

National Hotel

Condition: good unaltered; essentially original site

This is the most imposing building in the business district of Nevada City. Three stories tall and extending about a hundred feet along the main street, it possesses^{es} dignity, charm and an elegance which must have satisfied yearnings for "civilization" in the old days.

The brick walls are painted dark green which contrasts strongly with the white painted window frames and the many elaborate ornamental features.

A handsome wood portico extends along the street front, supported by bellied/^{wood}columns at the curb and cast iron engaged columns at the building. Above this portico heavy brick pilasters run through the second and third stories, dividing the tiers of windows in a design nostalgically classic. The pilaster capitals are formed with brick dentils. the brick cornice is playfully modelled with metopes - all features being brought out with the white paint. The length of the front is curiously divided into four sections, alternately wide and narrow; the wide ones emphasized by ornamental cast iron railings at the third floor.

Offices and shops occupy the entire street floor level, except for entrances to the hotel dining room, the bar and to a stairway leading to the hotel proper and the second and third floors. At the rear of the building the ground is at the second floor level and from that side the hotel is entered through a charming garden. The rooms, shops and all interiors are high ceiled, well proportioned and fitted with good doors, windows and woodwork of the period.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries -- complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: NATIONAL HOTEL

AND/OR HISTORIC: NATIONAL EXCHANGE HOTEL; originally called "Bicknell's Block".

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 211 Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: Nevada City

STATE: California CODE: COUNTY: Nevada CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisitions: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Hotel & Dining Room</u> <u>Shops & business offices</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Mr and Mrs Richard Worth

STREET AND NUMBER: 211 Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: Nevada City STATE: California CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Nevada County Assessor's Office - Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: Church Street

CITY OR TOWN: Nevada City STATE: California CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission

DATE OF SURVEY: May-September 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Commission files - 529 E. Broad Street, Nevada City, California

STREET AND NUMBER: Duplicate files - Nevada City Library (Historical Section)

CITY OR TOWN: North Pine St., Nevada City STATE: California CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: COUNTY: ENTRY NUMBER: DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One) Essentially			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is the most imposing building in the business district of Nevada City. Three stories tall, extending about 100 feet along the main street, it possesses dignity, charm and an elegance which must have satisfied yearnings for "civilization" in the old days. The brick walls are painted^{dark}/green which contrasts strongly with the white painted window frames and the many elaborate ornamental features. A handsome wood portico extends along the street front, supported by bellied wood columns at the curb and cast iron engaged columns at the building. Above this portico heavy brick pilasters run through the second and third stories, dividing the tiers of windows in a design nostalgically classic. The pilaster capitals are formed with brick dentils, the brick cornice is playfully modelled with metopes; all features being brought out with the white paint. The length of the front is curiously divided into four sections, alternately wide and narrow; the wide ones emphasized by ornamental cast iron railings at the third floor level. Offices and shops occupy the entire street floor level, except for entrances to the hotel dining room the bar and to a stairway leading to the hotel proper and the second and third floors. The hotel lobby is at second floor level. At the rear of the building, the ground is at the second floor level and from the side, the hotel is entered through a charming garden. The rooms, shops and all interiors are high ceillinged, well proportioned and fitted with good doors, windows and wood work of the period.

Francis E. Lloyd, A.I.A.
P.O.Box 177
Cedar Ridge, California 95924

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3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian; 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Completed April 1856; hotel opened August 20, 1856

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | Telegraph service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | important to mining; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | stage stop handling much freight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

History: This complex was built for Dr Bicknell, a dentist, by a Mr Todd who planned it and supervised the construction. According to an announcement in the Nevada Journal, April 25, 1856 Bicknell's Brick Building on Broad Street was completed." In both design and perfection of work it is the finest brick structure in the mountains and reflects great credit upon Mr Todd who planned and finished it." Bounded on either side by other buildings (Z.P.Davis's shooting gallery and Thomas/Young grocery) the Bicknell buildings came through the July 19, 1856 fire practically unscathed. Less fortunate was the U.S. Hotel -located on the corner of Pine and Broad - which burned to the ground. The owners of that hotel promptly leased the "Bicknell Block" and on August 20, 1856 opened for business as the National Exchange Hotel.

Historical Significance: It is one of the seven oldest structures extant in the city's business district. It is the only building, in this early group, that has been used for the same purpose which continues today. The National Exchange Hotel in operation since August 20, 1856 is one of the longest continuing hotels in the state.

Community Significance: The hotel offered much impact to the business community and local economy in its telegraph service and in its freight and passenger services. Its hotel facilities benefitted all travelers both commercial and pleasure. It has been the hub of Nevada City's commercial and social life for more than a century.

