

4195

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.



1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mountain House Historic District

Other names/site number: Mountain House Ranch; Mountain House Meadow; Mountain House
Home; Mountain House Resort; Trinomial (No. CA-BUT-3148H); Primary No. (04-003148)

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing N/A)

2. Location

Street & number: 13465 Oroville-Quincy Highway

City or town: Mountain House State: California County: Butte County

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

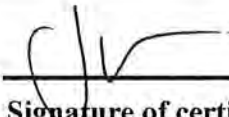
I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B C D

 _____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>California Office of Historic Preservation</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government	<u>4 June 2019</u> _____ Date
<p>In my opinion, the property <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p> <p>Signature of commenting official: _____ Date _____</p> <p>Title : _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	


Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:)

for 
Signature of the Keeper

7/12/2019
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Local

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

District

☒

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

4

1

4

1

10

Noncontributing

3

1

4

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register None

Mountain House Historic District

Name of Property

Butte Co., California

County and State

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

TRANSPORTATION: Road-Related

DOMESTIC: Hotel

AGRICULTURE: Agricultural Field

COMMERCE: Specialty Store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions.)

MID 19TH CENTURY REVIVAL: No Style/Vernacular

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Wood-frame construction, horizontal clapboards, hand-hewn wood beams, gable roof, 4-panel wood doors, double sash wood windows, fruit orchard, stone-lined pools.

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Mountain House Historic District (APN 061-330-015) is located at 13465 Oroville-Quincy Highway (State Route 162) in northeastern Butte County (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The historic district is situated on a 12-acre privately owned parcel and has 14 resources that include a vernacular-style hotel, grocery store/post office, barn, service station, 5-acre historic orchard, and other features. Mountain House was a prominent emigrant stop and stagecoach stop on a well-traveled road that supported a small community that actively participated in commerce, mining, logging, and agriculture and was supported by a population ranging from as low as 10 to over 100 residents between 1866 and 1930. In the mid 1940s, improvements were made to the property to promote Mountain House as a recreational auto destination, and new resources were added to the parcel.

The heart of the historic district is a 2½-story wood-framed hotel (c.1854; 1899) located on an unpaved segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville Quincy Highway. The hotel, a contributing resource, was a prominent stop for overland emigrants, stagecoach riders, and auto travelers, spanning from the 1850s until it closed in 2000. In addition to the hotel, there are two contributing buildings, a grocery store/post office and barn (both c.1865), which aided the hotel and the community of Mountain House. Besides these older buildings, there is a historic orchard (c.1860; c.1893) with numerous fruit trees and berry bushes, a window into an early 19th century

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

agriculture landscape. Between 1944 to 1945, a gas service station, horse trough for horseback riders, and three stone-lined pools fishing were added for recreation.

In 2000, Mountain House was surveyed by Julia K. Green of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in conjunction with a Plumas National Forest project. A Heritage Resource Inventory Report was completed for the "FHWA Oroville-Quincy (FH119) Road Reconstruction Project in 1987 when the road was surveyed.¹ The site's name was "Mountain House Meadow" and was given a Primary No. (04-003148) and a Trinomial No. (CA-BUT-3148H), as well as a Forest Service No. (05-11-54-774).² In this cultural resource form, Mountain House was not evaluated per the National Register.

Narrative Description

The Mountain House Historic District is approximately 12 acres in size situated on a privately owned parcel in a semi-forested area in the Plumas National Forest (see **Figure 2**). While the historic district spans both sides of California State Route 162, a modern two-lane paved road, an original alignment of what was the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville Quincy Road is present. Within the district, there are ten contributing resources, which date from the early 1850s into the 1940s including a hotel, a grocery store/post office, fruit orchard, and barn, which date to the 1850s and 60s. In the 1940s, the hotel's proprietor Ludwig Reiss improved the property, making it into a recreational destination for automobile travelers, and added a service station, fishponds, and a water trough for horse riders.

Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway Segment

Contributing Structure

The Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway (1851; 1855) passes by four contributing resources in the Mountain House Historic District (see **Figure 2, Photo 1**). The segment within the historic district is the original road alignment and is set on a curved north-south axis with an entrance and exit on the north side of the realigned California State Route 162, a modern asphalt two-lane road. The segment is about 25 feet wide, approximately 850 feet long, and passes by the hotel, grocery store/post office, and a barn—all contemporary to the early transportation history. The segment's roadbed material varies from predominantly being dirt to having patches of macadam, a ballast material, which is fixed in the dirt. Macadam as a historic paving material was best used during the turn of the 19th century. Sometime in the 1980s, the road was bypassed by the newer road. This segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway is a contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Hotel

Contributing Building

The 2½-story hotel (c.1854; 1899) is set on an east-west axis and faces south on the historic segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway (see **Figure 2**). The vernacular hotel was the heart of the Mountain House community and has a two-story south (front) porch

¹ Jensen & Associates Archaeological Consulting and Research. "Archaeological Reconnaissance of Grover's Proposed Cabin Reconstruction, Project, Mountain House, Butte County, California." Prepared for Alvin A. Grover, Berry Creek, California (Project No. 05-11-03-FY99). December 23, 1987.

² Julia K. Green. "Mountain House Meadow, California Department Parks & Recreation." November 8, 2000. Located at the California Historic Resource Information Center, Chico.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

that wraps around the east elevation. The east, west, and south elevations of the hotel's exterior walls are all clad with 3-inch wide clapboards (see **Photo 2** and **Photo 3**).

The hotel's roof slopes to the north and is steeply pitched as a catslide, a roof design best seen on New England saltbox buildings and atypical to California, especially rural Butte County. The hotel's unique roof design is visible on both its east and west ends, and has an office space on the east end and a commercial refrigerator space on the west. The hotel's roof has standing seam metal on the northern slope while historic wood shingles cover the southern slope.

On the south elevation, the hotel is divided into five bays and a two-story porch that extends out from the elevation approximately 4-foot wide. In the 1860s, the hotel had six bays, and by the 1890s, it was more than eight bays with grapevines growing on it; the hotel was shortened to its current five bays sometime between 1920-1940 by removing the east end (see **Figures 7-10, 12**). At this time, the porch was continued around the west side of the building under a pent roof. The porch is in fair condition and has been reconstructed or modified a few times over the years. Grapes, nevertheless, still grow on the trellis of the front porch. Two single-leaf wood doors are located on the south elevation, and a third door is located on the east elevation. Most of the windows on the south, west, and east elevations are 1/1 double-hung wood windows with a lamb's tongue detail. Two wood windows on the west elevation's second floor are wider, and it is believed were added sometime in the 1950s.

From the two-story porch on the east elevation is an addition that extends out approximately five feet. The addition is believed to have been built post-1899 because the wood clapboards on the addition are alike the siding on other elevations. Entrances are on both stories of the porch and connect to spaces that extend under the roof's catslide on the north elevation (see **Figure 7**). On the first floor, a single-leaf door and three double-hung sash wood windows are located on the east elevation. A French double door is accessible from the porch on the south elevation's first floor. On the second floor, a single-leaf door is accessible from the porch's south elevation, which leads into the rear side of the catslide, an unfinished space.

The north elevation is U-shaped and has two enclosed spaces, possible additions, located under the catslide roof. The elevation's enclosed porch, Room 107, connects to these spaces. The porch has an intact wall, which retains original 5-inch wide siding from the 1850s, door openings, and a 6/6 wood window with wavy glass panes and 1/4-inch thick muntins, located behind a wood bookshelf (see **Photo 5**). The window is similar to windows seen in an 1860s photo (see **Figure 7**). The fact this wall is intact refutes the claim that the hotel burned to the ground in an 1899 fire. Additionally, four historic 1850s 6/6 wood windows, set on edge as sliding windows, are located in the center of the north wall of Room 107. A few historic 1850s windows are also located on the chicken coop and others are stored in an unfinished space under the catslide on the second floor. In addition to the windows, all of the doors on the hotel are 4-panel single-leaf wood doors that appear to date to the 1850s, and exclude the multiple-lite front doors located on the south elevation, which were added in the 1940s.

The hotel's foundation is constructed of peeled log piers set on tapered fieldstone footings. The mortar joints on the footings are a mud material, and not a Portland-cement material therefore predates the 1899 fire. The log posts are a significant size and are approximately 8-10 inches in diameter. Hand-hewn 6x12 inch wood joists support original wood floorboards. Many of the joists and floorboards have char marks from the 1899 fire. The foundation has two basement

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

accesses from the first floor (Room 105 and Room 106) that include wood hatch doors (see **Figure 3**). The basement access in Room 106 has wide fieldstone steps that lead down into the space, which has a ceiling height of approximately 6 feet high. The basement access in Room 107 has a wood stepladder, and has a lower ceiling height where a large wood-fired barrel boiler, approximately 4 feet high, was located. The space under Room 107 is partially dugout, and it is theorized that the dugout basement was probably used historically as cold storage or a root cellar.

After the fire on July 10, 1899, the hotel was partially renovated, receiving new wood clapboard siding and 1/1 wood sash windows, which are today present. The interior of the hotel was again modified in the 1940s, modernizing it as both a residence and commercial business (see **Photo 4**). During this time, the hotel on both floors was modernized with indoor plumbing and electricity.

The first floor is divided into eight rooms, which includes a wide living room (Room 101), kitchen (Room 102), kitchen pantry (Room 103), and bathroom and hallway (Room 104 and Room 105) (see **Figure 3**). The living room and bathroom on the first floor have knotty pine paneling and a scallop cornice detail runs the along the ceiling and a central staircase along with a corner fireplace, which is not historic (see **Photo 4**). The north (rear) section of the floor represents an office or storeroom (Room 106), enclosed porch/hallway (Room 107), and an industrial cold storage refrigerator, (Room 108), which are all located under the catslide space (see **Figure 3**). The enclosed porch is intact and has original 1850s siding on its south wall and 6/6 double sash wood window is present (see **Photo 5**). A one-story addition was located on the west side that led to the refrigerator, which was removed in the last 10 years.

On the second floor, there is a bedroom with a closet (Room 201), small bedroom (Room 204), and master bedroom (Room 205) as well as two bathrooms (Room 203 and Room 206) and hallway (Room 202) (see **Figure 3**). The second floor is accessible from the central staircase on the first floor, added in the 1940s. Under the catslide roof, there are a few unique details, such as a 1/1 double-hung sash window located in a central bathroom (Room 203), and an infill closet, which indicates that the north elevation historically was open and not enclosed. Under the catslide, there is a space accessible from this unfinished space in the second floor (Room 107) via a staircase on the west side.

In addition to the first and second floors, the hotel has a full, unfinished attic with a 15-foot high ceiling that is open to the ridge. In the attic, historic rafters with hewn marks are sistered to newer rafters. Bituminous tarpaper as a moisture barrier is under the wood framing, added perhaps during renovations in the 1940-50s. A double sash window is located in the east and west gable ends. Historically, it is believed the space was used as storage for store goods or possibly extra bedrooms for visitors. The hotel is contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Grocery Store/Post Office Building

Contributing Building

The grocery store/post office (c.1865) is a 1½-story vernacular building located approximately 80 feet east of the hotel on the historic segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway (see **Figure 2, Photo 6**). The store/post office is 20 feet wide and 35 feet long. The single-wall building is constructed of horizontally laid 1x12 board-and-battens with vertical wood boards sheathing the exterior. The store/post office has a gable roof over an attic space

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

used to store goods. Fieldstones are set under the wood posts around the foundation perimeter of the store/post office. A historic 6/6 double-hung sash window is located on the front, southwest corner. The window is approximately 3 feet wide and 4 feet high and is wood pegged at the corners.

The interior of the store/post office is divided into two large rooms laterally on a north-south axis. A root cellar, or cold storage space, is accessible from the rear and located under the front room's floorboards. The ceiling is lined with board-and-batten boards that are notched around the vertical board-and-batten walls. On the east and west walls, the south (front) room has 8-foot high shelves with drawers for selling goods. The shelves have an ornate top and constructed of 1-inch thick boards. The walls and ceiling in this front room are painted turquoise, or "Prussian Blue," which is contemporary to the 1860s (see **Photo 7**).³

The north (rear) room is accessible through two parallel doorways from the front room. The same board-and-batten ceiling seen in the front room is present in the back room. A wood hatch lifts up from the wood floorboards that provide access to a root cellar or cold storage that leads under the building via stone steps. The grocery store/post office is contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Barn

Contributing Building

The barn (c.1865) is approximately 10 feet east of the store/post office and set on a north-south axis on the historic segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway (see **Figure 2, Photo 8**). The barn is 20 feet wide and 30 feet long. The building is constructed of hand-hewn bents that are joined by mortise-and-tenon construction and tied by hewn beams. Metal modern brackets are attached to the joints of the bents as additional support. The ends of the bents are set on fieldstones. The barn is covered with vertical wood boards and a hinged double door on the front. The barn's roof is gabled with peeled logs as rafters that are visible along the eave. The roof is covered with corrugated sheet metal and wood skip-sheathing and shingles are visible.

