

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 18 1987

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Heller Estate

AND/OR COMMON

"Valhalla," Heller Estate

LOCATION

Approx. 2.5 mi. NW of intersection of U.S. 50 and Calif. State 89,
on North side of Calif. State 89. Estate occupies portions of S
1/2 of Sec. 25, Lot 1, T13N, R17E 7 N 1/2 of Sec. 36, same T & R.

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

South Lake Tahoe VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

14th

STATE

California

CODE

06

COUNTY

El Dorado

CODE

017

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

United States Forest Service--Pacific Southwest Region

STREET & NUMBER

630 Sansome Street

California 94111

CITY, TOWN

San Francisco

STATE

VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

El Dorado County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

County Administrative Building

CITY, TOWN

Placerville

STATE
California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

USDA-Forest Service Site Number 05-19-44

DATE

2-7-75

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Forest Supervisor's Office, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

CITY, TOWN

870 Emerald Bay Road, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95791

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Heller Estate includes the following structures: the Main House, (I); Boathouse, (III); and the Twin Cabins, (IV). Roman numerals correspond to location of structures on Estate's map.

Main House I

The Main House is a large wood framed, shingled structure approximately 48' x 75', with an angled wing approximately 25' x 50'. The house has a gambrel shake roof overhanging a wide porch on three sides. A bark-covered log balustrade surrounds the porch, and bark-covered log columns support the overhanging second story. The central form is a large rectangle. A rectangular wing angles away from the structure to the southwest. The main hall is 2-1/2 stories tall. The wing, including the roof-peak, is two stories. Seven pairs of french doors provide access to the main hall from the porch.

The essential form of the interior of the house is one great hall, dominated at the east end by an enormous two-story stone fireplace that extends the width of the house. The beamed ceiling is supported with large trusses hung with light fixtures and decorative wooden "drops." A balustrade of bark-covered poles surrounds the central space at the second floor level. Squared longitudinal ceiling support beams are decorated with a delicately stenciled Scandinavian pattern. Second story dormer windows extend outward, north and south, at the balcony level. First floor walls are paneled in wood.

Plainly finished, though pleasant, bedrooms lie at either end of the great hall. A small fireplace, surrounded with a decorative wood molding, in one of the bedrooms appears to be the only concession to ornamentation in the sleeping quarter portion of the house.

The two-story stone fireplace has a large arched opening. A stone platform leads to a smaller hearth opening and wood mantel. Two built-in wooden benches flank the smaller opening. This fireplace is back-to-back with a very small one on the porch outside.

The small dining room off the main hall has lowered ceiling and small fireplace of its own. The kitchen has been randomly repaired and is unrestored.

The interior of the angled wing of the house was remodeled in the 1960's. A small addition appears to have been added at the end. The exterior has been treated with the same surface essentially as the house, with the addition of aluminum sashed windows rather than wood, and carved contemporary doors. The wing is inconspicuous seen from the north (Lake Tahoe) or east (Camp Richardson) but quite prominent when seen from the usual road approach from the south. Condition of the house is generally good.

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Boathouse III

The boathouse is a long (30' x 80'), two-story, wood frame building with a gambrel roof and cedar bark siding. The rear portion contains interior living quarters with tall, dormer windows. Almost all of the other windows (9) are diamond paned glass.

Skylights provide interior light and a tall wood paneled door dominates the northern end. A small gable-roofed extension protrudes at the front. Condition appears to be fair.

Twin Cabins IV

The Twin Cabins are two gambrel-roofed and shingled rectangular wood frame buildings, 42' x 16', joined with a gabled shingle roof supported by bark-covered log columns.

Interiors are wood siding, stained and rubbed. A stone fireplace occurs in the northwest room. The gambrel roof is supported by a small exposed truss and rafter system.

The Cabins appear to be essentially unaltered, apart from the installation of shake roofs. Their condition is fair with some deterioration of the sills, piers, lower walls and porch.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1920's	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

Boathouse 1899-1913

SPECIFIC DATES	Twin Cabins 1923	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Rankin (?)
	House 1924		

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Heller Estate and its structures possess both architectural and historic significance. The individual buildings are important to the estate complex as a whole. The estate is important to the unique cultural environment created by the two adjacent estates, formerly known as the McGonagle and Pope Estates at South Lake Tahoe.