Architectural Significance: In its exterior the building offers an example of an original building designed in 1856. The interior, though essentially original as to structural walls has undergone certain rearrangement. The present dining room and bar occupy space once used by the telegraph office, the passenger and freight service and the original dining room. The hotel lobby was relocated on the second floor and the original ground floor lobby converted to offices. The hotel annex built in the 1890 period connected to the hotel at second story level by a glass encased passage way. The annex and hotel proper separated by a narrow bricked driveway known as " hotel alley". The annex was torn down in 1968 and though less than historical its demolition has rendered great loss to the visual effect of the hotel and its adjoining property.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Doris Foley's Gold Cities (Howall-North, 1966)
 Nevada Journal 1854-1860 editions, Bancroft Library
 Study of The Seven Oldest Buildings in Nevada City
 by Doris Foley -July 1968 edition Grass Valley UNION

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39° 15' 46"	121° 01' 10"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Mrs Leland S. Lewis, Chairman

ORGANIZATION: Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission

DATE: September 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
 529 E. Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN: Nevada City

STATE: California

CODE:

12. 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 _____

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

P.O. BOX 2390
SACRAMENTO 95811

July 17, 1973

Mr. Leland S. Lewis, Chairman
Nevada County Historical Landmarks
Commission
529 East Broad Street
Nevada City, California 95959

Sully
Dear ~~Mrs.~~ Lewis:

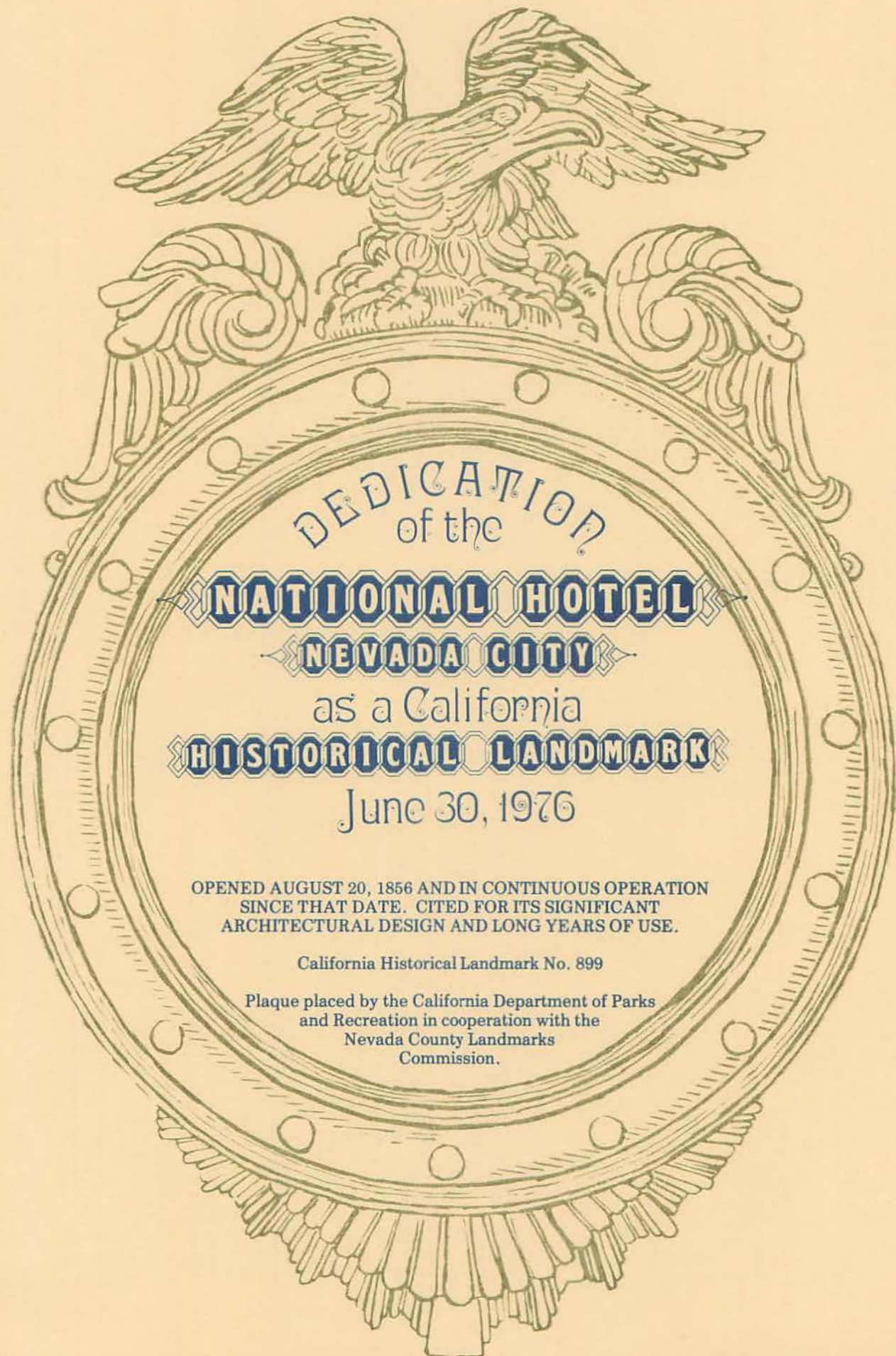
We are pleased to inform you that the National Register application for the National Hotel has been recommended by the California Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee. The State Historic Preservation Officer has nominated this property for inclusion in the National Register. It is now pending final certification by the Keeper of the National Register, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