The barn's interior has an office located in the northeast corner and ceiling boards separate a loft space. On the south wall, sliding-glass aluminum windows were added in the 1950s, which is the only alteration to the barn. The barn is contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Historic Orchard

Contributing Site

The historic orchard (c.1860; c.1893) is located on the south side of Oroville-Quincy Highway, off the modern alignment of California State Route 162, and is approximately 5-acres in size with actively bearing fruit trees and ground cover fruit patches (see **Figure 2**).

In 1893, the orchard was expanded and historic newspaper articles specifically define 50 varieties of apple trees, which included Sweet Bough, Early Harvest, Gravenstein, Northern Spy, and Ben Davis trees. Many of the apple trees are fruit bearing, 15 to 30 feet high, with a healthy diameter around 6-12 inches (see **Photo 9**). The trees, however, have not been pruned in over 30

³ Bonnie Wehle Parks. "Aurora Blue: Identifying and Analyzing Interior Paint in an Oregon Utopia, ca. 1870." *Cultural-Technical Booklet, Number Two*. Eugene, Oregon: University of Oregon, School of Architecture and Allied Arts, Historic Preservation Program. 1986.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

years and new vegetation, such as pines and firs, surrounded the orchard. Peaches, apricots, and French prunes were cited in the historic record but none of these trees was located during the survey. In addition to trees, raspberries, strawberries, currants, and gooseberries were recorded in the historical record. The orchard has a significant size wild strawberry patch, approximately 20 feet square. The historic orchard is a contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Water Trough

Contributing Object

The water trough for horses (c.1944) is constructed of board-formed, cast concrete that has a pebble aggregate (see **Figure 2, Photo 10**). The structure is approximately 5 feet long, 2 feet wide, and about 3 feet high and is east of the hotel approximately 30 feet. The water trough is a contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Service Station

Contributing Building

The service station (c.1944) is a small gabled Rustic style building that faces north and has an open filling station component in front and an office/store in the rear (see **Figure 2, Photo 11**). The service station is approximately 20 feet wide and 35 feet long, and is located on California State Route 162. The station is sheathed with horizontal half-log siding, and vertical redwood bark with a German coat of arms located in the gable. The roof is covered with standing seam metal and has exposed rafters on the east and west elevations.

The filling station component is under the gable and open on the sides, supported on round concrete footings. Knee brackets as an architectural detail are visible on the front. The windows on the sides are 4/4 double-hung sash wood windows with a lamb's tongue detail and the south elevation has fixed 6-lite wood windows. A door is on the south (front) elevation that had recently been vandalized. The interior is a single room store lined below the windows with a 6-inch wide wainscoting; plywood with wood battens line the ceiling. A pendant light fixture is suspended from the ceiling. In addition to the finishing, the room has an old industrial freezer in the corner, last used in 2000. The only alteration to the station appears to be the removal of its gas pumps. The service station is a contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Fish Ponds

Contributing Structures

On the south side of California State Route 162, there are three fish ponds (c.1944) adjacent to the historic orchard (see **Figure 2**). The larger fish ponds range in size from 20 to 30 feet in diameter and are about 5-10 feet deep. A fingerling pond is smaller in diameter and has a stone-lined brim. The largest pond has a wooden boat dock on the east side that is in poor condition (see **Photo 12**). All the ponds were dry during the time of writing the nomination. The fish ponds are contributing resources to the Mountain House Historic District.

Barn Ruin

Non-Contributing Building

The barn ruin (unknown date) is constructed as a mix of hand-hewn beams and stud framing (see **Figure 2, Photo 13**). The ruin represents three standing walls that are exposed and has no roof. The building appears to have been constructed of building materials from the site. Due to lack of integrity, the ruin is a non-contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Smokehouse Ruin

Non-Contributing Building

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

The smokehouse ruin (1935) is a wood-framed building with a gable roof (see **Figure 2**). Two walls are absent from the building and in a dilapidated condition. The smokehouse has an iron broiler smoker in its corner that is rusty and inoperable. Due to lack of integrity, the smokehouse is a non-contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Chicken Coop

Non-Contributing Building

The chicken coop (c.1940) is a wood-framed, two-room building that is about 50 feet east from the hotel, and is approximately 15 feet wide, 8 feet long, and about 6-8 feet high (see **Figure 2, Photo 14**). The building has a shed-roof that slopes to the north and has 1/1 double-hung windows with a few repurposed 1850s windows that are set on edge. The coop is divided into two rooms used to house chickens and possibly other animals. Due to lack of integrity, the chicken coop is a non-contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Beckwourth Trail Marker

Non-Contributing Object

The Beckwourth Trail B-44 marker (2012) is located east of the hotel (see **Figure 2**). The T-shaped trail marker is about 3 feet high and made of railroad rails. A bronze plaque on the marker reads: BECKWOURTH TRAIL-MOUNTAIN HOUSE/"IN TWO MILES FROM MOUNTAIN HOUSE ENCAMPED A MILE AND A HALF FROM THE ROAD ON VERY LITTLE GRASS FEAR OUR STOCK WILL HAVE A POOR SUPPER TONIGHT." – ELIZABETH PECKINPAH, SEP 14, 1853/GUIDEBOOK AVAILABLE/ TRAILS WEST INC. P.O. BOX 112045 RENO NV 89510. Due to age, the trail marker is a non-contributing resource to the Mountain House Historic District.

Setting/Landscape

The setting of the Mountain House Historic District is on a 12-acre privately owned parcel in a forested area in the Plumas National Forest along California State Route 162, a modern two-lane paved road that bisects the district into two. There are ten contributing resources, which date from the early 1850s into the 1940s, associated with transportation and settlement. The northern section of the district contains an original segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville Quincy Road, a semicircle dirt segment with macadam patches adjacent to a modern road. The segment has period buildings along it, which contribute to its significance as an emigrant trail and stagecoach road, such as the two-story vernacular hotel that is aside a grocery store/post office and barn. The southern section of the district located on the other side of California State Route 162 contains 1940s resources built by property owner Ludwig Reiss in making it into a destination for auto travelers on the road. Visitors were allowed to fish in a larger earthen pond while little fish were transplanted into the larger pond from a nearby fingerling pond. One of the most valuable assets in this section is a large orchard that historically had 50 varieties of apple trees and dated from the 1860s to 1890s, which were healthy and fruit bearing during the time of survey. The orchard has a significant size wild strawberry patch, approximately 20 feet square that is intact in its historic setting. Many of the fruit trees have not been pruned in over 30 years, and the forest is reclaiming much of its setting.

Alterations

The Mountain House Historic District has had minimal modifications in its 150 years. The district retains much of its architectural integrity even though its condition is fair due to lack of maintenance in the past 10 years. Two supportive 1850s resources in the district, the post

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

office/store and barn, have little alterations and only wood boards were added to the exterior in possibly the 1930s or 1940s in keeping it upright. Despite these alterations, much of the historic 1850s fabric of the hotel is intact. The 1940s service station's gas pumps were removed in the last 20 years.

On July 10, 1899, a fire notably changed the 2½-story 1850s hotel at Mountain House and new fabric, such as wood clapboard siding and 1/1 wood sash windows, were added to its exterior. These changes are considered historic to its period of significance. Between 1920 and 1940, the hotel was shorted to two bays on south elevation and a roofed, wraparound porch was constructed on the new east elevation. Since the 1940s, an addition on the west elevation was removed, leaving a 4-panel door on the second floor to no floor. A second smaller addition on the west elevation was removed in the past 10 years (see **Figure 14**). In addition, the interior and room configuration have been redesigned over time. Some of these changes are considered historic to its period of significance; however, most are not.

Historic Integrity

In order for the Mountain House Historic District to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, the property must retain its seven aspects of integrity (*location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association*). The Mountain House Historic District has ten contributing resources and four non-contributing resources. The district has a period of significance from c.1854 to 1945.

The Mountain House Historic District's *location* is situated on its original Beckwourth Trail that was blazed in 1850-51 across the Sierra Nevada Mountains, connecting the Sacramento Valley through Plumas County to the Truckee Meadows in present-day Nevada. In 1855, the trail became the Oroville-Quincy Highway, a predominant stagecoach route, and the Mountain House's hotel is known to be the last standing stage stop from this heyday, last used in 1911. Because of the travel, industries developed at Mountain House and it became a community, serving locals and travelers as a commercial stop for travelers.

The *setting* of the Mountain House Historic District has changed a little since its construction in the 1850s. The community of Mountain House is set on an intact segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway, and includes a hotel establishment, numerous supportive structures, and a historic orchard that dates to its early period. The historic orchard and its apple trees as a cultural landscape are over hundred years old, which still fruit bearing. As auto travel became more prevailing, Mountain House became a destination for auto travelers and recreating visitors, and a service station and fishing ponds were added in the 1940s.

The historic district has a rich *association* with travelers going west and the small community of Mountain House that developed around the stop. Transportation from overland travel on the Beckwourth Trail to stagecoaches on Oroville-Quincy Highway provided hundreds of people a temporary stay and commercial businesses were set up in the small community of Mountain House. The hotel was one of more than 20 stage stops on the route and is the last standing hotel establishment on the road, which marks a conclusion to an extensive transportation history from emigrant wagons to stagecoaches to automobiles. The community was invested in numerous industries that included mining, logging, and agriculture. As a small town, 10 to over 100 people

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

resided at Mountain House, which is best cited in California voter registration and U.S. Federal Census records.

The Mountain House Historic District's *design* contains ten contributing resources, such as the community's heart, a vernacular 2½-story vernacular-style hotel, a board-and-batten grocery store/post office, and heavy-timber framed barn. A devastating fire in 1899 triggered the 1850s hotel to be partially rebuilt and the interior was refurbished during the mid-century. In addition to the hotel and its auxiliary buildings, the district has an original segment of the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway that retains its original dirt lined and macadam roadbed. An approximately 5-acre historic orchard is located in the district that has fruit trees, particularly apples, and ground-covering fruit and berry bushes that were planted in the late 19th century.

Overtime, the historic district has been slightly adapted and its current condition is not ideal. However, its *materials* and *workmanship* have been minimally affected since its original construction c.1854. The contributing auxiliary buildings, such as the grocery store/post office and barn, are intact despite newer siding added to its exterior to keep them standing. The 1940s resources in the district retain their materials and workmanship, such as the service station, is intact and retains all of its materials as a rural gas station. The hotel, as another example, retains its original foundation visible in hand hewn beams and stone piers, 4-panel wood doors, and an intact wall with a 6/6 double-hung window that all reflect its early 1850s period. The rest of the hotel's materials date from 1899 up unto 1945 and include horizontal wood clapboards, 1/1 wood sash windows, and knotty pine paneling.

The Mountain House Historic District last retains its *feeling* in a rustic setting in a chaparral area in Butte County. Currently, the district is set in a rural forested setting and is a glimpse into the turn-of-the century. Its intact segment of the original Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy Highway provides historic context to the vernacular hotel and its auxiliary buildings. The biggest asset is the historic orchard that is a peek into 19th century farming.

Mountain House Historic District

Name of Property

Butte Co., California

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Transportation

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1854-1945

Significant Dates

Significant Person

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Mountain House Historic District is being nominated for its local significance connected to transportation, associated with the 1850s Beckwourth Trail and the 1860s Oroville-Quincy Highway, currently known as California State Route 162.⁴ Located at an elevation of 3,560 feet, the Mountain House community dates to this early period when it was an emigrant trail stop and stagecoach stop that connected Oroville and Bidwell's Bar in Butte County to Quincy in Plumas County. The hotel at Mountain House is considered the last standing stagecoach stop from this transportation period along this road.

In addition, Mountain House developed into a small community not only associated with transportation but with a diversity of industries that included commerce, mining, agriculture, and lumber. A number of individuals worked local quartz and placer claims along Mountain House Creek, farmed the adjacent orchard, and labored in lumber mills in the Brush Creek area. The population at its height between 1890 and 1930 ranged from 60 to over 100 people, who lived within the area between Mountain House and Berry Creek, a few miles south.

