

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Coloma Community Hall **DRAFT**

Other names/site number: Coloma Lotus Community Hall, Gold Trail Grange #452

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 319 SR 49

City or town: Coloma State: CA County: El Dorado

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national **statewide** **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A **B** **C** **D**

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Title :</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the 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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	object
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social / meeting hall

Social / clubhouse

Recreation and Culture / theater

Recreation and Culture / auditorium

Recreation and Culture / museum (art gallery, exhibition hall)

Recreation and Culture / music facility (concert hall, dance hall)

Recreation and Culture / monument/marker (cannon, mirror)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social / meeting hall

Social / clubhouse

Recreation and Culture / theater

Recreation and Culture / music facility (concert hall, dance hall)

Recreation and Culture / museum (art gallery, exhibition hall)

Recreation and Culture / monument/marker (cannon, mirror)

Landscape / natural feature (river)

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Stick frame barn style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Weatherboard walls, sheet metal roof, cement foundation, wood stairs and supporting wood posts

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Coloma Lotus Community Hall is located at 319 SR 49 which is historically the main street of Coloma, a rural historic site of interest. The Hall is a large wooden building with a sheet metal roof. The property is in fair condition, retains all aspects of integrity, and is in current community use. It has a stick frame barn style of construction with a high “western style” facade. It is a rectangular plan of one story at street level, with stairs enabling access from the parking lot to the rear. There is a small second-story balcony along the front of the building that is accessed by a flight of interior stairs. The interior contains a large meeting hall with a stage, and original side wood benches and lighting fixtures throughout the hall. There are five side rooms on the north side: a small street front area that is next to a historic gold rush cannon, a meeting room, a commercial kitchen, and two storage rooms. In the 1960s the hall was reinforced internally and a rear section was added to the building. The original interior measures approximately 80 x50 feet. The overall building area is 4,125 square feet. The hall is on a 0.45 acre parcel along the South Fork American River with river access. It is bounded by Highway 49 to the west, Marshall Gold

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Discovery State Historic Park to the north, the South Fork American River to the east, and Mount Murphy bridge to the south.

Narrative Description

Setting The Coloma Lotus Community Hall is located in a rural and picturesque river valley, on the South Fork American River in El Dorado County. It sits on a 0.45- acre parcel and fronts onto a 2-lane stretch of Highway 49, about halfway between Auburn to the northwest and Placerville to the southeast. Coloma is about 45 miles northeast of downtown Sacramento.

The Hall is bounded by Highway 49 to the west, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park to the north and west, the South Fork American River to the east, and the Mount Murphy bridge to the south.

The Hall sits in the historic area of downtown Coloma, where the highway is the Main Street. It is surrounded by lands and historic buildings now owned and managed by Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, a worldwide historic and educational attraction. Over time, the State Park has procured, preserved, and provided historic interpretation on the cultural and historic buildings and indigenous places of Coloma, preserving the historic feel of the area that the Community Hall fits into.

The Hall's southern border is the historic one-lane Mt. Murphy Bridge that crosses the river. Behind the building is a small parking lot and gravel beach that provides river access into the South Fork American River.

The Hall was constructed in 1926 on land donated by a local married couple, the Gallaghers (Figure 3). It was built and dedicated in the same year, through funds and volunteer labor contributed by the community (Figure 4). The Hall was painted white (Figures 9 and 10) until recent decades when it was allowed to revert to an unpainted, more rustic brown wood appearance, except for the back wall which is still white.

Exterior

The one-story, 4,125 square foot Hall has overall dimensions of 53' width and 80' length plus a 12' back addition over part of the width of the building. It is a timber framed, lap sided rectangular building. The roof is made of corrugated metal that forms a peak down the centerline. The front has a symmetrical Western style façade that extends the building height in two tiers. White painted, "western style" wood block letters that are 4 inches deep spell out, "Coloma Lotus Community Hall Gold Trail Grange Built 1926" on the façade wall.

Below this lettering, a narrow, exterior second-story balcony that has a lintel- post railing runs the width of the entire building and provides cover to the ground floor entrance. The balcony is accessed by a door that opens to a short flight of interior stairs. The narrow balcony provides some cover from the elements for the front entrance, which has a concrete, four foot wide

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walkway that transitions to a gravel area that aligns the street. The balcony is supported by four wood square posts across the southern three-fourths of the front, and by a protruding storefront wall and window at the northern-most section of the building. The storefront was added by Grange members in 2018 and has been used off and on since then. The entry to the Hall is a set of simple wood doors (6' wide) at the end of a short (5.5') recessed walkway south of center of the building.

An historic cannon is mounted in concrete at the southern end of the front walkway and is owned by the Gold Trail Grange #452. It is further described in its own section below.

The 92-foot long (including the back extension) southern exterior of the Hall stands along the gravel driveway that goes to the back parking lot. It has the same lap siding as the whole building. The ground angles downward about eight feet, exposing some of the concrete foundation of the Community Hall. Five large windows are spaced evenly along the southern wall, and two externally mounted swamp coolers are affixed at the same level as the top of the windows.

The eastern, back exterior of the building has two levels since it is farther downhill than the front of the building. Most of this wall is taken by the 1960s extension that was added on in unpainted dark brown wood in the same vertical lap siding of the rest of the Hall. It extends out twelve feet (12') from the main building. The addition is covered by the same type of corrugated metal roofing that is present in the main Hall. The ground level of the extension is open-sided and used for external storage. It is covered by the main floor of the extension that is supported by square wooden posts. Starting around the center of the building, a stairway rises to the back door and ends in a small landing that is covered by a corrugated metal roofing extension. To the north of the door is a window, and three other windows pierce the back extension wall.

The wall above and to the north side of the extension is made of white painted horizontal wooden clapboard siding. It rises to a peak in the center, where a rectangular vent is placed for the attic.

The northern side of the Hall measures 80 feet and is sided in vertical lap wood like the opposite (south) face. The ground angles down about 8 feet from the front (west) side to the rear (east) side of the building. There are five large windows across the length of the side, most 39" wide by 59" high. The exception is the center double window west of the stairs that go to the kitchen, which measures 72" wide by 59" high.

Near the center of this side are two doors at the main floor level that are accessed by two sets of stairs leading from ground level, one pointed west and one pointed east. The two doors share a landing, which is covered by a wood framed roof with unpainted corrugated metal on top. The stairs and landing have a wood lintel railing.

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Interior

The building is divided into a main hall of 35 x 62' to the right (south) of the entrance and smaller rooms to the left (north). The main hall is an open, wood-floored expanse with a nine foot wide stage at the back. On the south wall are four large, symmetrical single-hung windows. The windows are framed with flat, unpainted wood trim that matches the naturally brown wood panel of the Hall walls and floor. Original, built-in wood benches line both the north and south sides of the main hall, and twelve original hanging lamps are suspended from the ceiling.

A wood burning stove is in the center interior wall of the hall that is still used to provide heat. It is a Great Western Duplex Stove, made by The Great Western Manufacturing Company of Leavenworth, Kansas, in business from 1875 to the early 1940s.¹

Behind the stage to either side are multi-stalled women's (south) and men's (north) restrooms in a 1967 building addition.

The north side of the Hall contain a row of more narrow rooms. From the front, a small storefront area with a split door and a window onto the street is twenty feet long along Main Street and 6.5 feet deep.

Back from the storefront is a small meeting room of dimensions 30' by 17'. It contains an historic mirror, weighing 600 pounds, that has been in the Coloma area from 1850 or 1851 (see its history in its own section below). Two single-hung, wood trimmed windows of dimension 29"x 59" face north. The room features vertical wood paneling like the rest of the main rooms. Two wood hinged doors connect to the main hall from this side room, and one open doorway leads to the kitchen behind it.

The kitchen is eighteen feet wide by eighteen feet long. The commercial kitchen is kept to modern code for continued use and features a gas stove and ovens with hood vent, stainless steel sinks and built in cabinets. The walls are smooth and paneled with white melamine. The back of the fireplace chimney in the larger hall is on one kitchen wall, with its bricks painted white. The north side of the kitchen has two large windows that are 72" wide by 59" high. A door to the north opens to a small landing and double short flights of wooden stairs descending to the ground to be used in case of emergency. One flight is to the west (Main Street) and one is to the east (the back parking lot).

East of the kitchen are two storage rooms of the same width and totaling 32 feet in length.

Alterations

In the 1960s the hall was reinforced internally with cable trusses to keep the building square. In 1967, a rear section was added to the building to contain two multi-stall restrooms as part of its

¹ <https://kovels.com/kovels-komments/collectors-concerns/great-western-duplex-stove.html> accessed 4/4/2024

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improvements as facility for theater. The front façade and upper narrow balcony were added after 1968. The small storefront was added in 2018.

Integrity

The Coloma Lotus Community Hall – Gold Trail Grange #452 building retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

Location: The Hall remains in its original 1926 location and therefore retains integrity of location.

Design: The 1926 Hall was moderately renovated in the 1960s to add restrooms to the rear. The building heating and kitchen have been modernized while maintaining original parameters.

Setting: The Hall has remained in its location since built and therefore retains integrity of setting.

Materials: The building retains its original timber frame, wood lap siding, and large hall- style windows. The interior and exterior, excepting kitchen modernization, retain their original materials, as do the decorative motifs on the interior such as the built-in benches and light fixtures. Therefore, the Hall retains sufficient integrity of materials to convey its historic significance.

Workmanship: The building retains the original materials and workmanship of the period of significance. Only the interior changes to the bathrooms and kitchen are modern in their materials. Therefore, the clubhouse retains significant integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: Coloma Lotus Community Hall – Gold Trail Grange #452 has the character of an early twentieth century, rural community hall. It has a simple design that has been maintained over the decades. Therefore, the Hall retains integrity of feeling.

Association: The building retains the significant materials and design that were part of its original construction and continued use as a community hall. It holds events much like those held in the 1920s, with the addition of electricity that was brought in soon after the building's construction. Therefore, Coloma Lotus Community Hall – Gold Trail Grange #452 retains integrity of association.

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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.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History: Pioneer settling and Community Centers movement

Period of Significance

1926 - 1974

Significant Dates

1926 - Creation

1960s – Internal Reinforcement

1967- Building Back Addition

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Coloma Community Hall, also named the Coloma-Lotus Community Hall and Gold Trail Grange #452 Hall, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Social History: Meeting Hall and Clubhouse, and Recreation and Culture: Theater, Auditorium, Museum (art gallery and exhibition hall), Music Facility, and Monument/marker (the cannon). The Coloma Community Hall was built in 1926 on a historically significant site by local community members to promote civic, social, artistic, educational, historic, agricultural, and philanthropic activities for the community. Its formation was a grassroots, cooperative effort at the local level. The Hall's period of significance begins in 1926 with the donation (token sale for \$10) of the parcel of Lot Number 1 in Block Number 6 comprising of 0.43 acres by J. H. and Louise Gallagher (husband and wife) to the trustees of the Coloma Community Hall Association, "to make said property perpetually available as a "common center" for "the free use of the people of Coloma and vicinity."² The building was erected and dedicated in the same year, 1926. It has been used for club meetings and activities; dances, theatrical performances, artistic exhibitions and musical entertainment; agricultural meetings; community and educational presentations; and youth and senior events since that time. The Hall has a rich history of hosting dinners and dances around the annual Gold Discovery Day celebrations that observe James Marshall's famous discovery of gold at the nearby Sutter's Mill on January 24, 1848.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The early history of the Hall's site

Indigenous Nisenan, Maidu, and Miwok people were the area's original residents. James Marshall worked amicably with some of them on the construction of Sutter's Mill in Coloma, where he found flakes of gold in January of 1848. According to local historian Betty Sederquist, shortly after this discovery, Marshall "agreed with the Nisenan leaders to lease land around the sawmill" and Marshall's business partner, John (Johann) Sutter "talked to the Nisenan leaders and from them obtained a three-year lease on a tract about 10 by 12 miles in size in return for trinkets. He also promised them that they could live in their homes undisturbed – a promise soon broken, but not by Sutter."³ The gold discovery, in a time of global strife and deprivation, started a multinational influx of hopeful miners to Coloma and the California Gold Rush. Some of them began to push off and inflict violence against that area's indigenous people. According to Sederquist, "Most profoundly affected by the Gold Rush ... were the peaceful Nisenan natives

² 1926 Gallagher Gift Deed to Trustees of the Coloma Community Hall Association, Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives.

