

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0281158 DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED <b>DEC 3 1975</b>	
DATE ENTERED	<b>DEC 30 1975</b>

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Grand Union Hotel, and also El Hotel Grande

AND/OR COMMON  
Stagecoach Inn Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
51 Ventu Park Road

CITY, TOWN  
Newbury Park

STATE  
California

VICINITY OF  
06

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
20  
COUNTY  
Ventura  
CODE  
111

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Conejo Recreation and Park District

STREET & NUMBER  
401 West Hillcrest Drive, Suite B

CITY, TOWN  
Thousand Oaks

VICINITY OF

STATE  
California, 91360

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Ventura County Recorder

STREET & NUMBER  
501 Poli Street

CITY, TOWN  
Ventura

STATE  
California, 93001

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
State Historical Landmark

DATE  
January 1, 1966

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS California Department of Parks & Recreation-History

CITY, TOWN  
P.O. Box 2390 - Sacramento, California 95811

STATE Preservation  
Section

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE		
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED	DATE	<u>1966</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED				

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The reconstruction of the Stagecoach Inn Museum has been carefully detailed to resemble and duplicate the original structure. Several 5 x 7 photographs of the present structure are enclosed for comparison with photo copies of 1884 (man on wagon in front of Inn) and 1890 (southeast corner of building)

Originally constructed in 1876 as the Grand Union Hotel from the finest materials of the day, it was built entirely of redwood lumber shipped down the Pacific Coast from San Francisco to Port Hueneme (1:164; 2:4).

The building materials were freighted south up the Conejo Grade which was then called the "Butterfield Grade", by multi-teamed wagons from the Oxnard Plain. The building materials were delivered on May 20, 1876 and the Inn, according to a newspaper article of the day, observed its grand opening on July 4, 1876. The building cost owner James Hamel a total of \$7,000 to construct (2:4; 3:3).

The building was a 28-room L-shaped structure 66 feet long on each front. It was two stories, of an approximate 30-foot elevation, built in the Monterey style architecture with uncovered balconies on two sides of the second story. An outdoor staircase ascended to the top level and, according to old accounts, was necessary to provide travel-weary ladies the opportunity to avoid the sometimes raucous atmosphere of the first-floor bar. Handturned pillars supported the second-story balcony with ornate knee braces and the balcony handrail was supported by decoratively turned bannisters (2:4,5).

Upon entering the Inn from the main front door a lobby to the right of the entry foyer contained a fireplace and also a desk for registering guests. A parlor to the left of the foyer with another fireplace served as a rest area and waiting room for stage passengers to Los Angeles and Ventura. The Inn office and barroom were adjacent to the lobby straight ahead and to the right respectively (2:5).

The kitchen, dining room, pantry, a wash room, and storage room were straight on from the entry foyer and to the left of the oak staircase leading upstairs. The upstairs area consisted of a small foyer and large parlor with the remainder in numerous guest bedrooms and the owner's bedroom. The bedrooms contained a bed and washstand with pitcher, bowl, and glass (2:5).

There were no closets in the structure and no running water. The enclosed 1890 photograph reveals an outdoor privy at the rear of the building. Lighting was by oil or kerosene lamps. The Inn relied on fireplaces for heat, four of which were on the first floor, each pair back-to-back, serving the parlor, dining room, bar, and lobby. The second floor contained five fireplaces. One was in the owner's bedroom, the others were an extension of the downstairs fireplaces into three bedrooms and the parlor. These fireplaces were small and burned coal, not wood (2:5).

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 3 1975
DATE ENTERED	DEC 30 1975

CONTINUATION SHEET Appearance ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The building, as it exists today, is not totally complete inside. The interior wall framing closely approximates the original walls with the addition of electrical, heating, water, and a fire protection system. Wallboard is installed rather than the original lath and plaster interior. Authentic oak wainscoting, period wallpapers and paint will be duplicated per the research of the Conejo Valley Historical Society and is in process at this time.

Windows, doors, flooring, and other decor are a duplication of the original materials used in the structure with reproduction knobs, latches, and other hardware. The interior staircase, exterior bannisters porch supports, railings, etc. are being duplicated based on old photographs.