The Mountain House Historic District is being nominated for its significance to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with a period of significance that dates from 1854 to 1945.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Transportation

History of the Beckwourth Trail

James "Jim" Pierson Beckwourth was born on a plantation in Fredericksburg, Virginia, on April 6, 1798. His father was a Revolutionary War veteran, Sir Jennings Beckwith, and his mother was an African-American slave, Catherine "Katey" Miskell, who bore 13 children.⁵ As a freed slave, Beckwourth's was an adventurous frontier man who worked with the Rocky Mountain Fur Trading Company in 1823 until he was captured by Crow Indians in Colorado, earning him the title Chief "Bull's Robe." He fought aside Seminoles Indians in the 1842 Seminole War and gained respect as a warrior.⁶ He is said to have established two trading posts as well as the town of Pueblo, Colorado.⁷

Between 1846-48, Beckwourth guided General John C. Fremont across the Sierra Nevada Mountains and fought with Americans against the *Californios* in the state's Bear Flag Revolt. On July 4, 1848, gold was discovered on the North Fork of the Feather River by employees of

⁴ "Mountain House" is a common name for at least two other stage stops in Northern California that included one in Sierra County and a second in Colusa County. Some of the images of these sites are misnamed at state repositories.

⁵ Ancestry.com. "James Pierson Beckwourth." Accessed March 11, 2018 at www.ancestry.com.

⁶ BlackHistoryNow. "Jim Beckwourth." July 13, 2011. Accessed March 11, 2018 at <http://blackhistorynow.com/jim-beckwourth/>.

⁷ Curtis Jackson. "James Pierson Beckworth." Accessed March 11, 2018 at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/6931072>.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

General John Bidwell, and the town of Bidwell's Bar quickly formed.⁸ The town developed into a center for commerce and trade, yielding \$6.4 million in gold, the equivalent of over \$101 million today.⁹ That year, the population in Butte County was 3,441 males and 100 females. With the population growing daily with gold miners, Butte County became one of the original 19 counties in California on February 18, 1850.

After his travels with Fremont, Beckwourth was convinced he had the best route across the Sierra Mountains that followed California Maidu Indian trails.¹⁰ In 1850-51, he pursued a few investors who financed him with \$700 to blaze the trail.¹¹ Beckwourth hired men at a cost of \$1,600 to cut the wagon road that followed existing ridges, valleys, and rivers from Truckee Meadows in present-day Sparks, Nevada, through Quincy to Marysville near Sacramento. Safe passage across the mountains was critical for emigrants going west via rumored "passes" and "cutoffs." Beckwourth Pass was one of the safest passes for pioneer wagons traveling to Sacramento compared to other mountain pass, such as the more recognized Donner Pass. The Beckwourth Trail was 172 miles of "improved trail" across the Sierra Mountains. Much of the Beckwourth Trail is a National Historic Trail and part of the "Central Trail" in California and much of it currently follows State Routes 70 and 162, connecting the border town of Chilcoat-Vinton to Marysville in Yuba County (see **Figure 4**).¹²

As soon as Beckwourth's trail was blazed, hotels and boarding houses were constructed to provide needed services and accommodations for emigrants. This 1852 account describes the route of the Beckwourth Trail and includes one of the earliest references to Mountain House as a stop on the wagon road:

From Meadow Valley the trail followed about the line of the present wagon road to a point about a mile and a half beyond Meadow Valley, where it turned to the right, and reached the summit east of Buck's Ranch, by way of what is now known as the Edman mine. From the summit east of Buck's Ranch the trail—as near as I can determine—followed about the line of the present traveled wagon road through Buck's Ranch, Buckeye, Mountain House, and on to Oroville.¹³

Additionally, the Beckwourth Trail is memorialized in emigrant journals, which reference Mountain House as a stop. The earliest account of Mountain House was recorded in a diary for Dr. John Dalton, a surgeon in Captain Lorenzo Dow Stephen's Company. On September 5, 1852, Dalton recounted that the "hotel was established in 1850" and that he "traveled a hilly, dusty road, part of it very rough, about 18 miles to the Mountain House & camped—No grass,

⁸ George C. Manfield. *History of Butte County California with Biographical Sketches of the Lading Men and Women of the County Who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*. Los Angeles: Historic Record Company, 1918: 43.

⁹ Manfield, *History of Butte County California with Biographical Sketches of the Lading Men and Women of the County Who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, 73.

¹⁰ David M. Brown. *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse, and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*. Chico: Association for Northern California Historical Research, 2011:34.

¹¹ Brown, *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*, 31.

¹² Florence Danforth Boyle. "Chapter 188." *Old Days in Butte: A Glamorous Tale of Butte County*. Compiled and Edited by Robert E. Colby. Chico: University Printing Services, 2006. Provided by property owner, Linda Philips.

¹³ Manfield. *History of Butte County California with Biographical Sketches of the Lading Men and Women of the County Who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, 50-51.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

good wood and water.”¹⁴ A second emigrant entry is from Elizabeth Peckinpah on September 14, 1853 that stated, “In two miles from Mountain House encamped a mile and half from the road on very little grass fear our stock will have a poor supper tonight.”¹⁵ Peckinpah’s 1853 entry is referenced in a trail marker placed beside the Mountain House hotel in 2012.

During the early 1850s until 1860, the Beckwourth Trail experienced heavy traffic. The *Butte Record* accounted “12,000 head of cattle, 700 sheep, 500 horses and mules, and 1,200 emigrants, including 200 families” in November 1854, and many sought refuge at Mountain House.¹⁶ Historian David M. Brown details Mountain House as “among the most important stopping places” on the Beckwourth Trail.¹⁷ Traffic on the Beckwourth Trail started to dwindle by 1855 due to shorter, more well-maintained routes for travelers, such as Henness Pass Road that connected Marysville to the Truckee Meadows in present-day Nevada.

The Creation of the Oroville-Quincy Highway

Historically, the Oroville-Quincy Highway has had various names that include Quincy Road, Bucks Lake Road, American Valley Road, and Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route. Interestingly, its classification as a “highway” has been active since 1857, and therefore is not a 20th century term.¹⁸ The Oroville-Quincy Highway geographically followed the original Beckwourth Trail route connecting the towns of Oroville and Bidwell’s Bar, north through Buck Lake and the American Valley to the town of Quincy in Plumas County. It is theorized the evolution of the Beckwourth Trail into a highway was planned, explaining the immediate crossover in its timeline.¹⁹

The Oroville-Quincy Highway was platted by Butte County surveyor Mr. Scott in 1855 along with two mountaineers, Owen and Pierson, who routed the wagon road as a stage line to Walker’s Plain in Plumas County.²⁰ Stocks were purchased for the wagon road’s construction by Messrs. Singer and Company for the sole purpose of putting in a stage line for passengers who could leave the American Valley in Plumas County in the morning and arrive at Mountain House, approximately 47 miles away, in the evening.²¹ In 1856, the California Stage Company began servicing the road between the community of Oroville and Quincy, which was a 26-mile ride and stages ran consecutively for 24 years.²² The stages were crowded daily, especially to

¹⁴ John E. Dalton. “State Historical Society of Wisconsin—John E. Dalton, Diary, April-October, 1852.” Information given by his Daughter, Mary E. Benton, on October 23, 1926. Accessed October 11, 2018 at <https://www.octa-journals.org/merrill-mattes-collection/diary-john-e-dalton-1852>; Andrew Joanne Hammond. “Beckwourth Trail – Mountain House.” *Following the Beckwourth Trail: A Guide to the 1851 Emigrant Trail and to the Route Markers Placed on Trails West, Inc.*

¹⁵ Emigrants West, Inc. “Beckwourth Trail – Mountain House, B-44.” California Trail Emigrant marker, 2012.

¹⁶ Manfield, *History of Butte County California with Biographical Sketches of the Lading Men and Women of the County Who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, 51.

¹⁷ Brown, *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*, 42.

¹⁸ Brown, *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*, 14.

¹⁹ Brown, *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*, 47.

²⁰ Manfield, *History of Butte County California with Biographical Sketches of the Lading Men and Women of the County Who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, 182.

²¹ Mansfield, *History of Butte County, California: With Biographical Sketches of the Leading Men and Women of the County who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, 183.

²² Harry Laurenz Wells. *History of Butte County California*. 1882:204; Edwin G. Gudde, *Geographical and Historical Dictionary of Camps, Towns, and Localities Where Gold Was Found and Mined*. University of California Press, 2009:227.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Mountain House, as riders traveled to gold mining and lumber towns in the area.²³ E.A. Halstead, a resident of Mountain House in 1867, ran the stage route from Quincy to Reno.²⁴ Stages left the Union Hotel in Oroville around 4 A.M. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and would return on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.²⁵ In the winter, metal snowshoes were put on the horses, which were driven across the snow to pack it down for freighting sleighs.²⁶

As a busy stage route, accidents and stage robberies were frequent. Teamster Philip Hefner worked from Mountain House and records,

...A load of freight, and six horses, and had got part way down the Mountain House hill, which is very steep, when he attempted to put the brake on tighter, but the brake rod suddenly gave way and the loaded wagon was pushed upon the horses, who broke into a run to save themselves.²⁷

The most noteworthy robber in Northern California was the outlaw “Black Bart the P o 8,” who was labeled a “gentleman bandit” because of his style, sophistication, and poetry.²⁸ English-born Charles Earl Bowles, also known as C.E. Boles or Charles Bolton, was a dapperly dressed man in his mid-fifties who stayed in fine establishments. Black Bart’s criminal activities extended through multiple counties from 1875 to 1883 where he robbed 28 Wells Fargo & Company strongboxes, containing over \$18,000, the equivalent to about \$360,000 today. The Berry Creek Sawmill, 10 miles south of Mountain House, was the victim of a Black Bart robbery on July 25, 1878, confirmed by Historian Lee Drummel.²⁹ Because there are many Black Bart fabricated legends, one story is that Black Bart hid in the basement of Mountain House Hotel, which is a good size basement to hide in. The *Oroville Mercury Record* interviewed former Proprietor James W. Grace of the hotel in 1946 who confirmed:

The famous “Black Bart stage hold-up operator who used an unloaded revolver to re-enforce his commands, was a guest at times at the Mountain House hotel, according to Grace. He recalls that on one occasion when a sheriff had Black Bart in custody at the Mountain House, the gentleman stage-robber made his escape from a second-story room by using a rope made of strips of blankets.³⁰

By the twentieth century, automobile travel replaced stagecoaches on the highway and the last stage on the route was in 1911. The Oroville-Quincy Highway became State Route 162 in 1915.³¹ During the 1920s, traffic significantly lessened on the route that was bypassed by U.S.

²³ *Butte Record*, “Road to Plumas County,” May 31, 1856.

²⁴ Brown, *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*, 54; California State Library *Great Registers, 1866-1898*, Collection Number: 4 - 2A; CSL Roll Number: 8; FHL Roll Number: 976454. Accessed September 25, 2018 at www.ancestry.com.

²⁵ Florence Danforth Boyle. “Chapter 189.” *Old Days in Butte: A Glamorous Tale of Butte County*. Compiled and Edited by Robert E. Colby. Chico: University Printing Services, 2006. Provided by property owner, Linda Philips.

²⁶ Boyle, “Chapter 189,” *Old Days in Butte: A Glamorous Tale of Butte County*.

²⁷ *Oroville Mercury*, “Mountain House-Narrow Escape,” May 13, 1881.

²⁸ Blackbart.com. “Charles E. Boles.” Accessed October 24, 2018 at <http://www.blackbart.com/boles.php>.

²⁹ Lee Drummel, “Personal conversation with Corri Jimenez,” July 20, 2018.

³⁰ *Oroville Mercury Record*, “J.W. Grace to Quit W.P. Post June 30,” June 22, 1946. Note, Drummel commented that it was not his *modus operandi*, and he would hide in the woods and literally walk days to another county to commit his next crime.

³¹ [Californiahighways.com](http://www.californiahighways.com). “Chronology of California Highways, Phase II Growth (1915-1932).” Accessed September 23, 2018 at <https://www.cahighways.org/chrphas2.html>.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Highway 40. Mountain House Hotel proprietor, Ludwig Reiss, built a service station on the route in the 1940s and it was in operation for travelers into the 1990s, providing gas to tourists.