³ Betty Sederquist, *Coloma* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 8.

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who had called the region home for thousands of years. The miners destroyed their way of life in the fertile Coloma Valley, brought disease, raided villages, and decimated native populations.”⁴

James Marshall and John Sutter also suffered from the miners taking over their properties and land grants.⁵ Other new residents flourished, however, with the early town boasting stores, hotels, banks, and services. The area on which the Community Hall was to be built contained several such businesses, according to the Lortie report of 1979. Frank Lortie who worked for California State Parks reviewed research including reports by the El Dorado Heritage Association. Lortie concluded that the “first permanent structure erected on this site was probably the Rogers Hotel,” owned by William Rogers that was in business by May of 1850. The parcel between the hotel and the American River was known in 1851 as “B. Rask’s Corral.” The hotel was sold in 1852 to Louis Wintermantel and was known as Wintermantel’s Miner’s Hotel, “one of the more notable hostelries in Coloma,” for at least five years.⁶

Other probable occupants of the area according to the Lortie report were J.C. Brown, “Coloma’s pioneer blacksmith” in 1852, who expanded in 1854 to include a store for mining and hardware supplies. Other businesses shown in an 1857 map were “Randson & Co.” and the “Ti-Wa” property.⁷ These buildings were part of the overall settling of the Coloma-Lotus valley by European, Chinese, African, and other heritage settlers after the forceful removal of the Indigenous residents. Lortie concluded, “The property owned by the Coloma Grange is significant historically. The connection of the site with the Rogers Hotel and Wintermantel’s Miner’s Hotel makes it notable as one of the earliest areas to be developed for the emerging town of Coloma.”⁸

By the mid-1850s, the mines played out and the gold rush in Coloma receded. Coloma became an established town with families and civic organizations. It lost its status as the county seat, and became a more sleepy place, known for its fruit, produce⁹ and also for its high quality wines.¹⁰

The first recorded ownership of the plot on which the Community Hall was to be built (Lot 1, Block 6) was September 5, 1873. Charles Irwin was the county recorder who obtained possession of land when the listed owners did not pay their taxes on them.¹¹ Irwin sold the lot in 1879 to Rufus Morgan Burgess (Figure 1), who had been a freed enslaved person and became

⁴ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 10.

⁵ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 10.

⁶ Frank Lortie, “Historic Uses of the Property Now Occupied by the Coloma Grange Hall” (unpublished report, California State Parks Cultural Heritage Section, April 1979), 1.

⁷ Lortie, “Historic Uses,” 1.

⁸ Lortie, “Historic Uses,” 2.

⁹ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 53.

¹⁰ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 10.

¹¹ Library staff, Gold Rush Research Library, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Coloma, CA, in discussion with the author, April 2024.

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one of the town's successful African American community members. Burgess married Josephine Pearce Burris, who in 1901, as a widow, sold the plot to J. H. Gallagher for \$25 (Figure 2).¹²

In 1926, responding to the community's need for a communal gathering space after the second Sierra Nevada Hotel burned in 1925,¹³ J. H. and Louise Gallagher sold the plot to the Coloma Community Hall "for a common center for the people of the town of Coloma and all those belonging to the Coloma-Community Hall Association ... for the free use of the people of Coloma and vicinity" (Figure 3). Residents worked together to build the Community Hall (Figures 4, 5 and 6).

Social Context: Rural Community Halls

The building of the Coloma Community Hall was part of a national, and multi-country, social centers movement at the turn of the twentieth century for residents to build and run their own community spaces that were unconnected to business or private club interests. Areas around the country created social centers to be "consensual meeting place[s] for all Americans liberated from the partisan environment of saloons and boss-controlled assembly halls [to] rationally and efficiently solve public problems for the good of all."¹⁴ In rural areas, this was the schoolhouse and the community hall.

"The old village schoolhouse was a center of life in the community in the days when the community was self-centered."¹⁵ In addition, community halls like that in Coloma offered "capacity in the form of unstructured public space that is itself an infrastructure of opportunity, a blank slate for community ingenuity."¹⁶

Rural areas in other parts of America were building and using community halls at this time. For instance, Carlin Hall in Arlington, Virginia has origins and history similar to Coloma's Community Hall; "Carlin Hall was the single most important structure in the community, serving as a meeting place for the newly formed civic association ... as well as providing a place for dances, plays, holiday festivities, and a variety of other community social events."¹⁷

¹² Library staff, Gold Rush Research Library, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Coloma, CA, in discussion with the author, April 2024.

¹³ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 9.

¹⁴ Victor Jew. "Social Centers in Wisconsin, 1911-1915." *UCLA Historical Journal* 8, no.2 (1987): 97-113, 97-98. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3t64698c>.

¹⁵ Charles Zueblin, *American Municipal Progress* (New York: MacMillan, 1916), 252. <https://archive.org/details/americanmunicipa00zuebuoft/mode/2up>.

¹⁶ "Footprints and Dance Floors." Review of *Community Halls Sourcebook*, by Heritage Advisory Committee of the Township of Langley. *British Columbia History*, 49, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 40. EBSCOhost, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=31h&AN=114035135&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁷ Gail Baker. "Carlin Hall." *Arlington Historical Magazine* 10, no. 1 (October 1993): 27-33, 27. <https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=28&sid=8f05a859-e751-44b1-853d-68738d98ed3e%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVpZCZzaXRIPWVob3N0LWxpdmUmc2NvcGU9c2l0ZQ%3d%3d#AN=45859726&db=31h>

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In Arlington, as in Coloma after the burning of the Sierra Nevada Hotel, “residents of the growing village soon felt the need for a place to gather. The county remained rural with only a scattering of crossroads settlements ... In 1892, the Carlin's Hall Association was chartered as a stock corporation, with lot owners purchasing shares for the purpose of building a community meeting hall.”¹⁸ Coloma created an association in which the local members took part to create and maintain that Hall (Figure 4).

Additionally, our neighbors to the north had equally important community halls, as with those of British Columbia. A review of the *Community Halls Sourcebook* described that the community halls in British Columbia, like the one in Coloma, “have cradled profound moments in community and provincial history” like marriage and funeral gatherings, fairs, “concerts, political meetings and gatherings of citizens over contentious and important issues about the shape of the future.”¹⁹

The community halls in the town of Langley, British Columbia, like the one in Coloma, were built “through community fundraising efforts and donations of land, materials, and labour. Their building fabric embodies older building styles and construction methods. Their interiors reflect their former uses as gathering places and community hubs for all ages [and are] important testaments to hard work, patience, and belief in the future.”²⁰

The Coloma Lotus Community Hall is part of the social centers movement at the turn of the twentieth century, and is part of the overall pioneer settling of California and the West. It is significant for symbolizing and being part of those events, especially considering that it is still in running order and is still serving the social purposes for which it was designed. In addition, Coloma was the site of gold discovery in 1848, a landmark event for the worldwide rush into what would become the “golden county,” El Dorado County. The Coloma Community Hall has been an active participant in commemorating that event in the time of historic significance since its 1926 construction.

Coloma Community Hall History

In 1925, fire destroyed Coloma’s gathering spot, the second Sierra Nevada Hotel,²¹ depriving the small town of its social gathering place. The community came together to organize a Community Hall Association, and in 1926, the planning and building of the Coloma Community Hall was announced in newspapers far and wide.

The Sacramento Bee publicized on April 7, 1926 that “[r]esidents of Gold Hill, Coloma and Lotus held a meeting in the Coloma School House on Monday night and organized the Coloma

¹⁸ Baker, “Carlin Hall,” 28-29.

¹⁹ “Footprints and Dance Floors.”

²⁰ “Footprints and Dance Floors.”

²¹ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 9.

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Community Hall Association for the purpose of erecting a community club house on the J. H. Gallagher lot on Main Street. Gallagher recently donated the lot for the club site.”²²

On April 17, 1926 both the *Livermore Journal* and the *Petaluma Daily Morning Courier* announced, “J. H. Gallagher, Coloma, Eldorado [sic] county, resident, has made possible the construction of a community clubhouse by a gift of a large lot 80 by 200 feet.”²³ On May 5, 1926 the Italian language newspaper *La Voce Del Popolo* announced in the article, “Nuova Sala Comunale” (“New Communal Hall”) that the leadership of the Coloma Community Hall Association had awarded to Phileas Cote of Placerville the contract for the construction of the new community hall that was to be 80 feet long and 40 feet wide for a total cost of \$2,630. It was to be completed by June 1.²⁴

Later that month, the *Placer Herald* of Auburn, California provided the update that:

The Coloma Community Hall at Coloma which is to be utilized for dances, public meetings, and moving pictures is in its final stages of completion. It will be a modern, fireproof structure, and an addition that the Coloma people might well be proud of.

The dance floor space will be 36 ft. wide by 70 feet in length allowing about 12 feet in the rear of the hall for the erection of a stage. There will be two dining rooms with the kitchen between, a new efficiency idea.²⁵

July 3, 1926 saw the formal dedication of the Hall with a ball and community entertainment, as announced in Santa Clara County’s *Campbell Press*²⁶ to the south and Modoc County’s *Alturas Plaindealer*²⁷ to the north. *The Sacramento Bee* announced the event on the day it occurred, stating that the Coloma Community Hall cost \$3,500 and would be dedicated by a supper and dance.²⁸

From that point forward, the Hall had dinners, speakers, and dances, as well as civic, artistic, educational, and celebratory community events, for almost one hundred years now. The January anniversary of the gold discovery in Coloma was a highlight of the year for decades. Coloma was “the shrine of all California” on January 24, 1929, announced *The Sacramento Bee* in a front page article that included mention of the Coloma Community Hall. The reason? As the newspaper announced, “[T]his marks the spot where, just eighty-one years ago, James Wilson

²² “Coloma Organizes Hall Association,” *Sacramento Bee*, April 7, 1926, page 10. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

²³ *Livermore Journal* (Livermore, California), April 17, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>; *Petaluma Daily Morning Courier* (Petaluma, California), April 16, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

²⁴ *La Voce Del Popolo* (San Francisco, California), May 5, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

²⁵ *Placer Herald* (Auburn, California), May 29, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

²⁶ “Golden State News of Interest to All,” *Campbell Press* (Campbell, California), July 9, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

²⁷ *Alturas Plaindealer* (Alturas, California), July 16, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

²⁸ “Hall Dedication To-night,” *Sacramento Bee*, July 3, 1926. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

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Marshall found gold on January 24, 1848.” Celebrations were also commemorated in San Francisco that day.²⁹

Serving as a Concert and Dance Hall

Gold Discovery Day was celebrated for decades afterward in festive style at the Coloma Community Hall, including a 1935 dance for the “hundreds of dance devotees from [El Dorado] and surrounding counties.”³⁰ Two orchestras were promised, and a “typical 49er supper will be served at midnight.”³¹ Later, organizers of the 1940 gold discovery celebration dance called for “early day costumes” with men “urged to grow whiskers.”³²

