United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Nan	ne			
historic ^{Old}	Oroville Commerc	ial District (Cld)		
and/or common		,		
2. Loc	ation Montgo	many myers and	Huntoon Sts. and	Miners aller
street & numbe			of Montgomery Street a , including Miners M	
***************************************		intoon and Myers Stre		#2
	lifornia	code ⁰⁶ count	D ± ± _	code 007
	ssification	The second secon		
Category X district bullding(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X_ private both Public Acquisition in process being considered _X_ N/A	Status X occupied X unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted X yes: unrestricted no	entertainment government	museum park private residence religious scientific transportation other:
eame Mul		See continuation sh	neet.	
city, town		vicinity of	state	
5. Loc	ation of Le	gal Descript	ion	
courthouse, reg	istry of deeds, etc. Re	corder's Office, Cou	unty Administration Bu	ilding
street & number	, 25 County Cen	ter Drive		
city, town	Oroville		state	California 9 <i>5</i> 965
6. Rep	resentatio	n in Existing	Surveys	
Partial rep	presentation (bloc Alley Block Surve		ley between Myers & H property been determined eleg	
date 1962	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		See continu	ation sheetcounty _X loca
depository for s	urvev records Cultur	ral Heritage Council	, 1870 Montgomery Stre	
	roville		eteta (Valifornia 95965

7. Description

Condition deter excellent deter good ruins fair unex		Check oneX_ original site moved date _	N/A	·
--	--	--	-----	---

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Old Oroville Commercial District is situated within the City of Oroville's downtown area and contains sixteen commercial buildings dating from the 1856-1912 period. These buildings are located on streets and blocks officially laid out in 1855 and since unchanged. All of the structures within the district's boundaries contribute to the character of the district, and no nonconforming intrusions detract from the district's integrity.

Most of the buildings in the district were originally only one-story brick structures, having the simple facade designs, large iron doors and wood trim typical of Gold Rush architecture. In the 1870's and again in the early 1900's, second floors were added to several of the buildings. Some brick facades were also replaced during the 1880-1910 period with cast iron facades and large storefront windows.

Although several of the buildings have been altered and all of the porticoes that originally covered the sidewalks have been removed since 1912, all of the structures within the district still retain the scale, basic materials, and general feeling that existed at the turn-of-the-century. It is the intent of the property owners within the district to remove any architectural associations past the early 1900's; and in cases where facades have been altered, to restore the buildings to their turn-of-the-century appearance. Future rehabilitation work is also planned for several buildings that were damaged in Oroville's August, 1975 earthquake.

Description of individual buildings within the district:*

1. Store (1850 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: Miners Daughter (retail clothing)

Circa 1860, 1-story, brick, large arch in rear brick wall. Original iron door removed and plaster facade with large glass windows added circa 1900. Masonry walls anchored to roof, ceiling and floor system in 1976 to increase earthquake resistance. While no early photograph of this building has been found, the scalloped shingles added to facade in 1976 are not believed to reflect the building's appearance at the turn-of-the-century and are expected to be removed.

2. Store (1858 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: Ponds Fabric and Upholstery Supplies

Circa 1860, 1-story, brick. Original iron door removed and plaster facade added circa 1900. Although facade altered significantly in 1976 with wood siding and decorative railing, it is expected to be restored to turn-of-the-century appearance.

3. Governor Perkins Building (1864 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: private office

Circa 1860, Italianate design, 1-story, brick. Cast iron columns and front parapet added in 1880's.

*NOTE: All of the buildings have been listed as contributors to the district.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 _XX 1900-	Areas of SignIficance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture artX_ commerce communications		Iandscape architectur Iaw Ilterature Indicator	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1856-1912	Builder/Architect Unk	nown	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Old Oroville Commercial District is located within the City of Oroville's first commercial area, which was the spatial hub of commerce and entertainment during the 1856-1912 period. Montgomery Street was the town's main thoroughfare, and Miners Alley was the focal point for high living, gambling and general rascality. District boundaries encompass the largest remaining concentration of commercial buildings dating from the 1856-1912 period. The basic architectural integrity of these buildings is still intact, and the district retains the sense of time and place characterizing Oroville at the turn-of-the-century. As such, the district constitutes the City's strongest visual link to its origins as a mining town and is significant for its historic associations with Oroville's earliest commercial and architectural ventures at the present town site.