Stage Stops of the Oroville-Quincy Highway

Stage stops were prominent resources on the Oroville-Quincy Highway, providing services to passengers, travelers, and residents living in the area. Between Oroville and Quincy, there were twelve known stops on the route that included Rich's Bar/Spanish Ranch (1851), Meadow Valley, Eagle Gulch (1854), Buck's Ranch (1854), French Hotel, Palmetto Rancho (1851), Buckeye Rancho (1851), Pea-vine Creek/Merrimac (1852), Berry Creek (1851), Wild Yankee Rancho (1851), Jack's Ranch (1852), and Mountain House (1850), which was the earliest of the establishments.³² Some of these stops, like Mountain House, developed into small communities and included a complex of structures, providing comfort, accommodations, and provisions for long-distance travelers. Many of these places provided a variety of services, such as blacksmithing and wagon maintenance, toll collection, lodging, and dining, as well as office space for stage/freight companies.³³

Mountain House as a stop was no exception and developed into a small community between Berry Creek and Merrimac, supporting transportation, mining, logging, and agricultural industries in this area off Oroville-Quincy Highway. In addition, it had commerce, mail service, staging, as well as a polling location for elections. Teamsters and blacksmiths lived in the area, recorded in U.S. Census records and California Voter Registers from 1866 to 1911. In 1878, Teamster Charles Edwin Sevey was recorded as a stagecoach driver living in Mountain House who ran a route from Oroville to Buckeye House.

Between 1901 and 1904, two stops, the Merrimac Hotel and Berry Creek Hotel on the Oroville-Quincy Highway, burned leaving the Mountain House Hotel as the last standing stagecoach stop on the road (see **Figure 5**).³⁴ The last stage from Mountain House left in 1911, but under the ownership of Ludwig Reiss, Mountain House continued to service loggers working in the forest and cowboys driving cattle down the mountain, as well as automobile tourists.³⁵

Criterion A: Exploration/Settlement

The Community of Mountain House

The early historical record of Mountain House is spotty between 1850-1855, which has been summarized as part of the above transportation history. Butte County pioneers Robert Smith and his wife Emily Ann Rucker are recorded to have owned the property in 1851, valued at \$300. Between 1854-55, the Smiths sold the property known as "Mountain House Claim" to H.P. Ladd who made \$3,000 worth of improvements. Because the improvement cost was so high, it is

³² Jack J. Hunt. "History of Lake Madrone." Accessed June 17, 2018 at <https://nanopdf.com/download/the-history-of-lake-madrone.pdf>.

³³ Donald Hardesty and Barbara Little. *Assessing Site Significance*, Reno, University of Nevada Press, 2009, 114-115.

³⁴ *Butte Record*, "Hotel Burned," February 27, 1901; *Butte Record*, "Berry Creek House Burned Saturday," December 19, 1904.

³⁵ Robert D. Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond: A History of Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*. Edited by Nancy Brower. Aurora, Colorado: Accu Press, 2012, 234; Michael Schredl. "Chapter 18-Mountain Home: Tante Tillie and Onkel Louie Reiss." *Encyclopedia Schredl: A Dynamic History of the Schredl Family*. Vol. 4, 215-243. Document provided by property owner, Linda Phillips.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

believed it may have been applied for the construction of the original hotel. John H. Bradley & Company acquired a business license in Mountain House in 1854 to sell groceries and merchandise for travelers on the Beckwourth Trail, which is believed to have operated first out of the hotel, moving in c. 1865 to the extant grocery store/post office building.

In April 1856, Ladd sold the property to Elijah Star (E.S.) Ruggles for \$8,500.³⁶ Ruggles (1811-1891) moved into the Mountain House Hotel in early 1853 with his wife Laura England and their two-year old daughter, Emma. Ruggles' investment on the Oroville-Quincy Highway was situated between two major stage stops, Hart's Mill to the north and Berry Creek to the south.³⁷ As a successful businessman and proprietor, Ruggles owned 160 acres that included the two-story hotel, a large vegetable garden and orchard, and farm animals, which were all sold in the adjacent grocery store to travelers on the route.³⁸ On March 12, 1856, the first postmaster, D.G. Martin, was appointed for Mountain House, and by May, stagecoaches were running regularly up to the community.³⁹ During its early period, the Mountain House community was also established as a polling location for local elections, and nearly 100 men voted against the county seat move from Bidwell Bar to Ophir (now Oroville), 92 to 2 votes.⁴⁰

In 1858, the property was worth \$1,000, and Ruggles made \$3,500 worth of improvements to it and had \$600 worth of furniture in the hotel. An advertisement in the *Weekly Butte Record* recorded the Mountain House Hotel and its accommodations:

This well known stand situated fifteen miles from Bidwell's Bar, on the American Valley Road, has lately been thoroughly repaired. All the rooms are finished with plaster and furnished with the best of beds. The table as good as the best. The bar furnished with the best liquors the country affords. The stable is large and commodious, and always furnished with the best of hay and grain, and careful attendants. As a summer resort, the location cannot be excelled in the country. The undersigned would return his grateful acknowledgements for past favors, and solicit a share of patronage for the future. Prices: single meals 75 cents. Lodging, per night, 50 cents, 75 cents, & 1.00. Board and lodging per week, according to the room, \$10, \$12, & \$15. E.S. Ruggles, proprietor, Mountain House.⁴¹

Contemporary with this advertisement, the 1860 U.S. Census recorded there were 14 people living in the hotel, which included Ruggles, his wife Laura, and their five children, along with seven boarders who worked as miners. Ruggles' hotel is depicted in a c.1860 photograph, the earliest image of the hotel (see **Figure 7**).

In 1865, postmaster J. Jod moved Mountain House's post office from inside the hotel into the adjacent store and was the "last post office in Butte County on the road to Quincy."⁴² The population at Mountain House boomed to over 69 people by 1867 when the *Butte Record*

³⁶ Butte County Assessor Office. Butte County Records, Book B, 90.

³⁷ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond: A History of Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 232.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *Butte Record*, March 12, 1856:2.

⁴⁰ *Butte Record*, April 26, 1856; Manfield, *History of Butte County California with Biographical Sketches of the Lading Men and Women of the County Who have been Identified with its Growth and Development from the Early Days to the Present*, 97. Note, the county seat officially moved to Oroville in 1882 when Bidwell's Bar had 200 people.

⁴¹ *Weekly Butte Record*, "Mountain House No. 1." September 3, 1859.

⁴² Jamie Moore, Plumas National Forest District Archeologist. "Email to Linda Phillips," 2015

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

reported, it “is very well located for those who would wish to spend a few months breathing the pure, fresh mountain air, instead of ‘trying to breathe’ the heated atmosphere of some of the lower cities in the valley.”⁴³ Ruggles threw elaborate parties and dances for his hotel guests and the community that typically led them to stay the night. The parties were recorded as the “grandest affair I have ever witnessed...the spacious hall, 76x43 feet, was crowded to overflowing with brave men and women.”⁴⁴ The reference to the hall is a rare look into the accommodations that existed in the hotel, and provides a picture into the social activity of the community.

On December 10, 1870, Ruggles sold his 160-acre property to Laughlin McRose for \$2,000 who called it the “Mountain House Ranch” in its deed. McRose turned around and resold the property in October 1872 to business partners Robert P. Grace and John Nelson Douglas for \$3,500. Grace (1837-1916) was born in Toronto, Canada, and came to California in 1862 where he struck it rich as a hydraulic miner at Rich’s Bar in Butte County’s Feather River Canyon and Plumas County’s Spanish Ranch. In July 1875, Grace bought out his partner for \$1,600 and managed the “ranch.” At that time, there were over 90 people living in the Mountain House community who worked as gardeners, butchers, farmers, and merchants. Produce and supplies were delivered from the Mountain House grocery store via six to ten pack animals to the local mining districts on French Creek and Middle Fork of Feather River.⁴⁵

As proprietor, Grace managed the hotel and boarding house, and was joined by his son John E. Grace who clerked for him as a bookkeeper. Two of Grace’s other sons, James W. and Walter R., joined their father and assisted as teachers in Mountain House’s one-room school, located approximately 7 miles south of the community. Since the 1880s, a number of families had settled in Mountain House, and the school was built in 1882 to serve the Mountain House School District. The school ran on eight-month terms, and hosted events for the community.⁴⁶ The one-room schoolhouse was used into the late-1930s and still stands in the town of Berry Creek.

Fire at the Mountain House Hotel

Like most rural communities in the West, fire is the biggest threat and Mountain House was not spared. On the morning of July 10, 1899, a kitchen fire sparked in the hotel, which was reported in the *Butte Record*,

Mountain House Destroyed—On Saturday morning at 1 o’clock, Miss Lorena Grace and Miss Sexton, who were sleeping in the same room at Mountain House on the Quincy Road, were awakened by fire. They looked out of the window and it seemed to them as if the whole house was on fire.

Their screams awakened other sleepers, including Miss Bendle, Miss Leona Grace, Mr. Sexton and a young man named W. Harley, and these in bed out of doors as quickly as possible.

When Mr. Harley got to the foot of the stairs through the dense smoke, he found that Walter Grace was missing, so he ran back up stairs and awakened Walter and helped him down stairs, for he was nearly suffocated by smoke. The two then got into the store and took out some of the accountant books, but could not save anything else.

⁴³ *Butte Record*, May 20 1865:3.

⁴⁴ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond--History of the Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 232.

⁴⁵ *Butte Record*, “Brush Creek Items,” July 29, 1898; *Oroville Mercury Record*, “J.W. Grace to Quit W.P. Post June 30,” June 22, 1946.

⁴⁶ *Weekly Oroville Mercury*, “Items from Brush Creek,” June 22, 1883.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Mr. Harley says the fire evidently started from the kitchen, but one of the young ladies who was in the kitchen at 7 o'clock says there was no fire in the stove at that hour.

The hotel was a large, commodious structure, and in one part of it was the store of Grace Bros. The loss is between \$7,000 and \$9,000, with an insurance of less than \$3,000.

The building was owned by R.P. Grace and was one of the noted summer hotels of the mountain.⁴⁷

Although there were no population numbers for this specific year, it is known there were around 60 men living in Mountain House, made up of mostly of miners, lumbermen, and laborers.⁴⁸ These individuals assisted in both putting out the hotel's fire and repairing the damages. The physical repairs made to the hotel included replacing the horizontal siding with wood clapboards, and 6/6 wood windows with 1/1 wood sash windows, as well as adding an addition to the west elevation. The interior of the building was also modified, however, no interior photos exist. Despite these changes, the original roof pitch was retained along with older 4-panel wood doors.

The *Butte Record* recorded twelve days later, "the store will be in a structure separate from the hotel in order to reduce insurance on the property."⁴⁹ It is believed that the store moved into the adjacent Post Office building at this time (see **Figures 8-9**). On August 16, 1899, the *Butte Record* reported the "Grace Brothers [R.P. and J.W.] were pushing the work on their buildings and will be ready to move about the 23rd." After only two months, the hotel reopened in September. The fire and repairs to the hotel did not impact the Mountain House community, and by the turn of the year, over 100 people lived and worked in Mountain House, which was a bustling stage stop, according to the 1900 U.S. Census.

Industries at Mountain House

Mining, logging, and agriculture were some of the biggest industries in the Mountain House community and miners as well as loggers traveled regularly to operations north in Merrimac and as far south as Berry Creek. These industries employed as many as 150 people who lived in the Mountain House vicinity from the 1860s into the 1940s. The U.S. Census records and California Voter Registers for Butte County also recorded a variety of merchants, including a druggist, hatter, laundress, and butchers.

Extensive mining activities began near Berry Creek, less than 10 miles south, which brought settlers to the area and prompted the first post office to be set up at Mountain House on May 26, 1855 in the hotel.⁵⁰ In 1856, H.D. Lindsey and Peter La Page owned a ranch a short distance from Mountain House and mined "a specimen worth fifty dollars and forty five dollars in gold dust-the result of two hours labor."⁵¹ The Plumas Ditch distributed water from Gold Lake and Silver Lake in Plumas County south to Mountain House, providing needed water for mining operations in the area.⁵² Like most waterways in Butte County, Mountain House Creek developed as a mining claim as early as 1862 for placer miners and operated up until 1949.

⁴⁷ *Butte Record*, "Mountain House Destroyed," July 10, 1899.

⁴⁸ California State Library *Great Registers, 1866-1898*. Accessed September 25, 2018 at www.ancestry.com.

⁴⁹ *Butte Record*, "Mountain House will be rebuilt," July 22, 1899.

⁵⁰ *Butte Record*, "Bidwell, Important Mail Route," May 26, 1855; Hunt. "History of Lake Madrone."

⁵¹ *Butte Record*, "Rich Diggings," March 1, 1856.