A standout year was 1948’s Gold Discovery Centennial which was an enormous effort and celebration. Plans began in February 1947 at the Coloma Community Hall.³³ Auburn’s local chapter of E Clampus Vitus, or Clampers, held an initiation and banquet in connection with the centennial³⁴. Its members and novitiates were reported to “fill the Coloma Community Hall to capacity for our dinner and after dinner program.”³⁵ Three hundred people enjoyed dinner at the hall that evening.³⁶ People as far away as San Francisco read about and joined in on the weekend when the Coloma Community Hall hosted a Saturday night dance and Sunday luncheon.³⁷

The 1949 dinner featured costumes and an old fashioned hot supper with homemade cakes.³⁸ The annual celebrations continued, sometimes in conjunction with meetings when the Hall was used as an auditorium. In 1958, the 110th anniversary of the discovery of gold at Coloma saw a dance in the hall and a meeting the next day of the Western Mining Council as well as a parade outside.³⁹ The following year had another dance as well as an “old fashioned costume parade.”⁴⁰

Another special weekend was in 1961 with the dedication of the state park’s new Gold Rush Museum, “the first of its type in the state,” that had been built across the road from the Coloma

²⁹ “Gold Discovery Anniversary Is Marked To-day,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 24, 1929. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁰ “El Doradoans Plan For Annual Dance,” *Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 23, 1935. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³¹ “Dance Will Honor Gold Discovery,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 26, 1935. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³² “Dance at Coloma To Honor Gold Discovery,” *Sacramento Union*, Jan. 14, 1940. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³³ “Coloma Will Discuss Centennial Plans,” *Sacramento Bee*, Feb. 15, 1947. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁴ “Gold Centennial: Clampers to Participate in Coloma Gold Celebration,” *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 1, 1948. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁵ “E Clampus Vitus Clamps Lid On Applications,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 17, 1948. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁶ “Coloma Hits Sky as 3-Day Gold Fete Opens,” *Oakland Tribune*, Jan. 23, 1948. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁷ “Gold Centennial Fetes Commence Saturday: Coloma Events Will Be Broadcast; S.F. Luncheon to Honor Festival,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, Jan. 19, 1948. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁸ “Coloma Plans To Have Dance For Discovery Fete,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 19, 1949. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

³⁹ “Events Mark Gold Discovery Date,” *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 30, 1958.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁰ “Gold Discovery Day Events At Coloma,” *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 22, 1959.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

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Community Hall.⁴¹ The event featured speakers, demonstrations, a dedication ceremony, a parade, and the Miners Dance in the Coloma Community Hall.⁴²

In a societal shift, Chinese miners who historically had been badly, and sometimes terribly, treated, were honored in 1963's traditional Miners Ball,⁴³ which was also called the Gold Discovery Dance,⁴⁴ hosted in the Community Hall. In another, subsequent shift from tradition, the 1964 Gold Discovery celebration honored "surviving members of the Mi Wuk Indian tribe, natives of the Mother Lode Area." The dance was held as usual at the Coloma Community Hall,⁴⁵ as was "continuous entertainment."⁴⁶

At the annual celebration in the following year of 1965, pioneer families were honored, announced *The Folsom Telegraph*; "Descendants of the old time families of the Coloma area are invited to attend the reception to be held in the Coloma Community Hall" where the dance took place on Saturday night.⁴⁷ The 1966 weekend included a Sunday afternoon style show of a private collection of "some 70 historic gowns" presented by the auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, as well as the traditional Saturday night dance.⁴⁸ In 1967, the Hall had its Gold Discovery Dance that again celebrated during weekend events at the recently built Gold Discovery Museum.⁴⁹

In 1968, the anniversary event included the official state dedication of the replica of Sutter's Mill⁵⁰ that was built next door to the Coloma Community Hall. The nearby Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony, which was the first Japanese settlement in America, was featured in 1969 when the dance was again held in the Coloma Community Hall.⁵¹ The event, which included the consul general of Japan, San Francisco, Seiichi Shima, had more than 10,000 attendees expected "despite the threat of inclement weather"; entertainment was also provided in the Hall on Saturday night.⁵²

⁴¹ "Celebration At Coloma This Week End," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 19, 1961.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴² "El Dorado Town Plans Festive '49 Weekend," *Fresno Bee*, Jan. 21, 1961. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴³ "The Chinese Miners in Days of '49," *San Francisco Examiner*, Jan. 20, 1963. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁴ "Coloma Celebrates Discovery Of Gold," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 26, 1963. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁵ "Gold Discovery Celebration Set January 25-26," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 9, 1964.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁶ "Gold Discovery Anniversary Is Scheduled Sunday In Coloma," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 23, 1964. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁷ "Phillips To Pan Gold At Coloma Celebration," *Folsom Telegraph* (Folsom, California), Jan. 21, 1965.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁸ "Gold Discovery Fete Will Have Style Show," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 19, 1966. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁴⁹ "Discovery Dance," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 20, 1967. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵⁰ "Gold Discovery Days Program," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 19, 1968. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵¹ "Yokahama Girl Will Reign Over 2-Day Fete In Coloma," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 6, 1969.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵² "Threatening Weather Fails To Dampen El Dorado Event," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 24, 1969.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

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The theme in 1971 was “The Spirit of ’49 – Wine and Beer,” celebrating “the winemaking industry that flourished in that area in the 1800s,” including 250,000 “choice grape cuttings” offered by the Coloma Vineyard in 1862.⁵³ In 1972, Gold Discovery Day saw the dedication of the Coloma-Lotus Volunteer Fire Department, and ended with the “Old Time Miners Dance in Coloma Community Hall.”⁵⁴ Western music was featured at the 1973 dance.⁵⁵

Periodically, the Coloma Community Hall hosted benefits to raise money for the improvement of the hall, such as a card party in 1947.⁵⁶ The proceeds of the 1951 gold discovery dance were devoted to the community hall maintenance fund,⁵⁷ as were those of 1953.⁵⁸ The Gold Trail Grange that rented the hall held a harvest dance and roast beef dinner to raise money for improvements and maintenance of the hall in 1965⁵⁹ and a costume dance in 1967.⁶⁰ They hosted a similar fete in 1970 to raise money to repair “the water damaged ceiling of the historic hall.”⁶¹

The Hall was, and continues to be, the site of smaller celebrations including wedding anniversaries like a 1942 golden wedding anniversary.⁶² Wedding receptions took place in the Hall as well.⁶³ In 1968, mothers were served breakfast in the Hall “by men of the Gold Trail Grange on Mother’s Day.”⁶⁴

Serving as Meeting Hall and Auditorium

Various groups met and presented speakers at the Coloma Community Hall, including the Granges of the area. The Gold Trail Grange of Coloma was organized in 1931.⁶⁵ Thirty years later, six of its founders were honored in a 30-year anniversary event at the Coloma Community Hall, “where they had held their meetings continuously for thirty years.”⁶⁶

The Hall has been a place to discuss issues of concern for the community. In 1932, initiation exercises were held at the Coloma Community Hall involving the Gold Trail, Hangtown, and

⁵³ “Coloma Days celebrations all ready for the weekend,” *Mountain Democrat*, Placerville, California, Jan. 21, 1971. *Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives*.

⁵⁴ “Coloma Fete Gold Rush Celebration Opens,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 22, 1972. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵⁵ *The Folsom Telegraph* (Folsom, California), Jan. 10, 1973. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵⁶ “Coloma: Benefit Is Held,” *Sacramento Bee* May 7, 1947. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵⁷ “Gold Discovery Will Be Theme Of Coloma Dance,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 9, 1951. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵⁸ “Coloma Is Set To Celebrate 105th Gold Anniversary,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 23, 1953.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁵⁹ “Harvest Dance,” *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Oct. 7, 1965. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶⁰ “Costume Dance,” *Sacramento Bee*, Oct. 15, 1967. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶¹ “Fete Is Benefit For Coloma Hall,” *Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 2, 1970. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶² “Lotus Couple Are Wedded Fifty Years,” *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 9, 1942. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶³ “Shannon-Tollefson,” *Sacramento Bee*, Apr. 9, 1961; “Marcia Vander Pauwert Weds In Carson City,” *Sacramento Bee*, Sept. 27, 1961; “Newlyweds Are Honored,” *Sacramento Bee*, Dec. 28, 1965; *Sacramento Bee*, June 10, 1971. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶⁴ “Coloma Moms Will Be Feted On ‘Their Day,’” *Sacramento Bee*, Apr. 30, 1968. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶⁵ “New Grange Formed In El Dorado County,” *Sacramento Bee*, Feb. 3, 1931. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶⁶ “Six Coloma Grange Founders Attend Anniversary Event,” *Sacramento Bee*, Mar. 5, 1961. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

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American River, and Colfax granges. There was a talk about taxes that was of concern. Afterward, everyone enjoyed ice cream, cake, and dancing.⁶⁷ Similarly, in 1963 the Coloma-Lotus-Gold Hill Boosters club sponsored a spring meeting for residents of the Coloma area, and uphill towns of Kelsey, Garden Valley and Georgetown to present their telephone problems to the Pacific Telephone Company.⁶⁸

Other meetings and dinners were hosted for the Eldorado County Farm Bureau in 1939⁶⁹ and 1940,⁷⁰ and a presentation in 1949.⁷¹ The farm bureau also held a planning conference in the hall in early 1950,⁷² and had its new president and vice president installed at the thirty-fourth annual dinner at the Coloma Community Hall.⁷³

Members of the Western Mining Council from all parts of the state met at the Coloma Community Hall around the gold discovery anniversary in 1950.⁷⁴ The Clampers enjoyed the Coloma Community Hall again in 1955 when they held a banquet at the Hall.⁷⁵

The Cowbells provided an open lunch at the Hall for their tri-county (Amador, El Dorado, and Sacramento counties)⁷⁶ Cattlemens Association in 1953.⁷⁷ The association returned for a barbecued steak dinner in 1955.⁷⁸

Educational events took place in the Coloma Community Hall over the years, both for young students and adults. The Hall held the annual achievement night meeting of the 4-H Clubs of the county.⁷⁹ The farm home department of the Lotus-Coloma-Gold Hill farm Center gave a talk at the Hall in late 1949.⁸⁰ In 1969, the Hall held a speech contest for El Dorado County high schoolers that was judged by Folsom and Sacramento educators; the prize was a one-month trip to the East Coast and a seminar at the United Nations.⁸¹

⁶⁷ "Rescue Notes," *Folsom Telegraph* (Folsom, California), July 1, 1932. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶⁸ "Georgetown Journal," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Apr. 4, 1963. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁶⁹ "Farm Bureau Will Banquet In Coloma," *Sacramento Union*, Nov. 19, 1939. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁰ "Farmers of Eldorado Hold Annual Dinner," *Sacramento Union*, Nov. 23, 1940. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷¹ "Georgetown Locals," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Nov. 3, 1949. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷² *Sacramento Union*, Jan. 7, 1950. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷³ "Swift Is Seated As Farm Bureau Chief At Coloma Dinner," *Sacramento Bee*, Oct. 15, 1951.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁴ "Western Mining Council Will Meet Sunday In Old Coloma," *Colfax Record* (Colfax, California), Jan. 27, 1950.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁵ "Clampers To Meet At Coloma," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), Jan. 20, 1955. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁶ "Tri County Cattle Group List Coloma Meeting Schedule," *Sacramento Bee*, Mar. 28, 1953.

