

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS *Revised*

1. STATE California	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. XV - (Mining Frontier)	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 207 acres
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Columbia		
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) Fuclunne County, Four miles northwest of Sonoma and State Highway 49.		
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) State of California, Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources.		
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)		

Columbia, the "Gem of the Southern Mines," is probably the best preserved of the early gold rush mining towns in California's Mother Lode country.

Rich placer deposits were discovered as the future site of Columbia by Dr. Thaddeus Hildreth's party of miners on March 27, 1850. More than a thousand prospectors were immediately attracted by the scene, but a shortage of water--vital to the working of the placers--slowed the immediate development of the town.

A water company was formed in 1851 to meet this need, and a vast network of reservoirs, canals, and flumes many miles in length were eventually constructed. A second water company, organized in 1854, also completed a 60-mile aqueduct in 1858, at a cost of more than one million dollars, to convey water from the South Fork of the Stanislaus River through the mountains to Columbia. In 1856 hydraulic mining was instituted at Columbia on a large scale.

By May, 1852, however, sufficient water had been brought into the Columbia to permit the working of the placers and also the rise of a large business district, complete with a mining town's usual complement of hotels, saloons, stores, gambling rooms, restaurants, churches, and social and fraternal halls. Incorporated as a town in May, 1854, Columbia's population ranged between two and five thousand people in the 1850's.

A telegraph line was completed from Stockton to Columbia in February 1855; in July of the same year a large water system for domestic use and fire protection was placed in operation; and in 1858 illuminating gas, distributed through wooden pipes, was also briefly used to light the town.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works)

Rodman W. Paul, California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Cambridge, 1947) 161-164, 245, 312-13; Elizabeth G. Potter, "Columbia, Gem of the Southern Mines," in California Historical Society Quarterly, XXIV (September, 1945) 267-70; Marjell W. Wells, The Sonoma Trail (Albany, 1955) 122-126;
(Continued on page 2)

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, IIABS, etc.)

Historic American Building Survey (1934-36)
10. (199, 822, 1414, 2131-37), 1472-85).

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	11. CONDITION Excellent-orig. bldgs.	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) State Historical Park	13. DATE OF VISIT September, 1958
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles W. Snell	15. TITLE Historian	16. DATE Apr. 8, 1964	

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

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SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
California	Columbia

The Columbia Basin district was one of the richest gold producing regions in California. It is estimated to have yielded about \$87,000,000 worth of gold. By 1861, however, the boom was over and mining and business were on the decline in Columbia, and by 1867 most of the population had left the town for Nevada and other fields. In the 1870's and 80's numerous vacant buildings were demolished and their sites mined. But Columbia never became a true "ghost town," as it was never completely deserted. Its population has remained at about 500 through the years.

Present Appearance.

As with all other mining towns, Columbia was swept by several disastrous fires. The first of these struck on July 10, 1854 and completely wiped out the original structures of the mining camp, which had been built of shakes, clapboard, planks, adobe, mud, and stone. These were immediately replaced by new frame buildings, and also a number of fireproof structures of permanent brick construction. On August 25, 1857, a second fire wiped out all the frame structures and some of brick buildings in an area of thirteen square blocks. A number of the 1854 brick buildings, however, escaped this disaster and when Columbia was again rebuilt in 1857-58, the new buildings were also chiefly brick, with large, double iron doors and windows, shutters, and asphalted roofs, designed to prevent the spread of fire. Columbia today thus accurately reflects the appearance of an 1854-58 mining town. Generally, the many remaining buildings retain their original appearance and there are few modern structures intruding on the historic scene.

In 1945 the historic district of the town and most of the surrounding area were set aside as Columbia Historic State Park. An extensive program of restoration and rehabilitation has been underway since 1945. Included in the Park are thirty-nine historic structures, comprised of hotels, saloons, restaurants, banks, express offices, stores, residences, fraternal halls, churches, fire engine houses, and a school. The interior of many of these buildings have been restored to their original use and are furnished as drug stores, schools and hotels, typical of the gold rush period. There is also a visitor center with many exhibits and artifacts relating to the history of Columbia and gold mining. Surrounding the town are the naked rocks and weed-grown pits and hammocks where the miners' monitors have washed away the earth from miles around.

B. Bibliographical References continued in page 1.
Harold Kirker, California's Architectural Frontier (San Marino, 1960), 33, 80; Lyle F. Perusse, "Gothic Revival in California, 1850-1890," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Oct., 1955, Vol. XIV, No. 3.

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STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
California	Columbia

The attached map indicates the historic district boundary (same as the Park boundary) for Columbia. The district contains a total of 207 acres.