In order to satisfy modern building and safety codes, some modification has been necessary in the location of doors and windows. This has been minimal and only a detailed comparison of the new structure versus old photographs could detect the change. A full underground basement which includes restrooms, work areas for furniture restoration, and research has been added in place of the original small root cellar.

The Inn was moved  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile south to a new location on the same property holdings to make way for the expansion of Highway 101 in 1966. The building was in the process of being restored when it burned in April of 1970. During the period of restoration a great deal of research was performed and this is the basis for the close duplication of the new building.

REFERENCES

1. Charles F. Outland, "Stagecoaching on El Camino Real," Glendale, Calif., 1973, p. 164
2. Gwen Hinzle, Deborah Vittum, "A Short History of the Stagecoach Inn," Paper for the Conejo Valley Historical Society, November, 1967, pp. 4,5
3. Ventura Signal Newspaper, Article of May 13, 1876, p. 3

Note: Also see attached bibliography for additional references to the Inn

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES July 4, 1876

BUILDER/ARCHITECT { James Hamel-builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

{ architect unknown

The Stagecoach Inn represents the Monterey style architecture that was used in the later 1800s. Prior to the loss of the original facility to a fire, the building represented the last remaining structure in the Conejo Valley from that era.

The building, although a reconstruction, represents a tie with the historic past of the Conejo Valley and the role the valley served in the transportation network from San Francisco to Los Angeles with the Coast Stage Line connection between the Butterfield Overland and Coast Stage Routes (1).

The concept of the Stagecoach Inn Museum provides a link with the past history of the valley for the education of interested citizens and the school children of Ventura and Los Angeles counties and other areas.

The Ventura Signal, a weekly newspaper published in Ventura, reported on May 13, 1876 as follows:

"The new hotel will be commenced at once."

On May 27, 1876 the newspaper reported as follows:

"The new hotel will be opened on the 4th of July; at which time it is hoped the people of the (Conejo) Valley, and also of Pleasant Valley and Colonia and such others as may come will have a grand celebration."

Based on this grand opening date, the Conejo Valley Historical Society and the city of Thousand Oaks have declared a bicentennial-centennial celebration for July 4, 1976. The city of Thousand Oaks has been recognized as a bicentennial city with a tri-village project consisting of structures from the aboriginal Chumash Indian, Spanish, and early settler eras respectively. This project will be located in an area near the Stagecoach Inn Museum grounds and relate to an overall historic educational complex.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Attached Bibliography

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.6 acres approx.

Lat.  $34^{\circ} 10' 41''$   
Long.  $118^{\circ} 54' 42''$

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>11</u>	<u>B 23830</u>	<u>37183360</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION  
Beginning at a point; thence,

1. South  $89^{\circ} 10' 55''$  West, 258 feet; thence,
2. North  $49^{\circ} 35' 05''$  West, 87.89 feet; thence,
3. North  $0^{\circ} 17'$  West, 167 feet; thence,
4. North  $89^{\circ} 10' 55''$  East, 325 feet; thence,
5. South  $0^{\circ} 17'$  West, 225 feet back to the point of beginning

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
California		Ventura	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James M. Gilmore

ORGANIZATION

Conejo Recreation and Park District

DATE

April 17, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

401 West Hillcrest Drive, Suite B

TELEPHONE

(805) 495-6471

CITY OR TOWN

Thousand Oaks,

STATE

California 91360

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

SIGNATURE

*Herbert Rhodes*

AUG 20 1975

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

*12/30/75*

ATTEST:

DATE

*DEC 28 1975*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 3 1975
DATE ENTERED	DEC 30 1975

CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

---

In summary, the Stagecoach Inn (Grand Union Hotel) is felt to have served an important role in the development of the stage line transportation network in California. The stage line promoted the expansion and settlement of the Conejo Valley and other areas of Southern California as the great influx of settlers traversed the continental United States from east to west. The building replica itself represents the settlement era of California as it relates to the growth of the United States.