⁵² Brown, *The Oroville-Quincy Ridge Route: Development, Eclipse and Renewal of a Transportation Artery*, 47.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Quartz mines in the area included Graber Quartz Mine and Iroquois Quartz Mine. Mountain House lodged many miners at the hotel as a boarding house (**Figure 6**).⁵³

In addition to gold and quartz mining in the vicinity, lumber companies operated in this area. For example, Bavarian-born George Gable lived three miles west of Mountain House and owned a logging operation from 1892 to 1926.⁵⁴ Lumber investment improved the Oroville-Quincy Highway between Bidwell's Bar and Berry Creek, which included Mountain House, making it "one of the best mountain roads in the state"⁵⁵ After the creation of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905, Plumas National Forest was formed and lumber operations were a significant enterprise along Oroville-Quincy Highway. Brush Creek became a forest district and a Civilian Conservation Corps camp worked the area between 1933-1941. After World War II, logging companies continued to work the area in the 1950s from sunrise to sunset. Cabins were built on Mountain House Circle, a road that goes around Mountain House, by proprietor Ludwig Reiss to accommodate loggers felling trees in the area.

Besides logging and mining, agriculture was an important business in Mountain House. An apple orchard was first planted by hotel proprietor Elijah S. Ruggles on his 160-acre parcel, as recorded in an 1860 Agriculture Census.⁵⁶ In the 1870s, farmers in Mountain House supplied groceries and other products that were sold on the premises or used by Ruggles for hotel guests. Mountain House's later hotel proprietor, Robert P. Grace, enlarged the orchard and planted 149 apple trees and 75 peach trees on 6 acres, as well as raised 28 cattle, 3 milk cows, and 50 hogs. Judge Dodge lived in the community of Mountain House and accounted his own agricultural inventory in 1877:

Since that time I have added to the stock till the orchard now contains about 75 apple trees, 50 peach trees, ten pear, twelve plum, locust, fig, choke-cherry, besides a large patch of blackberry, raspberry, currant and gooseberry plants. Only a few of the apple trees are bearing yet, but from ten or twelve trees I had 2,000 pounds or more splendid apples.... Of small fruits I generally sell from \$50 to \$100 per annum. I have only about three acres under fence, and the part actually cultivated for a garden does not exceed half an acre. From this I raised two tons of beets, one ton of carrots, one ton of rutabaga turnips, 500 pounds of parsnips and half a ton of cabbage and cauliflower, besides corn, beans, potatoes, squashes and pumpkins, of which we have a ton quantity. We also have plenty of grapes for our own use and some to sell besides one ton of grain hay raised in the orchard.⁵⁷

The amount of fruits and vegetables grown in the community was abundant and exported up and down the Oroville-Quincy Highway. During this period, James W. Grace, Robert Grace's son, remembers pack animals and packers delivered product to residents in the area. Such items included a variety of vegetables and "50 varieties of apples [from] a fine orchard of 400 trees."⁵⁸ In an 1893 *Oroville Weekly Record* article,

⁵³ Britton & Rey. "Official map of the county of Butte, California." San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1886. Accessed August 20, 2018 <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4363b.la000015/?r=0.304,0.487,0.665,0.321,0>. Note, the two trapezoidal shapes located south of Mountain House are speculated to be mining claims.

⁵⁴ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond: A History of Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 236.

⁵⁵ *Butte Record*, "Bidwell, Important Mail Route," May 26, 1855; *Butte Record*, "Wagon Road," June 16, 1855.

⁵⁶ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond: A History of Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 232.

⁵⁷ *Oroville Weekly Mercury*, "Mountain Ranches," December 23, 1877:2.

⁵⁸ *Oroville Weekly Record*, "Mountain House Ridge," February 4, 1892.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

For early apples he [Clark] considers the Sweet Bough and Early Harvest preferable, for fall there is none finer than the Gravenstein while for winter the Northern Spy and Ben Davis are the very best...he estimates the number of apple trees in the vicinity at 2,500 of which 1,250 are in fruit-bearing. These will yield this season 800 pound per tree or 1,000,000 pounds.⁵⁹

These apple varieties ranged from common to uncommon. Introduced in 1800 in Kentucky, "Ben Davis" apples are "keeper" apples, meaning they keep well for months after picked in October.⁶⁰ Ben Davis apples were a dominant fruit from the Civil War into the early 1900s, and were seen as the "Red Delicious" of the 19th century American South until it fell out of favor in World War I. These apples were described in a 1911 catalogue as "very popular with hotel keepers," according to apple historian Rowan Jacobsen.⁶¹ "Gravenstein" apples were summer apples that originated in Denmark. They were brought to Sonoma County in 1812 by Russian settlers.⁶² "Northern Spy" apples were introduced in 1800 in New York and were/are known as "Northern Pie" apples because they made good pies.⁶³ The "Sweet Bough" apple, introduced in 1817, is an old variety of an American apple that was well-distributed and considered too sweet for pies but excellent for shipping, and is a rare apple to California.⁶⁴

In addition to apples, "several varieties of prunes" that had "excellent growth and bear heavily."⁶⁵ Clark mentioned prunes, peaches, apricots, and small fruits, such as raspberries, blackberries, currants, strawberries, and gooseberries, were prevalent in Mountain House and at the hotel's own orchard

Mountain Home

On December 9, 1907, Robert P. Grace sold his property to his son James W. Grace for \$10.00, although it was managed by his younger brother John Emmett Grace. In the 1940s, Ludwig Johannes Reiss purchased 30 acres of Mountain House, which included the core buildings of the community (see **Figure 11**). Reiss, born in Germany on December 9, 1897, was a veteran of World War I prior to coming to the United States in 1921.⁶⁶ He and his wife Matilda (Tillie) Bertha managed the Mountain House Hotel, now known as Mountain Home into the 1990s.

The Reisses improved their property as an auto stop destination on Oroville-Quincy Highway/State Route 162 between 1944 and 1945. Reiss remodeled the hotel and its grounds with the assistance of his friend Gene Kley, modernizing the old stagecoach stop (see **Figure 12-15**).⁶⁷ The hotel since its construction had no electricity and a gas generator was installed to electrify the downstairs. A nephew to Reiss, who spent summers at Mountain House recalled,

The bedrooms were upstairs and the stairway had a landing halfway up and then went at the right angle to the left. Upstairs was a hallway and all the bedroom doors were to the right.

⁵⁹ *Oroville Weekly Record*, "Fruit Locality," September 21, 1893.

⁶⁰ Jacobsen, Rowan. *Apples of Uncommon Character: 123 Heirlooms, Modern Classics, & Little-Known Wonders*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014: 171.

⁶¹ Jacobsen, *Apples of Uncommon Character: 123 Heirlooms, Modern Classics, & Little-Known Wonders*, 179.

⁶² Jacobsen, *Apples of Uncommon Character: 123 Heirlooms, Modern Classics, & Little-Known Wonders*, 22.

⁶³ Jacobsen, *Apples of Uncommon Character: 123 Heirlooms, Modern Classics, & Little-Known Wonders*, 143.

⁶⁴ Jennifer Kennedy, Apple Historian. "Personal Communication with Corri Jimenez," October 25, 2018.

⁶⁶ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond--History of the Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 234.

⁶⁶ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond--History of the Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 234.

⁶⁷ Schredl, "Chapter 18-Mountain Home: Tante Tillie and Onkel Louie Reiss." *Encyclopedia Schredl: A Dynamic History of the Schredl Family*, 217.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Several oil lanterns were mounted on the left side wall, which was the only source of lighting.

For obvious safety reasons, the lamps were firmly affixed to the wall.⁶⁸

The hotel also had no telephone service and calls were made from a phone booth in Berry Creek.⁶⁹ Since the Reisses were German, Tillie prepared German meals for guests. A store was located on the first floor of the hotel for visitors.

Besides the improvements in the hotel, Reiss built five cabins and a gas station in 1944. The cabins were rented out in the summer months to loggers working at sawmills in the area as well as visitors needing a place to stay.⁷⁰ A gas service station was added to State Route 162 for the convenience of travelers, pumped by Reiss. He also built a trout pond and fingerling pond for visitors who “paid to catch” for a nickel or quarter. The fish could be cooked on site by Mrs. Reiss.⁷¹ In addition, a walk-in chicken coop was built sometime in the 1940s as well as a swimming pool for guests and corral for ranchers who took their cattle up and down the mountain for grazing. The latter two features are no longer extant. The property had a large garden and every morning Reiss would milk cows that would be churned into butter.

In the 1980s, Mountain House was certified on the Register of Historic California Businesses, a California Historical Society program that appears to no longer exist, as one of the oldest continuously operated businesses in the state.

Conclusion

Mountain House Historic District played a significant role in transportation history on the Beckwourth Trail/Oroville Quincy Highway in Butte County and was a small community on this road as early as the 1850s. The historic district has ten contributing resources and four non-contributing resources within an approximately 12-acre National Register boundary. The historic district is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance to Butte County and has a period of significance that dates to 1854-1945 that outlines the construction dates of period resources.

As a way station on a well-traveled emigrant trail, stagecoach route, and highway, the Mountain House Historic District was a stage stop on both the Beckwourth Trail (1851-1855) and Oroville-Quincy Highway (1855-1911). Mountain House also developed into a small community, a hub for emigrants traveling west into the Sacramento Valley and supporting industries situated near this major thoroughfare.

The Mountain House Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance to Butte County under Criterion A for its importance to transportation and settlement between 1854-1945.

⁶⁸ Schredl, “Chapter 18- Mountain Home: Tante Tilly and Onkel Louie Reiss. *Encyclopedia Schredl: A Dynamic History of the Schredrel Family*, 230.

⁶⁹ Schredl, “Chapter 18- Mountain Home: Tante Tilly and Onkel Louie Reiss. *Encyclopedia Schredl: A Dynamic History of the Schredrel Family*, 218.

⁷⁰ Schredl, “Chapter 18- Mountain Home: Tante Tilly and Onkel Louie Reiss. *Encyclopedia Schredl: A Dynamic History of the Schredrel Family*, 229.

⁷¹ Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond--History of the Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*, 234.

Mountain House Historic District

Name of Property

Butte Co., California

County and State

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Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

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Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ 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 # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University: California State University, Chico
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: California Historical Resource Information Center, Chico; Butte County Historical Society; Butte County Courthouse, Oroville; Property owner, Linda Philips

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): In California, "Mountain House Meadow" has a Primary No. 04-003148 and Trinomial No. CA-BUT-3148H. The site also has a Forest Service No. FS 05-11-54774 with the Plumas National Forest.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 10.4

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 39.70652 | Longitude: -121.32408 |
| 2. Latitude: 39.70658 | Longitude: -121.32311 |
| 3. Latitude: 39.70469 | Longitude: -121.32272 |
| 4. Latitude: 39.70466 | Longitude: -121.32459 |
| 5. Latitude: 39.70535 | Longitude: -121.32622 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Mountain House Historic District (APN 061-330-015) is located at 13465 Oroville-Quincy Highway (State Route 162) in a rural area in Brush Creek, Butte County, California. The property also is set on Township 21 North, Range 6 East, Section 5, Tract 9 on the Mount Diablo Meridian. The privately owned property is an 18-acre parcel and has multiple historic and non-historic period resources. The state route divides the parcel on east-west axis, which is a Caltrans resource.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Mountain House Historic District National Register Boundary is an approximately 12-acre parcel that includes 10 historic-period contributing resources and 4 non-contributing resources (see **Figure 2**). The boundaries include the historic community of Mountain House located on the north side of the state route, a service station on the south side of the road, and a historic orchard plus three fishing ponds all on the south side of road. Many leased cabins were excluded from the boundary with concentrating set on the historic settlement.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Corri Jimenez, M.S., Architectural Historian/Historic Preservation Consultant
Organization: Independent Consultant
Street & number: P.O. Box 580
City or town: Tahoe City State: California Zip code: 96145
E-mail: Corri_Jimenez@yahoo.com
Telephone: (408) 710-2894 Date: January 25, 2019

Mountain House Historic District

Name of Property

Butte Co., California

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and does not need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mountain House Historic District

City or Vicinity: Mountain House

County: Butte

State: California

Photographer: Corri Jimenez

Date Photographed: October 13, 2018

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_001
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Overview, looking southwest
- Photo 2 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_002
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel, looking northwest
- Photo 3 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_003
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel, looking southeast
- Photo 4 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_004
Interior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel, looking west
- Photo 5 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_005
Interior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel window, looking south
- Photo 6 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_006
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Grocery Store/Post Office, looking northeast
- Photo 7 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_007

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

Interior view, Mountain House Historic District, Grocery Store/Post Office, looking northeast

- Photo 8 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_008
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Barn, looking northeast
- Photo 9 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_009
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Apple tree in orchard, looking north
- Photo 10 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_010
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Water Trough, looking north
- Photo 11 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_011
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Service Station, looking southwest
- Photo 12 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_012
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Fish Pond and Dock, looking southwest
- Photo 13 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_013
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Barn Ruin, looking east
- Photo 14 of 14:** CA_ButteCounty_MountainHouseHD_014
Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Chicken Coop, looking northeast

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

List of Figures

(Resize, compact, and paste images of maps and historic documents in this section. Place captions, with figure numbers above each image. Orient maps so that north is at the top of the page, all documents should be inserted with the top toward the top of the page).

