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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in 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: Winnemucca Hotel
other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number 95 S. Bridge Street not for publication N/A
city or town Winnemucca vicinity NA
state Nevada code NV county Humboldt code 013 zip code 89445

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Ronald M. Jones, SHPD Signature of certifying official/Title
4-8-05 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 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 Keeper Date of Action

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Hotel

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC Sub: Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/Vernacular Commercial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
roof Composition Shingle
walls Adobe, Brick
other Metal

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
ETHNIC HERITAGE/Basques

Period of Significance 1863-1953
 Significant Dates 1863, 1919
 Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A
 Cultural Affiliation N/A
 Architect/Builder Lay Brothers

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets) See 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: North Central Nevada Museum

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

7. Description

The Winnemucca Hotel is located on a 0.38-acre parcel at 95 Bridge Street in Winnemucca, Nevada. The hotel's plan is a complex one. The building, which is likely the oldest building in Winnemucca, was constructed in four sections between 1863 and 1915. The earliest section (1863), which housed the dining room, saloon, and hotel office, is a 2-1/2-story frame structure on a stone foundation and covered with composition siding over shiplap board. It faces Bridge Street and has a medium-pitched end-gabled roof with boxed eaves. Fenestration consists of double-hung windows and an entrance inset at the east corner. The original nineteenth-century porch was removed after 1910. The original ornate bar is still in use in this section of the building. The bar is reported to have been shipped around Cape Horn during the Civil War and laboriously transported to Winnemucca by wagon, presumably from San Francisco. Oral tradition frequently asserts that bars such as this as well as large pianos or other pieces of furniture that clearly date to before 1869 transcontinental railroad were "shipped around the horn." Most of these were probably either hauled across the continent or shipped to Panama, freighted across the Isthmus, and then shipped to San Francisco. Trips around the Horn were treacherous and less common than claimed by folklore, but bars such of this attract these stories because clearly their arrival was achieved only through extensive labor and cost.

The second section to be built is attached to the north side of the original building facing Bridge Street. This section was constructed ca. 1872 by David Giroux, who had acquired ownership of the building the previous year. He initially contemplated demolishing the hotel and building a new one, but instead, he decided to expand the existing facility. This two-story, red-brick addition housed more hotel rooms. It has a hipped roof and unusual second-story bay windows at each end. The entrance is centrally-placed with two double-hung windows on each side of the door and two above.

The Sanborn Map identifies the third section (1875), which faces First Street and housed hotel rooms, as being constructed of adobe bricks. The adobe was coated in stucco and is likely the earliest use of that material in Winnemucca (Stupich 1982). This two-story section is attached to the rear of the original section. It has a flat roof and an unornamented façade comprising evenly-spaced double-hung windows on both stories. The rear wall, which was the part of a Basque handball court added in the 1920s, extends above the roofline and on it is painted the hotel's advertising:

WINNEMUCCA HOTEL
BASQUE
AND AMERICAN
FAMILY STYLE
MEALS
HOME of the PICON PUNCH

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

7. Description, continued

The final addition to the hotel was built to the north of the 1872 section. It does not appear on the Sanborn Map until 1943, but it was likely constructed in the late 1920s by John Esparza, the first Basque owner of the hotel. This two-story section is also built of red brick and has a flat roof behind a false-front. The entrance is centrally-placed with one window on each side of the door and two above. It occupies a space on which the ice house stood.

The Winnemucca Hotel, especially since it represents several construction phases, does not reflect a specific architectural style. For the purpose of this nomination, it has been classified as “vernacular commercial,” a common type in the state.

