

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Of Historic Places
Registration Form

1268

SEP 28 2000

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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

historic name Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 376 Greenwood Beach Road NA not for publication

city or town Tiburon NA vicinity

state California code CA county Marin code 041 zip code 94920

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Samuel Abeyta 9/18/00

California Office of Historic Preservation
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

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - 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): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Paul R. Feyer

11/10/2000

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	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation: museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Second Empire

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation **concrete**
roof **wood shingles**
walls **wood**

other **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 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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:

Native Sons of the Golden West, Tiburon Arts Com.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1876

Significant Dates

1876

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Unknown

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	10	544300	4194000	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

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 **David Steinhardt, MD/ Revised by the Office of Historic Preservation**

organization **National Audubon Society** date **May 19, 2000**

street & number **23 Antilles Way** telephone **(415) 435-5575**

city or town **Tiburon** state **CA** zip code **94920**

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 **National Audubon Society, Patti Hedge, Director, Bay Audubon Center (415) 388-2524**

street & number **700 Broadway** telephone **(212) 979-3000**

city or town **New York** state **NY** zip code **10003**

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**

Section number 7 _____ Page 5

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

Summary

The Lyford House is a two-story wood frame residence with flared mansard roof with patterned shingles and dormers, a three-story tower with concave rood centered on the front elevation, and decorative carved trim on the dormers and on the roof. The house with its Second Empire mansard roof is also vaguely Gothic in the pointed tower dormers and Italianate in the bracketed and pedimented second floor paired windows. The house was built in 1876 on Strawberry Point overlooking Richardson Bay. Threatened by demolition in 1957, the building was placed on a barge and floated across the bay to its present location in Tiburon. Following the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile move, a single story addition was made to the rear of the house and windows on one side elevation were enlarged. Chimneys have been removed or altered and the raised box-like skylight on the roof has a new pedimented roof.

Description

The house was originally part of Dr. Benjamin Lyford's Hygienic Eagle Dairy on Strawberry Point between Sausalito and Tiburon. Overlooking the bay, the house sat adjacent to farm buildings and cow pastures and was "a model of sanitary dairy practices." Today the house sits on a 25-foot bluff at the shore of Richardson Bay, in Tiburon. It is owned by the National Audubon Society and sits on a parcel with other buildings at the Audubon Center. Although its immediate setting today is quite different from its historic dairy farm setting, the house still stands on open land and faces the bay.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 _____ Page 6

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

The two-story house is basically rectangular with a centered three-story tower projecting from the symmetrical front elevation. The ground floor has horizontal wood siding, corner boards, and double hung single and paired windows on the north (front) and west elevations. The windows on the east elevation have been replaced and enlarged. The second floor of the main body of the house has a mansard roof with patterned shingles. Dormers have full sized and projecting double hung windows with concave bracketed hoods surmounted by carved wood trim on the front and side elevations. Second floor windows in the tower are paired, round arched, double hung, and surmounted by bracketed pediments. The tower's roof at the third story level has patterned shingles and four smaller double hung dormer windows with steeply pitched gable roofs and large decorative carved trim. The flagpole sits atop the tower's roof. A raised box skylight sits atop the mansard roof.

A number of changes took place after the house was moved in 1957 and again in 1958 and 1959. A single story, gabled addition was added to the rear of the house. First floor windows on the east elevation were removed and replaced with larger windows. A small pedimented roof was placed on top of the skylight. The chimney was rebuilt. Lion heads originally surmounted the garlands, at the four corners of the mansard roof. These heads have sadly been removed, but the garlands remain.

In 1963, and again in 1975, Lucretia Hanson Little described the Lyford house in two local articles:

A stylish country house, of Victorian design, the double doors of the main entrance opening into the base of the three-story tower. White pine doors and windows, and molding to be gilded for 12-foot ceilings. Four inch thick concrete

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 ____ Page 7

Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California

walls, not reinforced, later stuccoed, formed the first floor with its front and back parlors and fireplace, dining room, and kitchen, with ornamental external trim above each window. (After the 1906 quake, the old concrete was replaced with safer wood.)

