

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH030060 DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 3 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 17 1976

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Jose Manuel Ramirez House

AND/OR COMMON

The W. T. Ellis House, "The Castle"

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

220 Fifth Street

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Marysville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

California

\_\_ VICINITY OF  
CODE

06

COUNTY

One

CODE

115

Yuba

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Camille Freel and Lesta Joubert

STREET & NUMBER

220 Fifth Street

CITY, TOWN

Marysville

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

California 95901

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Recorder - Official Records

STREET & NUMBER

215 Fifth Street

CITY, TOWN

Marysville

STATE

California 95901

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California

DATE

1973

\_\_ FEDERAL \_\_ STATE \_\_ COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

David Gebhard, Director of the Art Galleries, Univ. of California

CITY, TOWN

Santa Barbara

STATE

California

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Ramirez House is an outstanding example of Gothic Revival styling, demonstrating the diffusion of architectural preferences and traditions into California during the Gold Rush. The house, constructed 1851-54, is characterized by steep, pointed gables with elaborate wooden bargeboards, a finial at the apex of the gable, and flanking finials and pendants at the corners of the eaves. The high pointed arch of the English Gothic of the Middle Ages characterizes the style, here appearing as a number of pointed lancet windows in the facade. Based upon medieval forms, Gothic Revival architecture ideally was interpreted in stone. The Ramirez House is constructed of brick, plastered over and scored to give the appearance of stone construction.

Comparison with a lithograph of 1856 by Kuchel and Dresel, published by G. & O. Amy, Marysville, verifies the building's balconies, split porch pillars, railings and ornamentation as original features. Originally there were two very large bedrooms on the top floor under flanking gables on each side of the building; these were later remodelled into shed-roofed sleeping porches. An addition was constructed at the rear of the building around 1916, designed to blend with the original fabric of the building. Especially of interest is the large two story central bay containing four lancet windows, with the chimney piercing the roof at the peak of the gable. The lower two windows in the bay have small metal balconies in a style resembling the tracery of Gothic Revival ecclesiastical structures of the period. The property was originally surrounded by a metal fence of the same style as the window balconies.

According to W. T. Ellis, who became the owner of the house in 1919, the interior and exterior bearing walls are of brick, 30 inches thick. The floors of the house consist of two layers of brick laid over sand on top of heavy timbered planking, requiring heavily constructed walls to sustain the weight. The lumber in the house was supposedly imported hardwood from Chile. There was a large basement under the entire main building divided into two rooms, one of which was a large billiard room, the floors being of octagonal shaped marble slabs, the other room being the kitchen equipped with a dumbwaiter which took the meals to the dining room on the main floor above. A rise in the local water table resulting from hydraulic mining operations upstream rendered the basement useless and it was subsequently filled in.

Coville's Marysville Directory of 1855 describes the Ramirez House as follows:

"This splendid edifice, which attracts the attention of every visitant, is situated on the south side of Cortez Square, two stories in height, with a basement. The style of architecture may be termed Gothic, or Castellated. It is finished throughout after the finest style of workmanship, and is adorned exteriorly with beautiful and elaborate ornaments, while it is surrounded with labyrinthine walks and tessellated pavements, that the most refined taste or skill could scarcely add an

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additional charm to it. Flora Pomona and her numberless mythological sisters have manifested their admired handiworks here, at the invocation of the generous and hospitable occupant."

Today the Ramirez house remains as one of the outstanding examples of Gothic Revival residential architecture in California surviving from the Gold Rush period.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1851-1854 (Construction) BUILDER/ARCHITECT Jose Manuel Ramirez

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the fall of 1842, Theodore Cordua obtained a lease from Captain John A. Sutter. It was upon this tract of land that the City of Marysville would be located. The area was first named New Mecklenburg, by Sutter, in honor of Cordua's place of birth; however; it soon became more commonly known as Cordua's ranch<sup>1</sup>. On December 30, 1844 Theodore Cordua increased his holdings, obtaining a grant of land from the Mexican government which embraced an area of about seven square leagues. It became known as the Honcut Rancho after the creek that became its eastern boundary.<sup>2</sup> Some time between 1844 and 1849 a former employee of Cordua's, Charles Covillard, purchased the 31,080 acre rancho.

