bible of his choice as his spiritual guide. He is charged with the responsibilities of being a law-abiding citizen, to promote the well-being of others, and to exemplify personal morality. These lessons are all embodied in the three principle tenets of Freemasonry: Brother Love, Relief, and Truth, whereby everyone should be given consideration to the extent of the edification of humanity, to provide for the needs of those unable to help themselves, and to consider one's credibility as the cornerstone of character.*

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<sup>2</sup> That 'community service' was the basis for Bret Harte's novella Outcasts of Poker Flat.

<sup>3</sup> A letter by Zeora Wommack, the last known living resident of Quartzburg, to a Hornitos school student recounted her memories of the Giannini boys playing in town and of the Studebaker wagon-works.

United States Department of the Interior  
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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SOCIOLOGY

A survey of old newspapers of the period of significance shows the dedication and involvement these Masons had toward their town. For such a small lodge by membership count, it had a considerable number of Masons who held positions of responsibility in Hornitos. A review of the following businesses they owned, the government offices they held, and the public and Masonic services they rendered evidence the credit they were in the establishment and success of Hornitos, and to the well-being of its Masonic family.

### BUSINESSES

**George M. Hardwick.** Charter member of Quartzburg Lodge; owned Hardwick & Co. Mercantile in Quartzburg.

**Samuel W. Carr.** Charter member who lived to become the oldest surviving charter member; he owned a livery stable in Hornitos; his family heritage claims he was a great nephew of President Thomas Jefferson.

**Frank N. Solari.** Owned the town's only store in Indian Gulch, a small stage stop about five miles from Hornitos; he served the lodge as treasurer for forty-three consecutive years, the longest officer tenure in lodge history.

**Seneca G. Brownfield.** Co-owned Hussey & Brownfield's Store in Hornitos, a general emporium for the mining and farming community, and from his Drug Store he sold a rare item of that time: ice.

**Willis G. Goss.** Owner the Hornitos Hotel, the largest one in town; his most celebrated guests were former President Ulysses S. Grant and his wife who stayed on their way to Yosemite Valley.

**James R. White.** Owned a livery stable under the unique name of the Hornitos Horse Hotel & Livery Exchange Stable; he also sold lumber and building materials, and had a building design service.

**George Reeb.** Owned the Hornitos Market butcher shop. A letter written by one of the last living residents of Quartzburg (Zeora Wommack) related that Mr. Reeb's meats were sold by wagon throughout the local mines and from the San Joaquin Valley to San Francisco, and regretfully the recipe for his famous bologna "*died with him*".

**Robert R. Givens.** Owned the Plaza Meat market.

**McHenry Morrison.** Owned a livery stable.

**Charles Merck.** Owned a butcher shop.

**Andrew Olcese.** Owned a general store.

**Carlo Cavagnaro.** Owned a large emporium.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### PUBLIC SERVICE

Hornitos was the only town in Mariposa County to have ever become incorporated, a status that prevails today. Its patent was signed by President Ulysses S. Grant in 1861. Strangely, the town's certification was revoked in 1868, but was re-incorporated on March 29, 1870, and operated as a town for many decades until Mariposa County became the seat of territorial authority. Hornitos Lodge has a deed in its archives, dated August 20, 1871, of the property of what is now the north half of its parking lot and which bears in gold leaf a rare town seal of Hornitos. It was issued to George Reeb for his butcher shop property. The following lists the number and variety of services the Masons performed:

**O. M. Dickinson.** Charter member and first master of Quartzburg (Hornitos) Lodge; surveyor for Mariposa County.

**George Reeb.** Hornitos town trustee.

**Andrew Olcese.** Hornitos town trustee.

**Samuel C. Bates.** Notary public and Conveyancer.

**Jacob Y. Jones.** Charter member of the lodge; Township Officer and Constable for Hornitos.

**Nathaniel A. Bailey.** Charter member of the lodge; Township Officer and County Roadmaster.

**Jeremiah Burkhalter.** Charter member of the lodge. In the 1860s, he built a 10-mile toll road east of Hornitos over steep foothills to Mt. Bullion; he was the Court of Sessions and Probate Court judge for Mariposa County.

**William H. Tonge.** Charter member of the lodge. He was the Justice of the Peace in Hornitos. A descriptive newspaper article noted that Mr. Tonge owned and operated seven acres of fruits, vegetables, and vineyard located within the town of Hornitos, and who was essentially the "town grocer".

