NOV 1 6 1990 OFE Page 1 USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form The Gamble Building NPS Form 10-900 DMB No. 1024-0018 (Rev. 8-86) United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM 1. Name of Property Gamble Building and Miner's Bean Kettle historic name: other name/site number: Express Office Building, Wells Fargo Building, Raggio Store, Cobden Building. 2. Location street & number: 17544 State Highway 120\_\_\_\_\_ not for publication: N/A city/town: Big Oak Flat\_\_\_\_\_ vicinity: \_ state: CA county: Tuolumne codes 109 zip code: 95305 3. Classification Ownership of Property: Private Category of Property: Building Number of Resources within Property: Contributing Noncontributing \_\_\_\_ buildings \_\_\_2\_\_\_ sites -----\_\_\_\_\_ structures -----\_\_\_\_ objects \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:  $\__{-}$ 

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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Current : Vacant\_\_\_\_\_

4. 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  $\frac{x}{2}$  meets \_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet. w\_\_\_\_\_ 2-13-91 Signature of certifying official Date 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. Signature of commenting or other official Date State or Federal agency and bureau National Park Service Certification National Register 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 6. Function or Use Historic: Commerce/Trade\_\_\_\_\_\_Sub: financial institution

Sub:

department store\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description Architectural Classification: Italianate Other Description: metal-----Materials: foundation stone\_\_\_\_\_ roof walls stone\_\_\_\_ other ----and and all the state and the state and all and state Describe present and historic physical appearance. \_X\_ See continuation sheet. 8. Statement of Significance Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: \_statewide \_\_\_\_. Applicable National Register Criteria: C & A Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : Areas of Significance: Architecture Exploration/Settlement\_\_\_\_\_ Commerce\_\_\_\_\_ Period(s) of Significance: c. 1852 - 1930 Significant Dates :c. 1852, c. 1870 Significant Person(s): N/A\_\_\_\_\_ Cultural Affiliation: N/A\_\_\_\_\_ Architect/Builder: unknown\_\_\_\_\_ 

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. \_X\_ See continuation sheet.

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9. Major Bibliographical References \_X\_ See continuation sheet. Previous documentation on file (NPB): N/A \_ 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 # X recorded in Big Dak Flat - Groveland Historic Sites Survey, 1988. Primary Location of Additional Data: X State historic preservation office \_ Other state agency \_ Føderal agency \_ Local government University X Other -- Specify Repository: Southern Tuolumne County Hist. Soc. 10. Geographical Data Acreace of Property: .25 UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing A 10 741435 4189590 B and any second second second second second С \_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet. See continuation sheet. Verbal Boundary Description: The southern sixty (60') feet of Assessor's Parcels 7-182-01, 7-182-02 and 7-182-25 (see enclosed plot map). Boundary Justification: \_\_\_ See continuation sheet. This includes all remaining property historically associated with the Gamble Building and the Miner's Bean Kettle building. 11. Form Prepared By Name/Title: Mark V. Thornton/ Himtorian-Consultant for the Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society Organization: South. Tuolumne Cty. Hist. Soc. Date: 11-14-1990\_\_\_\_\_ Street & Number: P.O. Box 1849\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: (209) 962-7805 City or Town: Big Oak Flat\_\_\_\_\_ State:CA ZIP: 95305

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The Gamble Building with attached jailhouse room is situated on the north side of State Highway 120 and east of the Big Oak Road. The highway is a slightly widened and paved version of the original wagon trail which constituted Big Oak Flat's Main Street. The Gamble Building was constructed between 1848 and 1852 and has remained virtually unchanged since then. Between the Gamble Building and the Big Oak Road stands a wood frame building known commonly as the Miner's Bean Kettle. This building was constructed c. 1870 and is attached to the south wall of the Gamble Building's jailhouse room.

