

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Simmons, William Adam House _____

other name/site number: Simmons House _____

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2. Location

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street & number: 751 Kelly Avenue _____

not for publication: NA

city/town: Half Moon Bay _____

vicinity: _

state: CA county: San Mateo _____ code: 081 zip code: 94019

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: private _____

Category of Property: building _____

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: NA _____

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. See continuation sheet.

Stacie P. Cray
Signature of certifying official

June 30, 1992
Date

California Office of Historic Preservation

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Antiquities Act 8/18/92
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

for Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Domestic Sub: Single dwelling
 Funerary Mortuary

Current : Vacant/Not in Use Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Mid-19th Century

Other Description:

Materials: foundation: wood
roof: asphalt
walls: wood other

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,B,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : NA

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement
Architecture
Law

Period(s) of Significance: 1865-1942

Significant Dates : 1865

Significant Person(s): Simmons, William Adam
Simmons, Fred Allen

Cultural Affiliation: NA

Architect/Builder: Simmons, William

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- x preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- _ previously listed in the National Register
- _ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _ designated a National Historic Landmark
- _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- _ State historic preservation office
- _ Other state agency
- _ Federal agency
- _ Local government
- _ University
- _ Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	10	550650	4146250	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: Assessor's Parcel Number 056-168-070, City of Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries encompass the entire city lot that has historically been associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Kent L. Seavey, Preservation Consultant _____

Organization: _____ Date: September, 1991 _____

Street & Number: 310 Lighthouse Ave. _____ Telephone: (408) 375-8739 _____

City or Town: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

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The Simmons House is a one and a half story wood frame residence irregular in plan, resting on a wood mudsill foundation. The exterior wall cladding is a combination of wood shingle and horizontal "V" wood siding. The steep pitched end gable roof has a lower cross-gabled wing extending to the northeast, and a shed roofed addition to the rear (northeast corner). The roof covering is a composition shingle. The original covering was wood shingle. Fenestration is irregular with a combination of 1/1 and 2/2 double-hung wood sash. Some time after WW II, the original windows in the oldest portion of the building were replaced with 2/2 double-hung wood sash with horizontal muntins. Vertical plank shutters were added as well. The original wood window casings are still intact however. Modern hollow-core doors have replaced the original 4-panel type with low locking rail. An example of the earlier style ws found on site and will be matched in constructing replacements. Of particular note is the use of slab wall construction in the original building block. Of the three remaining residential structures dating from the 1860s in Half Moon Bay, two, the Simmons House and the Pablo Vasquez House at 270 Main St. employ slab wall construction. Also of interest is the use of fishscale wood shingles in a double-scallop pattern to create a decorative trim along the perimeter of the eaveline.

According to Sanborn fire insurance maps, a portion of the cross-gabled wing extension to the east was added between 1905 and 1911. While no documentary evidence exists in support, it is suggested that the exterior wood shingling of the house may have taken place at this time to unify the building's appearance. An enclosed shed roofed porch was added to the rear of the house at the northeast sometime after WW II by W.A. Simmons' grandson, Fred R. Simmons. He also constructed a rectangular wood framed garage along the northeast side of the property which was the original location of the elder Simmons' undertaking parlor and cabinet shop. The two buildings occupy a prominent corner lot surrounded by a low wood picket fence in a medium density mixed-use neighborhood. The landscaping consists of low and medium height shrubbery that has not been tended since the building was vacated by the Simmons family in 1990. The coast range of mountains forms a backdrop setting to the northeast. There is no physical evidence of any original interior finishes. During the Simmons occupation of the home between 1865 and 1990 a number of interior changes occurred to meet the needs of growing families and the decorative tastes of the times.

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The William Adam Simmons House in Half Moon Bay derives its significance under criteria A and C from the fact that it is one of only three remaining residences constructed in the 1860s during an important period of Anglo-European settlement and up-building of San Mateo County's first major town. It is also significant under criterion C as one of two remaining structures in Half Moon Bay to employ wooden slab wall construction. It is significant under criterion B because of the contributions made to the community by William Adam Simmons, its builder and Half Moon Bay's first undertaker, and his son Frederick Allen Simmons, who served as San Mateo County's Half Moon Bay constable and deputy sheriff for forty years. Both father and son occupied the Simmons family residence during the productive years of their lives. All physical changes that have been made over time to the Simmons property are the product of one family in its evolution and growth. The William Adam Simons House should qualify for listing in the National Register at the local level of significance.