No other reference has been found to the house originally having concrete walls. However, it is not entirely impossible the walls were concrete. Orson Squire Fowler's book A Home for all or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building, first published in 1848, was hugely popular for a number of years. Fowler, a phrenologist and a prolific writer on matters of health and happiness, believed concrete was the perfect building material; it was easy to clean, fireproof, and inexpensive. The hygienic qualities of concrete could easily have appealed to Lyford, who was interested in ideas of health, from the eastern United States, and possibly familiar with Fowler's ideas. Concrete, although not a common building material at this time, was used in northern California. The Thomas Earl House in Napa was built in 1861 using concrete blocks. The first concrete tilt-up warehouse was built in nearby Petaluma in 1865.

If the Lyford House walls were concrete, they may or may not have been sided with wood. A close inspection of the siding in 2000 showed the siding to be the same on the main body of the house and tower. The siding on the single story addition is slightly different. The siding on the house and tower is wide board with a fairly wide seam, which could date to the 1870s.

The question of whether or not the ground floor walls were originally concrete until 1906 is not confirmed at this time. And, therefore, the date of the siding is not confirmed.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 ___ Page 8

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

Many parts of the house were from the East Coast, for example the African mahogany circular staircase and banister. Dr. and Mrs. Lyford, according to legend, purchased the exterior decorative trim on their visit to Philadelphia and the Centennial Exposition in 1876.

A metal plaque was placed on the entrance in 1959 in memory of Florence van Vechten Dickey who donated money for restoration that year. In 1998 the Native Sons of the Golden West in recognition of the house's historic value put up a bronze plaque. The house became a Tiburon Historic Landmark in 2000.

The Audubon Society uses the house today as a house museum, and lecture and meeting center.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8_ Page 9

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

Summary

The Benjamin and Hilarita Lyford House, constructed in 1876, is significant at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of architecture as an excellent example of residential design from the second half of the nineteenth century. The house, threatened by demolition in 1957, was barged across Richardson Bay from Strawberry Point to its current site. The house is included in a number of regional architectural guides for its design. The property meets Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties because the property is significant for its architectural values which have not been lost by the move.

Significance

The House is featured in Kenneth Naversen's West Coast Victorians, A Nineteenth-Century Legacy. Naversen writes of the house:

The Reed-Lyford house, an interesting blend of styles, was the home of Dr. Benjamin Lyford – a San Francisco physician turned dairy farmer- and his wife, Hilarita – daughter of John Reed, a wealthy landowner in Marin County. A few years after their marriage in 1872 they moved into the quaint, towered house shown here and established their Eagle Dairy on a portion of an old Spanish land grant, the *Rancho Corte Madera del Presidio*, that Mrs. Lyford's father had acquired before the gold rush. There they led a romantically pastoral life, and, as part of a program to produce milk of superior quality, tended their cows with "great kindness" and extreme attention to hygiene. They also tried to start a sort of utopian, health-minded community on their extensive property and even sold a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8__ Page 10

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

few lots to selecting buyers. But some of the rules – no smoking, drinking, or kissing – were perhaps too strict for popular consumption, and the planned development (named “Lyford Hygeia” for the doctor and the Greek goddess of health) never attained much success.

No information has survived on who designed their residence, but it is thought to have derived from a pattern book. In style it is mainly Second Empire: both the flared mansard roof and the centrally placed tower are characteristic of houses in the French mode. But the influence of the Italianate is also apparent in the bracketed and pedimented second-floor windows, and there are hints of the Gothic in the pointed gables of the tower dormers. Moreover, the structure has a distinctly churchlike character perhaps appropriate for a man who seems to have made a sort of religion of health.

Moved to its present location and restored by the architect John Lord King in 1957, the former residence now serves as headquarters for the Marin chapter of the National Audubon Society.

