

P H 0036676

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: Contra Costa	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.10.06.0054	DATE 10/7/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
(John) Marsh Home

AND/OR HISTORIC:
John Marsh Home

2. LOCATION

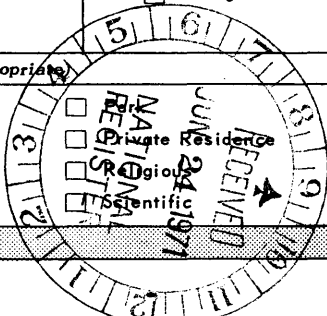
STREET AND NUMBER:
Marsh Creek Road, approximately 6 miles west of Byron

CITY OR TOWN:
Byron vicinity

STATE: **California** CODE: **06** COUNTY: **Contra Costa** CODE: **013**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) None	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments



4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Contra Costa County

STREET AND NUMBER:
P. O. Box 911

CITY OR TOWN: **Martinez** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
725 Court Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Martinez** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: **Historic American Building Survey No. 7-14, Ca. 1500; and Western Heritage, Inc.**

DATE OF SURVEY: **July, 1961** (county) Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

STREET AND NUMBER:
651 Pine Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Martinez** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: California

COUNTY: Contra Costa

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sandstone and brick construction containing three (3) floors, part basement and tower (Cupola) section.

Approximately 2,100 square feet of floor space on each floor with 720 square feet of basement area and 144 square feet in tower area for total of approximately 7,000 square feet.

Gross partitions are of masonry construction. Other partitions are wood studs with wood lath fastened with square nails. All walls are finished with smooth (putty) coat plaster. Ceilings are wood lath and plaster. Roof is of wood frame construction and at present is covered with asphalt shingles. Original roof covering appears to have been shakes.

Damage has occurred to stone at exterior near grade level. For the most part original floors have been covered with a later floor. The original arcade around one side, one end and half of one side has been removed.

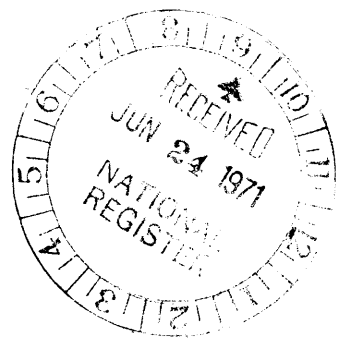
Structural failure has occurred in stone columns at front and rear of building. Brick and stone foundation has eroded at grade level. A protective facing of concrete has been placed around building about 12 inches high.

Concrete porches and walks have been placed at front and rear of building and at one end. The one visible fire place has been changed from the original. There were possibly other fire places in the building.

The wood structure at rear of home is of 1870-90 period and is in fair condition. It is not included in this application for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Major interior partitions appear to be unaltered. Electricity and plumbing have been installed since original construction.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Construction began in 1853; completed 1856.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

Historic significance as among first major residences in San Joaquin Valley, and as the home of John Marsh.

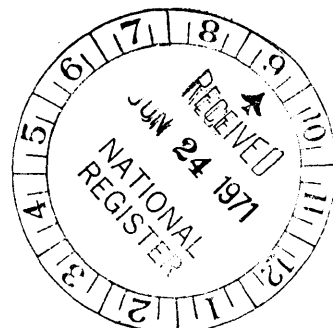
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Marsh Home was among the first permanent structures in Contra Costa County and in the San Joaquin Valley. Construction of this house began in 1853 and was completed in 1856. The predominant material for construction was sandstone quarried on the original rancho. The building is directly associated with the life of John Marsh and portrays the pioneer era of California.

John Marsh was California's first physician. He played a significant role in the overland migration to California and its eventual acquisition by the United States through his efforts to civilize the San Joaquin Valley. John Marsh is credited with establishing the first effective agricultural development, first fort, first medical facility, and the first center of promotional advertising in San Joaquin Valley. The original adobe house (now non-existent) built in 1838 near the existing John Marsh Home was the arriving point of the first overland immigrant party to California (1841).

See the attached Western Heritage, Inc. report on the John Marsh Home for a detailed study of the historical and architectural significance of John Marsh and the John Marsh Home. Also attached is a copy of a newspaper article printed in 1856 briefly describing the architectural significance of the property (page 2, 2nd paragraph).

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"John Marsh Home" study by Western Heritage, Inc. July, 1961
 Historic American Building Survey Cal.-1500
 Description of Physical Appearance supplied by Mr. A. Lewis Koue,
 Chief, Division of Historic Architectur, National Park Service.

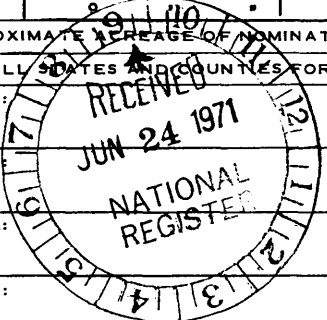
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37°	53'	32"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		121°	43'	19"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **7.362 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
J. P. McBrien, County Administrator

ORGANIZATION: **Contra Costa County** DATE: **April 28, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
2nd Floor, Administration Building

CITY OR TOWN: **Martinez** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *[Signature]*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date June 21, 1971

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

~~SEP 2 1971~~ **OCT 7 1971**

Date _____

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

Date **AUG 6 1971**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
California	
COUNTY	
Contra Costa	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
7110.D6.D054	10/7/71

(Number all entries)

Summary of (Attachment "A") of HABS photo-data book report (CAL-1500).

The John Marsh house is one of the major residential structures of mid-19th Century Contra Costa County. The house was designed by Thomas Boyd of San Francisco and built by contractors Pierce and Wood, circa 1853-56. It was constructed of native sandstone and brick made on the property.

Stylistically a cross between Victorian Gothic "Cottage" and an Italian Villa . . . the Gothic and Italianate details of the exterior represent a unique fusion of those forms . . .

A native of Massachusetts, John Marsh attended Harvard graduating with a B.A. in 1823. Moving to Minnesota he began the study of medicine. He moved around the frontier - Wisconsin, Missouri and, in 1835 to New Mexico. From Santa Fe he came to California, in 1836, and at Los Angeles received from the Ayuntamiento certification as a physician. The following year he acquired the Los Meganos grant first granted to Jose Noriega. This large rancho, some 120 square miles, lay in the lower San Joaquin region near Mount Diablo. Befriending the Indians, Marsh built an adobe house, said to have been capable of defense as a sort of fort. This was completed a year before John Sutter's 1839 arrival on the Sacramento. The site of the Marsh adobe is about 125 feet north from the northwest corner of the Marsh Home of this National Register nomination.

Marsh became known throughout the Mexican frontier of northern California as a physician, and was able to stock his ranch with cattle and horses received as fees for his services. His letters to friends in Missouri, boosting California, were widely reproduced in newspapers and other periodicals, and had a considerable influence upon emigration. The first overland emigrant party (Bidwell-Bartleson) to cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains thus made Marsh's ranch their goal, arriving November 4, 1841. Other Americans followed, including Fremont and Carson, Edwin Bryant, Captain Gantt, the Mormon settlers of nearby New Hope.

Married, June 24, 1851 to Abigail Tuck, Marsh began two years later construction of the great stone mansion. It was completed in 1856, but in 1855 Abby Marsh died, leaving one female child and the father, John Marsh. Marsh himself died September 24, 1856 - just as the new house was completed. He was murdered near Martinez, a few miles from the ranch. The John Marsh estate, after final confirmation of the grant, passed to daughter Alice, and son Charles.