Half Moon Bay was originally known as San Benito. Much of the town we know today was developed on the Mexican land grant, Rancho Arroyo de los Pilarcitos, awarded to Candelario Miramontes in 1841. Miramontes, a soldier at the Presidio of San Francisco was the first Mexican citizen to occupy the area. He constructed an adobe dwelling on the south bank of Pilarcitos Creek for his large family and with thirty head of cattle and horses began

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cultivating five acres of land. Tiburcio Vasquez, Miramontes' nearest neighbor to the north on Rancho Corral de Tierra is recognized as a co-founder of the town although he did not occupy his property until 1846. Vasquez built an adobe on the north side of Pilarcitos Creek near the Miramontes home.

During the War with Mexico between 1846-1848 a number of Spanish speaking families from Yerba Buena and Mission Dolores sought the relative isolation of the San Mateo County coastside to avoid the conflict. With the ensuing Gold Rush others moved to San Benito to get away from the influx of Anglo/European settlers. By the mid 1850's when the extranjeros or foreigners found the fertile coastal terraces, the settlement of San Benito consisted of about seven adobe homes, none of which remain today. Candelario Miramontes died in 1846. By 1853 his heirs began selling parcels from the original grant to the newcomers. The first San Mateo County tax assessment records in 1857 show native Californians and the "foreigners" matched at nineteen each. By that time San Benito had given way to the name Spanishtown, indicative of the original ethnic makeup of the population.

The Anglo/European arrivals purchased or leased farming land in and around the settlement and began to build up the commercial and industrial base of the community. In 1863 Estanislao Zaballa surveyed and layed out the Spanishtown Plat, creating a gridiron pattern on the land in the tradition of American town planning that remains today. In spite of major difficulties in transporting produce to market because of the rugged physical location of the region Spanishtown flourished and grew. The 1870 census showed the 5th township that included Spanishtown to be the most populous in San Mateo County. A State Assemblyman and the Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors both resided in the district assuring its political clout in the county. In 1874 the town's name was officially changed for the last time to Half Moon Bay. By that time there was a full compliment of general stores, hotels, and saloons a lumber yard, flour mill, wagon & plow manufacturing facilities, blacksmith shops, a brewery and churches.

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It was in the context of this period of town building that William Adam Simmons arrived in Half Moon Bay in 1864. Simmons was a native of New York State where he was born in 1838. He came to California by way of the Isthmus of Panama. Early census records show him as a carpenter by trade. San Mateo County assessment files indicate that he purchased 50 acres of land near Half Moon Bay where he engaged in farming. In 1865 he constructed the house at 751 Kelly Street. How long Simmons continued to farm is unknown, but with the rapid development of Half Moon Bay his skills as a carpenter soon came into demand. The only other identified builder in the 1860's was J.W. Dawson. Whether the two ever worked together is unknown.

It is known that in 1872 W.A. Simmons built a two-story carpenter shop adjacent to and in connection with the new Borden & Hatch lumber yard along Kelly Avenue. By 1878 he was the coastside's first undertaker. He built an office and carpenter shop at the northeast end of his property where the current garage is located. He also advertised furniture repair. An early member of the local Oddfellows lodge, Simmons became active in community affairs. According to historian Kathryn Gualtieri, Simmons was one of Half Moon Bay's most prominent and respected citizens. (Half Moon Bay: The Birth of a Coastside Town, p. 56) In June of 1877 the San Mateo County Times Gazette identified him as an officer of the Centennial Park Association which acquired property along Pilarcitos Creek for public use. In January, 1878 Simmons was elected first president of the Half Moon Bay Sportsman's Club. Some further evidence of Simmons' influence, if not his racial tolerance, came in 1886, when the Half Moon Bay Anti-Chinese Association was formed by a group of the town's most powerful citizens. Simmons was elected one of its first officers.

William Adam Simmons married Julia Nichols of Santa Cruz in July of 1862. Of their nine children only two survived to maturity. Fred Allen Simmons was born in the family home on March 24, 1877. He was educated in the public schools of Half Moon Bay. Like his father before him Fred took an active interest in community affairs. In 1903 at the age of twenty-six he was elected to the position of Police Constable for the 5th district. He was re-elected seven times to the four year post before the county adopted a new charter and the position became appointive. He continued to serve the

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coastside as its first appointed deputy sheriff retiring after more than forty years of honorable service, a record still unbroken in the county. As a tribute to the esteem in which he was held by the citizens of his district, in the 1930's the business men of Half Moon Bay collected a fund to purchase Mr. Simmons a new automobile for use in his official duties. Fred Simmons found time outside his constabulary functions to assume management of the United Cigar Company Store in Half Moon Bay. He was a successful business man as well as respected law enforcement officer. Simmons, his wife Lula Ramey Simmons and their four children continued to occupy the family home on Kelly Ave. until Fred's death in July of 1961. Marvin Simmons, Fred's son lived in the house until 1990 marking a hundred and twenty-five years of continuous occupation by a single family.