**Alexander M. McElroy.** Board of Supervisors; co-managed the seven-acres with Mr. Tonge.

**David M. Pool.** Newspaper agent for the Mariposa Gazette at Quartzburg.

**William G. Goss.** Newspaper agent for the Mariposa Gazette at Hornitos.

**William I. Adams.** Emigrated from England in 1860 through Canada to Hornitos, and became one of Hornitos' most prominent citizens and Hornitos Lodge's most dedicated officer. He served the lodge as its Worshipful Master for thirty consecutive years from 1872 – 1901, which remains the record in California. He also served as the presiding officer in the Hornitos chapter of the Eastern Star, a member of the O.E.S. Grand Chapter, a Masonic Inspector, a Grand Lodge officer and committeeman. He then continued for another 20 consecutive years as its secretary until his death in 1921. In Hornitos, his service to his community was extraordinary as a blacksmith, wagon-maker, attorney-at-law, notary public, coroner, and brick manufacturer.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5 Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### FRATERNAL ASSISTANCE

#### WIDOW

One of the three principle tenets of Freemasonry is *relief*, and the following account reflects the lodge's support of one of its Masonic widows. On December 31, 1881, John Mitchell applied for membership and was subsequently given the degrees of Masonry. He was a miner in the Yosemite Mine, and was married to Mary Mitchell. In 1895, Brother Mitchell passed away, and the lodge's first responsibility was to pay burial expenses.

Then for nineteen years, the lodge sent Mrs. Mitchell a check for \$5.00 every month for financial assistance. This was at the time in lodge history when its membership was at its lowest and dues was only \$6.00 per member per year, yet the lodge kept its obligation to its Masonic widow. Every month Mary sent back a receipt and sometimes a note of thanks. Her last note of April 23, 1914, closed with the words "*I do feel very old when I am not well. May God grant if we never meet here on earth we shall meet in heaven.*" That was Mary's last correspondence received by the lodge.

#### ORPHAN

In 1884, an orphan son of a deceased brother (David S. Kirkpatrick) was put in custody of the lodge for six months, and then subsequently placed in an orphanage.

### USE OF MASONIC LODGE ROOM

#### CATHOLIC CHURCH

In historic Freemasonry, it was not customary for the Catholic Church and Freemasonry to associate. Yet in the small town of Hornitos, there were occasions when Masonry and the Church joined in fellowship and support. During the WW1 years, St. Catherine's church in Hornitos was in such a dilapidated condition, that certain services could not be held, so the Lodge invited the church use its lodge room for funeral services.

#### OTHER FRATERNAL BODIES

The lodge rented its building to other organizations for meeting purposes.

1876 -- 1887 The Olive Branch Chapter No. 22, Order of the Eastern Star, met in the lodge room.

1892 - ? The Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor used the lodge hall for an unknown period of time due to the loss of their building.

1900 - 1905 The Buena Vista Lodge No. 369, Ancient Order of United Workmen, met in the lodge.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6 Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### HORNITOS MASONS AND THE EARLY CALIFORNIA OIL INDUSTRY

One of the most unusual associations of Hornitos Lodge and its co-membered fraternity (the AOYW) was with California's emerging oil industry. In the early 1860s, several prominent men in Mariposa County held meetings for the purpose of establishing the San Joaquin Valley's first operating oil company. On February 13, 1865, several miners and entrepreneurs met at the Santa Maria Ranch in the Temblor mountains in western Kern County. (The Department of the Interior deemed that oil was a mineral, thus any claims to that resource had to have mining laws in force.) At that meeting, the *Buena Vista Petroleum Company* was formed, and attending that meeting was Maurice Newman who was a member of Hornitos Lodge. Then in 1867, at a meeting of the petroleum company in Mariposa, Mr. Newman was elected its trustee and secretary. Also in attendance were investors Benedetto Ardizzi and Andrew Olcese, both members of Hornitos Lodge.

On March 1, 1900, several members of Hornitos Lodge instituted another fraternity that would also use the lodge room for its meetings. The new lodge was the Ancient Order of United Workmen (AOUW), and its charter members all came from Hornitos Lodge. In apparent recognition of California central valley's first oil company, they named their lodge *Buena Vista Lodge*.