Main House, "Valhalla"

Built in 1924, the house reflects two earlier 20th century architectural traditions. The exterior style of the structure combines shingle style and colonial revival traditions with rustic elements.

In its choice of style, it closely reflects the style of the main house of the adjacent Pope Estate, constructed almost 30 years prior. As such it employed a style whose vogue had largely passed. The style, however, was established and safe. The interior reflects utilized Nordic themes, more in keeping with the period revival modes of the 1920's.

The construction of the Twin Cabins in 1923 preceeded Valhalla, both chronologically and as a stylistic model. The style of the cabins may in turn have borrowed the style of the earlier boathouse, built by Tevis, whose roof was gambrelled like the cabins. The choice of style appears locally inspired.

The designer is reputed to have been an architect named Rankin. The massive fireplace was designed and constructed by a Scandinavian engineer/mason who devised a complex system of pulleys and tackle to lift the large stones into place. Not only is the fireplace an impressive architectural feat, it is apparently well engineered.

"Valhalla" shares references to past Scandinavian influences with the McGonagle House of that estate. The huge beamed hall and stone fireplace evoke strong medieval Nordic images. The cavernous room and the darkly lit corners lend an almost brooding quality to the great hall. The McGonagle house, apparently constructed at almost the same time, may have helped inspire the interior treatment.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

South Lake Tahoe Estates: An Historical Study
 Condition Survey of Valhalla, Pope, and McGonagle Estates
 Heller, Pope, & McGonagle Estates, 1975
 Interview, Stephen Heller
 Who's Who in California, 1929
 San Francisco Chronicle, Oct, 1956

John Townley, 1974
 John Grosvenor, 1971
 Simpson & Hildinger, 1978

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 8.79
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,0	7,5,6	3,7,5	4,3	1,4	0,0,0	B	1,0	7,5,6	4,6,5	4,3	1,3	9,8,5
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING		
C	1,0	7,5,6	4,0,5	4,3	1,3	4,8,5	D	1,0	7,5,6	4,4,5	4,3	1,3	4,9,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The southeast corner of the Heller Estate begins, on Highway 89 at a point 650 feet west of the junction of the Pope Beach Road and Highway 89; thence west along Highway 89 for 150 feet; thence 1675 feet north to the shoreline of Lake Tahoe; thence 210 feet along the shoreline to the northwest corner of the Camp Richardson parcel; thence 1625 feet south along the west boundary of this parcel to the point of beginning on Highway 89. This boundary corresponds to the historic boundary of the Heller Estate and maintains the historic integrity it possessed when placed in public ownership.

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

STATE	N/A	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	N/A	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Paula Boghosian; Frank A. Magary, Pam Smith, and Richard Kraushaar

ORGANIZATION

Historic Environment Consultants; U.S. Forest Service

DATE

September 30, 1985

STREET & NUMBER

2306 J Street ; 870 Emerald Bay Road

TELEPHONE

(916)446-2447; (916)544-6420

CITY OR TOWN

Sacramento; South Lake Tahoe

STATE

California 95816; 95731

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X

NO

NONE

[Signature]
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

[Signature]

TITLE

AGENCY PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE

JAN 21 1987

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Signature]

DATE

4/1/87

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The Heller house expresses a basic dichotomy; its exterior style and materials relate it to the refined and genteel expressions of the Pope Estate. The interior reflects an entirely different character in its use of massive and brooding Nordic imagery.

While the house is handsome and inviting on the exterior, Valhalla's outstanding architectural values lie in the design, character, and sheer power of its interior statement.

Walter Heller, who built the Heller House, "Valhalla", in 1924, was a wealthy financier and banker of San Francisco. His student days culminated in a Ph.D from the University of Gottingen.

