

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

GENERAL CATEGORY	
RECEIVED	
DATE RECEIVED	SEP 17 1976

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

NAME
HIS/ERIC *The Administration Building, Atascadero Colony*

AND/OR COMMON *Veterans' Memorial Building - Atascadero*

LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER *6500 Palma Avenue*

CITY/TOWN *Atascadero* VICINITY OF *16*

STATE *California* CODE *06* COUNTY *San Luis Obispo* CODE *074*

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY
NAME *County of San Luis Obispo*

STREET & NUMBER *Courthouse*

CITY/TOWN *San Luis Obispo* VICINITY OF *California*

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. *San Luis Obispo County*

STREET & NUMBER *Courthouse*

CITY/TOWN *San Luis Obispo* STATE *Calif.* *95401*

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE *(1) County Landmark (2) State Historic Resources Inventory*

DATE *1968* FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL *1974*

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS *County Museum* *Dept. of Parks & Recreation*

CITY/TOWN *San Luis Obispo* STATE *California* *Sacramento*

DECISION

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DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building has a Greek cross plan, in the middle of the cross there are two rotundas, one above the other and reach 100 feet in height. The domes of the rotundas are coffered. Medallions of famous scholars and philosophers carved by a French ceramist, Taxile Doat, were put in the coffered on the dome of the upper rotunda.

The dome of the building is tile. The northern and southern arms of the cross are pillared porticos. The eastern and western arms are walled-in with engaged columns on the surfaces. The porticos have very high walls above the entablatures. Each wall is broken by an arch in the middle. The building is resting on a podium foundation.

Three floors of offices open on the circular hallways around the lower rotunda. Free standing columns support the dome of the upper rotunda and an open mezzanine balcony. Walled columns support the lower rotunda from the dome of which hangs a very large chandelier.

The building has a floor area of 48,942 square feet. It is built of reinforced concrete and faced with terra cotta brick. The building stands alone in a landscaped block facing sunken gardens. At the four corners of the building are small Baroque fountains by George Julian Zelnay, now used as flower beds.

According to the architect the building is an Italian Renaissance revival (after Palladio).

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUDGE	
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION
		<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE
		<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE
		<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
		<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC
		<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SPECIFIC DATES 1914-24 BUILDER/ARCHITECT H. F. Ellis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The cornerstone was laid and construction was on this building before a single home was built (40) square miles of the Atascadero Colony. was planned by a board of national experts. a 25,000 acres was subdivided and a filing made than 100 miles of roads constructed, a water buildings, and 3000 acres of orchards planted first colonist was allowed to build his home. community far in advance of its time and design are considered progressive by current.

The Administration Building housed the executive the Colony Holding Corporation and its subsidiaries which managed all phases of colony activity: sales, printing and publishing, all colony enterprises (housed in another large building, the civic center), the marketing of the orchard colony (The Caladero Corporation), the Atascadero development, the Garden Farms development, the flower seed company, a bank, a library (the exhibition area (lower rotunda: present Museum phone exchange).

E. G. Lewis, founder of the Atascadero Colony of the Colony Holding Corporation was an early advocate of women's suffrage. Lewis was for American Women's League, a national organization houses throughout the country, founded to pre- take their place in the political life of the Atascadero Rancho was purchased in 1913 in the name Women's League and the cornerstone of the Administration Building was laid by its president.

see continuation sheet

SIGNIFICANCE

Form No. 1
Rev. 10-7-

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<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCENIC	
<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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1914-24 BUILDER/ARCHITECT E. G. Bliss of Bliss & Paville

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The cornerstone was laid and construction was well underway on this building before a single home was built on the forty (40) square miles of the Atascadero Colony. The entire colony was planned by a board of national experts and then the entire 25,000 acres was subdivided and a filling made thereof, more than 100 miles of roads constructed, a water system constructed, including 25 miles of mains, parks, civic buildings, and 3000 acres of orchards planted all before the first colonist was allowed to build his home. A pre-planned community far in advance of its time and concepts which in its design are considered progressive by current day professional.

The Administration Building housed the executive offices of the Colony Holding Corporation and its subsidiary companies which managed all phases of colony activity: including land sales, printing and publishing, all colony commercial enterprises (housed in another large building, La Plaza in the civic center), the marketing of the orchard production of the colony (The Caladero Corporation), the Atascadero Ranch development, the Garden Farms development, the Mineral water company, the flower seed company, a bank, a library (Upper rotunda), exhibition area (lower rotunda: present Museum), and a telephone exchange.

E. G. Lewis, founder of the Atascadero Colony and President of the Colony Holding Corporation was an early and strong advocate of women's suffrage. Lewis was founder of the American Women's League, a national organization with chapter houses throughout the country, founded to prepare women to take their place in the political life of the nation. Atascadero Rancho was purchased in 1913 in the name of the American Women's League and the cornerstone of the Administration Building was laid by its president.

see continuation sheet

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The Administration Building became nationally recognized as a symbol for the Atascadero Colony in the issues of the Illustrated Review. This magazine, the first picture publication devoted to current events, was published in Atascadero and had a circulation of 600,000. 10,000 copies were said to be sold each month on the New York newsstands alone. Subscribers lived in every state in the Union and many foreign countries. Many of these people became the residents of Atascadero. In addition, the building was most prominent in the lavish promotional publications on Atascadero Colony distributed throughout the country. (Mr. Lewis' circulation lists, from his University City publishing days where his magazines had the largest circulation in the nation, were extensive.) Atascadero was one of three cities founded by Mr. Lewis. The others were University City, Missouri and Palos Verdes, Calif.