Integrity

The Winnemucca Hotel retains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity for its period of significance, 1863-1953. As one of a handful of existing Basque hotels in Nevada and as the oldest surviving building in Winnemucca, the Winnemucca Hotel retains the ability to convey its significance through integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

8. Significance

The Winnemucca Hotel is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its role in the history of commerce in Winnemucca and for its association with Basque sheepherders. The Winnemucca Hotel is one of the oldest buildings in town. The hotel first served wagon teams, miners, and stage line operators. With the arrival of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869, it added rail passengers to its list of patrons and after 1919, the hotel served as a boardinghouse for Basque sheepherders. It continues to be known for its Basque cuisine, and especially for its potent Basque drink, “picon punch.” The hotel is also significant at the state level as a rare survivor of a property type that was prevalent in northern Nevada from the late nineteenth century to the early 1950s.

Winnemucca

Winnemucca, Nevada is located in the Humboldt River valley. The Humboldt River, and its tributary, the Little Humboldt were important routes for trappers and explorers, crossing the Great Basin before the hordes of gold-seekers who rushed through the region on their way to California. Rather than beginning life as a mining town, as so many northern Nevada communities did, Winnemucca started in 1850 as French Ford, a ferry at the only dependable crossing on the entire 350-mile length of the Humboldt. It

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

was known as French Ford after the Frenchmen who established it: the Lay brothers and their associate Frank Baud (Carlson 1974:248).

French Ford, around which cattle and sheep ranches developed, prospered as a teaming, shipping, and supply center serving a regular flow of Oregon- and California-bound emigrants, and after 1859 those headed to the Comstock, 180 miles to the southwest. By 1863, the Lay brothers had built a bridge down stream from the ferry crossing, where they established a saloon and hotel (an establishment that would become known as the Winnemucca Hotel). The spot became known as French Bridge. In the early 1860s, several mining districts were established in the vicinity, but it was the arrival of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1868 that guaranteed the permanence of the community at the big bend of the Humboldt River (Stupich 1982).

The railroad selected a route one mile above and parallel to the river, and away from the settlement at French Bridge. C.B.O. Bannon, a nephew of Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of the Interior, named the new townsite Winnemucca, in honor of the Paiute Indian chief of the same name (Carlson 1974:248). The two communities, which became known as Lowertown (on the river) and Uppertown (on the railroad), developed a rivalry. Uppertown, also known as Lanerntown—because it was the first of the two towns to light its streets at night with oil lamps—was modern and civilized compared to its neighbor a mile down hill. The first buildings in Uppertown were situated along the railroad tracks and consisted of a hotel and other commercial establishments.

By 1872, Winnemucca had wrested the seat of Humboldt County from Unionville, a mining town that was destined to become an out-of-the-way ghost town. Throughout the nineteenth century, Winnemucca was a transportation hub for travelers and goods on the transcontinental route, and as a result, the town thrived when others that relied on the boom-and-bust industries of agriculture and mining suffered and often died. For its central location, Winnemucca was also a thriving agricultural center, and according to author Robert Laxalt (1966), it served as a sheep and cattle capital for more than fifty years. Winnemucca was perfectly situated along the trapping and wagon trails, and when the Victory Highway came through the area in the early twentieth century it followed the historic routes. This provided additional economic security during the major downturns of the first half of that decade. With automobile and train travelers constantly passing through, Winnemucca's hotels and restaurants thrived.

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Basques in Nevada

The vast open ranges of Nevada were conducive to sheepraising, and during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was a profitable industry. As a railroad town, Winnemucca was perfectly situated to attract the hundreds of Basques who passed through town to and from the remote sheep camps in central Nevada. Hotels and boardinghouses catering to the Basque shepherders played an important role in their lives and in the history of the Basques in the West. At one time, a number of Basque hotels operated in the Nevada communities of Winnemucca, Reno, Gardnerville, Paradise Valley, Elko, Carson City, Eureka, Austin, Battle Mountain, Fallon, Golconda, Jack Creek, Lovelock, McDermitt, Unionville, and Wellington (Echeverria 2000:129). Professor Jeronima Echeverria recently reported that there are only ten functioning Basque hotels in Nevada and California (2000:138).