<https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁷ "Cowbells Plan Lunch For Cattlemens Meeting," *Sacramento Bee*, Mar. 28, 1953. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁸ "Cattlemen to Meet," *The Sacramento Union*, Mar. 18, 1955. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁷⁹ "El Dorado 4-H Clubs Plan Achievement Night," *Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 5, 1949. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁰ "New El Dorado Home Advisor Starts Job," *Sacramento Bee*, Nov. 24, 1949. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸¹ "Prep Speakers In El Dorado Vie For Trip," *Sacramento Bee*, Mar. 10, 1969. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

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Serving as an Art Gallery and Exhibition Hall

The Western Mining Council met and exhibited gold and other minerals, and then joined the Pioneer Quadrille Club for an afternoon dance in 1946.⁸² The following year, the Coloma Parent-Teachers Association had an open meeting at the Hall to display '49er relics.⁸³ The Placerville Art Association held a two-day art, antique and flower display in 1961⁸⁴ and 1962.⁸⁵ The Coloma-Lotus Volunteer Fire Department sponsored the third annual 49'er Arts Fair in 1973 that was staged in the Gold Trail Grange Hall, the name by which the Coloma Community Hall began to be known.⁸⁶

Serving as a Theater

Theater and performing arts have been hosted in the Hall, both as elements of Gold Discovery anniversaries, and with a summer stock theater that held its tryouts in 1967.⁸⁷ In that same year, the new Coloma Sluice Box Theater put on its first play in the Coloma Community Hall that was "being remodeled and rebuilt to accommodate a full professional stage and theater group."⁸⁸ Their summer stock production was "Bus Stop," described as "a three-act romantic comedy well remembered for the motion picture success scored by Marilyn Monroe."⁸⁹ Melodrama performance came to the Hall in 1968,⁹⁰ and was played again at Gold Discovery Day in January 1969.⁹¹ The Hangtown Theater Guild performed a melodrama in 1971 as part of the Gold Discovery Days celebration, and the Hall held "a can-can dance and other entertainment" that weekend.⁹²

Serving as an Historical Marker

Two special items of historic interest are incorporated into the hall: the cannon and the mirror. The cannon is a contributing object due to its association with the property. The mirror, while it is a historic artifact, is a non-contributor because its association with the property is too recent to qualify as a contributor.

1. The Cannon

⁸² "Western Group To Hold Meet In Placerville," *The Sacramento Union*, Jan. 12, 1946. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸³ "PTA Will Mark '49 Gold Days," *The Sacramento Union*, Apr. 6, 1947. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁴ "Coloma Art," *Sacramento Bee*, 07 May 1961, page 98. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁵ "Placerville Art," *Sacramento Bee*, 13 May 1962, page 114. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁶ "Coloma Arts Fair Entries Are Opened," *Sacramento Bee*, 02 Jul 1973, page 20. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁷ "New Theater Group Will Hold Tryouts," *Auburn Journal* (Auburn, California), 04 May 1967, page 29. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁸ "New Summer Theater Will Produce Plays In Coloma," *Sacramento Bee*, 07 May 1967, page 139. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁸⁹ "Play 'Bus Stop' Nears Coloma," *Sacramento Bee*, 28 June 1967, page 33. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁹⁰ "Coloma Plans Melodrama," *Sacramento Bee*, 03 Mar 1968, page 153. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁹¹ "More Than 90 Entries Will Be Seen In Coloma Gold Parade," *Sacramento Bee*, 23 Jan 1969, page 29. <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

⁹² "Coloma Days celebrations."

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The cannon in front of the Coloma Lotus Community Hall (Photograph 31) is owned by the Gold Trail Grange #452. It has a long and eventful history that goes back before the California Gold Rush.

In 1960, the cannon's provenance was investigated by Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma. According to the park's Ranger Fischer, "The cannon was displayed in the early celebrations of the town and was later used as a hitching post at the Sierra Nevada Hotel. After the hotel burned down, during the 1920's, the cannon was moved to the Coloma School House yard and was collected during a scrap metal drive. It was saved from the scrap pile by local citizens and taken to Loomis and then returned to its present location, the Community Hall in Coloma."⁹³

The cannon was identified by M. L. Peterson at the Smithsonian as a twelve-pound carronade, made between 1790 and 1820 in the Carron Foundry in Scotland.⁹⁴ Donald H. Clark of the Cannon Hunters Association of Seattle wrote, "I have no doubt that the Coloma gun came from Fort Ross, as it tallies with several guns which were there at the time it was occupied by the Russians."⁹⁵

According to the Fort Ross Conservancy, in December of 1841, "John Sutter purchased Fort Ross from the Russian American Fur Company, and he acquired many of the materials and implements that went into the construction and development of Sutter's Fort at New Helvetia."⁹⁶ This fort was located in what would become known as Sacramento, California. Sutter informed Vallejo that he had purchased "all the moveable and fixed property of the settlement of the Honorable Russian American Company at Ross" including "Russian uniforms, powder, rifles, and artillery, with which he equipped his Indian army and strengthened the fort."⁹⁷ With regard to how the cannon got to Coloma, Ranger Fischer wrote, "No written record of this cannon could be found, however, usually reliable people in the area say it is from Sutter's Fort and is the same one that was here during the early days."⁹⁸

Sutter was directly connected to Coloma because he funded the wood mill that had been very close, within a few hundred feet, to the current location of the Community Hall: Sutter's Mill, run by James Marshall, his partner in the endeavor.⁹⁹

⁹³ Robert A. Fischer to Clyde Newlin, "Fischer Letter May 10, 1960" (Coloma, CA: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, May 10, 1960).

⁹⁴ M. L. Peterson to John E. Dixon, "Smithsonian Institution Letter" (Coloma, CA: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, April 7, 1960).

⁹⁵ Donald H. Clark to H. H. Sederquist, "Canon Hunters Association Letter" (Coloma, CA: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, April 29, 1960).

⁹⁶ Fort Ross Conservancy, "John Sutter." https://programs.fortross.org/elp/john_sutter.

⁹⁷ Albert L. Hurtado, *John Sutter: A life on the North American Frontier*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 97-100.

⁹⁸ Robert A. Fischer to Clyde Newlin, "Fischer Letter May 10, 1960" (Coloma, CA: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park).

⁹⁹ Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, "The World Rushed In," https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=484.

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Some accounts say the cannon came to Coloma because of James Marshall,¹⁰⁰ but the plaque on the cannon in current times attributes its Coloma delivery to Patrick O'Bein Murphy. Either way, the Coloma cannon stayed on the valley floor for decades in a few different locations, except for about ten years. The *Placerville Times* in 1950 pronounced that the "Old Canon, Stolen from Coloma, Located by Centennials Group." The article stated the canon had been stolen about ten years earlier from the yard at the old Coloma Schoolhouse (1,000 feet south from the Community Hall on Hwy 49) and returned on January 31, 1950 by the Ramseys of Loomis "on whose property the canon was recently unearthed."¹⁰¹

The Sacramento Bee published a photo on January 30, 1950 and a caption describing how the depicted Mrs. G. H. Metcalfe examined the cannon, "a historic piece from Coloma," which was returned "last week to Coloma after it had been found buried in a lot near Loomis, Placer County."¹⁰² (Figure 8). Further reported, "Last Sunday the cannon was brought to Coloma and unloaded in back of the Community Hall. A few residents witnessed the firing of the piece."¹⁰³ It has stood guard in front of the Hall ever since.

2. The Mirror

An ornate, large, 600-pound mirror currently hangs in a side room of the Coloma Community Hall after having a rich history in the Coloma Lotus Valley (Figures 11 and 12 and Photograph 27). According to the local paper *The Mountain Democrat*, in 1850 Dick Lemoin owned the Isabell Hotel and eating establishment at Gold Hill, just uphill from Coloma. At first, states the article, "Dick's business did not prosper. He served good food and good liquor, but the miners just did not seem to have the interest in walking up the steep grade to the Isabel hotel." Dick put together \$1,000 in gold dust and commissioned the purchase in France of "the fanciest gold frame and mirror on the continent" to attract more customers. After six months, the mirror arrived on a special wagon to prevent its breakage. "When the great box was opened, it took eight men to lift out the immense frame and bolt it to the saloon wall. No one add ever seen anything like it. ... The great mirror twinkles and glimmered it through the golden baroque carvings like a bright star in the night."¹⁰⁴

According to the sign next to the mirror in the Community Hall with text that was based on *Mountain Democrat* newspaper articles, business at the Isabel failed when the mines played out. Its owner Dick Lemoin moved away, leaving the mirror in place at the saloon. The Isabel burned down in about 1852, but there was a legend that the great mirror had been saved. In fact, "110 years later a crated golden mirror frame was found in a barn on Gold Hill, cracked and peeling.

¹⁰⁰ "Coloma's Historic Cannon is Restored After Rediscovery," *Fresno Bee*, Jan. 16, 1950. <https://ancestry.com>.

¹⁰¹ "Old Canon, Stolen from Coloma, Located by Centennials Group." *Placerville Times*, 1950

¹⁰² "Historic Cannon," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 30, 1950. Gold Rush Research Library, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Coloma, California.

¹⁰³ "Cannon Returned," *Sacramento Bee*, Jan. 30, 1950. Gold Rush Research Library, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Coloma, California.

¹⁰⁴ J. Berton Hassler, "Portals of the Past," *Mountain Democrat* (Placerville, California), no date.

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The mirror glass was gone. Was this the long lost Isabel mirror? Yes!! The back of the frame had been scorched! It took Mother Lode Glass Company three days to fit new mirror glass.”¹⁰⁵

The restored mirror was then placed in its new home, the third Sierra Nevada House in Coloma. It is sometimes referred to as the Sierra Nevada House III because it had burned twice before, in 1902 and 1925.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, in 2015, that well-known inn and road house burned down yet again – but “the charmed mirror had again survived with only cosmetic damage.”¹⁰⁷ Just before the building was demolished, the owners Keith Merson and Kristi Warren invited the community to save the mirror. Volunteers were gathered to cut it out of the ruined building, others to repair and refinish it, and another team to install it in the Coloma Lotus Community Hall.¹⁰⁸

The Coloma-Lotus Community Hall Continues Its Mission

The local community continues to be involved with the Coloma-Lotus Community Hall and Gold Trail Grange. The Hall hosts informative talks on local issues by individuals and local groups, shows films, hosts music concerts and dances, provides monthly potluck dinners open to all, and each spring awards to select local graduating high school students scholarship funds that are raised all year. The Hall continues to provide the community a space for weddings and receptions, anniversaries and memorials, and other meaningful gatherings. Cub Scout meetings take place there, and teen river guides will show a film festival this summer. The river put-in has been groomed to be a more modern feature of the property that is utilized by members.

The cannon continues to stand guard outside the Hall, and the historic mirror reflects the continued social enjoyment of a community eating, drinking, dancing, talking, enjoying music and art, and raising money together for the community and the continued well being of their community hall.

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¹⁰⁵ The Great Gold Hill Mirror sign. (Coloma, CA: Coloma Lotus Community Hall, no date). Mirror sign.

¹⁰⁶ Sederquist, *Coloma*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ The Great Gold Hill Mirror sign.