We will keep you advised of further stages in the progress of the application.

Sincerely,

John H. Michael
John H. Michael, Supervisor
History Preservation Section

0-1/6



DEDICATION
of the

NATIONAL HOTEL

NEVADA CITY

as a California

HISTORICAL LANDMARK

June 30, 1976

OPENED AUGUST 20, 1856 AND IN CONTINUOUS OPERATION
SINCE THAT DATE. CITED FOR ITS SIGNIFICANT
ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND LONG YEARS OF USE.

California Historical Landmark No. 899

Plaque placed by the California Department of Parks
and Recreation in cooperation with the
Nevada County Landmarks
Commission.

Program

Welcome.....	Dr Hjalmer Berg Chairman A. R. B. C. Commission
Remarks.....	Assemblyman Eugene V. Chappie
Introductions.....	Dr W. Knox Mellon, Jr
Introductions.....	John Larue
Rector Family Records.....	Dr Jack Rector
Family Reminiscences.....	John Larue
History.....	Miss Jennifer Tremoureux
Unveiling of marker.....	Dr Jack Rector Mr Dick Worth
Presentation of Plaque.....	Dr Clement W. Meighan
Acceptance.....	Mr and Mrs Richard Ness

State Historical Resources Commission & Staff

Dr Clement W. Meighan - Chairman

Mr Glen A. Settle
Mrs Kathryn Kaiser
Dr John Kemble
Dr Nadine Hata
Dr W. Knox Mellon, Jr Executive Sect.
Mrs Sandra J Elder, Recording Sect.
Mr. Eugene Itoawaga, Staff Historian
Ms Paula Boghansian
Ms Dana McDaniels

Special Guests

Mr and Mrs John M Rector
Mr and Mrs Frederick G Rector
Mr and Mrs John M Rector, 2nd
Mr and Mrs Dick Worth
Mr and Mrs John L Larue
Mr and Mrs Roy Tremoureux
Miss Jennifer Tremoureux
Mr and Mrs Richard Ellers & Miss Sasha
Mrs Marian R. Libbey
Mr and Mrs Dick Ness
Mr and Mrs Rudy Ness

Mr John H. Michaels, Division of Operations

Dr Donald Hata
Mayor John Rankin

NATIONAL HOTEL

The National Hotel, probably the most widely-known building in the County, was first called the Bicknell Block, which included four buildings with common walls. The two structures in the center belonged to Dr. Bicknell. Zeno Philosopher Davis' gunsmith shop stood on the right and the Thomas store on the left. Office space and rooms were rented on the two floors above. Shortly after its completion on April 25, 1856, the fire of July 19th occurred and damaged the two end buildings while Bicknell's center structures remained intact.

Pearson and Healy, who ran the United States Hotel at the corner of Broad and Pine Streets (Eddie's), leased the Bicknell Block after the destruction of their own hotel in the fire. Henry Pearson gave it the name of The National Exchange Hotel and opened it for business on August 20, 1856. The Davis building soon repaired, was added to the complex, but the reconstructed Thomas building was not made ready until June, 1857.

John and George Lancaster bought the business in 1858, and it passed through several owners.

In 1886, the Rector Brothers leased the hotel from S. A. Eddy, and purchased it in 1891. The annex was added in 1902. It remained in the Rector family until purchased by Fred Worth in 1925, then Dick and Nan Ness in 1972. Having the distinction of being continuously operated since 1856, the hotel offers the same gracious hospitality that has made it so very popular throughout the years.

-Doris Foley