Basques, whose home country straddles the border between France and Spain in the western Pyrenees, first came to the American West in the mid-nineteenth century, drawn by the promise of gold in California. A young Basque adventurer named Pedro Altube sailed to California in 1850. How Pedro Altube made enough money to acquire a sizable herd of cattle is unknown, but his success brought him and his herd to Nevada in 1873. Attracted by the beauty of Independence Valley in eastern Elko County, Altube founded the Spanish Ranch there. Altube's family and friends followed him to the ranch and together they developed a cattle and sheep empire spreading from California to Colorado and from Washington to Arizona. As a result, Pedro Altube earned the title, "Father of the Basques in the Far West" (Laxalt 1966).

By the late nineteenth century, Basques began to come to Nevada to avail themselves of the opportunities in Nevada's thriving sheep industry (Arrizabalaga n.d.:2). The hard-working Basques were well suited to sheep herding in the remote basin-and-range topography of Nevada, and by the turn of the twentieth century, Basque immigration increased significantly. Dominique Laxalt described the phenomenon:

The big movement of the Basques came after the century had turned. Thousands like myself came between then and the 1930s. We all came the same way, with not much more than the clothes on our backs. But we were young and strong, and willing to work and suffer for a chance in life we couldn't have had in the old country. Though we talked about going home—and some did go—underneath, most of us realized the opportunity was here. It was raw new land, and we were helping to build it. There wasn't anything a man couldn't do in this western country with work and luck (Laxalt 1966:882).

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

The key to success for the shepherders was the practice of taking their pay in sheep instead of cash, allowing many to establish their own herds and purchase land. The Basques who settled in Nevada have made significant contributions to the state and its history. Nevada has been characterized as a western crossroads for Basques crossing the state to and from Utah, Idaho, Oregon, Wyoming, and California in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Echeverria 2000).

In the late nineteenth century, Winnemucca was an important Basque center and it would become even more important with the influx of Basques to the region at the turn of the twentieth century. The 1900 census reported 180 Basques in Nevada, and by 1910, the number had jumped to 986. Of the latter total, the greatest number (275) was in Humboldt County, where Winnemucca is located. The majority of the Basques in Humboldt County were from Spain, while those in Washoe and Douglas Counties to the west tended to be from France (Mallea n.d.:5-7).

Basque immigration increased dramatically at the beginning of the twentieth century, but in the 1920s the U.S. government imposed immigration quotas. In the 1930s, the Depression, a major drought, and overgrazing drove many itinerant Basque sheep men into bankruptcy and severely curtailed Basque immigration. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 put additional restrictions on the Basques, since it specifically excluded aliens from grazing their animals on public lands. After 1934, Basques immigrating to Nevada had to be in possession of a temporary work contract. This situation created a shepherd shortage in the late 1930s and 1940s. In the 1950s, Nevada Senator Pat McCarran pressured the U.S. Congress to raise the immigration quota for Basque shepherders from 500 annually to 893.

The nature of Nevada's sheep industry has changed over the years, and there is no longer a need for a large number of shepherders. In addition, South American shepherders have replaced those from the Basque country. The descendants of the Basque shepherders who came to Nevada "for a chance in life" are now honored members of Nevada society.

Basque Hotels

As most Basques arrived in this country without knowing the English language or being familiar with American culture, the hotel or boardinghouse, which the Basques call *ostatuak*, served as the major Basque social, political, and economic institution, and as halfway houses between the two cultures. Generally run by a couple, the *hoteleros*, the Basque hotel served as a home away from home for the shepherders. The hotels functioned as employment agencies, provided rooms and meals, social activities, permanent mailing addresses and storage for personal belongings while on the range. For a

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

Basque sheepherder, being “on the range” could last from a season to more than a year. The Basque sheepherders were generally young, single men, but they met Basque girls who came from the homeland to work in the hotels. Frequently marriage ensued. The Basque hotel was the extended family and church, hosting events such as dances, weddings, baptisms, and funerals. For some, the hotel even became a retirement home (Echeverria 2000).