With the exception of the concrete and steel Gardella-Reece Building that was built circa 1911, the buildings within the district show the evolution of commercial building in California's small towns from the late 1800's through the early 1900's, with many buildings reflecting the architectural taste of several eras. Constructed of brick with wood roof and floor frames, they exhibit an economy of architectural detail and have painted brick or plaster facades. The prevalence of brick construction in the district, together with the iron doors still to be found on some of the brick walls lining Miners Alley, testifies to the fact that the first building design objective of local builders and businessmen was to create fireproof buildings. Their overriding concern with fire is not surprising in view of the fact that in July of 1858, a fire destroyed all but eight buildings in the commercial district along Montgomery Street.

The replacement of many original facades in the 1880's and early 1900's followed an architectural trend toward cast iron facades and plate glass windows that was already well-established in California's larger cities. And in general, the alterations or 2nd story additions made to buildings within the district during the 1870-1912 period constitute excellent examples of the "provincial" interpretation of major commercial architectural styles that filtered down from California's larger cities. Such architectural refinements as ornamental brick cornices, recessed apertures and bay windows can be found in the district.

Perhaps the most significant building in the district from the historical perspective is the Washington Block Building, located on the southwest corner of Myers and Montgomery Streets. Believed to be the oldest commercial building still standing in Oroville, the Washington Block Building housed the Bank Exchange, Oroville's most notable saloon and gambling establishment during the 1856-1912 period, in a five-room basement. Despite being underground, the windows of the Bank Exchange opened into light wells, which still underlie existing sidewalks, and were hung with tinted glass double French doors to give the impression that the saloon was not, in

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of nominated property 1.6 Quadrangle name Oroville UMT References	Quadrangle scale 1:24000
A 1,0 6 2 4 2 0 0 4 3 7,4 5,8 0 Zone Easting Northing E	Zone Easting Northing D
Map No. 12-03 (Butte County, March 19 <i>5</i> 2 Lot 7 in Block 3; Lots 1-7 and 17-21 in	As shown by yellow line on accompanying Assessor's 2), this district comprises City Lots 3-5 in Block 10 Block 4; and, that section of Miners Alley running and Myers Streets. Boundaries are based (cont.
List all states and counties for properties overl	
state	coûnty N/A code
tate: 2.1 ab 1, or the code to the	ூர் county) ் ிருக்கிரும் மேற்ற code ப
11. Form Prepared By	and the distribution of the control
Dianne Hederich, Community Dev James W. Lenhoff, President	velopment Coordinator, City of Oroville; and,
rganization Oroville Heritage Council	date August 5, 1980
treet & number c/o 1084 Montgomery Street	t telephone (916) 533-1849
ty or town Oroville	state California 95965
<u></u>	ervation Officer Certification
he evaluated significance of this property within the s	
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for 65), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the coording to the criteria and procedures set forth by the criteria and procedures are criteria.	for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89—he National Register and certify that it has been evaluated he Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.
State Historic Preservation Offic	1/10/03
for HCRS use only	date T/10/03
I hereby certify that this property is included in the	he National Register pt 1 Register pt 1 Register
Keeper of the National Register	
Attent	
Chief of Registrellon	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4

PAGE 1

- 1. Dick, Stanley V. and Anne L. 4735 Olive Highway Oroville, CA 95965
- 2. Dick, Stanley V. and Anne L. 4735 Olive Highway Oroville, CA 95965
- 3. Lenhoff, James and Donna 1084 Montgomery Street Oroville, CA 95965
- 4. Jean-Jacques Le Blanc P. O. Box 6434 Incline Village. Nevada 89450
- 5. Jones, George A., Jr. and Georgia P.O. Box 1328 Oroville, CA 95965
- 6. Rush, David H. and Virginia C. 975 Naomi Chico, CA 95926
- 7. Lenhoff, James W. and Donna K. 1084 Montgomery Street Oroville, CA 95965
- 8. Gabriel, Barney J. and Katherine P.O. Box 602 Oroville, CA 95965
- 9. Young, Owen and Marlene 150 Oro View Drive Oroville, CA 95965
- 10. Bereit, Jeffery
 P.O. Box 2062
 Oroville, CA 95965
- 11. Aleck, John 1967 Montgomery Street Oroville, CA 95965