Virginia and Lee McAlester write of the Second Empire style in A Field Guide To American Houses:

Second Empire was a dominant style for American houses constructed between 1860 and 1880, although the first examples were built in the 1850s and the late examples were not uncommon in the 1880s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8__ Page //

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

The contemporaneous Italianate and Gothic Revival styles were part of a Picturesque movement, which looked to the romantic past for inspiration. In contrast, the Second Empire style was considered very modern, for it imitated the latest French building fashions. The distinctive roof was named for the 17th-century French architect Francois Mansart. Its use was extensively revived in France during the reign of Napoleon III (1852-70), France's Second Empire, from which the style takes its name. Exhibitions in Paris in 1855 and 1867 helped to popularize the style in England, from whence it spread to the United States. The boxy roof was considered particularly functional because it permitted a full upper story of usable attic space. For this reason the style became popular for the remodeling of earlier buildings as well as for new construction. The Second Empire style was used for many public buildings in America during the Grant administration (1869-77) and has been facetiously called the General Grant style. It rapidly passed from fashion following the panic of 1873 and the subsequent economic depression.

David Gebhard and Robert Winter refer to the style as both the Mansard style and French Second Empire. They describe the style as follows:

The origin of this style was the public architecture developed in France during the reign of Napoleon III. As a style, it came to be used extensively in parts of the East and Midwest for public buildings and commercial blocks. It was also employed for houses of all sizes. The style took hold in the U.S. after the Civil War and continued through the early 1880s. It often became mixed with the Italianate, and in many instances a building could just as easily be thrust in the Italianate pigeonhole as in the Second Empire.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8__ Page 12

**Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California**

In California, Italianate design far out favored the Mansard style. But excellent examples of the later were built and remain today. One notable example is the Nathaniel Goodell house (Governor's Mansion) in Sacramento. At the Marin County level, Italianate design predominated during the 1870s. Second Empire designs, however, were built and include a house in 231 West End Avenue in Mill Valley, the Burchard Hotel in San Rafael, 14 Sentinel Court in San Rafael, the Elliott house in San Rafael, and the Lyford House in Tiburon.

The Lyford House is a wonderfully picturesque local example of late 19th century design as seen in its complex roof shapes, patterned roof shingles, centered tower, variety of dormer shapes, window bracketing, and carved decorative trim.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Lyford House, Marin County, California

Section number 8 Page 13

Period of significance

The mansion was conceived and built in 1876, after the owners travelled from California to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Their homestead project was born and developed there, and steps taken toward its realization. Components such as ornamental trim were ordered in the East, as well as the African mahogany spiral staircase which had been brought around the Horn from Africa. From 1876 for about thirty five years they lived in the home.

After the period of significance there were alterations. These were after the house was moved in 1957. A small 1-story wing was added for custodial staff in 1959, using conforming design. A new foundation was provided at the Greenwood Beach site, by the Marin Conservation League, in preparation for the move across Richardson Bay.

* * * * *

Addendum

Doctor Lyford's military service included the battle of Gettysburg, where he operated a front-line casualty station. Under fire, he pressed into "nurse" service a heroic nine-year old girl who had lost her family. Her account of the amputations and deaths staggers the imagination.

After separation from service he practiced in San Francisco and married Hilarita Sanchez. The Lyford mansion was built in 1876.

During the war, and also in a cabin adjacent to the house, the doctor worked on and perfected a method of embalming that was remarkably efficacious.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 14 Lyford House, Marin County, California

Although the method became well-known, he never published the details as he wished to keep it secret for personal gain. The secret died with him.

The Lyfords established "Eagle Dairy" on Strawberry Point as a model of sanitary dairy practices. It was here that the house was built, dominating the several farm buildings close to the shore of the Bay.

Lyford also established "Lyford's Hygeia", a health resort across Richardson Bay in the part of Tiburon bordering on Raccoon Straits. There was strong commercial effort put forward, property was sold, and homes rented. Today a stone archway remains and is listed in the National Register.

On July 17, 1886 the Lyfords donated 11 acres of Tiburon, including Point Tiburon, to the San Francisco and San Rafael Railroad Company. The station and railroad yards were built there. The Stationhouse and the Peter Donahue Building, on that property, are in the National Register.

In 1898 two parcels of land on Strawberry Point, near the Eagle Dairy, were deeded to religious orders: Holy Family Sisters and Sisters of Mercy. On each of these, convents were built. One has been demolished; the buildings of the Holy Family Sisters remain but will be demolished next year.