The Gamble Building is a large, rectangular stone structure that's approximately 64' wide by 56' deep. A small rectangular one room jail is attached to the northwest corner. The Gamble building has a perimeter stone foundation and interior pier and post supports. The building is constructed principally of slate rock but features a wide, decorated brick frieze along the front facade that wraps around, in a tapered design, at each end. This frieze and the quoins around the three paired, bricked-lined doorways across the front (south wall) provide just a hint of an Italianate influence to the structure's design. The front doorways are 5'5" wide by 9' high and contain paired, folding iron fire doors which close over 1/2 glazed double doors. Across the back are three 4'9" wide by B' high doorway openings that are enclosed by single large iron doors over interior wooden doors. The rear (north) wall is covered with vines. The east and west walls are solid stone with no openings, excepting the jailhouse extension towards the rear of the west wall. The perimeter walls of the Gamble Building, including the jailhouse, are roughly 18" thick.

The Gamble Building is comprised of four main sections, three large suites and one small jailhouse cell. Each suite has its own front and rear entry. The suites are divided into two, with the rear portion being smaller in size. The eastern suite is roughly 1000 square feet, the middle and western suites are about 1200 square feet each. An interior connecting arcade at the front of the suites has been walled shut. Trap doors in each suite provide access to separate root cellars measuring about 200 square feet each. The Gamble Building has a corrugated metal shed roof which covers the timber and mud mortared roof framing. The original terne plate covered adobe brick roofing was removed years ago.

Located to the rear of the Gamble Building on the west side is the aforementioned jailhouse. This small (11'6" wide by 21' deep) stone and adobe room appears to be a contemporaneous and integral part of the Gamble Building (see enclosed drawing). The room served for a time as the community's jail. Its eastern wall is solid, providing no access to the interior of the Gamble Building's western suite. Centered in the rear (north) wall of the jail is a small 12" x 18" window with metal shutter. A 33" by 47" high window with iron shutter is centered in the west wall. Iron bars are situated in the window opening. The exterior of the jail's west and south walls have been plastered. A small shed roof extends down from the Gamble Building's primary roof covering the jail and rear portion of the Miner's Bean Kettle. Entry to the jailhouse room is through the south wall which has been enclosed by the attached Miner's Bean Kettle building. NPB Form 10-900-a (8-86)

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Section number 7 The Gamble Building Page 6 The three room Miner's Bean Kettle is 14'6" wide by 33' deep and is divided into two sections with the front (and larger section) having a corrugated metal covered gabled roof. The rear portion is covered with a corrugated metal shed roof that extends down from the Gamble Building and runs back to cover the jail. The Miner's Bean Kettle has a pier and post foundation with corrugated metal siding over the original plank siding. The windows on the south (front) and west sides and the front entry have been boarded over with scrap plywood. A narrow gap exists between the east wall of the Miner's Bean Kettle and the west wall of the Gamble Building's western suite. Large Chinese Locust "trees of heaven" grace the west side of the Miner's Bean Kettle. A rear entry is off-set in the north wall.

The corrugated metal miding and roofing for the Miner'm Bean Kettle and roofing for the Gamble Building were added around 1900. A recently constructed slate stone walk extends across the front of the Gamble Building, starting at ground level on the east property boundary running westerly to terminate in a two step stair on the west side of the Miner's Bean Kettle. This stone walk replaced a smaller concrete walk which in turn had replaced the original boardwalk. A shed roof awning across the front of the Gamble Building was removed a number of years ago. A small portion of the rear wall of the Gamble Building failed a few years ago but was carefully restored. Discoloration in the stone on the front wall of the eastern suite raises questions about this portion of the Gamble Building's history, although any changes done there appear to have been performed during the structure's first decade of life. Because the exterior walls surrounding the rear rooms of the suites show poorer workmanship and crude materials and due to the slightly different floor plan, it's been suggested that this part of the Gamble Building (including the jailhouse) might predate the front portion and may constitute the original Savage Trading Post. It's also possible that Big Oak Flat's great fire of 1863 damaged the rear portion of the Gamble Building necessitating reconstruction.

