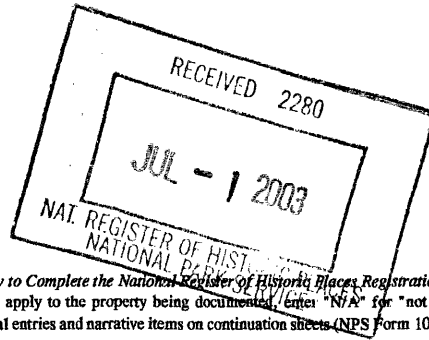


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



702

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Gridley Store
other names/site number Gridley & Hobart Store; Gridley Store Museum

2. Location

street & number 247 Water Street N/A not for publication
city or town Austin N/A vicinity
state Nevada code NV county Lander code 015 zip code 89310

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 nationally X statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] SHPO 6-26-03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. [Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 8/14/03
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other (explain):

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
COMMERCE	department store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
RECREATION AND CULTURE	museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Stone
walls	Stone
roof	Wood
other	Concrete
	Brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

Period of Significance

1864

Significant Dates

1864

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Gridley, Reuel Colt

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.06 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	1	11	494660	4370910	3	11
	2	11			4	11

___ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>		
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	date	<u>June 1, 2003</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>Lander County</u>		
street & number	<u>315 S. Humboldt St.</u>	telephone	<u>(775) 635-5195</u>
city or town	<u>Battle Mountain</u> state <u>NV</u>	zip code	<u>89820</u>

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 7 Page 1

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description

Summary

The Gridley Store is located at 247 Water Street in Austin, Lander County, Nevada. Austin is situated at an elevation of approximately 6,600 feet above sea level in Pony Canyon near the northern end of the Toiyabe Range and near the geographic center of the state. The town lies in the watershed of the Reese River, a tributary of the Humboldt River, and it is served by US Highway 50. The 1863 store is located in an area historically known as Upper Austin, above and east of most of the presently built-up section of town. The south-facing one-story building is constructed of granite and has a wood-shingled front-gable roof and two large front entries. A wooden framework on the interior extends above the roof to form what was apparently a support for a bell. The plain interior dates largely to a ca. 1985 rehabilitation. The building is presently operated as the Gridley Store Museum by the Austin Historical Society.

Exterior

The Gridley Store has a simple rectangular form. The stonework, partially rebuilt and repointed in the mid-1980s, features large quoin stones at the rear corners, and a band of relatively large stones extends across the front gable at eaves level. The east elevation appears to curve inward slightly. The two front entries differ in size--the left one is wider--but they both have 1980s double-leaf French doors (ten-plus-ten lights) with five-light transoms and wood and metal lintels. Photographs in the museum and at The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce show the pre-1980s doors, which were wood panel doors with large glass, screened, or mesh windows in their upper halves and possibly transoms. The Chamber photos also show what may have been a small board-and-batten frame shed wing to the rear and possibly also evidence for a former wing on the west side.

Projecting above the ridge at the front of the roof are two short, square-section wood posts from which extend the ends of large bolts. The posts may once have been used as supports for a bell. On the rear gable end are an entry with a thick wood lintel and a wood and glass panel door, and a brick-framed window with a reused six-light sash. Concrete was poured against the west foundation and a brick flue above the rear gable was rebuilt in the 1980s. Set into the masonry next to the left front entry is an iron hitching ring and in the gable is a circular tie rod plate. On the front are signs reading "Gridley Store," "Museum," "1" (a historic site number assigned to the building in the 1950s), and a bronze state historic plaque (No. 119) that replaces a free-standing state historic marker that stood in front of the building in the mid-1980s.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 7, 8 Page 2

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 7 Description, continued

Interior

The only surviving historic feature on the interior is a narrow H-shaped framework near the front of the building, which forms the lower end of the two posts that project above the roof. The framework is constructed of two posts, approximately six inches square, that are joined together by a cross member mortise-and-tenoned and pegged to the posts. Cut-nailed to one side of the cross member is a piece of wood with angled ends and two holes bored into it. There is also a large round mortise at the base of the one of the posts. Carved and penciled graffiti on the framework include initials, dates (1894, 1902, for example), and the inscription "Edward Myles, Austin." Other interior features include a concrete floor, stuccoed walls, and a modern bathroom in the northeast corner.

