

PH0085839

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE:<br><b>California</b> |                    |
| COUNTY:<br><b>Napa</b>      |                    |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY            |                    |
| ENTRY NUMBER                | DATE               |
| <b>001</b>                  | <b>OCT 25 1973</b> |

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Napa Opera House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Crowey's Opera House**

**2. LOCATION**

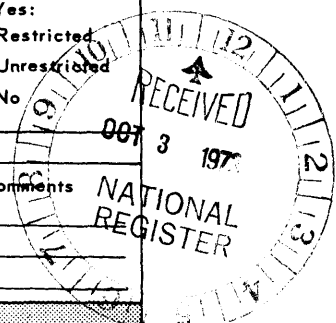
STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1030-1028-1020-1018 Main Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Napa**

|                            |                   |                        |                    |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE<br><b>California</b> | CODE<br><b>06</b> | COUNTY:<br><b>Napa</b> | CODE<br><b>055</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)   | OWNERSHIP  | STATUS   | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC   |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District<br><input type="checkbox"/> Site<br><input type="checkbox"/> Object<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building<br><input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Public<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private<br><input type="checkbox"/> Both                                    | Public Acquisition:<br><input type="checkbox"/> In Process<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered                                       | Yes:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted<br><input type="checkbox"/> No       |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Educational<br><input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Government<br><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial<br><input type="checkbox"/> Military<br><input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park<br><input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence<br><input type="checkbox"/> Religious<br><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ |



**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Frank A. Corsetti**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1881 Brown Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Napa**

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE:<br><b>California</b> | CODE:<br><b>06</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Napa County Courthouse; County Clerk's Office**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Brown Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Napa**

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE:<br><b>California</b> | CODE:<br><b>06</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Napa**

|                             |                    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| STATE:<br><b>California</b> | CODE:<br><b>06</b> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|

STATE: **California**

COUNTY: **Napa**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: **001**

DATE: **OCT 25 1973**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

\*Note: The Napa Opera House on the second floor is unoccupied, while the ground floor is occupied.

| DESCRIPTION  |   |
|--|---|
| CONDITION  | (Check One)   |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed   |
|  | <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 33%;">           (Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> Altered         </div> <div style="width: 33%; text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Opera House<br/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered         </div> <div style="width: 33%;">           (Check One) <input type="checkbox"/> Moved    <input type="checkbox"/> Original Site         </div> </div> |
| DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE   |   |
| <p>The Napa Opera House is located at 1018-1030 Main Street on the east side of the street. It is a two-story brick building with a frontage of 60 feet and a depth of 100 feet.</p> <p>The second story contains the Napa Opera House. The front facade has three triblet windows. At the north end of the building is a 7-foot stairway leading up to the Opera House.</p> <p>The ground level contains three stores--a bar, a clothing store, and a Chinese restaurant. The ground floor facade has changed several times since the building was built. A fire escape was added to the front.</p> <p>The rear facade is basically unchanged. Stairs leading to the stage and a balcony leading to an adjacent hotel were removed at an early date.</p> <p>Description of the interior:</p> <p>The Napa Opera House auditorium is 54-1/2 feet wide and 76 feet long with a flat floor. The stage is at the east end. Some of the stucco has fallen from the south wall exposing the bricks. A portion of the ceiling has fallen exposing the roof rafters.</p> <p>The entrance to the auditorium is from the north in the middle of the auditorium. At the head of the stairs outside the auditorium entrance is the ticket office. Behind this office is a small ladies' powder room. Stairs at either side of the proscenium wall lead to backstage and to the side boxes. There is a balcony or gallery at the west end reached by a curved staircase at the north-west end of the auditorium. The railing and posts were removed several years ago.</p> <p>The proscenium arch is about 7 feet deep and 27 feet wide. There is a box on either side of the arch. The pilaster and the box railing on the left (stage right) side were removed several years ago. The top of the arch is painted white, red and with green stripes.</p> <p>The stage is 20 feet deep and 60 feet wide and has an approximately 4° rake. The floor is worn with a trap center stage and a footlight trough downstage. There are several grooves in the floor running from holes in the floor up-stage right and left. There is a brick wall at the rear with three doors which originally led to a walkway since removed. Stairs (covered now) going to the trap area and dressing rooms underneath the stage are on either side of the stage. On the rear wall is painted a scene with a windmill. There is very little remaining in the flies.</p> |   |

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1879

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Theater  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Napa Opera House, also known as Crowley's Opera House, was built in late 1879 in Napa after much community discussion for the need of a quality "performing hall".<sup>1</sup> The date can still be seen faintly on the gable at the peak of the roof. The theatre opened in January of 1880.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is the second oldest commercial building remaining in Napa. It is older than Piper's Opera House building in Virginia City, Nevada<sup>3</sup> and is among the oldest five existing theatres in California.<sup>4</sup>

The Opera House itself is located on the second floor of the brick building with three small shops underneath on the street level. This style of theatre building was common practice for theatres built during the last half of the 19th Century. ~~However, there are no second floor theatres of this period outside of the Napa Opera House remaining in the United States.~~ It is an excellent example of a small intimate theatre of the late 19th Century which was built in almost every small city. The interior is similar to the Grand Theatre of Cripple Creek, Colorado, with the curved balcony and the supporting posts.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the Woodland Opera House built ten years later, the auditorium floor is flat and benches were used for seating. This made the hall available for dances and grand balls. The balcony is terraced and had fixed seats. This arrangement is very similar to present day design of many community auditoriums.<sup>6</sup> The flat floor design could be a transitional design between the Fallon Theatre in Columbia and the more traditional Woodland Opera House.