- Figure 1:** Mountain House, Location Map
- Figure 2:** Mountain House Historic District National Register Boundary
- Figure 3:** Mountain House Hotel, Floor Plans
- Figure 4:** Beckwourth Trail, 1850-1860
- Figure 5:** Oroville-Quincy Highway Between Mountain House & Berry Creek House, 1895
- Figure 6:** Mountain House to Berry Creek, 1880s
- Figure 7:** Mountain House Hotel, c.1860
- Figure 8:** Mountain House Hotel, c.1881
- Figure 9:** Mountain House Hotel, c.1890
- Figure 10:** Mountain House Hotel, 1895
- Figure 11:** Mountain House Hotel, c.1940s
- Figure 12:** Mountain House Hotel, c.1950s
- Figure 13:** Mountain House Hotel, 1960s
- Figure 14:** Mountain House Hotel, 1963
- Figure 15:** Mountain House Hotel, Postcard
- Figure 16:** National Register district boundary with points indicated in decimal degrees

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 1. MOUNTAIN HOUSE, LOCATION MAP

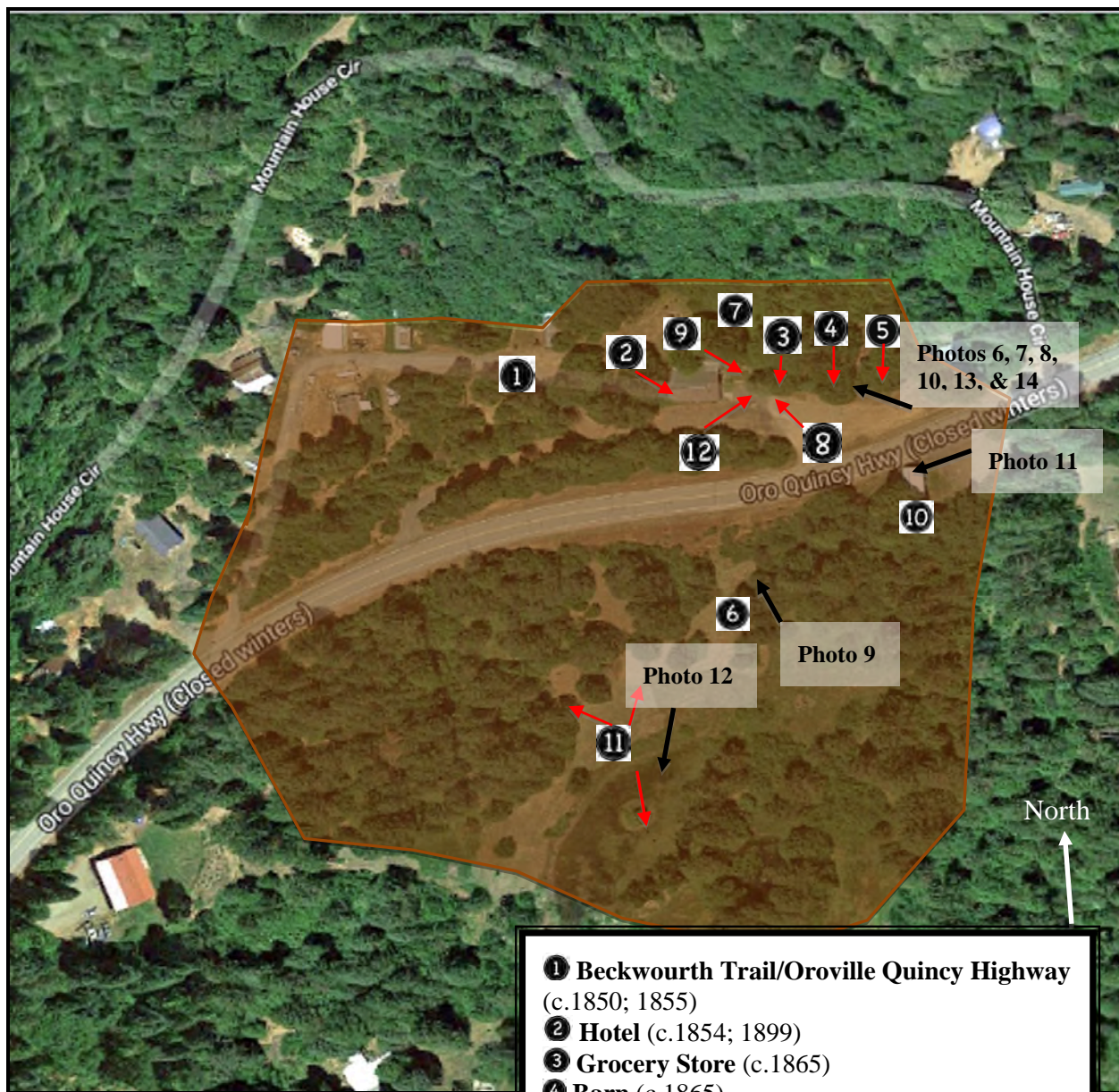


Source: Google Map.com.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 2. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HISTORIC DISTRICT NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY



Source: Google Map.com.

- ① Beckwourth Trail/Oroville Quincy Highway (c.1850; 1855)
- ② Hotel (c.1854; 1899)
- ③ Grocery Store (c.1865)
- ④ Barn (c.1865)
- ⑤ Barn Ruin (c.1865)
- ⑥ Historic Orchard (c.1865; c.1890s)
- ⑦ Smokehouse (1935)
- ⑧ Horse Trough (c.1940)
- ⑨ Chicken Coop (c.1940)
- ⑩ Service Station (c.1944)
- ⑪ Fish Ponds (c.1944)
- ⑫ Trail Maker (2012)

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 4. BECKWOURTH TRAIL, 1850-1860

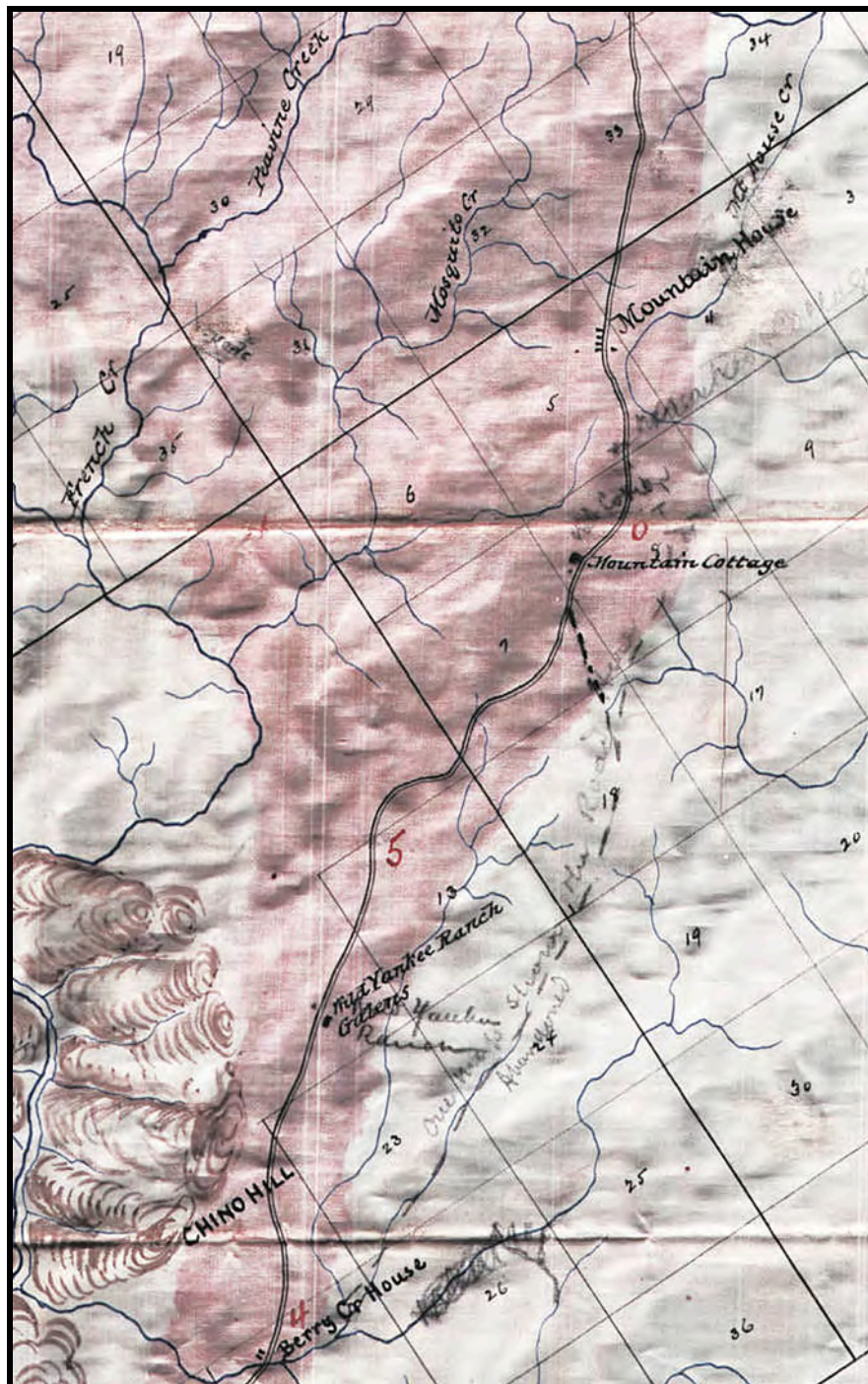


Source: California-Nevada Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association. "Beckwourth Trail Map," Accessed November 13, 2018 at <http://canvoca.org/emigrant-trails-of-nevada-and-california/beckwourth-trail/>.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 5. OROVILLE-QUINCY HIGHWAY BETWEEN MOUNTAIN HOUSE & BERRY CREEK HOUSE, 1895



Source: California State University, Chico. "Oroville to Buckeye," Historical Map Collection, Meriam Library. Accessed November 13, 2018 at <http://archives.csuchico.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/coll19/id/181/rec/13>.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 6. MOUNTAIN HOUSE MINING, 1880s



Source: A.W. Keddle, Survey General's Office, San Francisco, California. "Township North 21, Range No. 6 East, Diablo Meridian." June 15, 1871. Accessed November 13, 2018 at https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm_id=292644&sid=xvswtqkg.tv5&surveyDetailsTabIndex=1. Note, the quartz mining located near Mountain House Creek.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 7. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, c.1860



Source: Sidney A. Leube. "A Study of that part of the Beckwourth Trail known as the Merrimac Stage Route." A paper presented to Mr., Division of Social Science Oroville Union High School from John Rowe December 1959. Located in the Oroville Library (cr979.432r). Image provided to property owner, Linda Philips.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 8. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, c.1881