Integrity Statement

The Gridley Store possesses fair to good integrity. The overall form and basic appearance is similar to the appearance the building had achieved by the mid-twentieth century (earlier views of the building have not been located), and much of the historic stone walls remain intact. The roof was replaced in kind during a 1980s rehabilitation and a historic feature thought to have served as a bell support retained. The present front entries are modern and the interior has also been altered, but the historic framework at the base of the putative bell support survives. Historic photographs suggest the store originally stood among mostly small and scattered residences and other buildings. This character of development remains today, although many historic buildings have been lost in this section of Austin. The flanks of Lander Hill overlooking the store and dotted with historic tailing piles retains more or less its historic character.

Section 8 Statement of Significance

Summary

The Gridley Store, located in Austin, Nevada, is associated with one of Nevada's most celebrated Civil War-era episodes. The simple granite store was built in 1863 for merchant Reuel C. Gridley and a partner. In April 1864 Gridley lost an election bet and was required to march from his store through Austin carrying a fifty-pound sack of flour. The flour was then sold and resold to raise funds for the U.S. Sanitary Commission, which provided care to wounded Union servicemen.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 8 Page 3

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Gridley took the Austin Sanitary Flour sack on tour, ultimately raising in excess of a hundred thousand dollars for the cause in Nevada, California, and the East. The affair was heavily publicized at the time and was celebrated by Mark Twain in *Roughing It* (Twain and Gridley were schoolmates in Hannibal, Missouri). Today, the rehabilitated store is used as a museum by the Austin Historical Society.

Applicable Criteria

The Gridley Store meets Criterion A and is eligible in the military area of significance for its association with the promotion of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Nevada. The property is also eligible under Criterion B in the military area of significance for its association with Reuel C. Gridley, an early Austin merchant who attained statewide celebrity as a result of his fundraising for the Sanitary Commission. The period of significance corresponds to the year 1864 when Gridley and his flour sack were at the height of popularity. The Gridley Store is eligible at the state level of significance. The building is located in the Austin Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. Information in support of eligibility appears throughout this section.

Acknowledgments

A number of organizations and individuals assisted in the preparation of this report. The nomination was sponsored by Lander County (the property's owner) and the Austin Historical Society with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the Nevada Commission of Economic Development, and it is one of ten nominations prepared for prominent historic landmarks in Austin in 2003. Assistance was provided by Allen D. Gibson, Deputy District Attorney, Lander County; Christy Caronongan, Administrative Assistant, Lander County Executive Director's Office; Ray H. Williams Jr., Ray and Irene Salisbury, Phillip "Poncho" and Joan Williams, and Joy Brandt with the Austin Historical Society; Ray H. "Ramey" Williams III, Austin; Dee Helming and Herbert Wallace "Wally" Trapnell, The Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; Steve Frady, Nevada firefighting historian; the Comstock Firemen's Museum, Virginia City; and Mella Rothwell Harmon, Architectural Historian/National Register Coordinator, Nevada State Historic Preservation Office.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 8 Page 4

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Historic Context

Silver was discovered in Pony Canyon in May 1862 and within a year the population of the nascent community of Austin and its immediate vicinity stood at nearly 1,000. The Comstock Lode boomtown of Virginia City provided a staging area for the settlement of Austin and in many respects served as a template for Austin's economic, demographic, and architectural development. Austin was made the seat of Lander County on September 2, 1863, and in November 1864 the town's population was reliably estimated at approximately 6,000, briefly making Austin the state's second largest community. Austin rapidly passed through the three incipient developmental stages identified by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office as characteristic of the state's mining towns: the settlement stage (provisional architecture and haphazard organization), the camp phase (more permanent frame buildings and town platting), and the town phase (masonry construction, public buildings, established infrastructure, and stylistic sophistication).¹