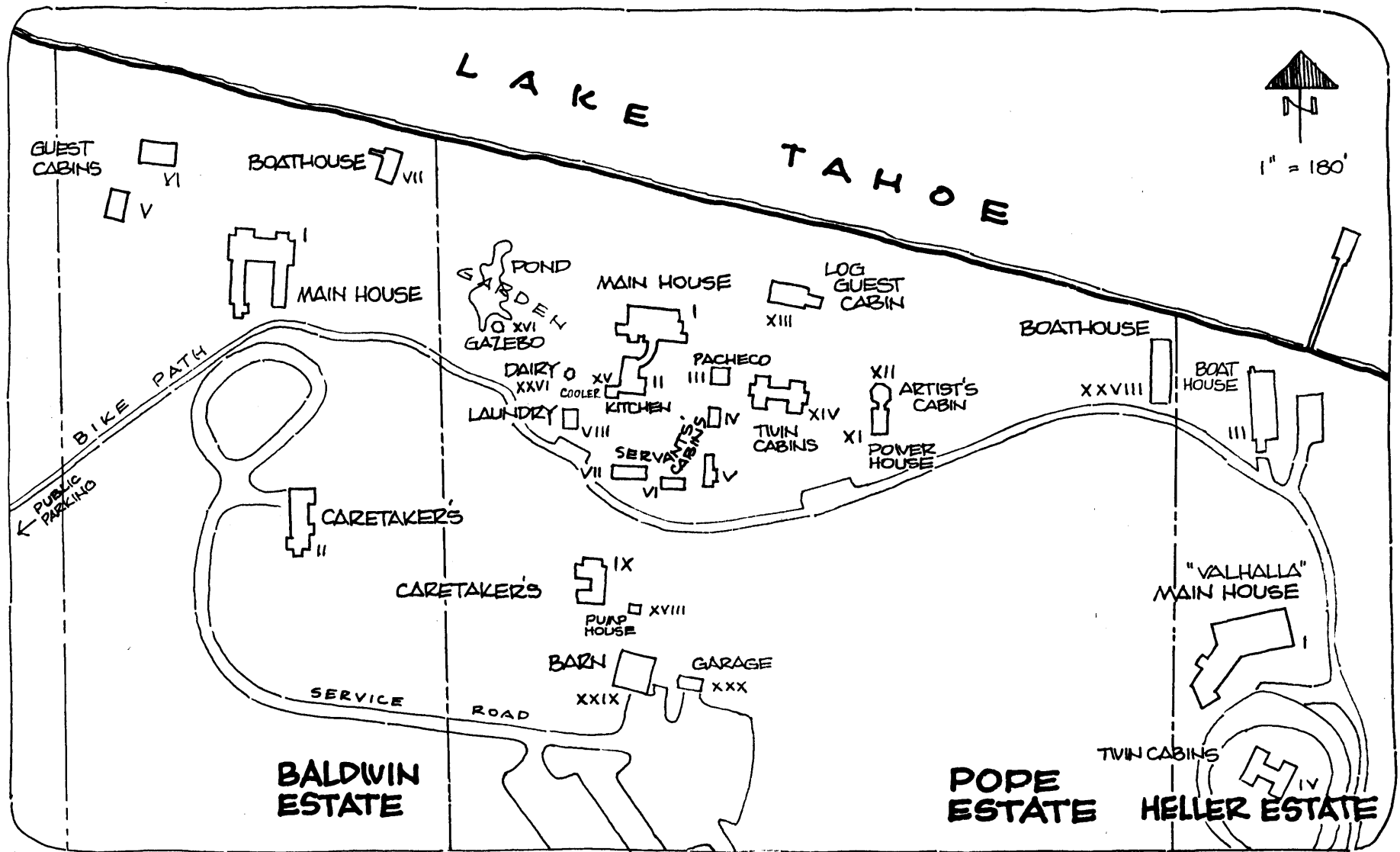
He organized the Heller Bruce Co., a successful investment broker firm in 1923. Heller later became a director of Wells Fargo Bank, in addition to serving as president and senior partner of his own brokerage house. He remained active in banking and brokerage circles until his death in 1956.

There was much social contact at the Lake between the Hellers and the Ehrman family, whose large and handsome estate stood a few miles to the north at Sugar Pine Point. At least one aspect of that house, the angled bedroom wing, may have been borrowed and incorporated into the Heller's "Valhalla".

Their active social life and summer "entourage" of servants to assist life on the Estate are indicative of the lifestyle of the wealthy of the era.

The Heller Estate occupies the general location of an early Tahoe resort establishment, Cascade House. Camp Richardson, a resort since the '20's, lies directly east and "Lucky" Baldwin's Tallac House resort once stood about one-half mile to the west. Baldwin's fame as a millionaire and pioneer business figure is established, as is that of the Tevis family of the adjoining estate. (Subsequently, the Pope family, also well-known and wealthy, came to own the Tevis estate, and occupied it for forty years).

These associations with some of the early and wealthiest families in the state add historic and cultural importance to the enclave of estates at this location.



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