In April of 1849 Jose Manuel Ramirez and John Sampson arrived at New Mecklenburg. Ramirez was Chilean by birth, and Sampson was most likely a native of Great Britain who had been residing in Chile.<sup>3</sup>

It is quite probable that they came with plans to extract gold on a large if not on a semi-feudal scale, for they brought with them a following of some thirty Chileanos who were decidedly, but to an unknown degree, dependent and subordinate.<sup>4</sup>

It was said of Ramirez that he was "among the first to explore deep into the auriferous regions bordering on the Yuba and Feather Rivers..."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California. The Lewis Printing Company, Chicago, 1891, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 283

<sup>3</sup> Earl Ramey. The Beginnings of Marysville. California Historical Society, San Francisco, 1936, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Earl Ramey. op cit., p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Coville. Coville's Marysville Directory. Printed by Monson and Valentine, San Francisco, 1855, p. 14.



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Soon after their arrival Ramirez and Sampson became impressed by the possibilities of Mecklenburg as a supply point for the mines.<sup>6</sup> In the latter part of 1849, Mr. Covilland sold 3/4 of his interest in Honcut Rancho to J. M. Ramirez, John Sampson and Theodore Sieavel.<sup>7</sup> For their part Ramirez and Sampson paid \$23,300.<sup>8</sup> In January, 1850, the town of Marysville was laid out by the four partners.<sup>9</sup>

Jose Manuel Ramirez began building his house in Marysville in 1851, completing it in 1854. Its cost was said to exceed \$35,000.<sup>10</sup> W. T. Ellis, who became the house's owner in 1919, described "The Castle", in 1936, as "one of the most interesting residences in Marysville...built by one of the original founders of the town..."<sup>11</sup> Ellis also attributed the structure's ample construction as due to the Chilean's experiences of earthquakes in his homeland.<sup>12</sup>

J. M. Ramirez's path to fortune was punctuated by difficulties brought to him by his Chilean heritage. His California adventure taught him that "foreigners" must be prepared to defend themselves in the California mines."<sup>13</sup> In the fall of 1849 Ramirez, John Sampson and their party of thirty Chilean miners were driven out of the mining community of Ferry Bar, near the present site of Marysville, by exasperated anglo-Americans who had discovered that the "Chileans were experienced miners, and could make better wages than they."<sup>14</sup> However, the "foreigners" returned under the protection of armed men "who could both speak and shoot in the English language."<sup>15</sup> Two years after the completion of his opulent Marysville home, Ramirez was shot by a member of an extra-legal band of Anglo-Americans when he refused to allow them to search his home. The search was in connection with a stagecoach robbery that yielded \$10,000 in gold dust to the bandits. Two days later, even though Ramirez was never accused of participating in the crime, they returned to confiscate his weapons described by a member of the party as a "perfect arsenal."<sup>15</sup> Jose Ramirez survived his wounds and the hardships visited upon him as a "foreigner", during California's gold rush era. His former residence still stands as a reminder of a city's birth and the personal achievement of one man in the wake of California's mining frontier.

<sup>6</sup> Earl Ramey, op cit, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> California Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. XII, No. 4, p. 280.

<sup>8</sup> Thompson & West. History of Yuba County California. Oakland, California, 1879, reprinted by California Traveler, 1920, p. 38.

<sup>9</sup> California Historical Society Quarterly. Loc cit, p. 280

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Coville, Op cit, p. XIX

<sup>11</sup> W. T. Ellis. Memories My Seventy-Two Years in the Romantic County of Yuba California. The University of Oregon, Eugene, printed by John Henry Nash, 1939, p. 70.

<sup>12</sup> W. T. Ellis. Op cit., p. 70

<sup>13</sup> California Historical Society Quarterly, Vol. IX, No. 1, pp. 75-76.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 359

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Vol IX, No. 1, p. 63.

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Ellis, W. T. Memories of My Seventy-Two Years in the Romantic County of Yuba California. The University of Oregon, Eugene, printed by John Henry Nash, 1939, 308 pp.

Memorial and Biographical History of Northern California. The Lewis Printing Company, 1891, 637 pp.

Ramey, Earl. The Beginnings of Marysville. California Historical Society, San Francisco, 1936, 104 pp.

Thompson & West. History of Yuba County California. Oakland, California, 1879, reprinted by California Traveler, Volcano, California, 1970, 99 pp.

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Representation in Existing Surveys (Continued)

State Historical Resources Inventory

April 15, 1975

Records deposited at California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Historic Preservation Section  
P. O. Box 2390  
Sacramento, California 95811