By the end of 1866 Austin boasted two substantial brick churches (Austin Methodist and St. Augustine's Catholic), several banking houses, the *Daily Reese River Reveille* newspaper, the International Hotel (moved from Virginia City), and hundreds of brick, stone, wood, and adobe mining structures, commercial buildings, and dwellings. American-born whites constituted the majority of the population; Chinese, English/Welsh, Irish, and "civilized Indians" were important groups as well. Austin also experienced, to a degree, a fourth phase of Nevada mining town development: partial abandonment, as the silver played out and the town's economy and population contracted at the end of the nineteenth century. Austin's status as a trade center for central Nevada prevented it from becoming a ghost town, but the town's population declined to 702 by 1900 and stands at about 300 today.²

¹ Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 56; Hulse, *Silver State*, 79; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 8-9. One authority claims a peak Austin population of 10,000 in the summer of 1863 (Nevada State Historical Society, *Nevada*, 259). Another suggests a peak population of approximately 8,000 (Smith, "Austin, Nevada," 7).

² Neu, "Austin Historic District;" Abbe, *Austin*, 58-59; and Harmon, "How to Prepare Nominations," 9.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 5

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

The Gridley Store dates to the first flush of development in Austin in 1863. It is associated with Reuel Colt Gridley (1829-1870), a native of Hannibal, Missouri, who married Susanna Snider (ca. 1832-1910) and moved to California in the early 1850s. The Gridleys presumably settled in Austin early in 1863, for on May 4 of that year R. C. Gridley and a partner, W. W. Hobart, purchased the Gridley Store site. By the end of July Gridley & Hobart had established their store and a corral and hay yard at the location. The latter served the teamsters who hauled lumber, food, and other products to and from Austin to supply the town's expanding population. Others opened hay yards in the Austin area the same month, supplied at least in part by local ranchers.³

The August 1, 1863 *Reese River Reveille* reported that Gridley & Hobart's "extensive storehouse" was under construction along with other stone buildings "far above what is called upper Austin." The partners must have opened before their building was completed for on July 22 they advertised: "New Store! Gridley & Hobart have on hand and offer for sale, at their store in Upper Austin, for cash, Family Groceries, Ready Made Clothing, Drugs, Medicines, Liquors, etc." Their initial stock included coffee, sugar, tea, syrup, pickles, candles, soap, tobacco, onions, bacon, flour, corn meal, sago (sago palm starch), vermicelli, mackerel, spices, jams, kerosene, and hardware.⁴

By the end of September the partners had associated with Henry and Julius Jacobs to form Gridley, Hobart & Jacobs with stores in upper and lower Austin. In addition to providing a second retail outlet, the Jacobs association may also have provided hay for the hay yard; in July it was reported that Jacobs Bros. were cutting hay on their ranch. Gridley, Hobart & Jacobs's first combined advertisement in the September 30, 1863 *Reveille* listed a "large and well assorted stock of general merchandise" that included, in addition to the goods noted above, lard, butter, cheese, saleratus (baking soda), wine, yeast powders, spices, dried fruits, crackers, boots and shoes, and stationery. The Gridley & Jacobs improvements, so named in the 1864 tax records, were valued at \$4,500. The Gridley Store was located in close proximity to the many silver ledges and mills on the flanks of Lander Hill above Austin, and by all accounts the store did well during its first years.⁵

³ Brandt, "Reuel C. Gridley Family;" Lander County Deed Book 5, p. 264; and *Reese River Reveille*, July 4 and 29 and September 12, 1863.

⁴ *Reese River Reveille*, July 22 and August 1, 1863.