#### TIME OF TRANSITION

The period of significance for the Masonic Hall was selected to correspond with that time beginning with their purchase of the building to an approximate year when the mining industry ended. As the mines closed down, the character of Hornitos rapidly transitioned into a farming community. The era of the stage coach ended with the automobile, and without a need for the town's stores, livery stables, saloons, and government, Hornitos was abandoned to deteriorate as a remnant of the Gold Rush.

The Lodge, though, elected to remain in Hornitos and see what destiny awaited them. It survived the transition to remain one of the few lodges in the Mother Lode *by almost not having a town of residency*. For example, there are more members on its lodge roll today than are residents living in Hornitos! As time passed, it was evident that the unique Masonic nature of the Hall's construction, size, and age would become the lodge's new interest of support replacing its historical function in community service.

The social history of the Masonic Hall manifested itself as a whole lodge function in its community. Whether the members were owners, officials, or laborers, they all had respective citizenship roles that took Freemasonry from the lodge room to the town. The work done by the Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98 in the mine tunnels, stores, gardens, and government offices wrote a colorful and important chapter in the town's history during the Gold Rush.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

### THE MASONIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HALL

At present, the Hall holds several distinctions within the California Jurisdiction of Freemasonry and has a unique status compared to its town's nineteenth-century buildings by singular characteristics of size, age, construction material, and historical prominence:

- *It is the oldest rock-walled Masonic Hall in the state.*
- *It is the only one made of stone of the six remaining Masonic buildings constructed in the 1850s.*
- *It has the distinction of currently being the oldest single-story ground-floor Masonic meeting hall<sup>4</sup>.*
- *It is the smallest Masonic Hall in California by dimensions of building and lodge room.*
- *It is the oldest building in Hornitos that is materially and structurally intact and in regular use.*

### CURRENT SOCIAL STATUS OF THE MASONIC HALL

In 1992, Hornitos Lodge instituted an annual open-house whereby for the first time in the lodge's 136-year history it invited the general public inside the lodge room. At present, the lodge is the only one in the state to host this annual event, and it receives hundreds of guests who visit for Masonic information, genealogy research, local history, or simple curiosity. An important aspect of the open-house is that the public can interact within an historical environment rather than just observe it as a museum diorama behind glass. Its 1873 furniture and Masonic paraphernalia are a source of fascination by all and are objects for photographers who can record an operating historic Masonic hall.

The trend for Masonic halls into the twentieth century was to sell the older multi-story buildings and construct single level halls for modern conveniences. Only those halls having significant historical association or character were kept in possession and operation, and the Hornitos Masonic Hall was fortunately so favored. It has survived the early years of California's settlement, the boisterous Gold Rush, and minimal lodge membership. It has existed in service to its community for 132 years in a town that began with a few miners in tents along Burns Creek to become an important mining center of 15,000 people, and then later dwindle to a current population of sixty-five. The lodge struggled against losing its charter by minimal membership, a proposed consolidation, and a total loss of property by fire. To survive it had to accommodate itself into a building with physical constraints, but which in time would become probably the most visited lodge in California to view its unique size and enjoy its lodge room ambience.

This seemingly ordinary little building, simple in architectural style and physical characteristics, has survived from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century to remain part of a world that changed from stage coaches to space ships, candles to lasers, crow-quill pens to computers, and gold dust to credit cards. That the building has survived at all is a testimony to the skill of those men who built it and to its Masonic custodianship. It is probably America's smallest and only rock-walled Masonic Hall, and assuming that significance, it obligates its ownership to safeguard the building as a symbol of ancient heritage and an archive of modern history.

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<sup>4</sup> Masonic lodges customarily met on second or third floors, not for necessity of privacy, but because ground floors were needed for business purposes; thus, Hornitos Lodge had a special Masonic significance during that era of limited and authorized meeting places.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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### Narrative Statement of Significance

#### CURRENT SOCIAL STATUS OF THE MASONIC HALL (cont)

The Hall historically existed within the context of the Gold Rush. In its own small way its purposes served to accommodate the growth of a new state, yet in a larger sense provided for the needs of its townsfolk. It continues to exist today, but within a new context as a resource for visitors who can enjoy town and Masonic history. The Lodge is currently active in support of community projects, organizational fundraisers, and historic tours. In May 2006, the Lodge will celebrate its Sesquicentennial of chartering, and enter a new era of historic residency in Old Hornitos.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 **Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

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### Verbal Boundary Description