12. Lenhoff, James W. and Donna K. 1084 Montgomery Street Oroville, CA 95965

Jones, George A., Jr. and Georgia P.O. Box 1328 Oroville, CA 95965

Graham, E. Joe and Susan M. 1578 Tija Drive Yuba City, CA 95991

Capralis, George C. 1740 East Valley Parkway Escondido, CA 92027

- 13. Loren, G. Gill and Sharon L. 6155 Fairlane Drive Oakland, CA 94611
- 14. Bible, John H. and Anne 1341 Huntoon Street Oroville, CA 95965
- 15. Damon, L. G. and Geraldine E. 1346 Myers Street Oroville, CA 95965
- 16. Mooneyham, James V. and Lona 2174 Linwood Avenue Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Rhoades, Donald C. 3340 Oroville-Bangor Highway Oroville, CA 95965 FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY RECEIVED DATE ENTERED.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

6

1

Entire district is included in the City of Oroville's <u>Downtown Historic Area</u>, which was created January 2, 1979 by the City Council's passage of Resolution No. 3402. This document is available from City Hall, 1735 Montgomery Street, Oroville, CA 95965.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

4. Gardella-Reece Building (1877 & 1887 Montgomery Street; 1328, 1330, 1332 & 1340 Huntoon Street)

Architect/builder: unknown

Present building occupants: Lock, Stock & Barrel (retail store)

Hollyhock House (retail store)
Hooked On Books (retail store)
Trade Mart (retail store)
S & J Quality Mart (retail store)

S & J Quality Mart (retail store) Twelve hotel apartment tenants

Circa 1911, 2-stories, Mission style detailing, concrete and steel. 1st floor divided into five stores, 2nd floor divided into twelve hotel apartments. Fall-out shelter built in basement in 1961.

5. Golden Gate or Hecker Building (1911 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: vacant

2-stories, brick, bay windows on 2nd story. 1st story constructed 1856 with original brick facade replaced circa 1904 with large plate glass windows. 2nd story also added circa 1904 with plaster facade, north tower, bay windows and tile roof Tower removed circa 1920, but bay windows retained.

6. Toy-Fogg Building (1919 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: The Chateau (restaurant)

2-stories, brick, painted brick and cast iron facade. 1st story erected circa 1857; brick facade with iron doors replaced around 1880 with cast iron facade and plate glass windows. 2nd story with painted brick facade added circa 1900. Following 1975 earthquake, front parapet tied to roof and floor system.

7. Brock Building (1925 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: vacant

Circa 1858, 1-story, brick, iron doors off of back courtyard. Plaster facade and front iron doors removed circa 1910 and replaced with more contemporary glass windows and painted brick facade. In 1977, brick walls tied to roof and 2nd floor to increase earthquake resistance, and decorative masonry damaged in 1975 earthquake removed at each end of front parapet down to roof line.

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED.

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 2

8. Scruggs & Meador Building (1933 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: Scruggs & Meador Club (bar)

Circa 1859, 1-story, brick. Plaster facade and iron doors replaced circa 1904 with painted brick and glass storefront. Due to 1975 earthquake damage, most ornamental brickwork has been removed from front parapet and rear (south) wall.

9. Goldstein Building (1941 & 1949 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: The Card Room

Circa 1859, 1-story, brick. Interior gutted by 1904 fire, but immediately restored; painted brick facade replaced original plaster facade. Glass storefront added in 1950. Owner intends to remove existing glass storefront and restore facade to turn-of-the-century appearance.

10. Kusel Building (1955 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: vacant

2-stories, brick, iron doors on rear (south) wall, two brick-walled walk-in vaults on 2nd floor. 1st story erected 1878, gutted by fire in 1904, and immediately restored with the addition of more contemporary storefront windows. 2nd story with painted brick facade was also added in 1904.