⁵ *Ibid.*, July 29 and September 30, 1863; Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 141; and Austin

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 6

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Like many of his boosterish contemporaries in Austin, R. C. Gridley involved himself in community affairs. In July 1863 he launched a Sunday school that met at first under a "pine-bough shelter" in Upper Austin. The *Reveille* noted of Gridley: "The Superintendent is, from his well known character for morality and probity, 'the right man in the right place.'" But Gridley's greatest contribution to his community--and to his adopted state--came about indirectly as the result of a wager. Austin gained city status in early 1864 and on April 19 the population elected its first slate of city officers. Gridley, a Democrat, had bet with a Unionist on the outcome of the mayoral election. Gridley lost, and as a consequence he was required to carry a fifty-pound sack of flour through town to the tune of *John Brown's Body*.⁶

"Yesterday morning the wager was paid in most splendid style," reported the *Reveille* on April 21:

At 10 o'clock a large convocation of citizens, with the Austin band, people on horseback, and many flags of all sizes, were assembled about the store of Mr. Gridley, who was ready with his sack of flour trimmed with ribbons and mounted with a number of small [American] flags.

To a modern understanding the wager and its payment seem all in fun, but there was a serious undercurrent to the carnival-like proceedings. In the opening months of the Civil War secessionists conspired to place Nevada under Confederate control, a threat the pro-Union majority took seriously. Those who openly expressed disloyalty to the Union were rounded up and imprisoned; interestingly, one punishment required prisoners to carry sacks of sand around the jail yard.⁷

Gridley and his flour sack marched down Main Street to a saloon in Clifton (a vanished community at the base of Pony Canyon) where the crowd proposed that the sack of flour be auctioned for the

City Assessment Roll for 1864, Lander County records.

⁶ *Reese River Reveille*, July 25 and 29 and September 12, 1863, and April 21, 1864; Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 121-126.

⁷ *Reese River Reveille*, April 21, 1864; Browne, "Reese River Country," 35; and Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, 265.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

benefit of the Sanitary Commission. The U.S. Sanitary Commission was established in 1861 shortly after the beginning of the Civil War. The Commission promoted the health of Union soldiers as an adjunct to and oversight body for the military health care system. Although sanctioned by the government, the Sanitary Commission relied entirely on private contributions. One of its most effective fund-raising means was the holding of Sanitary Fairs and lesser events that funneled money to the fairs. The first fair was held in Chicago in November 1863; soon Northeastern cities were competing intensely to outdo each other in the raising of funds. The West Coast, prevented by distance from fully engaging in the war effort, participated enthusiastically in the Sanitary Commission movement. San Francisco developed as "the radiating point of Sanitary influence," and by the end of the war California was the largest single funder of the Commission. Less populous but wealthy Nevada was also an important contributor. On April 16, 1864, three days before the Austin municipal election, the *Reveille* reported that the Territory had sent approximately \$50,000 to the Commission, of which about \$45,000 was raised in Storey County. The Austin press noted that Lander County was being "stigmatized" in the Virginia City papers for its "big pretensions and little liberality," and the editor urged that the upcoming election be made an opportunity for fund-raising.⁸

The flour was transported back to Austin accompanied by the band (playing *Dixie* according to one account), a stand was set up in front of a saloon, and Gridley opened the bidding at \$200. When the sack was sold it was sold again; by the end of the day it had fetched several thousand dollars, and auctions on following days added to the take. The Austin paper declared the affair "a clever stroke of policy for the Republicans." The bidding fever induced Southern sympathizers--Gridley among them--to contribute to a cause that benefited Union soldiers only, but the event helped the citizens move beyond the hotly contested municipal election and work together for the benefit of Austin. In fact, the community quickly realized the promotional value of the "Austin Sanitary Flour" sack. The news went out on the Overland Telegraph, and Gridley took his soon-to-be-famous flour sack on the road.⁹

⁸ Browne, "Reese River Country," 35; Bollett, *Civil War Medicine*, 458-463; Maxwell, *Lincoln's Fifth Wheel*, 224-227; and *Reese River Reveille*, April 16 and 21, 1864.