Reno played an especially important role in hosting Basques because of its location on several major transportation corridors. Reno’s first *ostatuak* was established in the 1880s, and by 1929, there was a “Basque town” where more than five Basque hotels were clustered. Two of Reno’s Basque hotels are still in operation, the Santa Fe on Lake Street and Louie’s Basque Corner on East Fourth Street (Echeverria 2000:129). Two other former Basque hotels still stand, the Alturas (now the Alturas Bar) on East Fourth Street and the Espanol on East Plaza Street. The latter, however, has been slated for demolition to make way for a regional transportation center.

Elko, in northeastern Nevada, was another important center for Basques. By the first decade of the twentieth century, Basques moved into the area and built boardinghouses for their compatriots. The earliest was the Star Hotel on Silver Street, built in 1910 by Pete and Mathilde Juaregui and their partner Emilio Dotta. Although the Star has seen a succession of Basque owners, it remains under Basque ownership today (Echeverria 2000:130). As with other extant Basque hotels, the Star operates today as a popular restaurant featuring Basque cuisine. Basque restaurants are important symbols of Basque heritage in the West.

Several Basque hotels were located in Gardnerville, in west central Nevada. The Overland, the East Fork, and the French Hotel were home to the region’s mostly French Basque sheepherders. The Overland continues under Basque ownership, and is known for its Basques dinners. The East Fork stands vacant, but it is still owned by the children of the Basque family that ran it for many years. The hotel rooms at the East Fork appear as they did when the hotel was abandoned following a fire in the 1980s. Still intact are the storage closets where the sheepherders’ possessions were stored, the individual rooms with their single beds, dressers, and crucifixes on the walls, and the large bar and dining table in the common area. In addition to the Overland Hotel, the JT Bar and Dining Room, and the Country Club restaurant (located in a modern building) are popular spots for Basque dining.

Winnemucca’s only other extant Basque hotel is the Martin, which began operating as a Basque hotel in 1913, when Augustine and Elisée Martin took over the building, known as the Lafayette Hotel Annex, and renamed it the Martin Hotel. The Martin is located directly opposite the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks,

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

The Winnemucca Hotel

not far from where the depot stood. Like the Winnemucca Hotel, the Martin represents several construction and reconstruction phases (Harmon 2003). The Martin Hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 24, 2003.

The Winnemucca Hotel is likely the oldest standing building in Winnemucca. It was built along the banks of the Humboldt River in 1863 by brothers Theophile and Louis Lay, and a partner Frank Baud, from France.¹ Baud and the Lays, who owned 160 acres along the Humboldt River, had built a bridge across the river a hundred yards down stream from an 1850 ferry crossing. Their establishment, which opened in 1866, served those crossing their toll bridge. When Baud died in 1866, the Lay Brothers bought his one-third interest in the hotel and bridge. In turn, Louis deeded his one-third interest to Theophile, who sold the bridge to the county. The hotel quickly became the center of the small but growing community. It was the first stage stop and post office in the area, serving among others the Paradise Stage Line and the Wells Fargo & Co. Express (Stupich 1982).

Theophile Lay operated the Winnemucca Hotel until 1871, when he decided he would follow his brother Louis to Golconda, where they planned to build the Golconda Hot Springs Hotel. Like Winnemucca, the mining town of Golconda had a relatively large French population. The 1880 census of Golconda lists the younger of the two Lay brothers, Theophile, as a hotel keeper, and Louis as a farmer. David Giroux, a French Canadian, purchased the Winnemucca Hotel and initially thought about demolishing the existing building and constructing a new one. He decided instead to build an addition to the existing hotel.