REFERENCE

1. Charles F. Outland, "Stagecoaching on El Camino Real," Glendale, California, 1973, pp. 111,163,184,185,187,208

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STAGECOACH INN

At the time the Grand Union Hotel was built in 1876, the Conejo Valley was thinly populated. There were five or six great ranches and no towns at all. During that year the town of Newbury Park came into being as a United States Post Office named for its postmaster, Mr. James Newbury. At the same time a man named James Hamel owned considerable property in the area and, desiring to enhance the appearance of his property, he set out a great many trees. Because these trees beautified the area, the town of Newbury became the town of Newbury Park.

In the 1850s a Mr. James Butterfield had received a government franchise to run stagecoaches across the United States. His venture was unique as most stage lines were local and their routes were relatively short. In 1860 the Civil War began and it became necessary to put the business aside in the interest of conducting the war. Mr. Butterfield fully intended to carry on his business after the war was over, and he did, but not nearly as extensively as he had hoped and within a few years the Butterfield Stage Line was out of business. It is my understanding that the Butterfield stages did run from Los Angeles to San Francisco via the Santa Clara Valley from approximately 1878 until 1882. The presently designated Conejo Grade, a portion of U.S. Highway 101, was originally called the Butterfield Grade when it was planned that the Butterfield stages would use the Conejo Valley route from San Buenaventura to Los Angeles. However, plans were changed and the Butterfield stages never used the route.

In 1876 Mr. James Hamel built the Grand Union Hotel in anticipation of great overland travel business. The hotel was to be used as a stagecoach stop for the Butterfield stages that would pass through the Conejo Valley. Hardly had Hamel built the hotel before the plans were changed and the building, no longer situated on a main stagecoach route, became a stopping place for local stage travelers. During the time that Mr. Hamel owned the hotel, his patrons were mostly cattle and grain buyers visiting the Conejo Valley's large ranch owners as well as land speculators. He owned the hotel for only four years, selling it in 1880 to Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Haigh.

At that time a weekly newspaper, called the Ventura Signal, was printed in San Buenaventura. It was the only newspaper in the area and consisted of four pages. It had a special column called "Neighborhood Items" which gave local news from the various outlying towns such as Springville, El Rio, and Newbury Park (El Rio was at that time called New Jerusalem). An item in the February 26, 1876 issue mentioned talk of a large hotel to go up at the Newbury Park Station to be built by Mr. James Hamel.

On May 13, 1876 a brief notice appeared that the new hotel would "commence at once".

On May 27 a notice stated that D. Rendebuck had contracted to carry the mail from Springville to Newbury Park three times a week. Another notice, on the same day, indicated that the hotel would open on July 4 and a public invitation was extended to the people of the Conejo and Pleasant Valleys and Colonia to come for a grand celebration.

On May 20, 1876 a notice had appeared stating that a number of Santa Barbarans had been induced by Mr. Hamel to make the Conejo a summer resort and, to that end, Mr. Hamel proposed "to give, for a merely nominal consideration, a lot for each as would put up cottages".

A June 17, 1876 item stated that the Coast Line Stage Company had changed from the Conejo route to the Lyons Station route and the editors had been requested by the agents of the company and by citizens generally to call the attention of the public to the bad conditions of the road on the new line.

All the above were printed under "Conejo Items". On June 24, 1876, under "Springville Items", this notice appeared: "Mr. Hut of Ventura proposes to run a line of hacks to the Conejo from this place commencing on Monday next. The line is much needed and we hope it will be maintained".

On December 28, 1877, under the general heading of "Neighborhood Items" announcement was made of contracts to be let to carry the mails. The item said:

"This is the year when contracts are let to carry the mails and all bids must be mailed in to reach Washington before February 2, 1878. The contracts will be on routes. . . . .

"Also on Route 46 from San Buenaventura by Hueneme, Springville, Newbury Park and En Cinio (Encino) to Los Angeles, 76 miles and back three times a week. Leave San Buenaventura Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 p.m., and arrive Los Angeles next day at 6 p.m. Leave Los Angeles Monday, Wednesday and Friday, arrive San Buenaventura at 6 p.m.

Bond of \$5,000 required with bid. Parties desiring to bid can obtain further information and also blanks upon which to make their proposals from the postmaster on the route."