The Administration Building today is pictured on many letterheads -- The Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society, the Colony Days Committee, on the cover of the General Plan, and on tiles set in plaques given as first place awards during the annual Colony Days celebration.

The Administration Building ranks as one of the most prominent structures in the county along with Hearst Castle, the Missions of San Luis Obispo and San Miguel and the Dana Adobe.

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ARCHITECTURE

The Administration Building of the Atascadero Colony has been one of the most imposing structures on the Central Coast of California for sixty years.

It was designed by W. D. Bliss, of Bliss and Faville, a prominent San Francisco Architectural firm. They also designed many well-known buildings in the San Francisco Bay Area, such as the St. Francis Hotel, the Southern Pacific Building, Bank of California, Women's Athletic Club, Convent of the Sacred Heart, the State Office Building, and the Oakland Hotel. The impressive scale and style of the Administration Building would have adapted well to the San Francisco surroundings, but was highly unusual for this area at that time. Employing a prestigious architect, such as Bliss, was part of Lewis' plan to involve experts at every phase of the community's development.

The building's prototype may have been constructed earlier in Lewis' University City in Missouri. The earlier structure showed Asian influences and was known as the "Taj Mahal". The Administration Building's unusual characteristics are its double rotunda rooms, one above the other, and its layered-like dome roof.

A detailed description of the architecture of this building was included in the Nomination form.

COMMERCE

The Administration Building was built as the headquarters of the Atascadero Colony's operations. These included the all-under-one-roof shopping center (which provided the only shopping in the colony); the printing and publishing plant with the only rotogravure presses in the West; the dehydrating and canning plant; land sales; the hotels, one above the shopping center and one at Atascadero Beach; the water system, the community building, the hospital and the schools. A bank and a telephone exchange were in the building.

Several of these commercial enterprises were of far more than local scope. The Illustrated Review, a rotogravure picture magazine with a national circulation of 600,000 originated here and the Sunday rotogravure supplements of several metropolitan newspapers as well as rotogravure sections in Western magazines were printed here. The dehydrating plant sold its products nationwide and had contracts from the federal government for dehydrated products for the armed forces.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

In the 1910's, E. G. Lewis, of Missouri, created an independent and self-sustaining colony at Atascadero. It was based on the concept of developing a community before allowing the construction of the first residence. Lewis enlisted the aid of experts in every related field and built the entire community, including public buildings,

CONTINUATION

such as the Administration Building for the Colony. The Colony Home, the colony architecture.

The creation of the colony was far in advance of its time, retaining many characteristics of the early settlement.

The Administration Building, a government building, was designed by E. G. Lewis, who sought to create a unique architectural style. Little was known about the colony at the time, but it was far in advance of its time, being progressive by design.

The forty square foot building is presently used as a museum.

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

The Administration Building was built as the headquarters of the Atascadero Colony's operations. These included the all-under-one-roof shopping center (which provided the only shopping in the colony); the printing and publishing plant with the only rotogravure presses in the West; the dehydrating and canning plant; land sales; the hotels, one above the shopping center and one at Atascadero Beach; the water system, the community building, the hospital and the schools. A bank and a telephone exchange were in the building.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The land for the colony was laid out by Lewis and his partners. The colony was a self-sustaining community, and the Administration Building was a central part of the colony's operations.

E. G. Lewis was a pioneer in the American West, and his colony at Atascadero was a unique experiment in self-sustaining community development.

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such as the Administration Building, before the first house was built. As the headquarters for the Colony's operations, the Administration Building housed the executive offices of the Colony Holding Corporation and its subsidiary companies which managed all phases of the colony activity.

The creation of a pre-planned and pre-constructed community, like Atascadero Colony, was far in advance of its time. There has been considerable interest in recent years in retaining many of the original concepts. The present Atascadero General Plan embodies much of the Colony Plan.

The Administration Building remains the symbol of the Atascadero Colony where, to quote a government publication "The Atascadero Colony Plan was devised with remarkable foresight by E. G. Lewis more than a half century ago... subsequent planning (county) has sought to remain true to the basic concepts of the original layout..." and, "although little was known about Community Planning, Lewis' adroit handling of his development was far in advance of his time. Many concepts used in its design are considered progressive by current-day professionals."

The forty square mile subdivision of 1914 remains the basis upon which Atascadero Colony is presently growing. The population is now 16,000.