¹⁰⁸ The Great Gold Hill Mirror sign.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Coloma Lotus Community Hall / Gold Trail Grange #452, and Gold Rush Research Library of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.45 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Coloma Community Hall
Name of Property

El Dorado County, California
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Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: 38. 813369, -120. 827068
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.813369 Longitude: -120.827068

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 1 Block 6 in central Coloma is bounded by Highway 49 to the west, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park to the north, the South Fork American River to the east, and Mount Murphy Bridge to the south.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The lot is described by the records of El Dorado County, book 104 at page 20. The location, identification, and boundaries of the lot have remained consistent since the first recording, as shown by the historic and current maps.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: S. Schwartz C.R. Kendall
organization: _____
street & number: PO Box 172
city or town: Coloma state: CA zip code: 95613

Coloma Community Hall
Name of Property

El Dorado County, California
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e-mail brainwork@mindspring.com
telephone: (617) 997 - 7955
date: July 22, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Coloma Community Hall – Coloma Lotus Community Hall - Gold Trail Grange 452
City or Vicinity: Coloma
County: El Dorado
State: California
Photographer: S. Schwartz C.R. Kendall

Coloma Community Hall
Name of Property

El Dorado County, California
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Dates Photographed: January 28, April 19, and May 29, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Number Description

- 1 of 32 View of the Community Hall nestled in the valley from the hill to the west
- 2 of 32 View of the Community Hall from the historic state park to the west
- 3 of 32 View of the rear of the Community Hall, its parking lot, and river put-in, from the east
- 4 of 32 View of the river access from the Community Hall parking lot, looking east
- 5 of 32 Back parking lot, looking east
- 6 of 32 Front and south corner of the Hall
- 7 of 32 Front letters and façade of the Hall
- 8 of 32 South side of the Hall
- 9 of 32 Back of the Hall
- 10 of 32 Back north corner of the hall
- 11 of 32 North side of the Hall
- 12 of 32 North side of hall looking west, showing detail of outside stairs
- 13 of 32 Front and north corner of the Hall
- 14 of 32 Interior of hall looking west to the stage in back
- 15 of 32 Interior of hall looking southwest to the front
- 16 of 32 Hall detail of built-in original bench, looking west to the front
- 17 of 32 Hall detail of built-in original bench, looking east to the back

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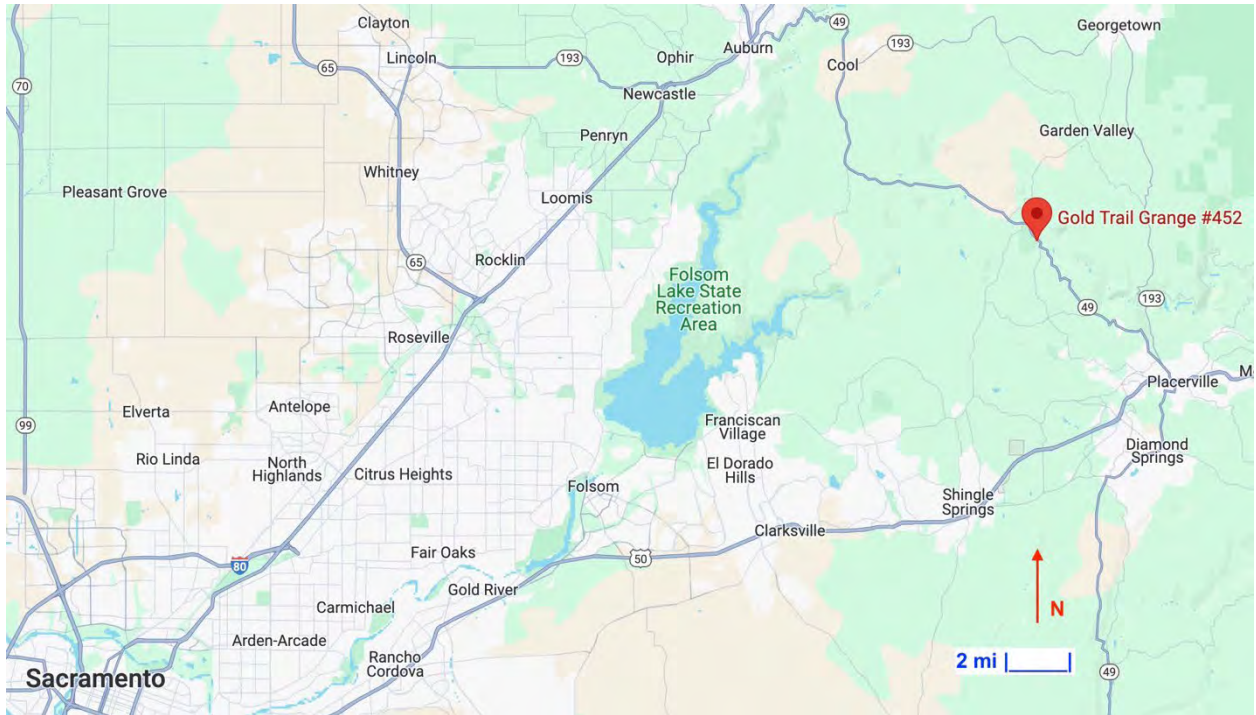
- 18 of 32 The stage at the back of the hall
- 19 of 32 The historic wood burning stove
- 20 of 32 Doorway from hall to back addition and back stairs, looking east
- 21 of 32 Back addition looking west at the original white external siding
- 22 of 32 Kitchen looking to the southwest
- 23 of 32 Kitchen looking to the east
- 24 of 32 Kitchen window looking north
- 25 of 32 Storage room looking east
- 26 of 32 Original wood floor in storage room
- 27 of 32 Small meeting room with historic mirror, looking east to kitchen
- 28 of 32 Women's lounge opening to restroom, looking northeast
- 29 of 32 Women's restroom, looking north
- 30 of 32 Men's restroom, looking north
- 31 of 32 The cannon in front of the Coloma Lotus Community Hall, viewed from the side
- 32 of 32 The cannon in front of the Coloma Lotus Community Hall, viewed from the front

Coloma Community Hall
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Location Map

Latitude: 38.813369 Longitude: -120.827068



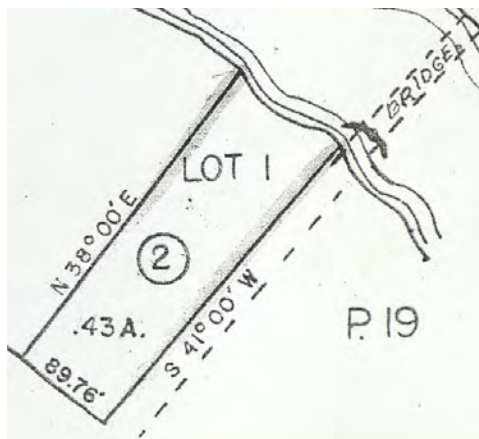
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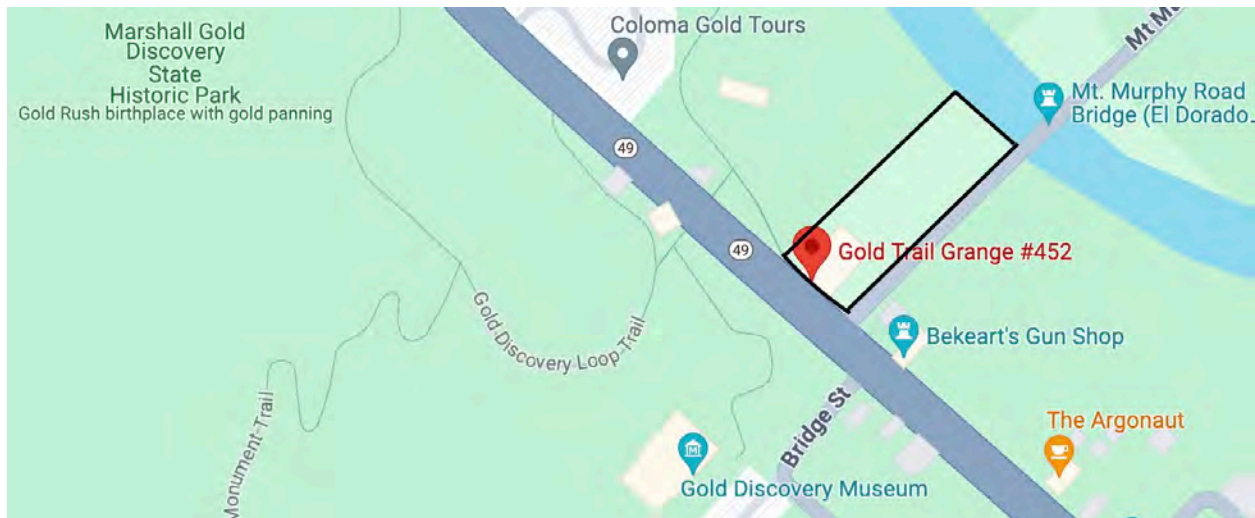
Boundary Maps

Coloma Lotus Community Hall – Gold Trail Grange #452, Lot 1 Block 6, Coloma

Historic map. Source: Records of El Dorado County, book 104 at page 20 (Courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park).



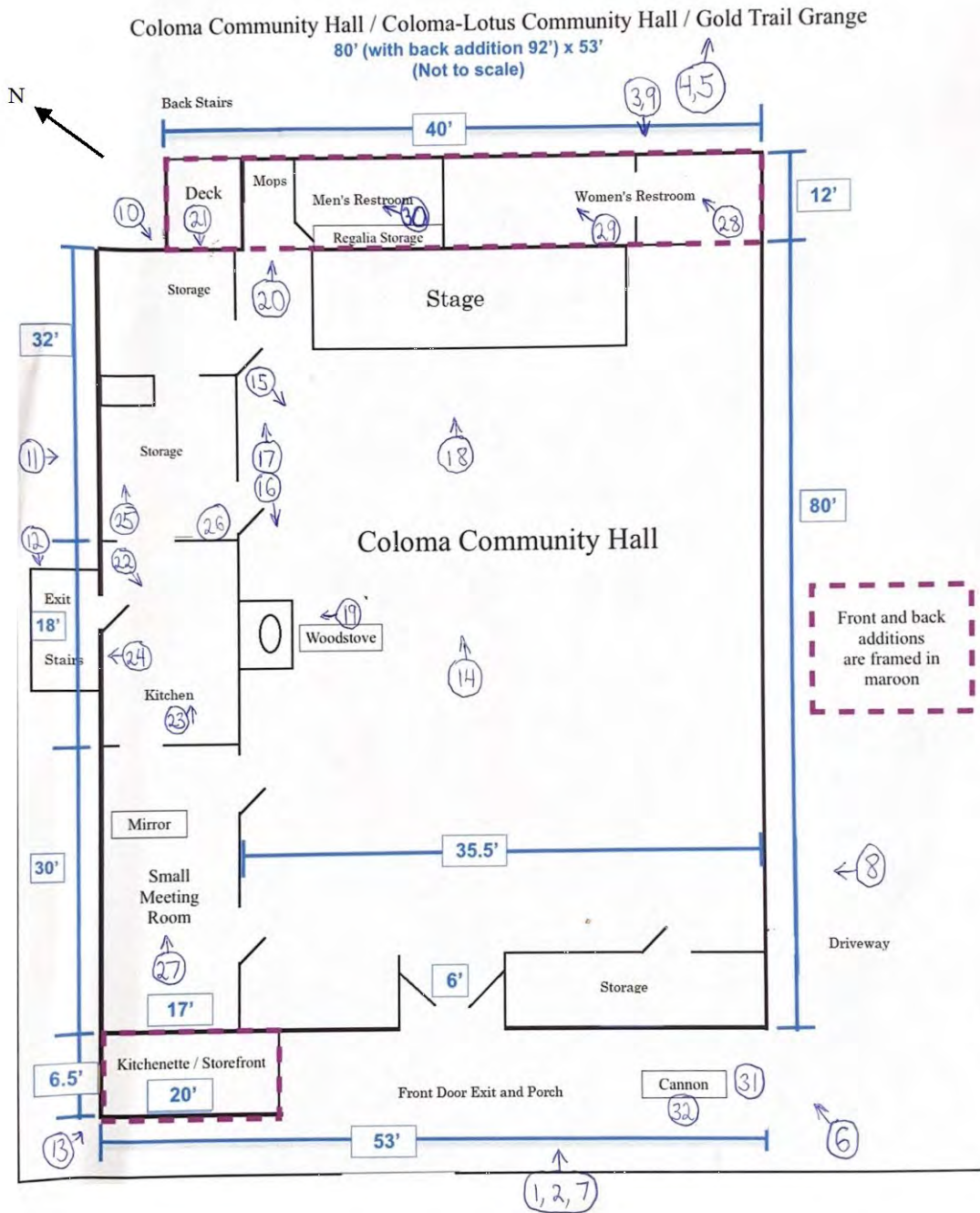
Current map. Source: Google Maps.