The William Adam Simmons House derives its significance under criterion A for its age and association with the Anglo/European settlement of Half Moon Bay. It is one of a handful of standing residential structures from this early period of development. Of the three homes identified as remaining from the decade of the 1860's, the Zaballa House, 326 Main St. (1863); The Vasquez House, 270 Main St. (1869) and the Simmons House (1865), all have been altered over time. However, unlike the Zaballa and Vasquez houses the William Adam Simmons House was constructed by its namesake and changes made over time were the physical product of family members. The house retains a strong sense of time and place related to the long tenure of a single family.

The Simmons House is significant under criterion B for the many contributions made by William Adam Simmons and his son Fred Allen Simmons to the development and general welfare of Half Moon Bay. Both men lived and worked out of the house during the productive years of their lives. There are no buildings remaining in town that better reflect the feeling and long association of the family with the community.

The Simmons House meets the test for significance under criterion C as one of two wooden slab wall residences remaining in Half Moon Bay from the decade of the 1860's. This archaic method of construction employed vertical and horizontal boards sandwiched together and nailed without use of

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traditional mortice & tenon framing or the newer stud wall construction. The finished product in a smaller building could successfully withstand wind and seismic loads associated with their physical setting. While there were lumber mills in operation in the Half Moon Bay area in the late 1850's and 1860's, the majority of trees felled were transported over the coast range to Redwood City where they were shipped to San Francisco. Borden & Hatch did not establish a formal lumber yard in Half Moon Bay until 1872 suggesting that dimensional lumber was in short supply until that time. Based upon the availability of materials it was probably more cost effective to use a slab wall system for one story residential construction than to order dimensional lumber from the San Francisco yards and have it shipped by boat to one of the two landings near town then freighted to the site. The other remaining slab wall residence is the Vasquez House at 270 Main Street. No other reference has been found to slab wall houses that may have been demolished over time in Half Moon Bay. The Simmons House exists today essentially as it did during its period of significance.

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BOOKS

- Cloud, Roy W. History of San Mateo County, (Chicago, 1928).
Gualtieri, Kathryn, Half Moon Bay: The Birth of a Coastside Town (Half Moon Bay, CA, 1988).
Rasmussen, Louis J., San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists, Vol. 1, (Baltimore, 1978).

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

- San Mateo County Assessment Records, 1857-1920. Located in San Mateo County Historical Museum, College of San Mateo.
San Mateo County Deeds, 1857-1920, Located in Office of County Recorder, Redwood City.
United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Tenth Census, 1880, Eleventh Census, 1890.

COLLECTED DOCUMENTS

- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Half Moon Bay, 1905, 1911, Revised 1932. Located in collection of Spanishtown Historical Society, Half Moon Bay.
Scrapbook of Clippings on Half Moon Bay and the Coastside, 2 vols., 1966 Richard N. Schellens Collection, located in Redwood City Public Library.

REMINISCENSES

- Interview with Marvin Simmons, son of Fred A. Simmons and last family member to live in the Simmons House, June 12, 1991.

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(Except where noted the information for items 1 through 5 are the same for all the photographs listed.)