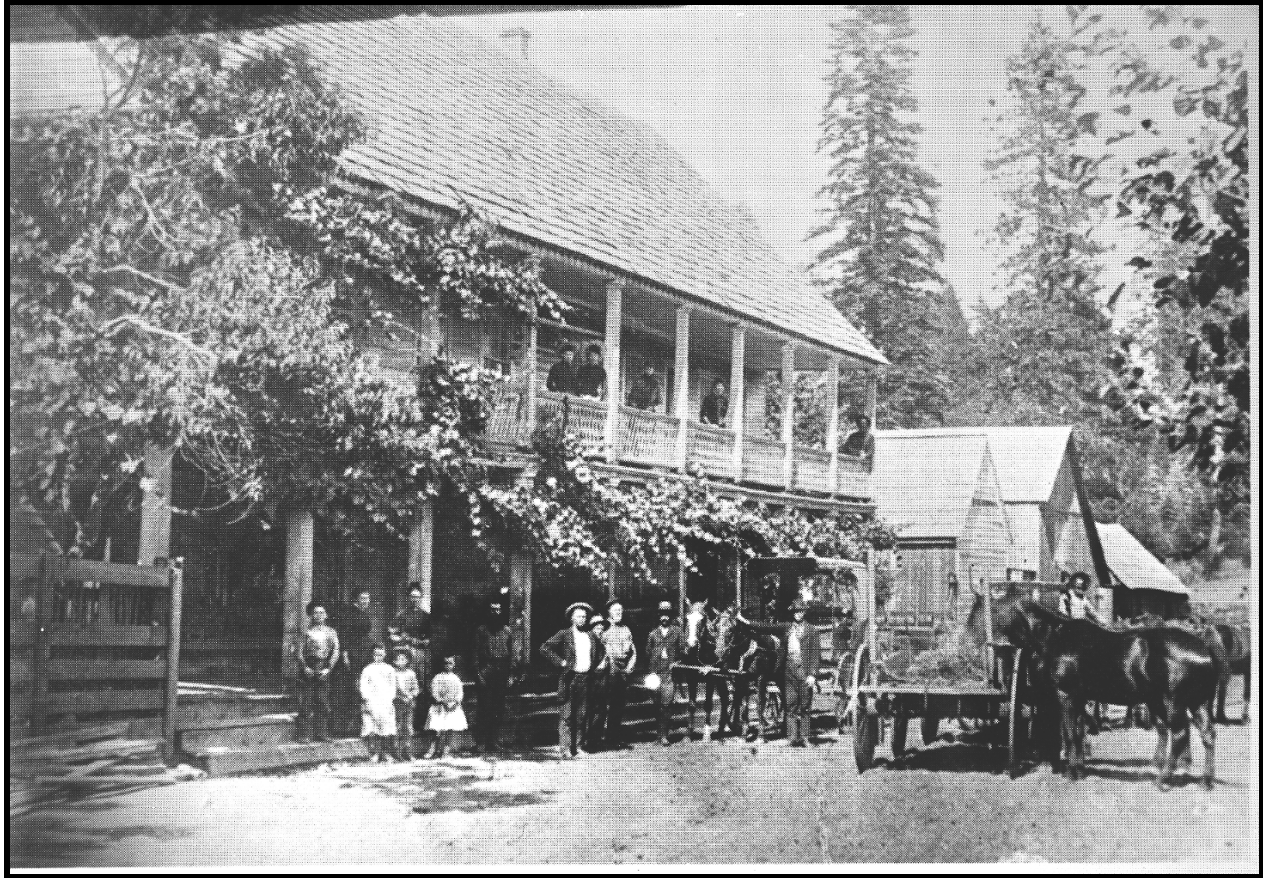


Source: Robert D. Richardson, *Bidwell Bar & Beyond: A History of Families from Bidwell Bar to Buckeye, 1850-1950*. Edited by Nancy Brower. Aurora, Colorado: Accu Press, 4.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 9. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, c.1890

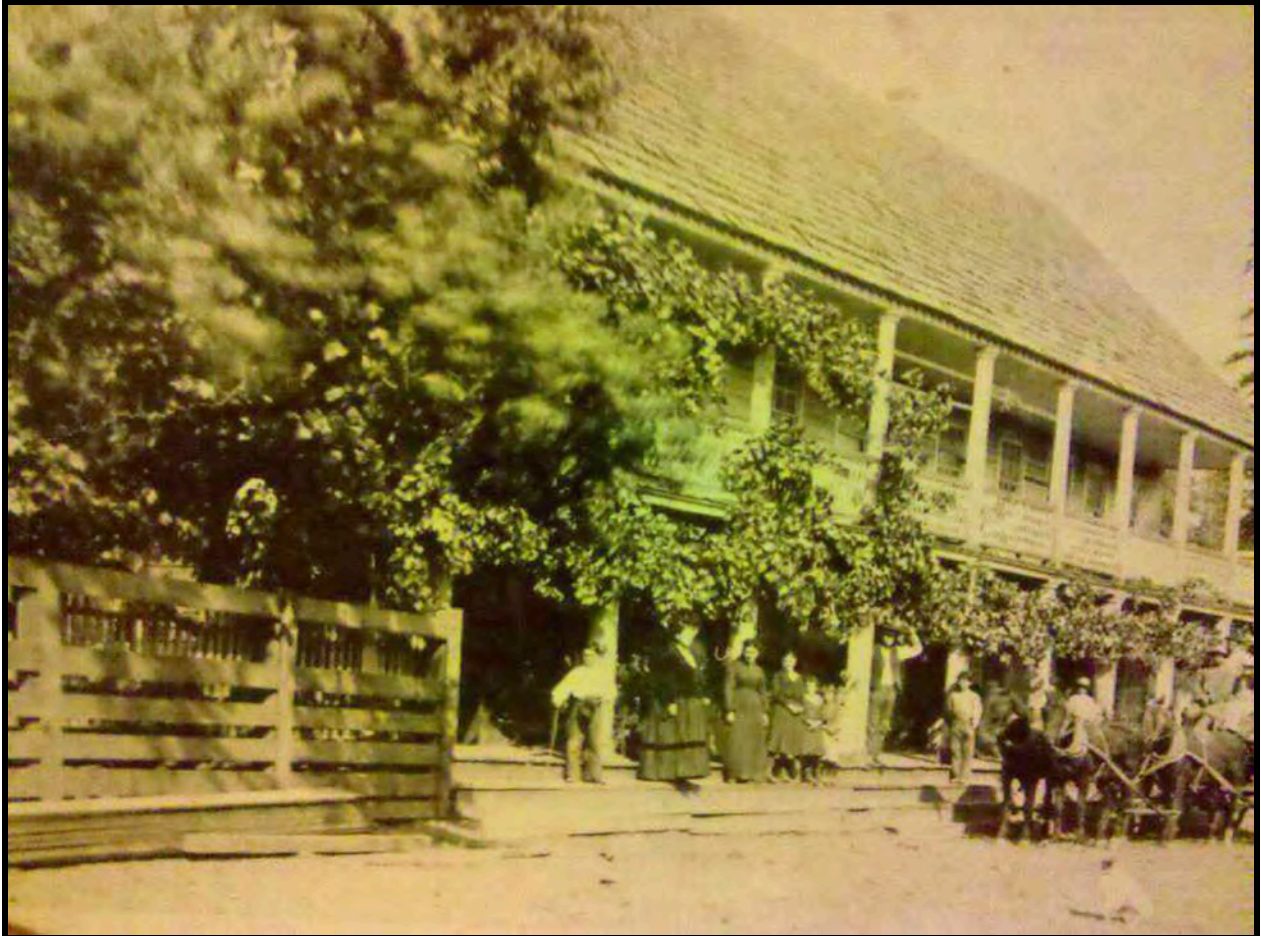


Source: Butte County Historical Society, *DIGGIN'S*. Summer 1959, Volume 3, number 2. Note: the caption reads, "This was the site of another well-known travelers' stopping place. The old Mountain House burned in the late 1890's. The contemporary building follows in style similar to the old house. The large grape vine across the front of the building is at least 103 years old. The out-buildings beyond Mountain House are much older than the main building."

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 10. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, 1895



Source: Facebook Group, "Butte County Photographs & Information," Posted on September 24, 2015; and California State University, Chico. "Mountain House Stage Stop," John Nobel Photograph Collection. Accessed November 13, 2018 at <http://archives.csuchico.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/coll10/id/2101/rec/24>.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 11. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, c.1940s



Source: Michael Schredl. "Chapter 18-Mountain Home: Tante Tillie and Onkel Louie Reiss." *Encyclopedia Schredl: A Dynamic History of the Schredl Family.* Vol. 4, 218. Information provided by author to property owner, Linda Philips.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 12. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, c.1950s



Source: California State University, Chico. "Mountain House, c.1950." Northeastern California Historic Photograph Collection, Merriam Library. Accessed November 13, 2018 at <http://archives.csuchico.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/coll11/id/3742/rec/16>.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 13. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, 1960s

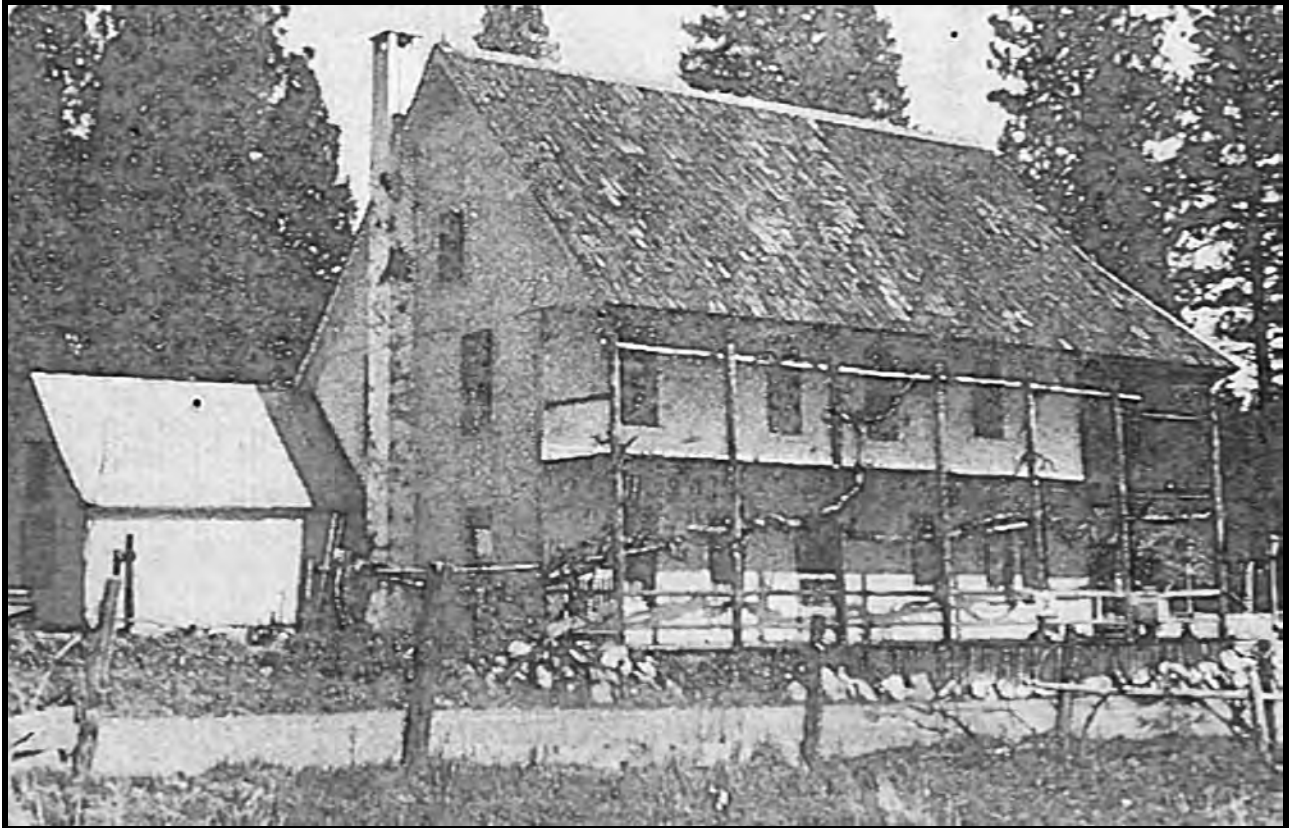


Source: California State University, Chico. "Old Mountain House Stage Station." Photographer, John Clark Hunt. John Nobel Photograph Collection, Merriam Library. Accessed November 13, 2018 at <http://archives.csuchico.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/coll10/id/2113/rec/8>.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 14. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, 1963