A rather glowing account of conditions in the Conejo Valley appeared under "Conejo Items" on February 2, 1878:



"Mr. O.L. Abbot passed through here on Thursday on his way to Santa Barbara and informed us that the Conejo is looking finely, grass growing, feed good, stock improving, and an abundance of rain—probably almost 13 inches for the season. Prospects never better, crops sure. He thinks there will be 6,000 acres of wheat harvested, all looking well, and go from 20 to 25 sacks to the acre.

The roadmaster, he thinks, should look at once into improvement of the road to Hueneme, from which point the grain will all be shipped. One day's work will go as far now as five in the summer, when the ground is hard."

Another item, on the same day, stated:

"Eli Rundel, late stage agent at Santa Barbara, will take the new hotel and run it in good style. Will also put in a crop of wheat."

The stagecoach lines entered and crossed Ventura County from Los Angeles via Simi, the Conejo and Santa Clara Valleys. The Santa Clara Valley route eventually became the main passenger route to Los Angeles from San Buenaventura. All the routes converged at San Buenaventura and proceeded northward along the coast to Santa Barbara. The route of the stagecoaches from Ventura to Los Angeles was via Hueneme, Springville (later to become part of Camarillo), Newbury Park and Encino. The Conejo stage route, apparently, traveled from Hueneme over what is now Lewis Road to Springville, thence over the Conejo Grade onto what is now Old Conejo Road, into the portion of Borchard Road traveling east, past the Stagecoach Inn at its original location on Newbury Road to where Newbury Road winds southward toward the hills and thence to Los Angeles. There was a more direct route to Hueneme by way of Potrero (Reino) Road but it was so steep that it could be traversed only with an empty wagon. This road is, of course, now paved and passes the rear of the Camarillo State Hospital.

Before 1873 the principal stage route from Los Angeles to coastal points was by way of Chatsworth, Simi, and Saticoy in the Santa Clara Valley, to Ventura, and thence along the beaches to Santa Barbara. This road was passable only at low tide as the horses had to draw the coaches through the surf.

In 1887 the Southern Pacific Railroad was laid from Saugus to Santa Barbara. It was the beginning of the end for stagecoach service. Mr. Hamel prophesied "the county would go to the dogs" because all stage stations would be closed if the railroad built its coast line. It was in that year that Camarillo came into being when the Southern Pacific Railroad built the line through that area and the city grew up around it. In the Conejo Valley, however, which had no other adequate transportation system, the stagecoaches hauling mail, freight, and a few passengers did run until 1917.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS

1. Roscoe P. and Margaret B. Conkling, The Butterfield Overland Mail 1858-1869, Glendale, Calif., 1947.
2. Samuel Danna and Myron Krueger, California Lands, Washington, D.C., 1958.
3. Robert Harrington, Early Days of Simi Valley, Simi, Calif., 1961
4. Walter A. Howley, The Early Days of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, Calif., 1920.
5. Jesse Mason, reproduction of Thomson and West, History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, Berkely, Calif., 1961.
6. Charles F. Outland, Stagecoaching on El Camino Real, Glendale, Calif., 1973.
7. J.H. Russell, Heads and Tails, Thomas Litho, Los Angeles, Calif., 1966.
8. J.H. Russell, Cattle on the Conejo, Thomas Litho, Los Angeles, Calif., 1966.

### PAPERS

1. Irene Bahn, "Stagecoach Inn Background", Thousand Oaks, Calif., February, 1969.
2. Conejo Valley Historical Society, "Conejo Valley Days", Thousand Oaks, Calif., 1966.
3. Gwen Hinzie and Deborah Vittum, "A Short History of the Stagecoach Inn", Thousand Oaks, Calif., November 1967.
4. Steven D. Sessions, "Grand Union Hotel", Thousand Oaks, Calif., May 1974.

### NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

1. Ventura Free Press, November 13, 1875 through December 28, 1889, various articles on the Inn from newspaper located in Ventura, California during that period.
2. Ventura Signal, April 22, 1871 through April 4, 1885, various articles on the Inn from newspaper located in Ventura, California during that period.

Note: Above articles are available through the Conejo Valley Historical Society and the Ventura County Library.