Electricity arrived to Big Oak Flat in 1906 and interior wiring appears to date from that time. Some of the original furnishings of the Raggio Store, shelving, counters and etc., are still to be found within the Gamble Building. In 1934 the wood frame Brinham Store building was constructed on the parcel immediately to the east of the Gamble Building, replacing an earlier structure. This building runs along most of the eastern wall of the Gamble Building. Today it is used primarily for storage. The wood frame Raggio House, built circa 1901, is located on the north portion of Assessor's Parcel 7-182-01 and is not a part of this property registration. A small well house for this residence is located on the west side of the jailhouse.

The Gamble Building and Miner's Bean Kettle have served generally as storage space for the past 30 years. The Gamble Building's close proximity to a heavily traveled State Highway has not gone without causing some structural strains but despite this and the several aforementioned minor alterations, both the Gamble Building and the Miner's Bean Kettle still maintain a high degree of integrity and they serve as striking and vivid reminders of the glories of Big Dak Flat's more prosperous past. NFS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

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The Gamble Building is significant under Criteria C as representing one of the finest examples of Gold Rush stone commercial architecture to be seen today. It is one of only two surviving stone buildings in Big Oak Flat and it is one of the oldest buildings to be found in Tuolumne County. It has a high degree of integrity having under gone few alterations during its lifetime. It displays splendid craftsmanship, with solidly constructed native slate stone walls accented by brick lined doorways and brick frieze. The building also derives significance under Criteria A, being one of the first permanent structures in Big Oak Flat and having played a long role in the town's commercial life. The Gamble Building continuously served the town of Big Dak Flat from the 1850s until the 1930s.

The associated wood frame building (known as the Miner's Bean Kettle sometime after 1925) was constructed circa 1870. It represents one of only three wood frame buildings in Big Dak Flat today built prior to the 1890s. The building has had few changes since its erection (chiefly the addition of corrugated metal siding and roofing) and it provides insight into the simple but efficient commercial architecture of the 1870s. This building served as a residence/business facility until the 1940s.

Big Dak Flat is located east of the Mother Lode in the east belt mining region of southern Tuolumne County. The setting is a small mountain valley which once had a broad, flat grassy floor dotted with stately oaks and pines. Along the south side of this meadow runs a small creek where, in late 1848 or early '49, James Savage discovered gold. Savage established a trading post near this creek and the resultant mining camp was known as Savage's Diggings. Savage's stay was short lived; after his departure the camp was renamed Big Dak Flat in tribute to a magnificent oak tree which stood guard over the west end of the flat. Several hundred people were engaged in either mining or catering to the miners' needs by 1850.

One of the earliest and most successful merchants in Big Oak Flat was Alexander Gamble. The Gamble Building was constructed sometime between 1848 and 1852. Tuolumne County's oldest tax records (1852) shows that Gamble had an assessed valuation of  $\pm 5,000$  for land and improvements, the highest amount in town. He was one of only a half dozen residents to be assessed in excess of  $\pm 1,000$ . A typical frame dwelling house and lot would have run for  $\pm 100$ . The tax rolls of the 1850s referred to Gamble's building alternately as either "The Gamble Block" or "The Express Office." Wells, Fargo and Company occupied the eastern suite until 1893. Gamble also owned a smaller stone building located elsewhere in town.

The Gamble Building was constructed near (or possibly) on the site of Savage's Trading Post. By 1852 upwards of 3,000 people are estimated to have been in and around the Big Dak Flat area. A sizable collection of permanent buildings moon surrounded the Gamble Building, including hotels, boarding houses, livery stables, restaurants and, of course, saloons. About a dozen of these buildings were constructed of stone or adobe, the rest were wood frame. Only a few buildings came near in size and value to Gamble's, none surpassed it. The Gamble Building was an impressive architectural achievement with its fourteen foot high stone walls and brick detailing across the front. The stone and brick were obtained locally but NP8 Form 10-900-A (8-86)

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Section number 8 The Gamble Building Page 8 The huge iron fire doors were reportedly packed in via mules.