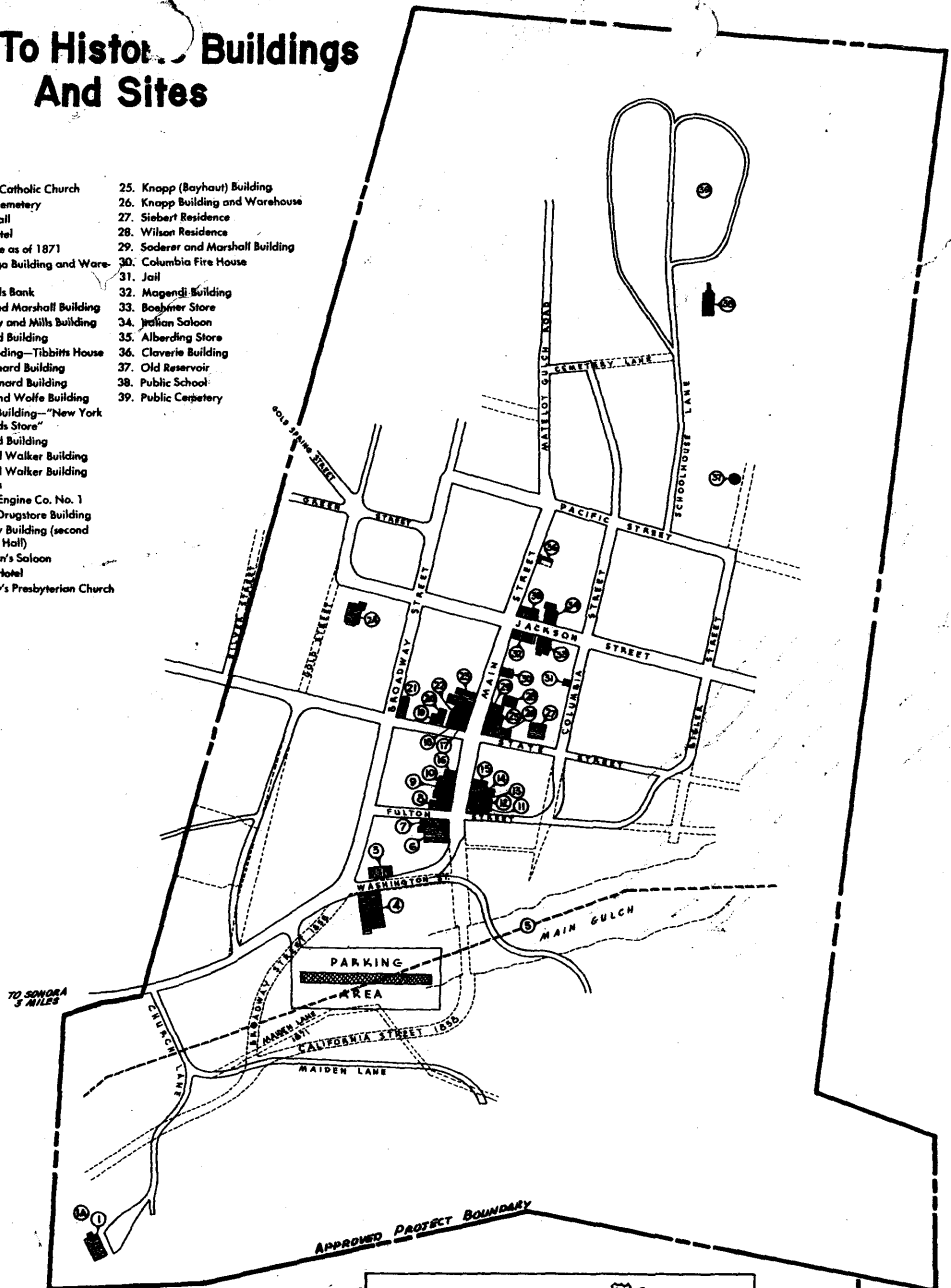
The map also locates and identifies the 39 historic structures and sites situated within the historic district of Columbia.

Reference and further detail: State of California, Division of Beaches and Parks:
"Columbia Historic State Park - Historical Index," one sheet, dated April 21, 1949;
"Townsite of Columbia," one sheet, dated November 15, 1955.

Data prepared by Charles W. Small, February 23, 1961.

Key To Historic Buildings And Sites

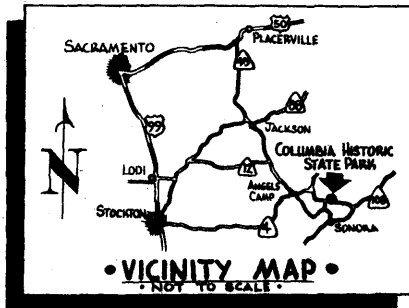
- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. St. Anne's Catholic Church | 25. Knapp (Boyhaut) Building |
| 1A. Catholic Cemetery | 26. Knapp Building and Warehouse |
| 3. Masonic Hall | 27. Siebert Residence |
| 4. Fallon's Hotel | 28. Wilson Residence |
| 5. Main Plume as of 1871 | 29. Soderer and Marshall Building |
| 6. Walls Fargo Building and Warehouse | 30. Columbia Fire House |
| 7. D. O. Mills Bank | 31. Jail |
| 8. Soderer and Marshall Building | 32. Magendi Building |
| 9. McChesney and Mills Building | 33. Boshrier Store |
| 10. Hildebrand Building | 34. Italian Saloon |
| 11. J. Levy Building—Tibbitts House | 35. Albaring Store |
| 12. South Brainerd Building | 36. Claverie Building |
| 13. North Brainerd Building | 37. Old Reservoir |
| 14. Franklin and Wolfe Building | 38. Public School |
| 15. Schwartz Building—"New York Drygoods Store" | 39. Public Cemetery |
| 16. Hildebrand Building | |
| 17. Leavitt and Walker Building | |
| 18. Leavitt and Walker Building Addition | |
| 19. Tuolumne Engine Co. No. 1 | |
| 20. Columbia Drugstore Building | |
| 21. McChesney Building (second I.O.O.F. Hall) | |
| 22. Heynemann's Saloon | |
| 23. Morgan's Hotel | |
| 24. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church | |



COLUMBIA HISTORIC STATE PARK

SCALE 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 FEET 1/8 MILE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF BEACHES & PARKS



The State Park System holds in trust for generations yet unborn a small but very valuable portion of this State's rich heritage.

Help keep it thus.

For specific information write Supervisor, Columbia Historic State Park,
P. O. Box 265, Columbia, California