11. Friesleben-Howard Building (1963 & 1967 Montgomery Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: Liberty Club (bar)

2-stories, brick. 1st story with plaster and glass facade divided into two commercial spaces; 2nd story with painted brick facade divided into hotel rooms. 1st story erected circa 1878, gutted by 1904 fire, and restored with the addition of second floor. Large showcase windows, added to portion of 1st story facade in 1920, are planned for removal by the owner as part of turn-of-the-century restoration. Owner also intends to repair 1975 earthquake damage to second floor frame, which now precludes occupancy. Earthquake-related repairs completed in 1979 included repairing 1st floor frame, installing roof truss ties from front to rear, patching exterior masonry walls, and replacing portions of rear brick wall.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 3

12. Washington Block Building (1975-1985 Montgomery Street; 1330-1338 Myers Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: vacant

2-stories with basement, brick, below street-level Romanesque arches and double French windows, original rooms. lst story, divided into four stores, and basement, comprised of five rooms, constructed in 1856. 2nd story with 21 rooms added in 1878. 2nd story portico removed in early 1900's; ornamental brick cornice, bracketed window hoods on 2nd story, and lst story portico removed sometime after 1920. Brick facade replaced on 1st floor stores with cast iron facades and large plate glass windows in early 1900's. Iron facade on corner store replaced in 1961 with street-level reproduction of Romanesque arches still visible in basement. 2nd story facade is plaster over brick. Owners plan to restore building to turn-of-the-century appearance, complete with 1st story portico.

13. Gem Saloon Building (1337 Huntoon Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: vacant

Circa 1859, 2-stories, brick, plaster facade added circa 1900. Steel beam and glass front on 1st story installed circa 1910. Due to 1975 earthquake damage, front parapet removed down to roof line and rear (east) brick wall replaced with reinforced concrete block down to point below 2nd floor in 1978.

14. Hendee & Gaskill Building (1341 & 1347 Huntoon Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupants: Goldtown Skatery
Big Daddy's Pawn Shop

Circa 1859, 1-story, brick. Plaster over brick facade added circa 1900. Front remodeled circa 1950 with addition of large showcase windows and metal awning. New interior partitions installed in 1972.

15. Store (1346 & 1348 Myers Street)
Architect/builder: unknown
Present building occupant: Damon's Athletic Distributor

Circa 1858, 1-story, brick. Plaster facade added circa 1900. Lower portion of facade changed to modern showcase windows, glass doors, brick, tile and metal awning in 1960.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 4

16. Gray-Nurse Hardware Building (1359 Huntoon Street)
Architect: unknown
Present building occupant: vacant

2-stories, brick, original iron doors and brickwork on north wall bordering on Miners Alley. 1st story erected circa 1875. Cast iron columns and 2nd story added circa 1900. Iron columns removed and 1st story glass storefront installed during the 1920's.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED.

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

fact, underground. The French windows, as well as the original rooms, still remain. In addition to functioning as a saloon, the rooms were used for many town functions and meetings, including a few public trials.

The early grandeur of the Washington Block Building with the underground Bank Exchange attests to Harold Kirker's observation in California's Architectural Frontier that "... it is undeniable that in architecture, too, the glories of the gold-rush cities were the gambling and drinking halls and not the occasional brick warehouse or frame church." Saloons were, in fact, so numerous in Oroville's commercial area that the town was called "the devil's nest of California" in its early years. Of the sixteen buildings located in the Old Oroville Commercial District, six are known to have housed saloons at various times during the 1856-1912 period. The Gem Saloon Building at 1337 Huntoon Street is locally notorious, said to have been frequented by Black Bart, a legendary Western outlaw, on his visits to Oroville. The other buildings known to have been occupied by saloons are the Golden Gate or Hecker Building, the Brock Building, the Goldstein Building, and the building at 1858 Montgomery Street (Mad Hat Saloon).

Although the saloons figured significantly in Oroville's commercial attractiveness to the surrounding mining camps, the buildings in the Old Oroville Commercial District are also associated with many locally prominent businessmen who contributed to the emergence of Oroville as a trade center for much of the Feather River country. Most of the structures in the district have, in fact, been named after the most prominent of the early businessmen who occupied the buildings. The early non-saloon businesses operating out of buildings in the district included a hardware store, variety store, haberdashery, photography studio, jewelry store and shoe store.