APN 011-152-002

### Boundary Justification

The property is that parcel of land identified on the Site Map as the N ½ of Lot 64 and Lots 65 & 66, which entirely compose parcel number 011-152-002.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 11 Page 1 **Hornitos Masonic Hall No. 98, Mariposa, CA**

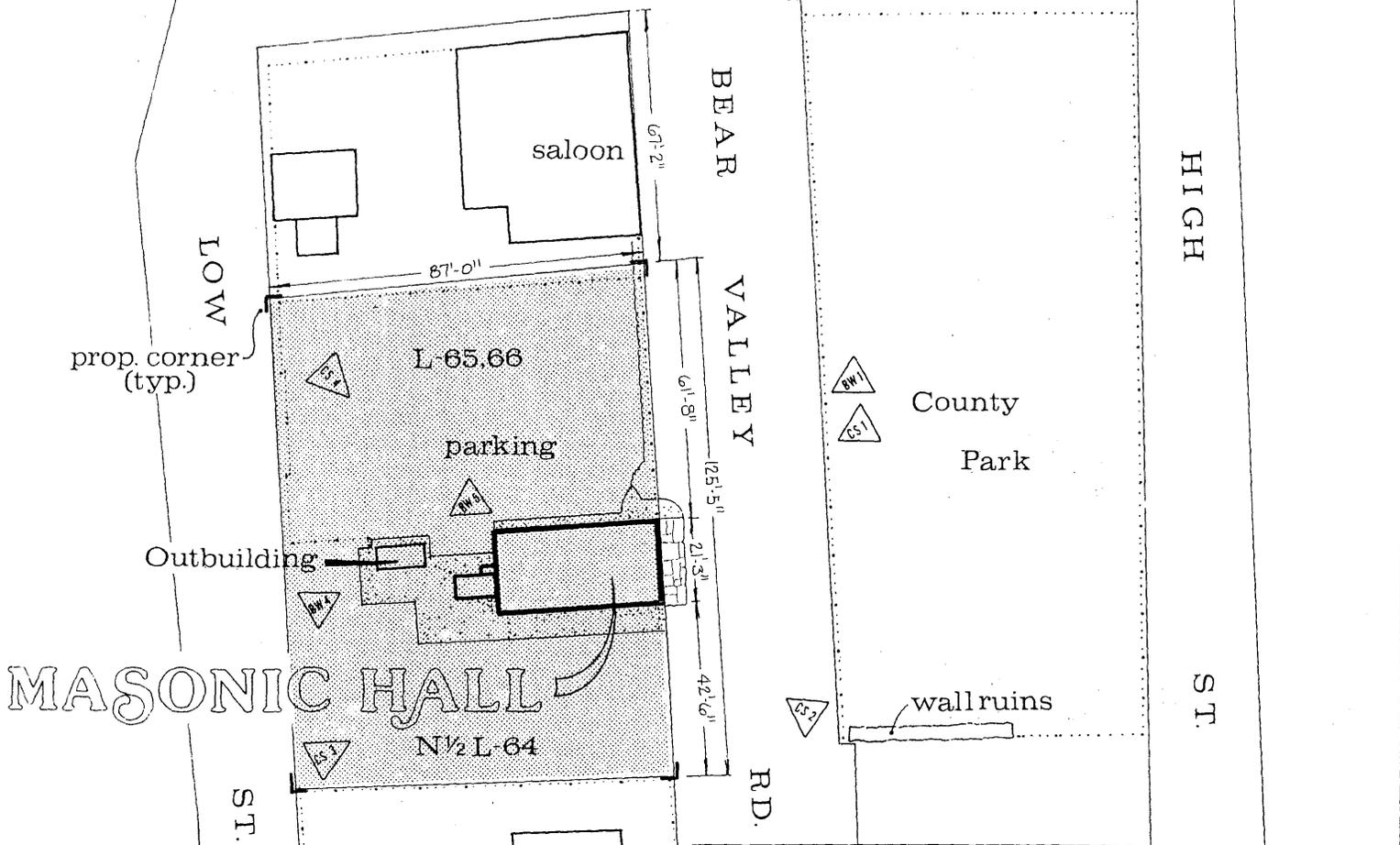
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**Additional Documentation**

Inventory of photographs as annotated on Site Map and Floor Plan:

