## Old Masonic Hall

### Benicia Masonic Hall

#### LOCATION
- **See Solano Co. Planning Commission map attached**
- **106 West "J" St.**
- **Benicia**
- **California**

#### CLASSIFICATION
- **Category:** (Check One)
  - District
  - Site
  - Structure
  - Object
- **Ownership:** (Check One)
  - District
  - Site
  - Structure
  - Object
  - Public
  - Private
  - Both
- **Public Acquisition:** (Check One)
  - In Process
  - Being Considered
- **Present Use:** (Check One or More as Appropriate)
  - Agricultural
  - Commercial
  - Educational
  - Entertainment
  - Industrial
  - Military
  - Private Residence
  - Religious
  - Educational
  - Entertainment
  - Museum
  - Scientific
  - Transportation
  - Other (Specify)

#### OWNER OF PROPERTY
- **Benicia Lodge #5 F. & A. M. of California**
- **106 West "J" St.**
- **Benicia**
- **California**

#### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
- **Solano County Courthouse**
- **600 Texas St.**
- **Fairfield**
- **California**

#### REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
- **Title of Survey:** City of Benicia
- **Date of Survey:**
  - Federal
  - State
  - County
  - Local
- **Depository for Survey Records:** Solano County Courthouse
- **Street and Number:** 600 Texas St.
- **City or Town:** Fairfield
- **State:** California
### 7. DESCRIPTION

<table>
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<th>CONDITION</th>
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<tr>
<td>□ Excellent</td>
<td>☑ Good</td>
<td>□ Fair</td>
<td>□ Deteriorated</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Ruins</td>
<td>□ Unexposed</td>
<td>□ Moved</td>
<td>□ Original Site</td>
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<td>□ Altered</td>
<td>☑ Unaltered</td>
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**DESCRIPT THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

Physical appearance much the same as when erected. This 120 year old structure has had necessary repairs carefully made and was refurbished in 1950.

The two-story frame building is 32' x 56' in plan dimensions and about 22' to the eaves. The foundations are brick and lap siding covers the exterior walls. Masonic history states the edifice cost $18,000 to erect, with lumber donated by Robert Semple (a Benicia founder) and the lot donated by A. Riddell.

By 1887 Benicia Lodge #5, with twenty-two Master Masons in the charter membership, had outgrown this hall. A new temple was erected in Benicia and dedicated December 27, 1888. The subject building then was used as a public hall and was sold by the lodge for that purpose.

In 1950, one hundred years after erection, Benicia Lodge #5 repurchased this property. Necessary repairs were made and the hall was refurbished to closely resemble the original Benicia Masonic Hall.
The first Masonic hall built in California stands as State Historical Landmark #174 at 106 West "J" St. City of Benicia, California. It was formally dedicated on December 27 1850, about three months after California became a State. Many of California's prominent pioneers received their Masonic degrees in this two story modest building. Among them was George Yount, a noted early settler in Napa County.

Solano was one of the 27 original counties in the State, with Benicia named as the County seat. The lower floor of the Masonic hall was used by the Court of Sessions for two years until the pretentious "city hall" was completed. (This latter building became the third State Capitol.) The Masons sold their hall about 1888 for community purposes. But they re-acquired it in 1950, and refurbished the old building. Still in use, it is one of the three places in California where any Masonic lodge may hold meetings to confer degrees.
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**Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property:** 2 acres m/1

**List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries:**

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<th>State</th>
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<th>County</th>
<th>Code</th>
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**Form Prepared By**

**Name and Title:**

Wood Young

**Organization:**

Solano County Historical Society

**Street and Number:**

Rt. 1 Box 22

**City or Town:**

Suisun

**State:**

California 94585 06

**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:**

Title: State Liaison Officer

**Date:** October 16, 1970

**National Register Verification**

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

**Chancellor:**

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**Date:**

ATTEST:

**Date:**

Keeper of The National Register