Big Oak Flat incorporated as a city in 1861 but the placers soon played out. In 1863 a devastating fire laid waste most of the town, including damaging or destroying some of the stone buildings. The fire, which originated towards the west end of town, apparently was stopped or slowed in its eastward spread up the north side of Main Street by the Gamble Building. Accounts of the fire are sketchy and it's unknown how much damage (if any) the Gamble Building received. The fire destroyed Big Dak Flat's original jail. It's at this point that the Gamble Building's jail room came into service. It is unclear what use this room had prior to the fire. Unlike the Gamble Building's three suites, the jail shares no interior passageway with the adjoining suite and its roof is separate. However, the rear (north) wall of the jailhouse is an integral extension of the western suite's north wall. It may be that the back portion of the Gamble Building, including the jailhouse room, **圣教頭 動** result of reconstruction or a new addition after the 1863 fire. Prior to the fire, N. T. Cody's apothecary was located in a frame building on the west side of the Gamble Building and the jailhouse room may have been enclosed by this building. It's believed that the 1863 fire destroyed Cody's frame building.

Many merchants opted not to rebuild after the fire and in 1864 city incorporation ceased. By the late 1860s, Gamble had sold his interest in the western suite of the Gamble Building to merchants, Marconi and Murphy. Dominic Cuneo acquired the middle suite at this same time. The Gamble family retained ownership of the eastern suite where Wells, Fargo and Company continued business. Around 1870 Lewis Costa acquired the jailhouse which now had a small frame building attached to it (the future Miner's Bean Kettle). The frame building's construction date is unknown. The frame building and jail served as Costa's place of residence and business.

Big Oak Flat contained only a few dozen buildings when it was surveyed and patented as a townsite in 1877. Most of the structures had been lost in the 1863 fire. Others, left vacant after the fire, had fallen into ruin. Gold mining played a minor role in the economy while catering to ranchers and a growing Yosemite bound tourist trade provided the chief source of income for the town. From this time until the early 1890s the Gamble Building continued to serve the community as a general store and express office. The Gamble Building's suites also saw use from the 1860s to the 1890s as a law office, post office, cobbler shop and justice court.

Marconi and Murphy sold their interest in the western suite to Joseph Raggio in 1879 and it is here that the Raggio Store operated into the 20th century. In 1879 Raggio also purchased the attached one room jailhouse and associated wood frame building from Costa. Raggio used the frame building and jailhouse for his residence until about 1901 when he moved into his new residence located to the north of the Gamble Building. After 1900 the frame building and Gamble building received their corrugated metal roofs. The popular building material was also used as siding on the frame building.

Big Dak Flat's economy remained at a low ebb from the late 1860s until the mid-1890s. In 1893 Wells, Fargo and Company left town. In 1899 Thomas Reid purchased this suite of the Gamble Building from John Gamble. NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

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Section number 8 The Gamble Building Fage 9 By now, improvements in deep shaft mining coupled with the advent of economical hydroelectric power had spurred a hard rock mining boom. In 1907, Victor Repetto, cobbler and postmaster, purchased the middle suite of the Gamble Building from Cuneo. Raggio continued to maintain his general store in the western suite and may have rented the eastern suite from Reid. Many new buildings were constructed at this time but the Gamble Building remained a central fixture in Big Oak Flat's business district. Over a half dozen stamp mills were in operation in the area when World War I brought a near stop to this second gold rush. Gold mining never recovered.