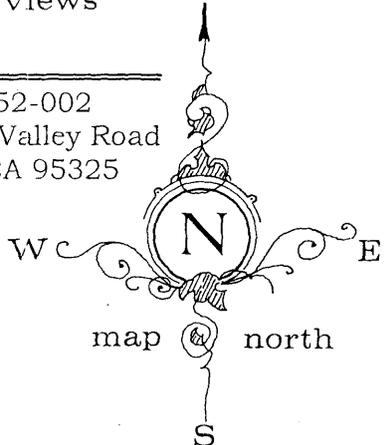
- (BW-1) Black & white: view looking at building's northeast corner.
- (BW-2) Black & white: view of lodge room in 1875 (from Sherman's Fifty Years of Freemasonry in California, 1898).
- (BW-3) Black & white: comparative view of lodge room in 2005.
- (BW-4) Black & white: view of outbuilding's southwest corner.
- (BW-5) Black & white: view of outbuilding's northeast corner.
  
- (CS-1) Colored slide: view looking at building's northeast corner.
- (CS-2) Colored slide: view looking at building's southeast corner.
- (CS-3) Colored slide: view looking at building's southwest corner.
- (CS-4) Colored slide: view looking at building's northwest corner.
- (CS-5) Colored slide: view inside basement dining room.
- (CS-6) Colored slide: view of lodge room looking toward Masonic east.
- (CS-7) Colored slide: view of lodge room looking toward Masonic west.
- (CS-8) Colored slide: view of entrance doors.

The Plaza



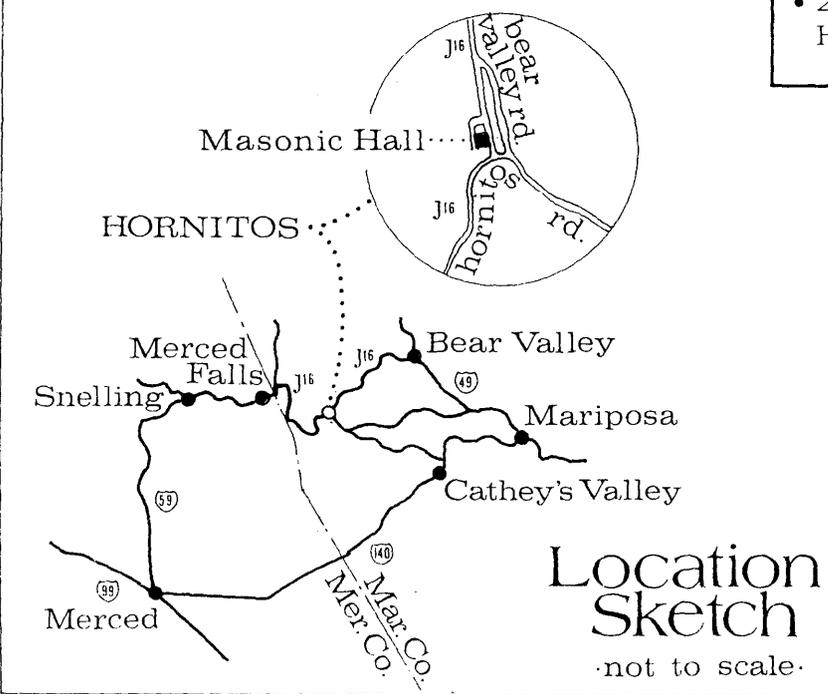
# MASONIC HALL

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Legend</b>           | <b>Map Base</b>     |
| Nominated prop.         | • Assessor's map    |
| Photo views             | • Site measurements |
| <b>Legal</b>            |                     |
| • APN 011-152-002       |                     |
| • 2877 Bear Valley Road |                     |
| Hornitos, CA 95325      |                     |