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

The Administration Building was administrative headquarters of the Atascadero Colony which was founded on forty square miles of land formerly inhabited and owned by a single cattle rancher. This was a virgin area before Colony construction work of surveying, planting orchards, building roads, bridges and a water system. This work done in 1913 and 1914, which included the start of construction of the Administration Building, was done before a single Colonist was allowed to build a home. When the Colony was ready for private home building in 1915 there were hundreds of Colonists living in a tent city awaiting permission to build. Tent City had accommodations for 1,000 persons.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

The land for the Atascadero Colony was purchased on behalf of the American Woman's Republic of the American Woman's League. The cornerstone of the Administration Building was laid by Mabel G. Lewis, Vice President of the Woman's Republic, elected at the national convention in June, 1910. The League and its Republic were national organizations formed to prepare women for national suffrage.

E. G. Lewis was a strong supporter of women's rights. Around 1905, he founded the American Woman's League and the American Woman's Republic to prepare women to take their place in the nation's political life. The organizations were modeled on the pattern of the American Government.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Lewis purchased the land for Atascadero and the ownership was transferred to Colony.

The Administration Building was government offices, now houses San Luis Obispo County Office. This building will be the city hall.

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

The concepts of the Colony evolved from ideas as complete hospital and medical care for all employed persons in the Colony; a fire department which included 23 Protestant denominations; the maintenance, harvest orchards on a pro rata basis; underground shopping center for the Colony with all owned water system that remains the same.

OTHER

Bankruptcy of the Colony Holding Corporation of the Colony as dominated by E. G.

There has been considerable interest in the original concepts. The present Atascadero General Plan. There are probably not two lots of the original plan. Speculators have obtained lot splits. The lots are winding and give an open space, rural atmosphere. Many new residents in recent years. The original plan of 7,000 homes on 23,000 acres as originally subdivided.

Atascadero Colony is an unincorporated area. Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo, the first to pave the state highway with concrete.

Of the original buildings from Colony: Administration Building, now called the Veterans' Memorial Temple and Sheriff's North County Headquarters for the north county; one building in tent city now owned by a church.

E. G. Lewis was years ahead of his time in his development concepts extremely modern, but are more modern than many contemporaries. The significance further enhanced.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Lewis purchased the land for Atascadero Colony in the name of the Republic. Soon after, the ownership was transferred to Colony Holding Corporation, of which Lewis was president.

The Administration Building was governing seat of the Colony for its first decade and now houses San Luis Obispo County Offices. When Atascadero Colony eventually incorporates this building will be the city hall.

SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

The concepts of the Colony evolved from this building and included such progressive ideas as complete hospital and medical coverage for all employees, which included about all employed persons in the Colony; a federated church, the only church in the Colony, which included 23 Protestant denominations worshipping together in a building provided by the Colony; the maintenance, harvesting and marketing of fruit from privately owned orchards on a pro rata basis; underground utilities in the civic center; a single shopping center for the Colony with all stores under one roof; and a property-holder-owned water system that remains the same today.

OTHER

Bankruptcy of the Colony Holding Corporation in the mid-1920's brought an end to the era of the Colony as dominated by E. G. Lewis, the founder.

There has been considerable interest in recent years in retaining much of the original concepts. The present Atascadero General Plan embodies much of the Colony Plan. There are probably not two lots of the same shape in the Colony other than where speculators have obtained lot splits. Excepting in the civic center all of the roads are winding and give an open space, rural atmosphere to the community that has attracted many new residents in recent years. The growth was more than 11% in 1975. The original plan of 7,000 homes on 23,000 acres may be realized with the opening of new areas as originally subdivided.

Atascadero Colony is an unincorporated community under the governing control of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo. Atascadero Colony had the first golf course in the county, the first First-Class Post Office in the county, and was the first to pave the state highway with cement from Colony border to border, eleven miles.

Of the original buildings from Colony days there remain, in addition to the Administration Building, now called the Veterans' Memorial Building; the Printery, now the Masonic Temple and Sheriff's North County Headquarters; the hospital, now county general hospital for the north county; one building in the high school complex; and the Community Building, now owned by a church.

E. G. Lewis was years ahead of his time in many ways. Not only were his community development concepts extremely modern, but his attitudes toward women and their capabilities are more modern than many contemporaries'. Lewis, in himself was historically significant and this significance further enhances Atascadero's importance.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

San Francisco Chronicle 2/9/69
 Fresno Bee 7/5/70
 Sunday Peninsula Herald 3/2/75
 Discovering San Luis Obispo County, 1970, publication of Cal Poly
 Cover of SLO County telephone Directory 1965
 Issues of the Illustrated Review 1916-1921

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre *approximately 2 acres*
 UTIA REFERENCES *below (may conflict with others)*

A	1,0	7,1,1,7,2,0	3,9,2,9,6,6,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property bounded by Palma Avenue, East Mall, Lewis Avenue and West Mall, Atascadero.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Martorie R. Mackey, President DATE: September 14, 1975
 ORGANIZATION: Treasure of El Camino Real (aka Atascadero Historical Society)
 STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 1047 TELEPHONE: 466-9585
 CITY OR TOWN: Atascadero STATE: California

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
 NATIONAL STATE LOCAL XX

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: [Signature] DATE: 1-16-76
 TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE: 11/17/77
 DATE: 11/14/77