Since the Winnemucca Hotel was located in Lower Town, away from the railroad depot that was built in 1868, Mr. Giroux had to make an extra effort to attract rail travelers away from the hotels closer to the tracks. To do this, he instituted bus service in 1873 to lure customers from the Railroad Street hotels. His advertisement read: "Headquarters for Stockmen and Mining Men. Strictly first class. Bus to and from all trains." In 1875, he added spring beds. He leased the hotel for two years between 1887 and 1889, but he ultimately took back the operation and made additional improvements, including the installation of a large well and pipeline, and a 10,000-gallon water tank. In 1893, a contractor jacked up the building one foot and placed a stone foundation under it in order to solve the settling problem that had developed. In

¹ A large number of Basques from Spain and France settled in Humboldt County, but a substantial number of Non-Basque French came to the area, as well. A recent article by Professor Marc Frangi of Maure, France appeared in the 2003-2004 edition of *The Humboldt Historian*. Dr. Frangi's article focused primarily on immigrants from the Seyne region of France and their lives in Winnemucca and Golconda.

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

8. Significance, continued

1908, the ceiling in the barroom collapsed. No one was hurt, as the ceiling gave off a loud crack before its ultimate failure the patrons and employees had sufficient time to escape (Shannon 2003).

While under the 30-year ownership of David Giroux, the Winnemucca Hotel served as an important community center for the region's French residents. Edward Giroux's, David's son from his first marriage, was a physician in Winnemucca. He counted among his patients, local French many of whom, along with many Basques, worked as shepherders in the region. His father's hotel served as the local hospital on at least one occasion. In 1903, a French shepherd from the Seyne region of France, was in a fight with a fellow Seynoise and severely injured. He was taken from his home near Paradise Valley to the Winnemucca Hotel where he was attended to by Dr. Giroux. Although Dr. Giroux was at first optimistic, the shepherd died six days later from a blood infection (Frangi 2004).

David Giroux, who owned and operated the hotel for three decades, died in 1919. Just before his death, he had leased the hotel to John Esparza, a Basque from Spain. With Mr. Esparza's involvement with the Winnemucca Hotel came its new community role as a Basque boardinghouse and restaurant. Mr. Esparza was sufficiently successful in his first five years operating the hotel that he was able to offer David Giroux's widow \$20,000 for the purchase of the hotel. The sale was completed on September 16, 1924. Another testament to Mr. Esparza's success, and the demand for Basque housing during the first few decades of the twentieth century, was the addition he made to the hotel, presumably shortly after the 1924 purchase. Mr. Esparza also added a handball court to the rear of adobe section of the hotel. Basque handball (pilota or pelota) was an important cultural activity and the handball court would have played a significant role in the daily lives of local Basques.

Over the last 86 years, several owners have operated the Winnemucca Hotel in the Basque tradition. The Olano family has owned the hotel for 42 years. Family patriarch, 82-year old Miguel Olano, continues to oversee operations and ensure a high standard of excellence (Shannon 2003).

Summary

The Winnemucca Hotel is significant as the oldest continuously-operating business in Winnemucca, its first hotel and stage stop, and later as a Basque boardinghouse and restaurant. The hotel reflects the history of Winnemucca from its founding and the presence of French and Basque shepherders in the region.

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Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

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Section 10 Geographic Data

Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries of the Winnemucca Hotel includes the 0.38-acre parcel identified as Assessor's Parcel Number 15-143-02, Humboldt County, Nevada, located in Section 29, T.36N, R.38E, MDB&M.

Boundary Justification

Resource boundaries include all land commonly associated with the lot identified as Humboldt County, Nevada APN 15-143-02.

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Section Photographs Page 12

Winnemucca Hotel, Winnemucca, Humboldt County, Nevada

Photographs

Property: The Winnemucca Hotel

Property Location: 95 S. Bridge Street
Winnemucca, Humboldt County
Nevada

Photographer: James Anderson

Date of Photographs: March 10, 2005

Location of Negatives: Mr. James Anderson
4905 Davis lane
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Photograph 1: Front elevation of the original building
Also showing the second and fourth additions to the right and the third
addition to the rear
Facing southwest

Photograph 2: Front elevations of the second and fourth additions
Facing west

Photograph 3: Rear and east elevations of the third addition with the original structure at
the far right end
Facing north