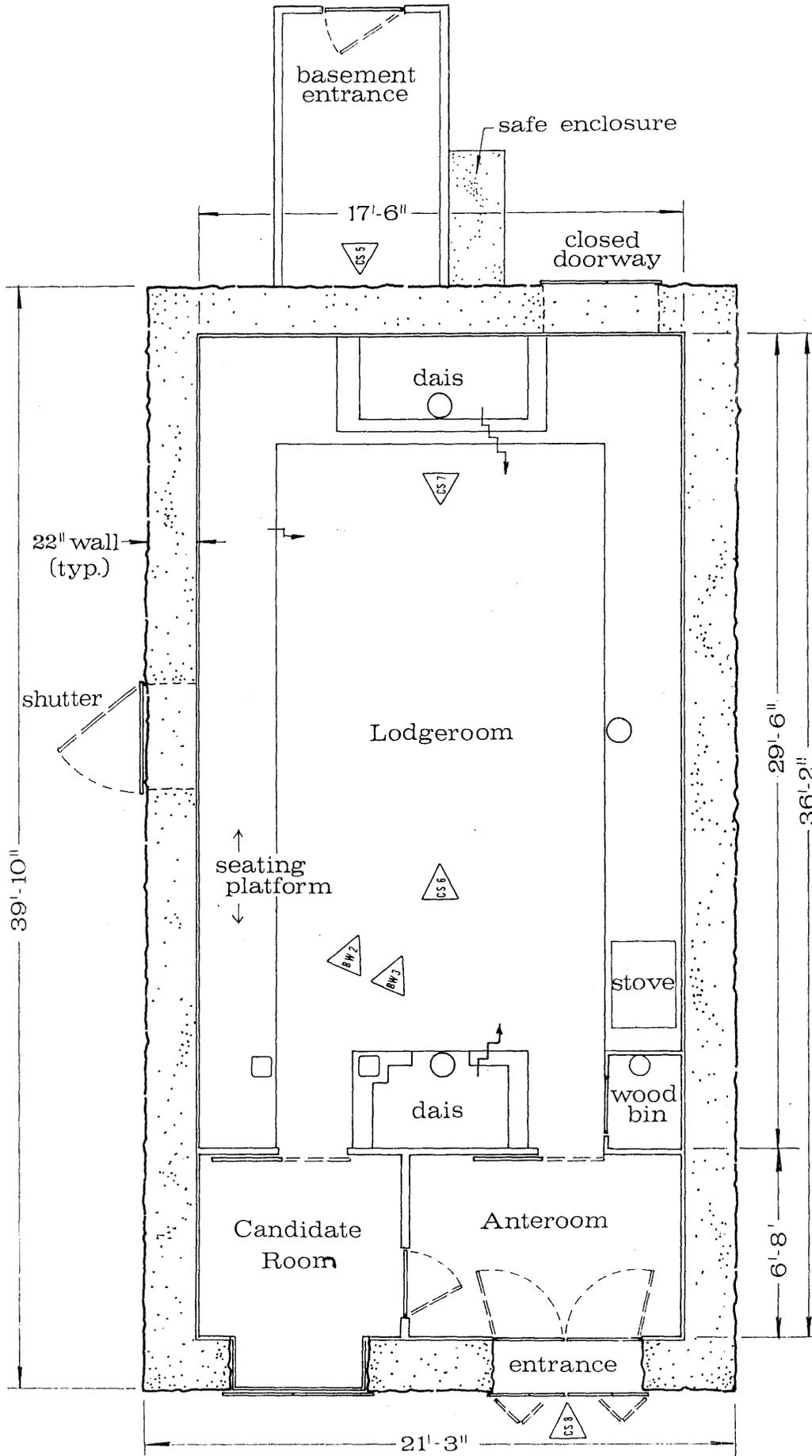


# SITE MAP

SCALE: 1" = 40'  
DRAWN: K.N. Cooper  
DATE: Jan. '05



Location Sketch  
not to scale.

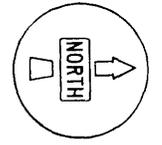


**BUILDING DATA\***

Sq. ftg. (ext.): 846  
Sq. ftg. (int.): 633

\*at street level

▷ Photo views



**FLOOR PLAN**  
At Street Level

Scale: 3/16" = 1'-0"  
Drawn: K. Cooper  
Date: Nov. '04

Bear Valley Road



MAIN STREET, HORNITOS

ca. 1875

View looking north

**LEFT SIDE OF STREET**

**Front to back**

McGregor residence  
Hornitos Masonic hall  
Two-story brick store building (now lodge parking lot)  
The Plaza (not visible)  
Two-story white adobe (American Bakery?)

**RIGHT SIDE OF STREET**

**Front to back**

Sam Carr's adobe livery stable  
Sam Carr's store and Wells Fargo office  
(present county park area)  
Native Sons of the Golden West hall  
Golden Stag hall  
IOOF Hall (above and right of Stag Hall roof)  
Ghiradelli store ruins



Ca. 1925



2005