While in operation during its brief 34 years, many of the great and near great have performed in the Napa Opera House. David Warfield (a famous actor with David Belasco in New York) made his stage debut here in 1888.<sup>7</sup> James A. Hearne played here in his HEARTS OF OAK. The Opera House was a common stop for the many minstrel companies which toured California during the late 19th Century. Zamloch, a famous magician, played here in 1884.<sup>8</sup> The concert singers Patti and Terazzini each held well received concerts within the hall.<sup>9</sup> Animal acts and lectures filled out the programs. It also served as a community hall for many civic balls, amateur theatricals, high school functions, and other civic celebrations.

A gas border light, a gas "distributor" remains of the gas stage lighting system. There also remains holders in the ceiling for the grooves which assisted in the changing of the scenery.

(Continued)

? can't be  
KIR 10/1/79  
NOT 50'  
AR 10/1/79

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Adams, Allen J. "Mining Theatre History: Cripple Creek, Colorado, 1897-1907. PLAYERS MAGAZINE, Vol. 44, No. 2. (Dec.-Jan., 1969).

Hanrahan, Virginia. Napa Journal, February 24, 1948, p. 1, 3.

Napa Journal, 1890-1892.

(Continued)

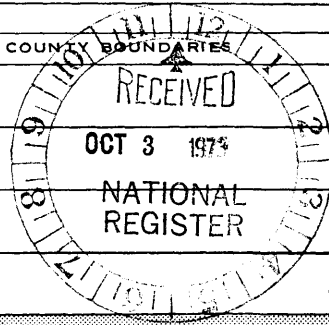
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |          |         |         | OR      | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES |         |         |          |         |         |           |         |         |         |         |   |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|---|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE |         |         |         | LONGITUDE   |         |         | LATITUDE |         |         | LONGITUDE |         |         |         |         |   |
|  | Degrees  | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes   | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes  | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes   | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |   |
| NW   | 0        | .       | .       | 0       | .   | .       | 38      | 0        | 17      | 59      | N         | 122     | 0       | 17      | 04      | W |
| NE   | 0        | .       | .       | 0       | .   | .       |         |          |         |         |           |         |         |         |         |   |
| SE   | 0        | .       | .       | 0       | .   | .       |         |          |         |         |           |         |         |         |         |   |
| SW   | 0        | .       | .       | 0       | .   | .       |         |          |         |         |           |         |         |         |         |   |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **.14 acres**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY  | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |



UTM  
10/56256  
4239110  
CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Bruce Payne, Drama Instructor**

ORGANIZATION: **Vintage High School** DATE: **July 20, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1375 Trower Ave. Home address: 3035 North Ave.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Napa** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name *[Signature]*

Title **State Historic Preservation Officer**

Date **SEP 11 1973**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Ernest A. Connally*  
~~XX~~  
Associate Director, Professional Services

Date **OCT 25 1973**

ATTEST:  
*[Signature]*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date **10 . 17 . 73**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

|                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| STATE<br>California |             |
| COUNTY<br>Napa      |             |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY    |             |
| ENTRY NUMBER        | DATE        |
|                     | OCT 25 1973 |

(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

The Napa Opera House closed its doors in 1914 with the rise in popularity of motion pictures and the end of small touring companies. Since that time it has remained unused as a theatre.

<sup>1</sup>Virginia Hanrahan, NAPA JOURNAL, February 24, 1948.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>The second Piper's Opera House was built in 1878 and burned down in 1883. The present Opera House was built in 1885.

<sup>4</sup>First "Theatre", Monterey-1849; Fallon House Theatre, Columbia-1850's; Nevada City Theatre, Nevada City-1865; The Merced Theatre, Los Angeles-1869; Napa Opera House, Napa-1879-80.

<sup>5</sup>Allen J. Adams, MINING THEATRE HISTORY: CRIPPLE CREEK, COLORADO, 1897-1907, PLAYERS MAGAZINE (vol. 44, no. 2), Dec.-Jan., 1969, p. 64.

<sup>6</sup>Refer to San Jose Community Auditorium, San Jose, California.

<sup>7</sup>ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA, 1960. Vol. 23, p. 352; OXFORD COMPANION TO THE THEATRE, Phyllis Hartnol, editor, p. 834; NAPA REGISTER, "Centennial Edition", (March 30, 1963), p. 2B-1.

<sup>8</sup>NAPA REPORTER, March 21, 1884.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., March 28, 1884; Louis Ezettie, "Napa's Past". NAPA REGISTER (August 10, 1966), p. 20.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Continued)

Napa Register, 1878-1881, 1963.

Napa Reporter, 1878-1884.

Wallace, W. F. HISTORY OF NAPA COUNTY, Oakland, 1901.