Coloma Community Hall
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Sketch Map / Photo Key



Coloma Community Hall
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8068B00D-93CF-41D2-90BC-B3B2F9C76601.jpg

Figure 1 1879 initial property transfer in from Charles Irwin to Rufus Morgan Burgess; courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.

July 1879

Blacksmith / Grange Hall 77

Charles H. Irwin
Rufus M. Burgess

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT WHEREAS,
the United States, by Letters Patent dated the 5th day of September 1873, has granted to the undersigned in trust for the several use and benefit of the occupants of the Town Site of Coloma in El Dorado County, State of California, according to their respective interests, the lands embraced within said Town Site, as will more fully appear by reference to said Patent, now of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County, in Book A of Land Patents, on page 12221¹ And Whereas, Rufus M. Burgess has made the proofs required by law as to his ownership of that certain piece or parcel of land in said Town hereinafter described, and has paid me upon said land the sums required by law to be paid, and the legal time having expired, and no adverse claim thereto having been filed,

Now, THEREFORE, I do hereby Grant unto said Rufus M. Burgess that certain piece or parcel of land designated on the Plat of said Town, now on file in the office of said County Recorder, as Lot No. 111 in Block No. 17 (6)

No title shall be hereby acquired to any mine of gold, silver, platinum or copper, or to any valid mining claim or possession held under existing laws of Congress.

Witness my hand, this 9th day of July 1879 Charles H. Irwin [S.]
County Judge of El Dorado County, California.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }
County of El Dorado, } ss. On this 9th day of July in the year 1879, before me Thomas Francis Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared Charles H. Irwin known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

Witness my hand and Official Seal, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.
Thomas Francis Notary Public [S.]

Filed for record at request of Charles H. Irwin
July 9th 1879, at minutes past 12 o'clock M., and recorded
July 11th 1879, at 30 minutes past 9 o'clock A.M.
Geo. B. Burcham
Recorder of El Dorado County.

By [Signature] DEPUTY.

Charles H. Irwin
Rufus M. Burgess

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT WHEREAS,
the United States, by Letters Patent dated the 5th day of September 1873 has granted to the undersigned in trust for the several use and benefit of the occupants of the Town Site of Coloma in El Dorado County, State of California, according to their respective interests, the lands embraced within said Town Site, as will more fully appear by reference to said Patent, now of record in the office of the County Recorder of said County, in Book C of Land Patents, on page 12221¹ And Whereas, Rufus M. Burgess has made the proofs required by law as to his ownership of that certain piece or parcel of land in said Town hereinafter described, and has paid me upon said land the sums required by law to be paid, and the legal time having expired, and no adverse claim thereto having been filed,

Now, THEREFORE, I do hereby Grant unto said Rufus M. Burgess that certain piece or parcel of land designated on the Plat of said Town, now on file in the office of said County Recorder, as Lot No. 111 in Block No. 17 (6)

No title shall be hereby acquired to any mine of gold, silver, platinum or copper, or to any valid mining claim or possession held under existing laws of Congress.

Witness my hand, this 13th day of June 1879 Charles H. Irwin [S.]
County Judge of El Dorado County, California.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }
County of El Dorado, } ss. On this 13th day of June in the year 1879, before me Ogden Squares Notary Public in and for said County, personally appeared Charles H. Irwin known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that he executed the same.

Witness my hand and Official Seal, the day and year in this Certificate first above written.
Ogden Squares Notary Public [S.]

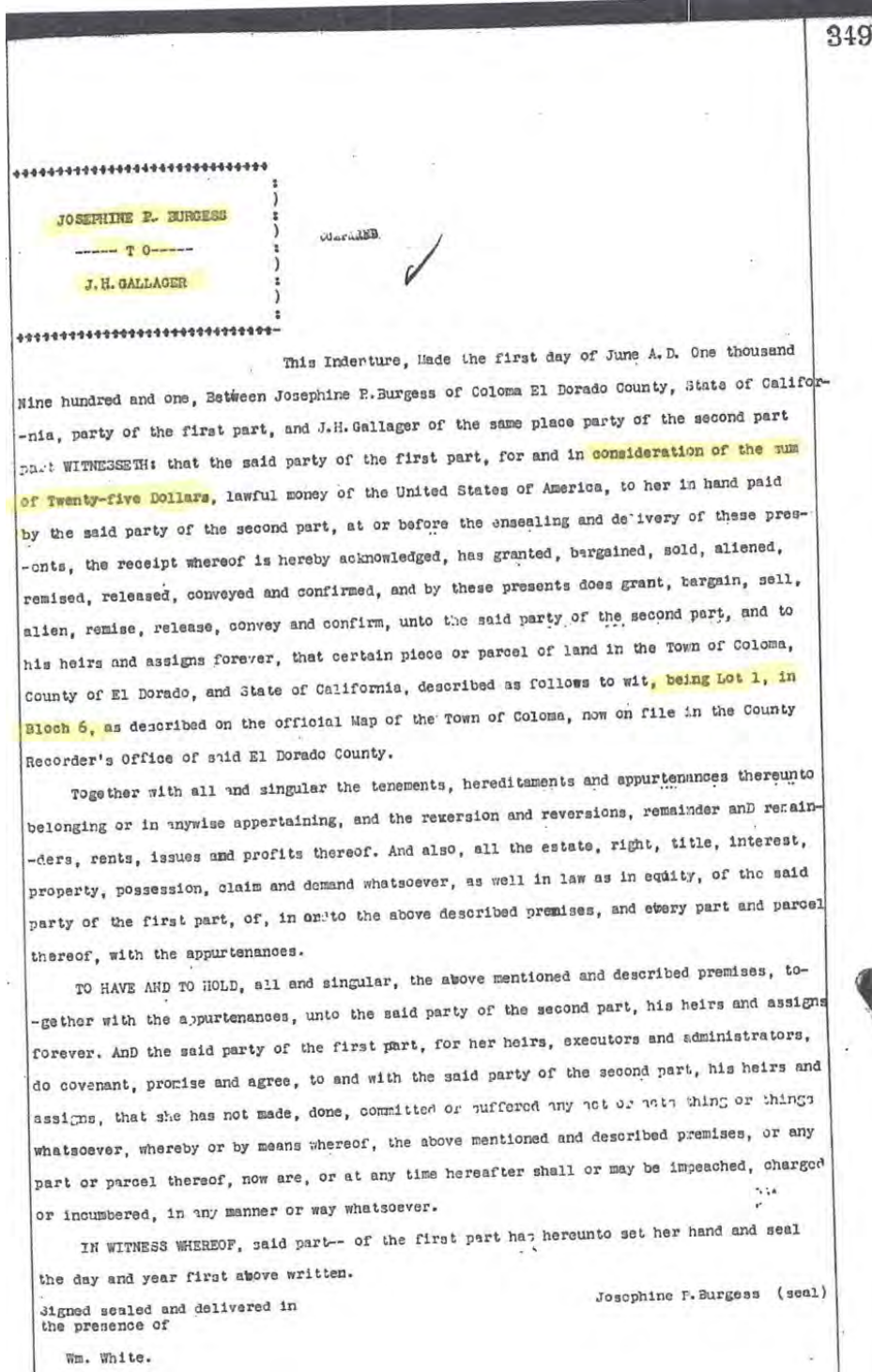
Filed for record at request of Charles H. Irwin
July 9th 1879, at minutes past 12 o'clock M., and recorded
July 11th 1879, at 45 minutes past 9 o'clock A.M.
Geo. B. Burcham
Recorder of El Dorado County.

By [Signature] DEPUTY.

Coloma Community Hall
Name of Property

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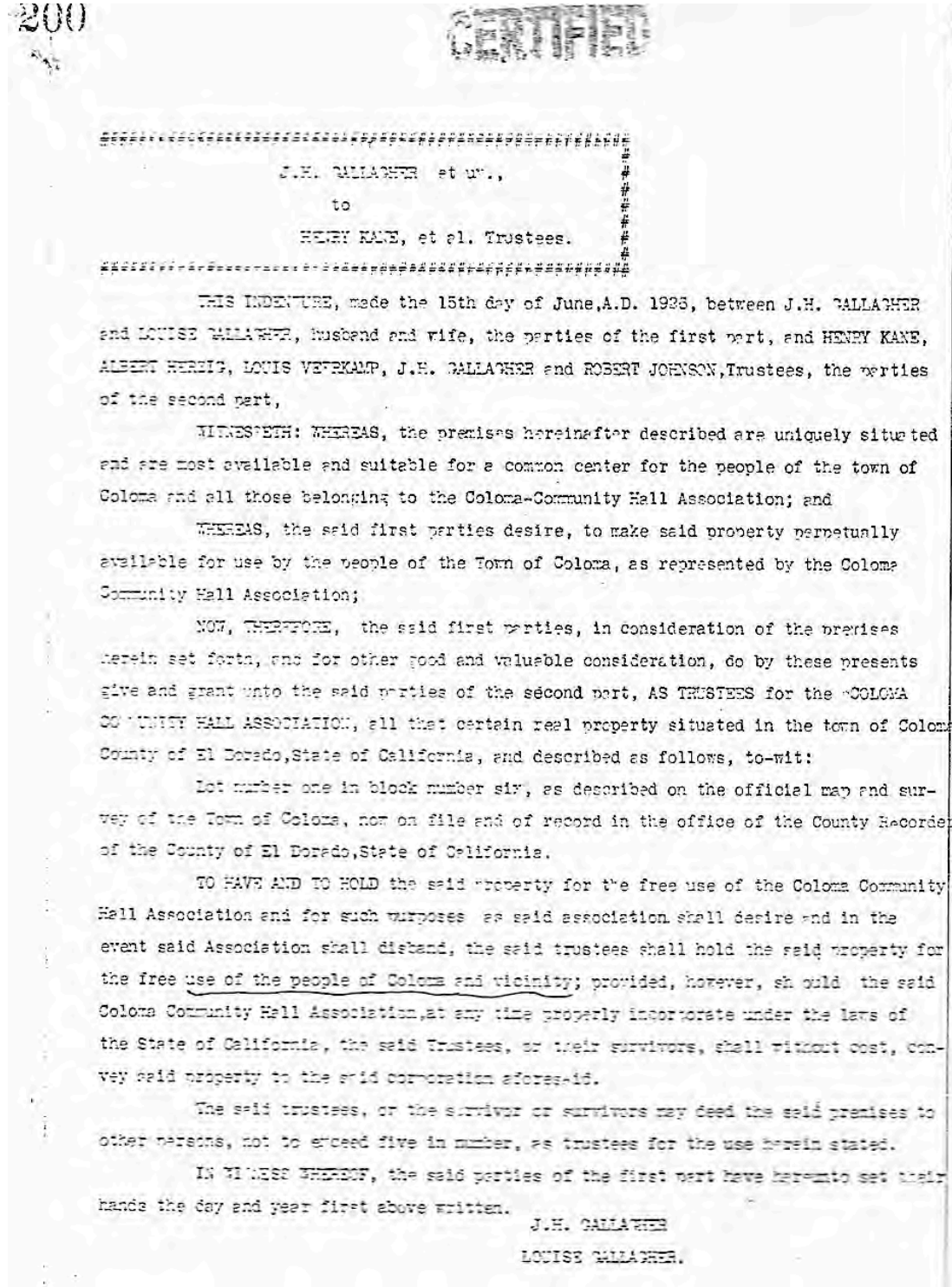
Figure 2 1901 property transfer from Josephine Burgess (widow of Rufus Burgess) to J.H. Gallagher (sic); courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