A broad stained-glass window was given by the Lyfords to St. Hilary's church while it was under construction. It is located over the entrance door and one gets a good view of it while walking out of the pew area.

And about the nine-year old "nurse" from Gettysburg: Many years later, both Lyford and the woman were living in the San Francisco Bay area. They got in touch by chance, and the doctor was able to give her a hand respecting a place to live.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 26 1976
DATE ENTERED	DEC 2 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

8

1

Re: Architect, Gustav Albert Behrnd. He is listed as an architect in Langley's San Francisco Directory ⁽¹⁾ from 1885 through 1907 with these exceptions: 1890 through 1894, 1896 and 1897. Behrnd's known work includes five buildings in San Francisco, two in Sausalito, and one in San Leandro. ⁽²⁾ According to local Tiburon stories, Behrnd designed Lyford's Tower and provided other architectural services for Lyford in payment, or in return for, a lot in Lyford's Hygeia. ⁽³⁾

Behrnd's residence was "Lyford's Point, Marin County" from 1902 through 1907, ⁽⁴⁾ according to the city directories. In 1909 he lived in Midlake, Lake County. When his wife died in 1913 he still resided there. ⁽⁵⁾ After that we know nothing of him. The Department of Health in Sacramento has no record of his death in California.

- (1) Rare Book - Special Collections Room, San Francisco Public Library
- (2) California Architectural & Building News, San Francisco, 1880-1900. Courtesy of Dr. Joseph A. Baird, Jr.
- (3) One long-time resident, the later J. F. C. von Rosen, who knew Behrnd, related this in an interview about 1956 with Mrs. Louise Teather, local historian and member of the Tiburon Landmarks Advisory Committee. Records in the Marin County Recorder's Office show that Lyford transferred Lot 4, Section 6, of Lyford's Hygeia to Behrnd's wife, Anna, on February 27, 1901, and that she deeded it to her husband on September 17, 1904.
- (4) Behrnd sold Lot 4, Section 6 to the Hotaling Banking Co. on June 16, 1909 (Marin County Recorder's Office).
- (5) Behrnd was informant as to details of his wife's death on December 15, 1913 (death certificate, County Recorder, Lake County).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 15

Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California

Bibliography

Published Material

Eischen, Charles. "Victorian Glory Restored." San Francisco Examiner (June 22, 1959).

Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter, et al. A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco & Northern California. Santa Barbara and Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, Inc., 1973.

Gowans, Alan. Styles and Types of North American Architecture, Social Function and Cultural Expression. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

Griffin, L. Martin. Saving the Marin-Sonoma Coast. Healdsburg, California: Sweetwater Springs Press, 1998.

Heig, James. Pictorial History of Tiburon. San Francisco: Scottwall, 1984.

Little, Lucretia H. Marin History. Belvedere-Tiburon Landmark Society, 1983.

McAlester, Virginia, and Lee McAlester. A Field Guide To American Houses. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

Naversen, Kenneth. West Coast Victorians, A Nineteenth-Century Legacy. Wilsonville, Oregon: Beautiful America Publishing Co., 1987.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 16

Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California

Steinhardt, David. Richardson Bay Journal. National Audubon Society, 1996, 1999.

Warshaw, Steven. "The Rescue of Richardson Bay." San Francisco News (December 5, 1957).

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The M.I.T. Press, 1969.

Diary

Portions of personal diary recovered from Lyford House in 1957 and preserved at the Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society.

Minutes

Minutes of Marin Conservation League, 1956-1966, reflecting management of gifted Lyford House and Verral property, passing these on to Audubon Society and contracting for first repairs and renovation.

Oral History

Interview of David Steinhardt, MD, telling story of Richardson Bay and Lyford House. Tape and transcript in Belvedere-Tiburon Landmark Society archives.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 17

Lyford, Benjamin and Hilarita, House
Marin County, California

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property boundary measures 60 by 90 feet, about 20 feet from the edge of Richardson Bay. Please see accompanying map.

Boundary Justification:

The property boundary was drawn to encompass the house and an appropriate setting. Because the house has been moved it is no longer connected with its original, historic setting.

National Audubon Society Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

Tiburon, California

Scale: 1" = 30'