⁹ Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 126-129; Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, 269-270.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET 7

Section 8 Page 8

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Mark Twain recalled Gridley's arrival in Virginia City in his book *Roughing It*. Although vague on the sack's origins--Twain incorrectly related that Gridley had been the defeated mayoral candidate--the celebrated reporter with the *Territorial Enterprise* faithfully captured the festival atmosphere of the auctions in the Gold Hill-Virginia City area, which are reported to have raised \$8,000. (Twain had another interest in Gridley; the two men had been schoolmates together in Hannibal and had maintained their acquaintance into adulthood.) The conciliatory power of the flour sack was felt throughout Nevada. As contemporary historian (and one-time *Reveille* editor) Myron Angel put it, "sectional and partisan rancor was forever obliterated" in the state by the "fraternizing" event. Gridley and his sack traveled on to Sacramento, where \$10,000 was raised, and San Francisco, where \$15,000 went to the Sanitary Commission. The California papers distrusted the pro-Southern Gridley's motives, but allegiance to Austin, and no doubt an awareness of the self-promotional value of the fanfare to himself, clearly overshadowed any secessionist sympathies Gridley may have harbored. In June Gridley traveled to the East Coast via the Isthmus of Panama, held his auction in New York City and made it into *Harper's Weekly*, and finished up at a grand nationwide Sanitary Fair in St. Louis. The Sanitary Flour Sack is variously reported to have generated between \$100,000 to \$275,000 for the Sanitary Commission. For Austin, according to the *Reveille*, the affair gave the community "a good name and celebrity abroad." Today the sack is a featured exhibit at the Nevada Historical Society Museum in Reno.¹⁰

Gridley is said to have paid his expenses out of his own pocket, but he did gain personal advantage from the episode. According to J. Ross Browne, writing in 1866:

On the strength of his fame Gridley became interested with Mr. John W. Harker and other experienced financiers, and raised sufficient capital in New York to return to Austin and start a bank. The great banking establishment called the "First National Bank of Nevada" is now one of the prominent institutions of the county.

¹⁰ Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 126-129, 141-142; Twain, *Roughing It*, vol. 2, 26-31; Angel, *History of the State of Nevada*, 270; Browne, "Reese River Country," 35-36; "Gridley Store Museum;" and *Reese River Reveille*, May 3, 1867.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET⁷

Section 8 Page 9

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

Despite the foray into banking, Gridley's business interests took a turn for the worse. His grocery business is said to have suffered during his absence. Hobart and the Jacobses pulled out and Gridley briefly partnered with Thomas Callow. By 1866 Gridley was no longer listed as an officer in the First National Bank. According to historian Oscar Lewis, Gridley returned to Austin "heavily in debt [and] broken in health." Gridley and his wife Susan sold off most if not all of their property and mining claims in Austin in 1866. In the fall of 1866 the Gridleys relocated to California in search of a healthier climate. In 1867 Gridley opened a grocery store in Paradise, California, which he operated until his death in 1870. According to Oscar Lewis, Gridley may have opened his store using the proceeds from a collection taken up for him in Austin. In 1887 the Stockton, California branch of the Grand Army of the Republic unveiled a statue of Italian-carved marble that marks Gridley's grave in Stockton's cemetery.¹¹

Thomas W. Triplett & Company occupied "Gridley's Old Store" in 1871, where the new occupants sold "groceries, provisions, liquors, clothing, and a general variety of family and miners' supplies." Triplett operated the store in partnership with two other Austin merchants, R. L. Horton and M. A. Sawtelle, but in January 1872 the partnership dissolved. Presumably, the Gridley Store continued to operate as a store in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although abandonment is possible during the years of Austin's decline.¹²

An architectural feature of the store hints at another possible use. As noted in Section 7, the heavy framework inside the front entries, which projects above the roof ridge, appears to have served as a bell support. A bell in turn suggests use of the building as something other than a store, perhaps a school or a firehouse. Upper Austin was already supplied with a substantial schoolhouse during the historic period--the direct or indirect consequence of R. C. Gridley's efforts--so the firehouse possibility seems more likely. Austin's first fire company, the Pioneer Hook & Ladder Company, organized on January 2, 1864 and operated from a building on Main Street in the center of town

¹¹ Browne, "Reese River Country," 36; *Reese River Reveille*, January 2 and April 9, 1866; Harrington and Angel, *Harrington's Directory of the City of Austin*, 16; Langley, *Pacific Coast Business Directory*, 297; Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 141, 145-148; and Lander County Deed Book 29, pp. 679 and 707, and Deed Book 30, p. 381.