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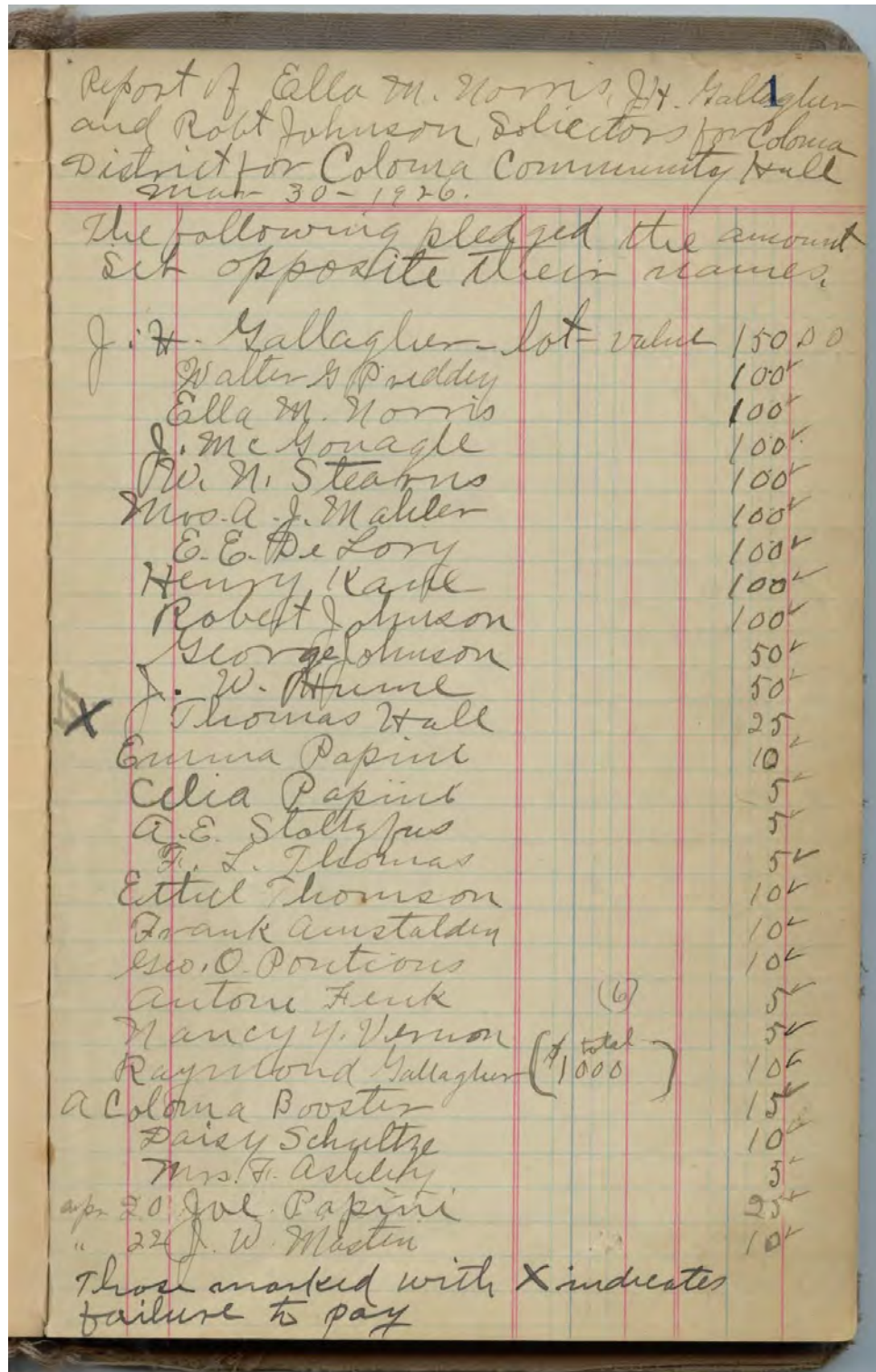
Figure 3 1926 deed to transfer land from J.H. and Louise Gallagher to trustees of the Coloma Community Hall; courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



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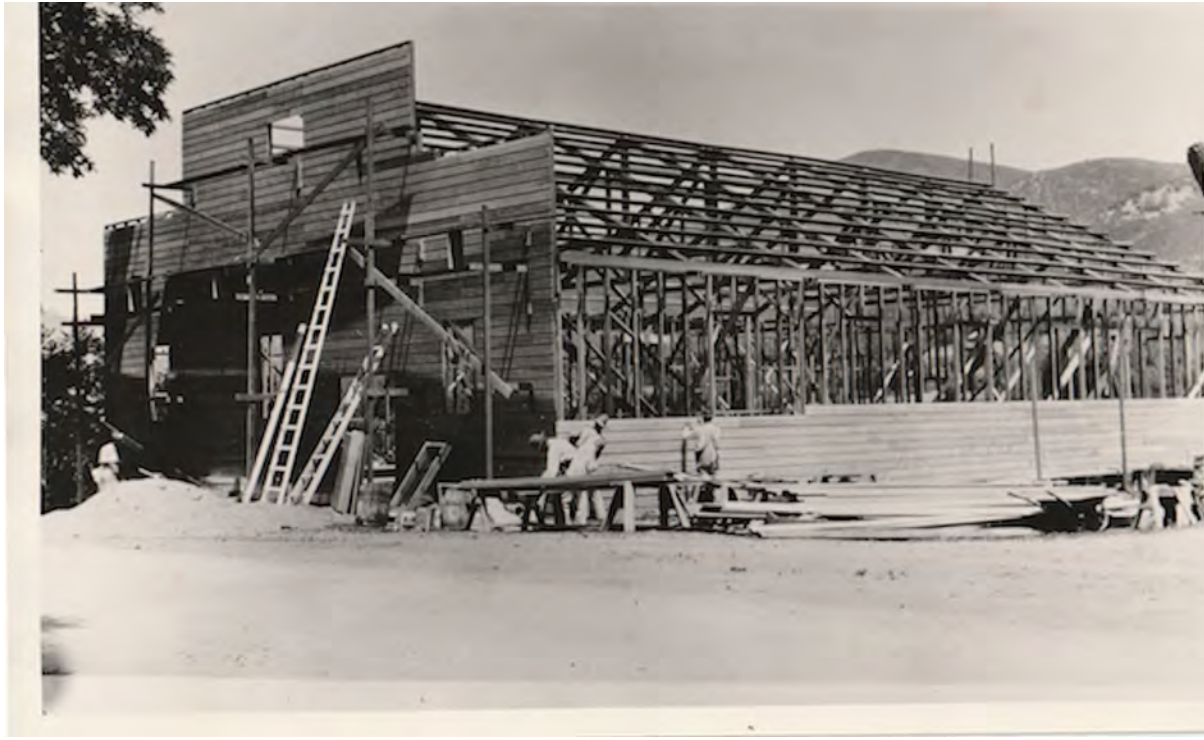
Figure 4 1926 Coloma Community Hall membership book, page 1; Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives.



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Figure 5 1926 Construction of the Coloma Community Hall; Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives.



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Figure 6 Newly built Coloma Community Hall, circa 1926; Sederquist p.77.