The Governor Perkins Building is named after the man who granted the building to the City in 1903 for its first public library. Perkins was a very successful local businessman who was elected Governor of California in 1879 and U.S. Senator in 1893, a position he held for twenty-one years. The Spanish-style Gardella-Reece Building is named after gold dredger baron Lawrence Gardella, who financed construction of the building circa 1911, and Walter Reece, who used the building for his haberdashery.

Miners Alley, which is included in the district between Myers and Huntoon Streets, is perhaps one of the most colorful thoroughfares in Western history. Hotels and saloons had lobbies on the alley, as well as on Montgomery Street. As a result, the alley became the setting for a great deal of social activity during the latter half of the 1800's, as well as into the 1900's. During the 1856-1859 period, Miners Alley was particularly active due to the regular stage coach runs between Oroville and numerous mining camps that brought in so many visitors that one observer commented:

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 2

The streets of Oroville looked like those of a great city. The thoroughfares were crowded day and night with people passing to and fro, and by heavily-laden wagons and pack-animals. Scenes of great animation and life were present everywhere. Every other door opened into a saloon or gambling-house. The amount of business transacted by merchants and hotel men was enormous... Those were flush times in Oroville.

The extensive remodeling of the buildings around 1900 was largely the result of the economic boom which descended upon the city because of the major gold dredging operations that eventually crept to the very edge of the town. After local entrepreneur Wendell Hammon developed and built the first successful bucket-elevator gold dredger at Oroville around 1896, over fifty of the wonderous machines roamed the vast placer deposits here. Thirty-five of the gold boats operated at one time during the peak of production. Over 6,000 acres were involved, making the field the largest in the world at that time. Millions of dollars in gold was produced, mostly from land that had only marginal agricultural value at best. These lands were later leveled and comprise much of the new commercial district of the city. Tailings left by the dredgers were used for aggregate businesses afterward and to build the great Oroville Dam in the 1960's, saving the taxpayers of California approximately \$100-million according to at least one estimate.

One of the prominent mining engineers involved with the pioneer Oroville Gold Dredging Company was none other than future U.S. President Herbert Hoover. Wendell Hammon saw his gold dredger employed in gold-fields around the world, and even today, very little improvement has been made to his basic concept.

Harold Kirker, California's Architectural Frontier, (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1960), pp. 83-84.

²<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 36

³Harry L. Wells and W.L. Chambers, <u>History of Butte County</u>, (San Francisco: Harry L. Wells, 1882), p. 236

FOR HCRS USE ONLY RECEIVED DATE ENTERED.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

- Butte County Adult History Class of Oroville Union High School. Oroville's Days of Old. (Oroville, California: James W. Lenoff, 1976).
- Kirker, Harold. <u>California's Architectural Frontier Style and Tradition in the 19th Century</u>. (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1960).
- Lenhoff, James. "The Wickedest Town in California". Diggin's, I (Spring, 1957).
- Mansfield, George C., B. L. <u>History of Butte County</u>. (Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1918).
- Steadman, Agnes and Jean Minasian, ed. Oroville Legacy of a Gold Town. (Oroville, California: Friends of the Parks, 1976).
- Wells, Harry L. and W. L. Chambers. <u>History of Butte County</u>. (San Francisco: Harry L. Wells, 1882).

North Californian, 1855-1860.

Oroville Register, 1873+.

Information on recent alterations obtained from:
City of Oroville, Office of Code Enforcement. Building Permits, 1960+.

Dates and descriptive information also obtained from various newspaper articles in:

Butte Record, 1853+.

North Californian 1855 1860

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10

PAGE 1

upon remaining integrity, and drawn to encompass the remaining historical resource.

Boundary Justification:

The district encompasses the largest remaining concentration of commercial buildings dating from the 1856-1912 period that still retain the architectural integrity of the turn-of-the-century period. The three buildings included on the north side of Montgomery Street (1850, 1858 and 1864 Montgomery Street) are the sole survivors of all the old commercial buildings that used to line the north side of the street between Lincoln and Myers Streets.

FHR-8-300A (11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCR	S USE C	MLY	
RECEIVE	D.		
DATE EN	ITERED.		

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 11

PAGE 1

Date on individual buildings, historical associations and restoration plans provided by James Lenhoff. Application package complied by Dianne Hederich.