One more economic boom did follow. Big Oak Flat's sister camp of Groveland (Savage's second diggings that was originally named Garrote) was chosen as the mountain construction headquarters for the immense Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Project. Congress approved San Francisco's project in 1913 and a flurry of activity ensued until construction work shifted westward at the end of the 1920s. The Gamble Building's doors remained open during this time, catering to Big Oak Flat's commercial needs. In 1917 Reid sold his interest in the eastern suite of the Gamble Building to Raggio and Marconi. Raggio's business operations now surrounded Repetto's shoe shop. In 1925 Edward Cobden acquired the jailhouse and associated wood frame building. He later rented it out as a residence/business known as the Miner's Bean Kettle restaurant, said business continuing into the 1940s.

From the 1930s until the 1970s Big Oak Flat was a quiet, nearly forgotten ranching town deriving some income from the tourist trade. The Gamble Building and Miner's Bean Kettle were vacant during much of this time. The central suite remained in Repetto's ownership until his death in 1936 when title passed to his sisters. They sold their portion of the building to Harry Cobden in the 1960s. Cobden is a grandson of both Luigi Marconi and Joseph Raggio and thus it is that the Gamble Building was once again under single ownership. It was Cobden's father, Edward, who in 1901 built the Raggio residence to the north of the Gamble Building. Also, the Miner's Bean Kettle's corrugated metal siding and roofing and the Gamble Building's corrugated metal roofing were installed by Edward Cobden.

The Gamble Building and the Miner's Bean Kettle remain magnificent examples of Gold Rush and early day settlement architecture. Wells, Fargo and Company's long tenure in the Gamble Building's eastern suite highlights this building's central role in Big Oak Flat's early economic life. Today the Gamble Building, "Wells Fargo Building," or "Cobden Building" as many are want to say, stands vacant but a new population boom is occurring as many Californian's discover the beauty and peace of living in the Sierra Nevada foothills. This increased activity is revitalizing the area. In the past three years a new group formed, the Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society, with plans to turn the Gamble Building into a museum and shining memorial to our rich past. It and the nearby Odd Fellows Hall remain Big Oak Flat's only stone Gold Rush buildings to have survived to the present. Harry Cobden's long time desire has been to see the Gamble Building and the Miner's Bean Kettle receive the recognition they so richly deserve. National Register status and his donation of this property to the Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society are sure to accomplish this goal.

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Section number 9 The Gamble Building Page 10 Editors of Sunset Magazine. Gold Rush Country. Menlo Park, CA: Lane Magazine & Book Co. 1967. Margaret E. and Irene Paden. The Big Oak Flat Road to Schlichtman Yosemite. Dakland, CA: The Holms Book Company, 1959. Thornton Mark V. Big Dak Flat - Groveland Historic Sites Survey, 1988. Big Oak Flat, CA: The Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society, 1988. Ted. Hetch Hetchy and Its Dam Railroad. Berkeley, CA: Wurm Howell-North Books, 1973.

"Harry Cobden File." Miscellaneous information pertaining to the Gamble Building. On file with the Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society, Big Dak Flat, CA. K. M. "Gambel (sic) Building" Blue Prints of floor plan Borzage and elevations, June 1988. On file with the Southern Tuolumne County Historical Society, Big Oak Flat, CA.

Thornton Mark V. All photographs taken September 1990 for National Register submission. Negatives on file with MVT, Groveland, CA.

Primary sources for information on the Gamble Building were Notes for the Big Oak Flat - Groveland Survey and are listed in its ふここの思想のロ bibliography.



NPS Form 10-900-a OMB Approval No. 1024-0018 11 (8-86) United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET Photographs The Gamble Building Page 11 Gamble Building Tuolumne County California Mark V. Thornton, photographer All photos taken 9-20-1990 Negatives on file with MVT, P.O. Box 192, Groveland, California Front (south) wall, looking north. #1: #2: Southeast corner, looking northwest.

#3: Rear (north) wall, looking east.

#4: Southwest corner, looking northeast.

#5: West wall jailhouse attachment, looking north, NE.

#6: Bouthwest corner of the Miner's Bean Kettle, looking northeast.

#7 West side of the Gamble Building showing relation of jailhouse to the Miner's Bean Kettle, looking east.