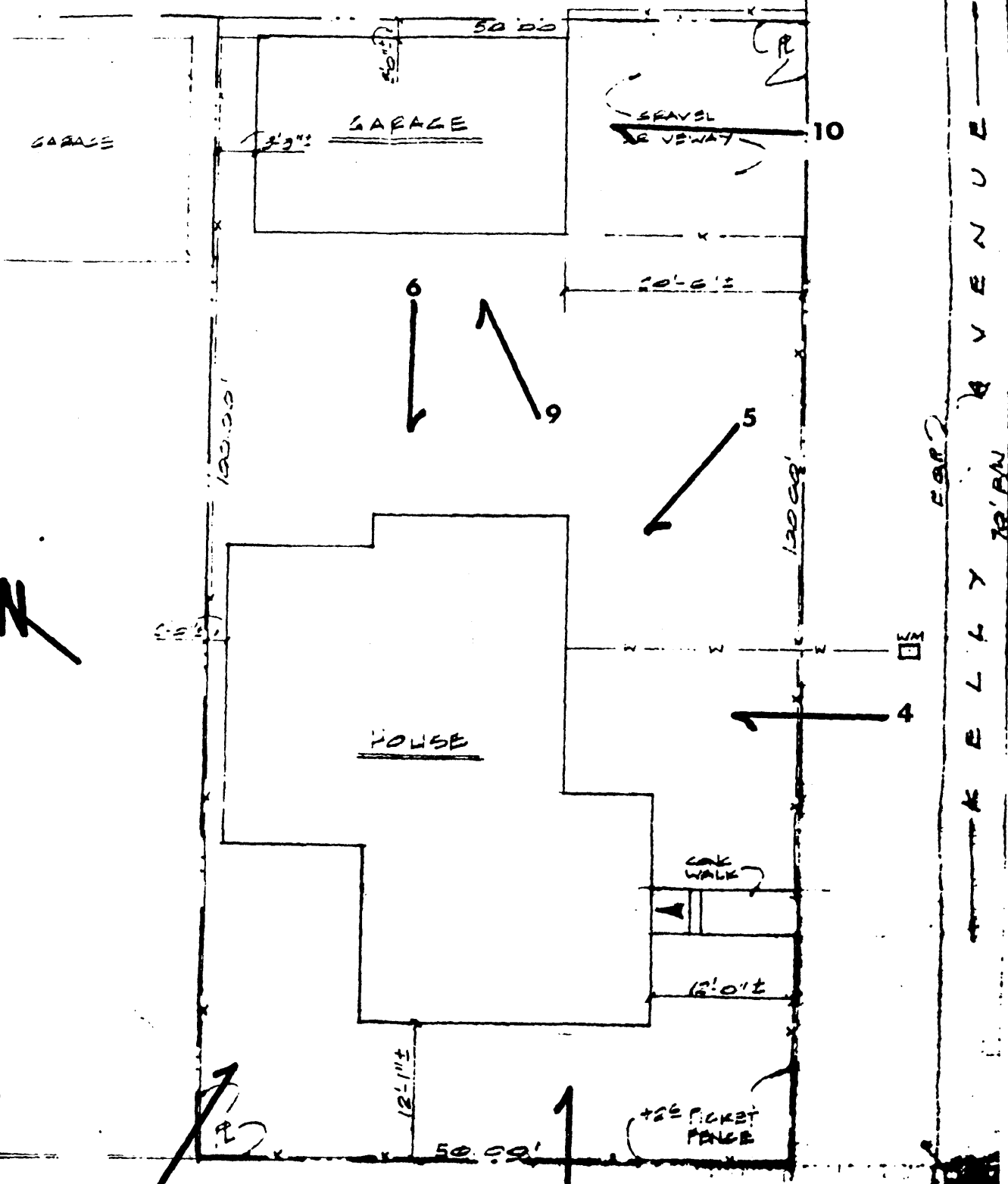
- #1
1. William Adam Simmons House
 2. 751 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
 3. Kent L. Seavey
 4. 1991
 5. Richard & Joan Baker, 2140 Winged Foot Road, Half Moon Bay
 6. Looking northeast along Kelly Ave. from the southeast corner of Main St. at the building's setting. The Simmons House is in the center of the picture frame.
 7. Photograph #1 of 10
- #2
6. Looking north along Johnston St. at the building's setting. The Simmons House is left center. The building on the right is the historic city jail, (1911).
 7. Photograph #2 of 10
- #3
6. Looking southeast along Johnston St. at the building's setting. The Simmons House is in the center of the frame. The Methodist Church, (1872) is to the far right.
 7. Photograph #3 of 10
- #4
6. Looking in a northerly direction at the facade of the Simmons House, (southeast elevation). A portion of the wing to the right was added between 1905 and 1911. Note post WWII horizontal muntins in the windows of the gable end of the house.
 7. Photograph #4 of 10
- #5
6. Looking northwest at the facade (southeast elevation) and side (northeast) elevation of the Simmons House. Note the decorative trim of fishscale shingles along the eaveline.
 7. Photograph #5 of 10

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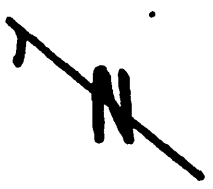
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- #6 6. Looking southwest at the side (northeast) elevation of the Simmons House. Note the post WWII rear porch addition to the right.
7. Photograph #6 of 10
- #7 6. Looking east at the rear (northwest) elevation of the Simmons House. Note the shed roofed half story extension of the post WWII rear porch addition.
7. Photograph #7 of 10
- #8 6. Looking northeasterly at the side (southwest) elevation of the Simmons House. Note the low picket fence and the post WWII wood shutters.
7. Photograph #8 of 10
- #9 6. Looking northeast at the side (southwest) elevation of the post WWII garage constructed along the northeast edge of the Simmons House property line. This area was originally used for W. A. Simmons undertaking office and carpenter shop. Refer to the 1905 & 1911 Sanborn maps for specific locations.
7. Photograph #9 of 10
- #10 6. Looking northwest toward the southeast entrance of the post WWII garage on the Simmons House property.
7. Photograph #10 of 10

PHOTOGRAPHIC KEY



KELLY AVENUE



Simmons House
Half Moon Bay
California

PARKING

JOHNSTON