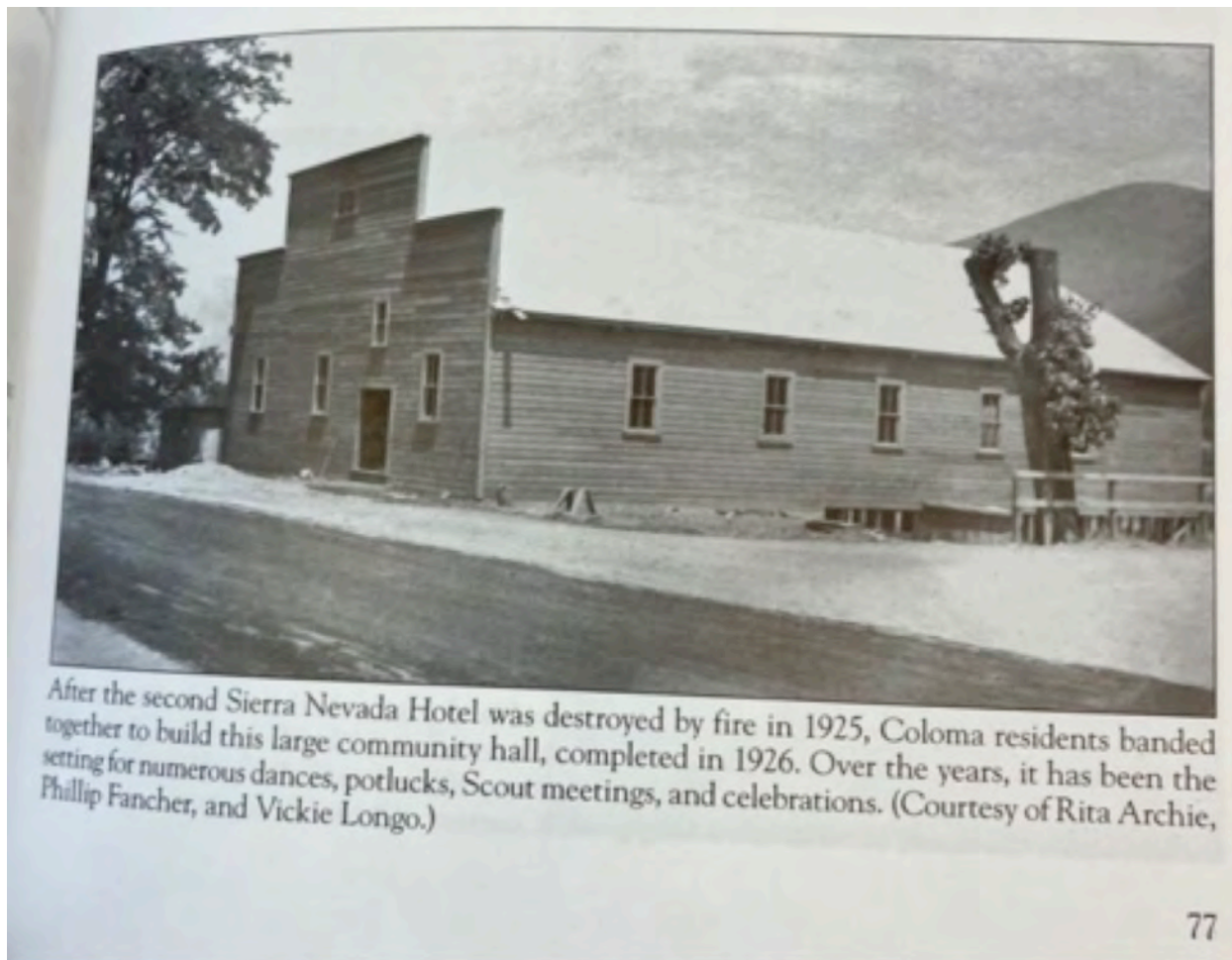
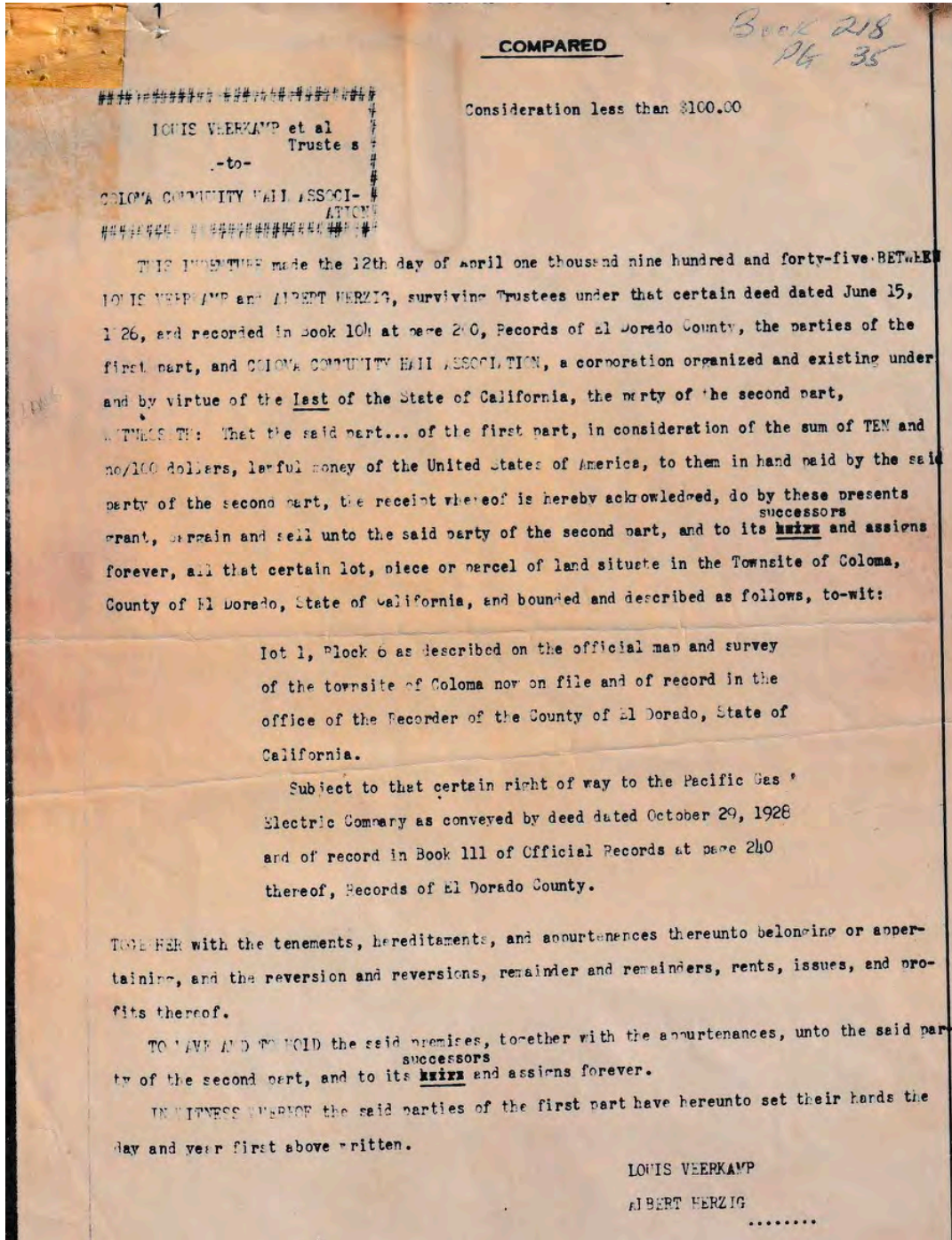


Figure 6 – After the second Sierra Nevada Hotel was destroyed by fire in 1925, Coloma residents banded together to build this large community hall, completed in 1926. Over the years, it has been the setting for numerous dances, potlucks, Scout meetings, and celebrations.

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Figure 7 1945 Transfer of Coloma Community Hall from Community Hall trustees to the Community Hall Association; courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



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Figure 8 "Historic Cannon," *The Sacramento Bee*, 1950; courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



HISTORIC CANNON—Mrs. G. H. Metcalfe examines the cannon, a historic piece from Coloma, El Dorado County, which was returned last week to Coloma after it had been found buried on a lot near Loomis, Placer County. It had been missing several years.
Bee Photo

Figure 8 HISTORIC CANNON – Mrs. G. H. Metcalfe examines the cannon, a historic piece from Coloma, El Dorado County, which was returned last week to Coloma after it had been found buried on a lot near Loomis, Placer County. It had been missing several years. – Bee Photo

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Figure 9 1960 photograph of the front of the Coloma Community Hall; courtesy of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



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Figure 10 1968 photograph of the front of the Coloma Community Hall from *The Mountain Democrat*; Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives.



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Figure 11 Postcard, no date: “Gold Hill Mirror”; Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives.

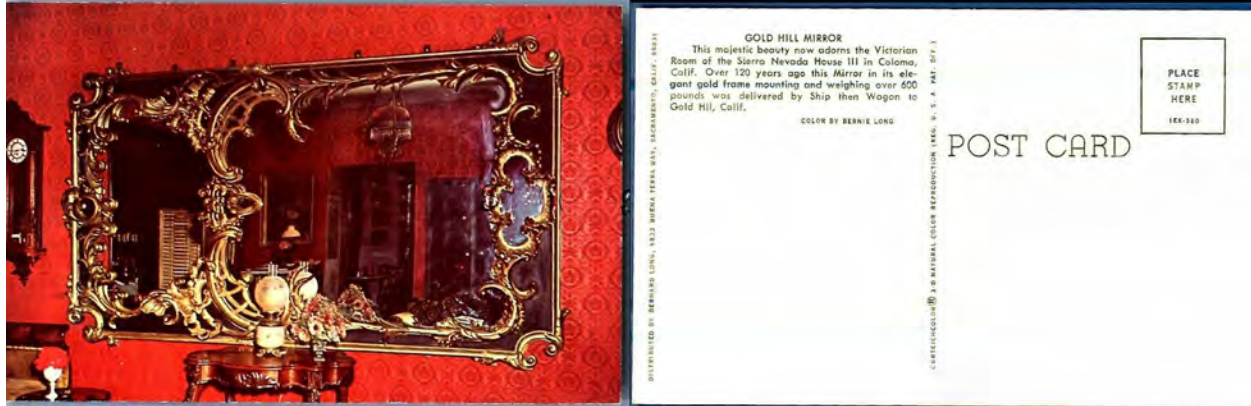


Figure 11 - GOLD HILL MIRROR - This majestic beauty now adorns the Victorian Room of the Sierra Nevada House III in Coloma, Calif. Over 120 years ago this Mirror in its elegant gold frame mounting and weighing over 600 pounds was delivered by Ship then Wagon to Gold Hill, Calif.

Color by Bernie Long. Distributed by Bernard Long, 6833 Buena Terra Way, Sacramento, Calif. 95831

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Figure 12 “The great Gold Hill mirror,” *The Mountain Democrat*, no date; Coloma Lotus Community Hall archives.



Figure 12 - THE GREAT GOLD HILL MIRROR – lost for over 110 years, now hangs on the wall in the Victorian room of Sierra Nevada House III at Coloma. Four months of painstaking work have restored the frame to its original condition – much of the work done by artist, Laura Marsha (in mirror at left). ... – Democrat photo

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Photo 1 View of the Community Hall nestled in the valley from the hill to the west



Photo 2 View of the Community Hall from the historic state park to the west



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Photo 3 View of the rear of the Hall, parking lot, and river access, from the east



Photo 4 View of the river access from the Community Hall parking lot, looking east



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Photo 5 View of the Hall's back parking lot, looking east



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Photo 6 Front and south corner of the Hall



Photo 7 Front letters and façade of the Hall



Coloma Community Hall
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Photo 8 South side of the Hall



Photo 9 Back of the Hall



Coloma Community Hall
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Photo 10 Back north corner of the Hall



Photo 11 North side of the Hall



Coloma Community Hall
Name of Property

El Dorado County, California
County and State

Photo 12 North side of hall looking west, showing detail of outside stairs



Photo 13 Front and north corner of the Hall



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Photo 14 Interior of the Hall looking west to the stage in back



Photo 15 Interior of the Hall looking southwest to the front



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Photo 16 Hall detail of built-in original bench, looking west to the front



Photo 17 Hall detail of built-in original bench, looking east to the back



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Photo 18 The stage at the back of the Hall



Photo 19 The historic wood burning stove



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Photo 20 Doorway from the Hall to the back addition and back stairs, looking east



Photo 21 Back addition looking west at the original white external siding



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Photo 22 Kitchen looking to the west



Photo 23 Kitchen looking to the east



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Photo 24 Kitchen window looking north



Photo 25 Storage room looking east



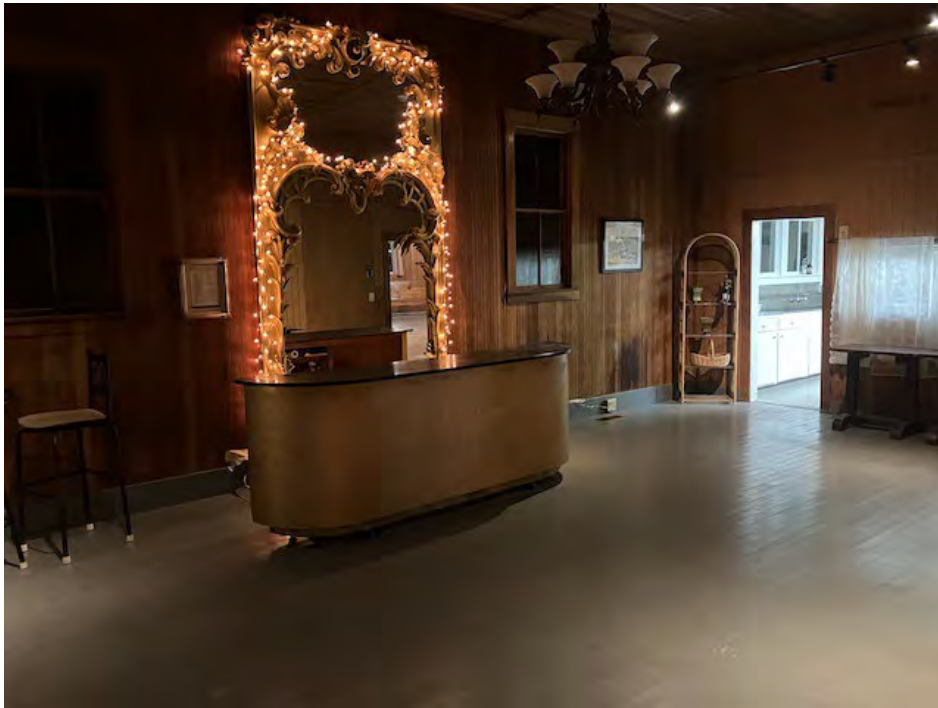
Coloma Community Hall
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Photo 26 Original wood floor in storage room



Photo 27 Small meeting room with historic mirror, looking east to kitchen



Coloma Community Hall
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Photo 28 Women's lounge opening to restroom, looking northeast



Photo 29 Women's restroom, looking north



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Photo 30 Men's restroom, looking north



Photo 31 The Cannon – viewed from the side



Coloma Community Hall
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Photo 32 The Cannon –viewed from the front



Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.