¹² *Reese River Reveille*, December 29, 1871, and February 9, 1872.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET7

Section 8 Page 10

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

through the early twentieth century. A Confidence Hose Company existed in 1871, although it's hose house appears to have been located elsewhere. By 1881 two additional companies had been formed, the Manhattan Hose and Eagle Hose companies. If the Gridley Store did indeed function as a firehouse, then perhaps it was used by the Manhattan Hose Company since the extensive facilities of the Manhattan Silver Mining Company spread across the flanks of Lander Hill just above the store.¹³

The Gridley Store became the focus of interest in the early 1950s as the town battled to retain its county seat status and saw preservation of historic sites as a way to attract tourism. The building has been featured in brochures and tour guides ever since and more recently on websites. A rehabilitation of the store was completed in 1984 using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The work entailed some masonry reconstruction, repointing, installation of a new roof structure and wood shingle roofing, the replacement of doors and windows, and new interior finishes and the addition of a bathroom. Federal monies were used for the rehabilitation, to which Austin residents and former residents also contributed. Today, the Gridley Store houses the Austin Historical Society Museum, and it is one of the attractions of the town's annual Gridley Days Festival, held in June.¹⁴

Architectural Analysis

Architecturally, the Gridley Store is typical of small-scale nineteenth century commercial buildings by virtue of its rectangular form, gable front, windowless side elevations, and unsubdivided salesroom interior. The front elevation, with its wide entries and lack of display windows, exhibits a storefront form that was common in the West during the period. (John Reps' collections of lithographic views of American towns and cities demonstrate the prevalence of the Western storefront form in the West.) The course of large stones that runs across the front gable is interesting. It may have been purely decorative in function, or it may be evidence of some early

¹³ Ibid., October 5, 1871; Smith "Austin Nevada," 55; and Angel, *History of Nevada*, 466-467.

¹⁴ Lewis, *The Town that Died Laughing*, 233-234; "Austin Nevada Restored 1984;" "Gridley Store Museum;" Nicoletta, *Buildings of Nevada*, 173; Hall, *Romancing Nevada's Past*, 54; and Mella R. Harmon personal communication.

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Section 8 Statement of Significance, continued

alteration of the front gable (the stonework above the course differs from that below). There is evidence that Gridley & Hobart began selling merchandise before their store was completed. Other buildings in Austin operated during the summer of 1863 with canvas roofs until lumber and shingles became more available and winter weather necessitated more permanent roofing. Perhaps the change in stonework is associated with the roofing over of the store in late 1863.¹⁵

The question whether the Gridley Store served as a firehouse at some point in its history cannot be answered with certainty from an architectural perspective. Early firehouses were often relatively undifferentiated buildings, essentially sheds in which the fire engine and related equipment were stored. Originally, fire hoses were drained and dried in a number of ways. In the late antebellum period vertical drying appears to have become popular and hose towers were constructed for firehouses, at least in urban centers. The framework inside the Gridley Store may have been used for drying or storing hose, although if it was intended for that purpose one would expect chamfering or other softening of the edges corners of the cross member. The cross member may have served to stiffen the framework without any relation to hose drying. A thorough study of firefighting in Austin could help determine whether the Gridley Store was used as a firehouse.¹⁶

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¹⁵ Reps, *Bird's Eye Views*, 82, 83.

¹⁶ Zurier, *The American Firehouse*, 16, 65.

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Section 10 Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated area corresponds to Lander County tax parcel 01-246-02.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated area correspond to the present boundaries of the parcel on which the Gridley Store stands.

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Section Photographs Page 15

The Gridley Store, Austin, Lander County, Nevada

PHOTOGRAPHS

1.
 1. Subject: Gridley Store (same for all photos)
 2. Location: Lander Co., Nv. (same for all photos)
 3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
 4. Photo date: March 2003 (same for all photos)
 5. Original negative archived at the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office,
Carson City, Nv. (same for all photos)
 6. Description of view: West and south (front) elevations. View looking northeast.
 7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)

2.
 6. East and north elevations. View looking southwest.

3.
 6. South end of interior.