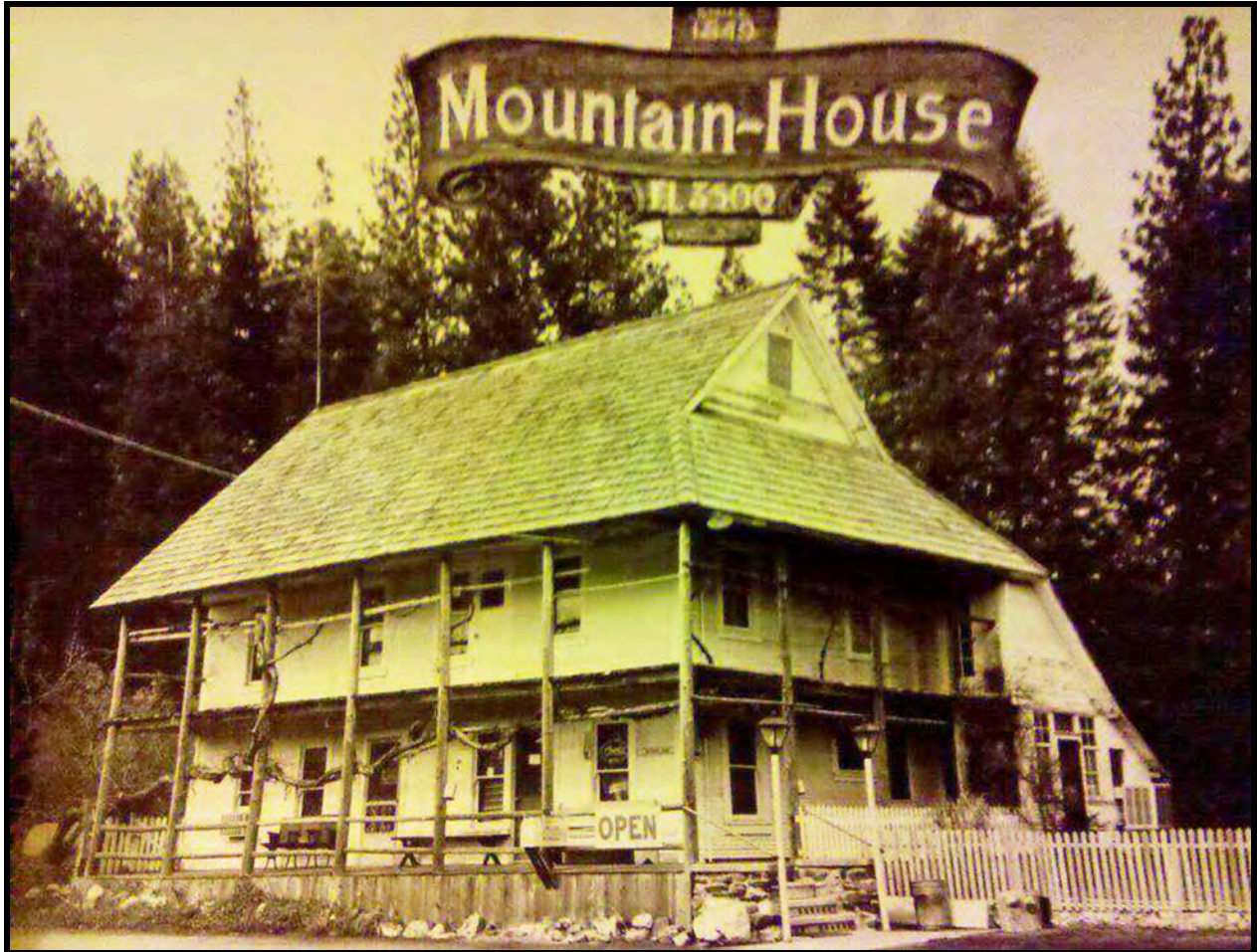


Source: *Sacramento Bee*, "Superior California News," August 21, 1863, C4.

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

FIGURE 15. MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL, POSTCARD



Source: Facebook Group, "Butte County Photographs & Information," Posted on September 24, 2015.

Mountain House Historic District

Butte Co., California

Name of Property

County and State

FIGURE 16. National Register Boundary Map using Google Earth

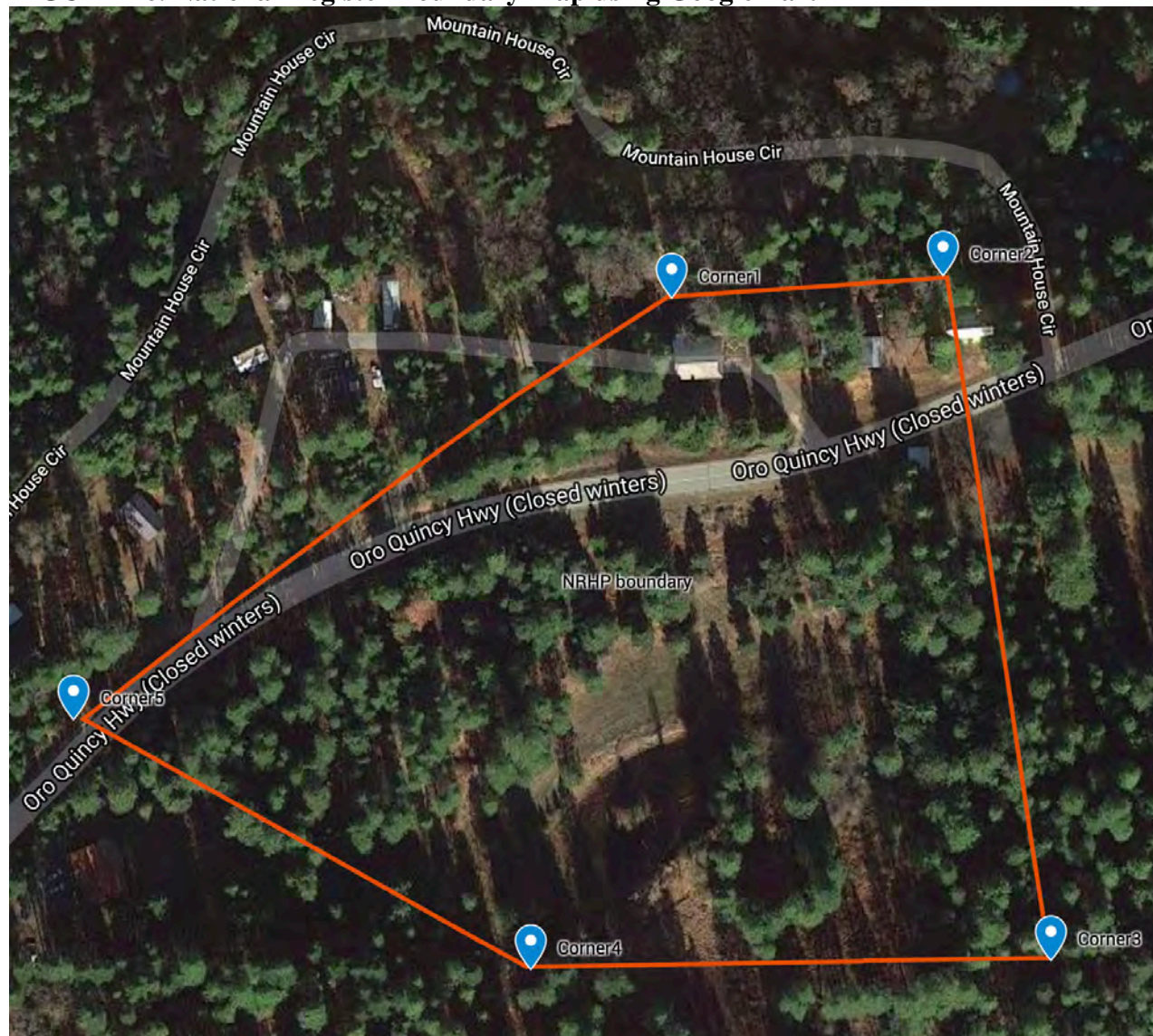


Figure 16 Point Locations

1. Latitude: 39.706641	Longitude: -121.323098
2. Latitude: 39.706647	Longitude: -121.324064
3. Latitude: 39.705441	Longitude: -121.326052
4. Latitude: 39.704550	Longitude: -121.324171
5. Latitude: 39.704734	Longitude: -121.323054

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Overview, looking southwest (Photo by Corri Jimenez).



Photo 2. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel, looking northwest (Photo by Corri Jimenez).

Mountain House Historic District

Name of Property

Butte Co., California

County and State



Photo 3. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel, looking southeast (left); **Photo 4.** Interior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel, looking west (right) (Photo by Corri Jimenez).

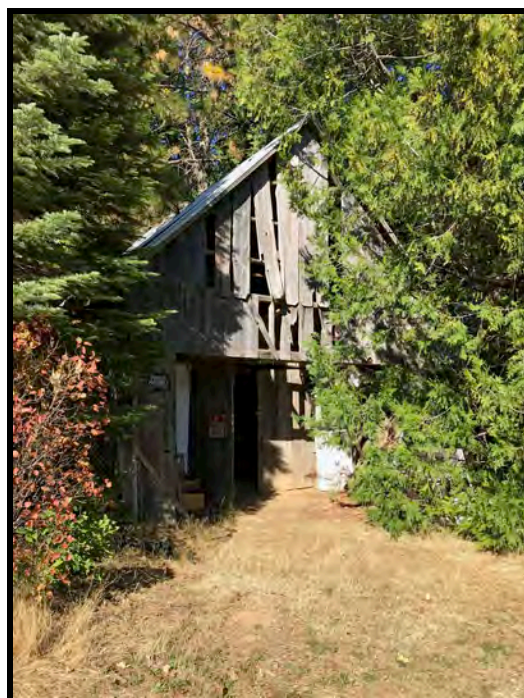


Photo 5. Interior view, Mountain House Historic District, Hotel window, looking south (left); **Photo 6.** Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Grocery Store/Post Office, looking northeast (right) (Photo by Corri Jimenez).

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State



Photo 7. Interior view, Mountain House Historic District, Grocery Store/Post Office, looking northeast (Photo by Corri Jimenez).



Photo 8. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Barn, looking northeast (Photo by Corri Jimenez).

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State



Photo 9. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Historic Orchard, looking north (Photo by Corri Jimenez).



Photo 10. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Water Trough, looking north (Photo by Corri Jimenez).

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State



Photo 11. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Service Station, looking southeast (Photo by Corri Jimenez).



Photo 12. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Fish Pond and dock, looking southeast (Photo by Corri Jimenez).

Mountain House Historic District
Name of Property

Butte Co., California
County and State



Photo 13. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Barn Ruin, looking east (Photo by Corri Jimenez).



Photo 14. Exterior view, Mountain House Historic District, Chicken Coop, looking northeast (Photo by Corri Jimenez).













PRIVATE
PROPERTY

NO
TRESPASSING
PRIVATE
PROPERTY

















NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

Mountain House
Butte County, California
National Register of Historic Places

Mountain House is a district of properties including four buildings, four structures, one object and one site, the surviving elements of the town of Mountain House, located along the Oroville-Quincy Highway (State Route 162) in northeastern Butte County, today a twelve-acre privately owned parcel. Mountain House was a prominent emigrant and stagecoach stop in the 19th Century, with a population varying between ten and 100 residents between 1866 and 1930. The heart of the district is a two-and-one-half story wood-framed hotel, constructed circa 1854, a grocery/store post office, and a barn, both built in approximately 1865. Other contributing resources include a five-acre orchard, service station, horse trough, stone-lined fishing pools, and a segment of the original Beckwourth Trail/Oroville-Quincy highway segment. The newest feature of the district is a service station, built in 1944-45 in a rustic style intended to complement the 19th century vernacular buildings of Mountain House, while providing a useful service for travelers and tourists. Non-contributing features include ruins of a barn, smokehouse and chicken coop, built during the period of significance but lacking sufficient historic integrity, and a trail marker placed in 2012.

The property is eligible under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the areas of Transportation and Exploration/Settlement, with a period of significance of 1854-1945. The period of significance represents the span from original settlement of Mountain House until construction of the gas station in 1944-45. The property served as a way station on a well-traveled emigrant trail, stagecoach route, and highway, becoming a hub for those traveling west, and a destination for vacation travelers as California's population grew and demand for recreation in rustic California settings increased during the 20th Century. The surviving buildings convey their historic significance as remnants of a 19th century frontier community

The property is nominated by a consultant, Corri Jimenez, on behalf of the property owner. No letters of support or objection have been received.

Staff supports the nomination as written and recommends that the State Historical Resources Commission determine Mountain House eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C at the local level of significance, with a period of significance of 1854-1945. Staff recommends the State Historic Preservation Officer approve the nomination for forwarding to the National Park Service for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

William Burg
State Historian II
May 28, 2019



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Lisa Ann L. Mangat, Director

Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95816-7100
Telephone: (916) 445-7000 FAX: (916) 445-7053
calshpo.ohp@parks.ca.gov www.ohp.parks.ca.gov



June 4, 2019

Joy Beasley
Keeper of the National Register
National Register of Historic Places
1849 C St., NW
Room 3316
Washington, D.C. 20240

Subject: **Mountain House**
Mountain House, Butte County, California
National Register of Historic Places

Dear Ms. Beasley:

Enclosed please find the **Mountain House** nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for Mountain House to the National Register of Historic Places. This property is located in Mountain House, Butte County, California. On May 8, 2019, the State Historical Resources Commission unanimously found the property eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance.

The property is nominated by a third party, historian Corri Jimenez, working on behalf of the property owner. No letters of support or objection were received.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact William Burg of my staff at 916-445-7004.

Sincerely,

Julianne Polanco
State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures