

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Historic Resources of Martinez, California

Name of Multiple Property Listing

California

State

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E. Statement of Historic Contexts

(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

SUMMARY STATEMENT

This Multiple Property Submission addresses historic resources in the unincorporated and incorporated City of Martinez that are eligible under Criteria A, B, and C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These properties have significance for their association with events and persons locally significant in the areas of community development, economic development, commerce, agriculture, and associations with historically significant ethnic groups that settled in and around Martinez and contributed significantly to the development of Downtown Martinez. The properties may also be significant in the area of Architecture as examples of styles in Downtown Martinez during the applicable Periods of Significance as eligible under Criterion C.

The historic resources in Martinez, California, may be nominated for their association with events, persons, and architecture locally significant in these Historic Contexts:

- SETTLEMENT: 1847 to 1876
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: 1877 to 1914
- ROYAL DUTCH SHELL AND 1920s-ERA BUILDING BOOM: 1915 to 1929
- DEPRESSION AND POST WORLD WAR II: 1930 to 1960

INTRODUCTION

Martinez is positioned at the most southern curve in the Carquinez Strait where the Straits connect San Pablo and Suisun Bays. Alhambra Creek runs fresh water from the Alhambra Valley to the center of Downtown Martinez where Alhambra Creek empties into the Carquinez Strait. The Downtown Martinez Neighborhood exists on the hills on either side of the alluvial floodplain and on the alluvial flood plain created by Alhambra Creek. The low lying alluvial flat area and a portion of said hills were included in the first survey of Downtown Martinez in 1849. Alhambra Way follows Alhambra Creek to the Alhambra Valley. This portion of Martinez is flat. At the southern end of Alhambra Way is the John Muir Home National Monument, situated next to a set of train tracks and trestle that border the more recent and southern bedroom community portion of Martinez commonly referred to as "south of the tracks" or "south of Highway 4." Shell Refinery borders the eastern side of Martinez along Pacheco Boulevard which slants gently uphill from Downtown until it reaches the unincorporated area of Martinez. Between Pacheco Boulevard and Alhambra Way and south of Brown Street (the Downtown Neighborhood), Martinez consists mainly of gently rolling hills. Martinez is bordered by the towns of Pacheco, Concord, Pleasant Hill, Lafayette, Orinda, and Pleasant Hill.

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CLARIFICATION OF THE NAMES OF THE DEFINED GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

For the purposes of this Multiple Property Submission, a northwest portion of what the City of Martinez Downtown Specific Plan (2006) names the “Downtown Neighborhood” and most of what the City of Martinez names the “Downtown Shoreline” and “North Downtown Shoreline” are combined and referred to as the “Shoreline Neighborhood.” The City of Martinez’s Downtown Shoreline Neighborhood (as defined by this Multiple Property Submission), Downtown Commercial Core, and Contra Costa County Seat Civic Core (Civic Core) combined are referred to as "Downtown Martinez" in this Multiple Property Submission. The "Downtown Neighborhood," as defined by the Multiple Property Submission, is the residential area from Green Street to Brown Street on the east side of Alhambra Creek and the area from Green Street to Soto Street on the west side of Alhambra Creek.

ETHNIC CONSIDERATIONS

In 1850, an African American man named Jones opened the first hotel in Martinez. There were definitely Chinese in Martinez during the 1800s. Japanese were mostly known to farm in the Alhambra Valley. Mexicans, Spaniards, Portuguese, and other groups have contributed significantly to the development of Martinez. Native Americans were in Martinez and there were reports of them interacting with the Italian fishers. Greeks lived among and fished with the Italians in Martinez. Any one of these ethnicities is worthy of further investigation and possible addition to the Historic Contexts of this Multiple Property Submission.

Italian immigrants contributed an undeniably tremendous significant influence on the development of Martinez and especially Downtown Martinez. They were the primary builders of the Shoreline Neighborhood, the fishing and canning industries, and brought with them from the old country contributions to many aspects of current culture. Italians were also significant in the physical development, culture, and economic vitality of the Downtown Commercial Core as well as wine-making and farming in the greater Martinez area.

There were and are major differences between the Northern and Southern (Sicilian) Italians in their native country. In San Francisco those differences continued with the respective waves of immigration. In Martinez this was true but to a lesser degree. Most of the differences were vocationally derived. Nevertheless, there were dialectic, racial, and cultural differences between northern and southern Italian immigrants in Martinez. Most of the fishing Italians were Sicilian and many of them from the Isola della Femmine area. Generally, Italians from all areas of Italy merged their social, economic, and cultural goals in Martinez, particularly as the next generations had the opportunity to advance economically.

The historic literature and other reports that describe Martinez’s Italians have varying ways in which the last names of the Italians are reported. Wherever possible, this nomination kept the spelling of the name as it was encountered in the literature. This leads to variations in the

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spelling of the names. There was a Malluche and a Molloche, a Bellici, a Belleci, and Belleccis. It is likely there is only one spelling of that which phonetically is equal to Aiello, Cardinalli, Ferranti, and others. English-speaking reporters, such as the City Directory authors and Census takers, could only communicate phonetically with the Italian-speaking immigrants is a factor in the variance of the spelling of the names found in reference works.

IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS AND PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

There are no above-ground resources surviving within Martinez from the Prehistoric Era (4,500 BP to 1772) and perhaps only one from the Spanish and Mexican periods (1773 to 1846), the Barber Adobe. The earliest known resource in the Downtown Commercial area, the Isadore Weiss residence at 715 Ferry Street (c. 1860), dates from the Settlement period (1847 to 1876). This era began in 1847 with the American conquest and Robert Semple's Ferry, and ended in 1876 with the incorporation of Martinez as a city. The Bertola, Tucker, Miranda, Muir, Martinez adobe, and Wittenmeyer homes are examples of residences built during the Settlement Period of Significance.

In 1842, Louis Rampoldi began residing in Martinez. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1892. Rampoldi is likely the first Italian-born pioneer in Martinez. His son became Contra Costa County Deputy Sheriff and later Rampoldis contributed to the development of the Downtown Commercial Core.¹

The period following the incorporation of Martinez is "Economic Development 1877 to 1914." This period was characterized by significant growth of the small rural city and county seat of Contra Costa into a more distinctive and commercial Victorian center. Downtown Martinez was located strategically as a transportation hub particularly with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1877. During this period, Martinez returned to its position as County Seat and in 1903 replaced its pioneer-era courthouse with the extant and palatial monumental granite courthouse. Three years later the matching jail was built just east of the Courthouse on the same block. Many industries of relatively advanced technology were established in Downtown Martinez during this Period of Significance.

Italian Immigrants arrived on Martinez's shoreline to fish and work in canneries. They built homes on the marsh and near the creek or lived in boarding houses, boats, and arks. Small businesses sprang up to serve these mostly Sicilian Italians. Non fisher Italians continued to run businesses, farm, and make wine in the outskirts of Downtown Martinez. Italians contributed to the economic vitality of Martinez as a transportation hub.

A catastrophic fire in 1904 wiped out most of the Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez. The 1906 Earthquake contributed more destruction in the Commercial Core and caused a fire

¹ A.F. Bray, "Italians Figure Prominently in Agricultural, Social, Business, and Educational Life of County," *Martinez Herald*, August 21, 1936, Microfilm.

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that destroyed a portion of the Italian fisher village north of the railroad tracks in the marsh. The latter was incentive for Italians to begin to build, live, and do business just south of the railroad tracks and in the Commercial Core.

During the Period of Significance the Commercial Core rebounded from both the destructive fire of 1904 and the 1906 Earthquake. Twelve extant buildings in the Commercial Core were constructed during this period in the area most affected by the fire at and around the intersection of Ferry and Main Streets. Masonry buildings replaced wood frame buildings and received better insurance ratings. The Bank of Martinez (1905) at 618 Ferry Street, the granite Bergamini Building (1905) and the Curry Building (1913) at 600 Ferry Street are examples, as well as the Costanza family residences and business in the Shoreline Neighborhood. The extant resources from this period stand outside the limits of the fire and include several former dwellings such as the 1880s Prosser Residence at 815 Marina Vista Avenue, and several frame commercial buildings such as the 1892 Whiskey (formerly College) Lane Saloon at 613 Ferry Street.

The 1906 Earthquake brought refugees by ship from San Francisco including Italians from the North Shore. The Martinez Italian community absorbed several hundred Italians from other communities in the San Francisco Bay Area. The 1906 Earthquake also brought fire to the Italian fisher village north of the tracks. The population and construction pressure resulted in the Italians moving south over the tracks to start new businesses closer to and in the Commercial Core. Baseball great Joe DiMaggio (1914-1999) was born in a wood shack on the marshes near the Italian fishing village in Downtown Martinez’s shoreline. Houses that served both as businesses and residences continued to be built in and around the Italian fisher nexus in the Shoreline Neighborhood.

The Economic Development Period of Significance was the era of the residential Victorian and Craftsman Homes. The Borland and Briones Homes are exceptional examples of these respective architectural styles.

The announcement by Royal Dutch Shell that it would construct a \$500,000 refinery in Martinez sparked a major building boom that lasted until the late 1920s. The "Royal Dutch Shell and 1920s-era Building Boom: 1915 to 1929" was characterized by rapid growth and an unprecedented construction in response to the hundreds of laborers and managers who moved to Martinez to take jobs at Shell. Between 1915 and 1918, seventeen extant buildings within the Downtown Martinez Commercial Core were completed, including three residential hotels, such as the Hotel Ohem (1915) at 700 Alhambra Avenue, two single-family residences, and twelve masonry commercial building—including the City Hall Building (1915) at 706 Main Street. The 1920s building boom increased by thirty-seven the number of buildings in the Commercial Core.

Reflecting the technology and business practices of the day, most of these were single-story

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reinforced-concrete or reinforced-brick commercial blocks. Several automobile related businesses arose along Alhambra Avenue and Ward Street at the southwest edge of Downtown Martinez’s Commercial Core. This was a vibrant time for the Italians in Martinez as they continued to increase their numbers and the economic and social power. They continued to build in the Shoreline neighborhood and the Commercial Core.

The Civic Core increased by two buildings during this period of significance: The World War I Veterans Memorial Hall (1924) built with an interior community swimming pool that was used for eight years and the Sharkey/630 Court Street (1926) newspaper building. More Italians arrived. Boarding houses and residences in the Shoreline Neighborhood were built by and for Italians as they opened more businesses and as the fisher population expanded due to native births and immigration. Improvements in transoceanic ships facilitated travel.

All the estates and farms were bought up proximal to Downtown Martinez and developed. All the Revival styles of residential architecture proliferated in the Downtown Neighborhood tracts during this period. Due to population pressure, schools were built, including what is now Martinez City Hall.

After the 1920s expansion, the following period of significance is "Depression and Post World World War II: 1930 to 1960." Greater Downtown Martinez was built out. Eleven extant buildings were erected in the Commercial Core between 1930 and 1939. As the county seat of Contra Costa County and as home to a major refinery, Martinez continued to attract investors and business people who were responsible for building several one-and two-story brick and concrete commercial buildings, such as the Cooper Building (1930) at 636 Ward Street, the Marini Building (1930) at 686 Escobar Street, and the exuberant Colombo’s (1937) Art Deco building at 627 Ferry Street. This period of slowed development continued through the Second World War in reaction to wartime restrictions on the use of many common building materials. The Italians grew to their peak population during this period of significance while suffering the Enemy Alien Ban. Nevertheless, another eight buildings were completed during World War II.

The Civic Core was increased by seven buildings (six extant) during this period, including the Art Deco 700 Court Street (1941) as the county headquarters of a title company, the now demolished Contra Costa Title Company (formerly Assessor’s), and 610 Court Street (1945) as a commercial building and the only Streamline Moderne building in Downtown Martinez. Three monumental buildings were constructed with the deliberate development of Court Street as a Civic Center: The transitional Art Deco County Hall of Records (1932), the New Deal Public Works Association Art Deco Post Office (1937), and City Library (1942). A new jail was constructed on the Pine Street side of the Courthouse block.

Revival, Minimalist, and Prairie Box-derivative style residences continued to be built during the early part of this Period of Significance. The residences around the intersection of Pine and Brown Streets exemplify Tudor, Spanish, and Colonial Revival residential tracts. By the end of

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this Period of Significance, the Downtown Martinez Neighborhood was built out on both the east and west hills and to its southern extension.

Immediately after World War II, unpretentious one-story concrete Main Street commercial buildings, automotive-related commercial buildings along Alhambra Avenue, and industrial buildings along Berrellesa Street were erected. By the mid-1950s new auto-centered commercial and residential development covered the formerly rural areas of central and eastern Contra Costa County, luring existing business away from downtown Martinez.

Between 1950 and 1960, only six extant buildings were erected in the Commercial Core. Sharkey Square, a memorial to State Senator William R. Sharkey who also published the county newspaper that dominated the county until the 1950s, was created by widening Court Street between 630 and 610 Court and the Court House block. Gill-net fishing was banned in 1957, thereby permanently changing the way of life of the Italian and other fisher people of the Martinez Shoreline. After 1960, Downtown Martinez became a backwater within the suburbanized East Bay region, Sun Valley Mall in neighboring Concord was built, and Martinez entered a long period of little change.

SETTLEMENT: 1847 to 1876

Robert Semple's Ferry

Dr. Robert Semple had been a Lieutenant in the Bear Flag Revolt. Semple arrived in what is now Martinez in 1847 and began the first individually owned regular ferry service in the Bay Area. Semple’s ferry crossed the deep waters of the Carquinez Strait. The 1849 gold rush brought people from all over the world via San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. Because the locus of gold activity began in Coloma, many travelled overland to the Sierra foothills through the flat Sacramento Valley. This required crossing the Carquinez Strait by Semple’s Ferry. The traffic through what became Downtown Martinez in the late 1840s and early 1850s provided economic vitality through many types of businesses besides Semple’s ferry, such as stores and restaurants.

Martinez Town Site Laid Out

Don Vicente was the son of Ignacio Martinez. Ignacio had been granted Rancho El Pinole. This rancho encompassed land bordered by and west of Alhambra Creek to the tidelands as far as where the towns Crockett and Pinole are now. The rancho included the Alhambra Valley. A part of this rancho became the part of the City of Martinez that is east of Alhambra Creek. Don Vicente erected an adobe house in the Alhambra Valley over two miles south of where Semple’s Ferry would be. That adobe remains as part of the John Muir National Historic Site. Also in 1848, the Martinez family agreed to allow Ignacio's son-in-law, Colonel William M. Smith, to hire a surveyor named Thomas A. Brown to subdivide for sale 120 acres of land near

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Semple's ferry. Brown had just accomplished the same for Portland, Oregon and the Martinez family paid him \$3,613. The initial town site was located only on the west side of Alhambra (El Hambre) Creek. Smith named the north to south streets after the other men who had married Ignacio Martinez's daughters: Talbart, Richardson, Berrellesa, Smith, Castro, and Estudillo. To attract investors, Smith named the east to west streets after real estate tycoons from San Francisco: Howard, Ruden, Ward, and Green.

In 1850, William Welch's son-in-law Joseph Swanson subdivided 500 acres of Welch land on the east side of Alhambra Creek and this increased the yet to be township of Martinez five-fold. This survey continued Smith's grid plan eastward towards Court Street and is known as the "Additional Survey of Martinez." Martinez was at a strategic location on the water channel that connected San Francisco Bay to Sacramento and Stockton. Martinez and its ferry were critical connectors in the overland route from San Jose to the Sacramento Valley. In the winter of 1852 to 1853 Martinez's waterfront filled with hydraulic mine detritus. Owners then had to build their wharves and piers over the tule and through marshes in order to reach the Carquinez Strait. Also in this year, a ferry passage was acquired by and a landing built at the end of Ferry Street by Oliver Coffin. Economic activity then shifted east to Ruden (now Main) and Ferry Streets. Business relocated to this intersection, beginning again in lightly framed wood buildings—including Asa Bowen's Morgan House and William Hook's general store—most of which were destroyed by fire and are non-extant.

In January 1851 the Court of Sessions rejected a citizens' petition for the incorporation of Martinez as a city. The rejection of the petition declared the community was of insufficient size. Martinez then grew as returning gold miners settled permanently in Martinez. The fertile soil, comfortable climate, and fresh water were conducive for farming and horticulture. Wheat, apricots, cherries, pears, figs, walnuts, and peaches were sold to San Francisco markets. Many of the early settlers were from New England; some from Nantucket such as the Smith and Coffin families. Pikers came from Missouri, such as Elam Brown. Other prominent horticulturalists included John T. Strentzel, Henry Bush, and the Bent family. The Union Hotel and the Wells Fargo Station were among the businesses that opened during the period. These buildings were lost to fire.

Martinez continued to grow through the early 1860s. Martinez was a center of commerce, agriculture, and transportation. Martinez was the center of government and civic culture for much of the territory that lay east of the East Bay Hills. Martinez' first newspaper, the *Contra Costa Gazette*, was founded September 18, 1858 by W.B. Soule. In its last six months of its existence, the Pony Express had a stop in Martinez.

The early 1860s brought Martinez into California's wheat boom because along with Alameda County, Contra Costa had enough sunshine and wide swaths of level and nutrient-rich soil for dry land wheat farming. This factor--combined with its international port—positioned Martinez as a center of wheat shipping activity from Contra Costa, Alameda, and other outlying valleys

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to Europe and the East Coast. Farmers in the inland valleys moved the unprocessed wheat they grew to Martinez where the wheat was stored in large timber frame warehouses on the west side of Alhambra Creek. Where Berrellesa Street meets Buckley Street was the largest collection of these warehouses. Oliver Coffin and Syranus Standish built a flour mill at the foot of Estudillo Street to process wheat into flour, significantly increasing its value for export. Plans for a railroad in Martinez resulted from these wheat industries. Wheat commerce brought several new businesses to Martinez. In 1860, Isadore Weis acquired the modest two-story, framed vernacular building at the corner of Ferry and Ward. It is the oldest building in the geographic area of this Historic Context.

During the early American period, Contra Costa’s population did not grow and the county continued as a far flung collection of often temporary frontier communities that sprang up and died off as new opportunities arose. For a brief time in the 1860s, Martinez almost lost the county seat to Pacheco—a town ambitious to divert and absorb the wheat commerce. Businesses including the *Contra Costa Gazette* relocated to Pacheco. However, the creek silted in and Pacheco was no longer able to participate in the wheat trade. As the 1860s progressed, the wheat growing industry found larger and cheaper parcels of land in other places such as the San Joaquin Valley. Martinez nevertheless held on to its agricultural prosperity via its relationship to San Francisco. Truck farming and horticulture commerce continued into the twentieth century. In 1869, John Muir’s father in law, John T. Strentzel, invented a method of fruit preservation using carbonized bran. This opened a much broader market for local fruit to be exported.

Martinez Designated County Seat of Contra Costa County—The Birth of the Civic Core

California achieved statehood on September 9, 1850. In the beginning, California was divided into 27 counties which included Contra Costa County. Not yet incorporated as a city, Martinez was designated the county seat of Contra Costa County due to its strategic location on the Carquinez Strait and as the county’s geographical center. The first permanent courthouse was erected in 1855 on the corner of Main and Court Streets. It was three stories, brick, and finished with a cupola. This first courthouse faced the Carquinez Strait where it was positioned on the north east side of Court Street. The Courthouse sat among palatial Victorian estates as Court Street was once residential. Gradually each mansion and residence was demolished for the development of the Civic Core and this expansion continues.

Italians

Contra Costa County, and especially Martinez, has a similar climate and growing conditions to Italy. Martinez is similar to Sicily with its hills near shorelines that are fishable waters. Farmers from the northern part of Italy first settled in Pacheco and Concord. The first Italian to be naturalized in Contra Costa County was Antonio Bertola on August 3, 1869. In 1857, Bertola

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opened the first fruit and grocery store in Martinez.² Bertola moved from Pacheco to Martinez where he owned a swath of land in just south of the Downtown Neighborhood. On this land Bertola planted vegetable and fruit crops, and developed a vineyard and a winery. A street in this area was named Bertola. His son became a Martinez town trustee. Bertola’s daughter, Mariana, was Martinez’s grammar school principal and then became a well known doctor and social worker in San Francisco. She is considered one of California’s notable Italians. She was born in the house on Antonio Bertola’s land. The house is extant at 2102 Castro Street, about one-third mile south of Downtown Martinez’s Commercial Core.³ The large clapboard house, that predates 1884, has become an apartment building. Its exterior and landscaping retain most of their character defining historic features.

Due to a flood in Pacheco in 1872, Antonio Rafetto moved his gardens to a large acreage in Martinez near the Downtown Neighborhood. Rafetto’s produce shipped to San Francisco via Benicia. He peddled vegetables in the proximal shoreline towns as well. At one time, the water supply for the Downtown came from Rafetto’s property. Martin Bonzagni was naturalized in August 1875 and moved to Martinez after owning a hotel in Nortonville and operating the first soda works in the County.⁴ The skilled Italian farming, horticulture, and winemaking contributed to the transportation hub and the food supply of Downtown Martinez, and these Italians were significant to the development of Downtown Martinez.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: 1877 to 1914

Arrival of the Railroad

The following description of the arrival of the Railroad is quoted directly from the Kelley and VerPlanck Historic Context, with the correction that “Northern Pacific Railroad,” that never came through California, is replaced with “Northern Railway.”

Martinez became even more closely linked to the greater world with the arrival of the railroad in the 1870s. In 1870, the newly incorporated San Pablo-Tulare Railway Company, a subsidiary of the mighty Central Pacific Railroad Company, began making plans to build a low-elevation line from Martinez, via Tracy, to Los Gatos Creek in Fresno County. Around the same time, the Northern Railway Company, another Central Pacific subsidiary, began planning a new and more direct link in the Transcontinental Railroad, between Oakland and Sacramento, along the south shore of Carquinez Strait.

² Orinda G. Petty, Dr. Mariana Bertola: Distinguished Californian (1868 – 1956),” in *Columbus: The Publication of the Columbus Celebration—1977: Historical Issue: Italians in California* ed. California Historical Society, (San Francisco: Alessandro Baccari and Associates, 1977), 171.

³ Charlene Perry, *Martinez: A Handbook of Houses and History*, (Pleasant Hill, CA: Diablo Press, 1998), 81-82.

⁴ Bray, “Italians Figure Prominently.”

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Construction began in early 1877, with the San Pablo-Tulare division building a line east from Martinez and the Northern Railway building tracks from Oakland toward Martinez. The Oakland-Martinez alignment posed many difficulties, Snaking along the south shore of Martinez Strait, crews had to blast away steep bluffs, tunnel through promontories, and fill shallow mudflats to provide a level track bed. As the Northern Railway approached Martinez, crews built a swing drawbridge over Alhambra Creek, allowing scow schooners to continue navigating the waterway beneath the railway. Tracks were completed as far east as Ferry Street in Martinez in the fall of 1877, with the first train arriving in town on September 22, 1877. Other railroad sponsored infrastructure in Martinez included the spur tracks to the warehouses west of Alhambra Creek, an engine house and turntable east of Ferry Street, and a "Swiss-rustic" style passenger depot and freight house between Ferry and Las Juntas streets.

Regularly scheduled service between Martinez and Oakland began in January 1878. By July of that year, the Northern Railway and San Pablo-Tulare lines were connected near Antioch, completing the new route between Oakland and Sacramento and down to Tulare County. On September 8, 1878, Martinez became an official stop on the Transcontinental Railroad after eastbound trains from Oakland to Sacramento were diverted from the old Altamont Pass alignment to the new and more level line running along Carquinez Strait.

Martinez's status as a stop on the Transcontinental Railroad lasted barely a year. Seeking an even quicker route to Sacramento, the Central Pacific began exploring the possibility of bridging the Carquinez Strait. Concluding that such a bridge would be too expensive, the railroad established car ferry service from Bull Valley (now Port Costa) to Benicia in December 1879. Soon, new wharves lined the south shore of the Carquinez Strait from Crockett to Port Costa, somewhat isolating Martinez from the main channel of continental commerce.

Martinez Depot

The combined passenger depot/freight house built by the Northern Railway (in reality the Central Pacific), part of which still exists [and is a State of California Point of Historical Interest], initially consisted of a 75' long, one-story freight house and a two-story ticket office and waiting room with quarters for the station agent on the second floor. The station was built from a standardized plan developed by the Central Pacific's Office of the Superintendent of Buildings and Bridges. The design was called "Common Standard (CS) 18." The Central Pacific used standardized plans for its entire infrastructure, ranging from buildings to rolling stock to signage. The particular Common Standard depot design was chosen on the basis of community size and station type, i.e., main

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line, junction, or spur. Only major cities got their own architect-designed depot. As a small town on the Transcontinental Railroad, Martinez received a medium-sized depot capable of expansion.⁵

Building Boom

Residential and commercial construction proliferated with the arriving railroad. In 1876, Simon Blum erected a Main Street mercantile emporium on the block bounded by Castro and Ward Streets and Alhambra Creek. That same year, Granger's Wharf and Coffin & Standish's Flour Mill were completed next to Bray Brothers' Lumber Yard at the foot of Smith Street (now Alhambra Avenue). These buildings do not survive. In 1879, James Stewart built a combined residence and grocery at the southwest corner of Castro and Ward streets. Partially rebuilt in the 1990s, Stewart's Grocery is the second-oldest commercial building in the Downtown Martinez Commercial Core. The growing importance of Martinez during the railroad era was reflected in its final incorporation as a sixth-class city in 1876, with a population of a little less than one thousand people.

1884 Sanborn Map

Martinez was a regional settlement of 895 farmers and merchants. The first Martinez Sanborn Map was generated in 1884 and reveals a not built-out Downtown district of mostly single-story, wood frame commercial buildings facing Main Street between Smith (Alhambra) and Jail (Court) streets, and Ferry Street between Front (Marina Vista) and Pine (Ward) streets. Martinez's greatest buildings were the expansive International Order of the Odd Fellows Hall at the southwest corner of Ferry and Escobar streets, the Centennial Hotel on Main near Estudillo, and Blum's stretch of commercial buildings just west of Alhambra Creek. Johnsons' Livery Stable and several saloons were close to the railroad station and the ferry terminal where Johnson's Livery Stable. Hough's Saloon was on the southeast corner of Front and Ferry streets and William Jones' saloon was across from the depot. Jones Saloon was moved in 1914 to its current site at 815 Marina Vista.

Infrastructure

A growing population demanded an upgraded infrastructure. In the 1880s new bridges were built for crossing Alhambra Creek. The Martinez Water Company incorporated in 1883. In 1887, D.R. Thomas contracted with the City of Martinez to supply 20,000 gallons of water a day via water pipes he lay beneath the streets and a holding tank on his property in the foothills west of town. Martinez Gas Company laid gas lines and built a plant. In 1901, Contra Costa Electric Light Company contracted with the Bay Counties Power Company to supply power to Martinez.

⁵ Kelley & VerPlanck. *Downtown Martinez*, 14-15.

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1888 Sanborn Map

The 1888 Sanborn Map shows an increase in construction indicative of Martinez's transition from semi-rural settlement to a Victorian commercial center. From 1884 to 1888, the Martinez Depot freight platform was expanded and the new Martinez Hotel was built at the southeast corner of Main and Ferry streets along with a number of new frame commercial buildings. Contiguous residential districts densified with grander, Victorian-detailed homes that connoted an increase in wealth. Other maps show increased residential development in the fisher Italian village at Granger's Wharf. Simon Blum's building supply expanded into what had been Bray Brothers' lumber complex at the end of Alhambra Avenue.

1890s

In 1880, the population was 895 and by 1890 it had grown to 1,600. In 1890, a major fire destroyed parts of the Downtown Commercial area of Martinez. A second fire occurred in 1894. The 1897 Sanborn maps indicate that the block bounded by Main, Ferry, and Ward streets and Alhambra Creek had been reconstructed, including the Commercial Hotel.

In 1890 John Muir arrived at his father-in-law John Strentzel's ranch about two miles south of Granger's Wharf. During the Panic of 1893, Strentzel purchased the Granger's Wharf complex from the Grangers for \$22,000.⁶ Also in 1890, the Moore/Borland Home that is now Martinez Museum was built. In the 1890s, the Borlands introduced the telephone to Contra Costa County and Martinez—installing the first equipment in the train station. In 1899, the Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad built a line from the San Joaquin Valley to Point Richmond that increased Martinez's accessibility. A depot was built on John Strentzel's successful farm. In 1888, Central Pacific Railroad bought and ceased the Martinez-Benicia ferry in lieu of Central Pacific's already established Port Costa-Benicia route.

Martinez approached the twentieth century transforming into an industrial town and leaving behind its agricultural history. By the 1870s, Martinez's economy was expanding with transportation, warehousing, fishing, and canning. In the late 1890s, oil companies sprung up on the shores of the Carquinez Strait with tank farms and refineries that could accept oil coming from inland fields and then export the processed oil through tankers. The first refinery arrived in 1895 in Rodeo and was owned by the Union Oil Company of California. In 1904, the Bull's Head Oil Company built a small refinery next to the Mountain Copper Company and just east of Downtown Martinez. These industrial additions accompanied a change in the built environment in Downtown Martinez.

1900s

In the early 1900s several pioneer buildings were replaced with newer, larger, and more

⁶ Kelley & VerPlanck. *Downtown Martinez*.

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elaborate construction. A third and devastating fire took Downtown Martinez on August 19, 1904. Starting in a box factory at the rear of McMahan's grocery store, the fire ravaged the block bounded by Main, Ferry, Escobar, and Estudillo Streets. The fire then jumped Main Street to destroy much of the block bounded by Main, Ferry, and Ward Streets, and Alhambra Creek. Firefighters could only save buildings on the east side of Ferry Street. The fire destroyed the heart of Downtown Martinez, including the Commercial Hotel, the original Bank of Martinez, the Odd Fellows' Hall, the Martinez Opera House, and several other commercial buildings along Main and Ferry Streets, including A.P. Nelson's store, C.C. Swain's real estate office, Maximilian Bergamini's grocery store, and McMahan Brothers' grocery.

Damage within the fire zone forced businesses to open in temporary quarters. Most of the buildings destroyed were older wood frame buildings. Newspaper articles began promising an improved and more attractive Downtown constructed of masonry. Reconstruction over the next two years resulted in several extant and character defining buildings: the Bergamini Building at 624 Ferry Street, the new Bank of Martinez on the northwest corner of Ferry and Main Streets, a small brick commercial building at 713 Main Street, a grand stone commercial block at 701 Main Street, and the Rankin Block on the southwest corner of Ferry and Main Streets. Just two years later the 1906 Earthquake struck and partially destroyed the newly reconstructed Bank of Martinez which was again repaired to its original architectural character. In 1906, Pacific Bell Telephone Company built an exchange and switching station on the northwest corner of Ferry and Ward streets. This heavily remodeled and now stucco covered building still exists.

Martinez's participation in industrialism helped Martinez survive economically. Martinez's well developed position as a transportation hub in an area more removed also contributed to economic stability. In 1909, adding to Martinez's several small industrial plants and refineries, the Mountain Copper Company opened a fertilizer plant that included a small tract of workers' housing named Fairview. Industrial employees sought residences in new housing tracts or hotels in downtown Martinez. From 1900 to 1910, Martinez's population increased from 1,380 to 2,115.

Martinez's place as an industrial center was confirmed in 1913 when Royal Dutch Shell Corporation bought waterfront land to build a tank farm facility and this action spurred speculation of an impending Shell refinery. In 1914, Shell acquired the 368-acre tract Frasier Ranch east of downtown Martinez for \$144,000 and built a half million dollar mega-refinery that equaled Standard Oil Company's massive refinery in Richmond. The Shell complex refined crude oil from Coalinga. Shell chose Martinez for its deep water access, closeness to railroad lines, and topography to build a pipeline between Martinez and Coalinga.

Civic Core

Between the 1890 and 1900 censuses, Martinez's population decreased by 220 people to 1,380. The Central Pacific's decision to reroute the main line away from Martinez and cease

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the Martinez-Benicia ferry resulted in significant setbacks for Martinez's development. In 1900, a prominent Concord resident unsuccessfully petitioned that the County seat be moved from Martinez to Concord. On May 29, 1903, Contra Costa County officials dedicated a new courthouse. The new courthouse replaced the 1855 masonry pioneer masonry structure. The 1903 courthouse remains a monumental, granite, Federalist Revival building with matching jail (1906). This building and its block are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It is currently used by the County of Contra Costa as offices and storage.

Italians

Antonio Riggardo arrived in Martinez in the 1880s and set up a business near the Southern Pacific Depot in Downtown Martinez. Girolomo Pavolini came also in the 1880s and established a restaurant at the northwest corner of Court and Main Streets. Many prominent politicians frequented this establishment. Eventually John Marchi took over the restaurant and became a Town of Martinez Trustee. His descendants continue to own property in the Downtown Martinez Commercial Core as of 2014. The May 11, 1901 *Contra Costa Gazette* shows Contra Costa County paying these bills submitted by Italians: Pavaloni, G. meats, Pavoloni, A. interpreting, Bergamini & Co. Store vegetables, Cardinalli supplies, Rampoldi vegetables, and Maloche supplies.

In the 1890s there was an influx of Bolognans to Contra Costa County. Primo Ferrarini became a founder of the Bank of Italy in Martinez. Cesare Borghesani also arrived during this period of significance. In 1888 the Dante Society was formed in Martinez, and existed at least five decades. It was a club to strengthen the Martinez Italian community, and its members were loyal to one another and active in civic affairs. Antonio Raffeto was its first president and Max Bergamini was also a charter member. In the 1890s, Bergamini had a cigar and grocery store where the Bank of Martinez building stands. After the 1904 fire, Bergamini erected a tall, two story granite block building on the west side of Ferry Street, one lot up from Main Street and next to where his former store was. That building is extant. Max Gibelli operated "The Old '49 House" where the 1930 Montgomery Ward Building is at the northwest corner of Castro and Main Streets.

In the first decade of 1900, Italians arrived in Martinez from Tuscany, Pisa, and Lucca. Advances in the design of the steam ship reduced months of sailing into just days or weeks. The Italian Hotel on Alhambra Street, extant but highly altered, was established in this time by the Pistochinos. One of their children was born in it in 1907. The Compagnos had a vegetable stand in their extant Marina Vista home and then on Main Street. The DeCarlos family started a winery in the outskirts of Martinez and sold it to a Portuguese family in 1923.⁷

When A.F. Bray published his historical recount of the pioneer Italians in Martinez in August 21, 1936 *Martinez Herald*, he wrote: "It is often said when an Italian buys a piece of land he

⁷ James G Carroll, *Winemakers of Martinez, USA* (Martinez, CA: Carroll, J.G, 1980).

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seldom parts with it and one can usually pick out homes belonging to Italians by the fact that they generally have a vegetable garden and vines around their homes.”

The Fisher Italians Begin to Arrive

John Flores was the first reported pioneer fisherman to settle in Martinez. He bought and sold fish at the Old California Transportation Wharf. Sicily was and is culturally, geographically, and politically different than mainland northern Italy. Both areas suffered from political and resource deprivations at the time of their respective mass migrations. Fishers from Sicily began arriving in the Delta in the 1880s, to Pittsburg and Martinez. This is also true of Crockett and later Monterey. Many of the Italian families between these towns were and are related. Often, sets of brothers would marry sets of sisters. Italian fisher families produced on average over eight children per family. Martinez grew at a moderate pace during the latter half of the 1880s, helped in part by the addition of fish canneries such as the Joseph Black Fish Cannery and Martinez Packing Company. Many of the laborers in the canneries were Italian immigrants. Oskie Aiello (1932–2011) recounted that his grandmother started worked at the canneries when she was eleven years old.

In the 1880s there were anti-Chinese riots throughout the United States. In Martinez, in 1882, a group of Chinese laborers were ordered from their large building, beaten away from the town, forced to leave, and their building torn down. This was done by Greek and Italian fishermen and various Anglos in the town, including boys and prominent men. An investigation and prosecution was undertaken against the attackers.⁸

The United States Commission on Fish and Fisheries reported that the 1880s California waters were dominated by foreign fisherman—most of them Italians who came straight from the fishing waters of Southern Italy. They quickly acquired boats and nets, leaving Native Americans with only trout streams. The commission remarked these Italian fishermen were brave, hardy, and industrious despite a relatively meager living and they ultimately and aggressively displaced other immigrant groups from the fishing trade. They used the paranzella meshed trawling net that dragged the Bay. The Italians centuries tested felucca boats were rigged with lateens and could withstand ocean type waters.⁹

The Italian fishers began to settle near Granger’s Wharf where they also moored boats on which many lived to save money to retrieve their families back in Italy and Sicily. They bought lots and built stilted shacks, arks, boarding houses, businesses, and homes near their boats at the mouth of Alhambra Creek. Once they were able, the new immigrants sent for their families or found an appropriate bride. They created their own village and continued their ancient

⁸ Nilda Rego, “Days Gone By: Riot against Chinese alarmed state’s economic interests,” *Contra Costa Times*. June 13, 1993.

⁹ Deanna Paoli Gumina, *The Italians of San Francisco, 1850-1903 =Gli Italiani di San Francisco* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1978), 79.

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customs and fishing craft, their languages, and the seasonal life of a fisher from Sicily and the coast of Italy.

Thus began the era of the fisher Italian in Martinez, a distinct subset of the Italian immigrant in Downtown Martinez. These fishers brought their skills from Italy and Sicily. Commercial fishing grew to be a vital economic activity in Downtown Martinez.¹⁰ In 1890, fishermen from Rio Vista to Vallejo—mostly Sicilians—went on strike and settled for three cents per pound. The Martinez Cannery Company bought 80 percent of the 1,000 fish caught that day. The rest went to San Francisco. The salmon population went into decline not long after the strike due to over fishing and hydraulic mining.¹¹ Before 1902, the Italian fishers employed the centuries-proven felucca sail boat—slow and twenty-two to twenty-four feet long. The slow speed of the boats was another reason the fishermen slept in them. Later, one cylinder gas engines were added and the boats evolved into the Monterey-style fishing boat.

Families that lived near one another in the old country settled near each other again in Downtown Martinez. Bread ovens were built, fruit trees planted, wine-making outbuildings erected or basements made for the same. Other businesses sprang up to serve this Italian fisher microcosm and its foreign tastes. Bread was baked Italian style in a high round loaf. Italian home cooking influenced the use of Italian ingredients in American cuisine: Olive oil, mushrooms, tuna, preserved olives, sardines, pickled vegetables, green peppers, processed and smoked meats, tomato paste, spiced fruit, eel, saffron, tuna roe, sweet basil, pesto, mineral salts, and the use of the pestle and mortar and other kitchen implements.¹² “The growing, preparation, and sharing of food dominated the lives of most Italians, who made each meal a social event.”¹³ The Shoreline Neighborhood became “Little Italy,” a name it retained for almost a century.

The Shoreline fisher village, during this period of significance, was a world culturally apart from Downtown Martinez and yet proximal geographically and interdependent economically with the Downtown.¹⁴ The derivative Italian accent remains in the direct offspring of the fisher Italians, three or four who also continue to live in or near their ancestral homes and/or have businesses in Downtown Martinez. The area north and west of Alhambra Avenue and Main Street were intact recreations of parts of Sicily and Italy. Friday night dances and Sunday picnics were part of each community of Italians on the Carquinez Straight. According to Josephine Paganini who was 72 in 1981, all in the community were friends and one big happy family. Everyone knew each other.¹⁵

¹⁰ Charlene Perry, et al, *Martinez: A California Town*, ed. Harriett Burt, et al (Martinez, CA: RSI Publications, 1986).

¹¹ Nilda Rego, “Days Gone By: After strike ends, fishing begins to fade away,” *Contra Costa Times*, September 21, 2003.

¹² Raymond Stevenson Dondero, *Italian Settlement of San Francisco* (Master’s thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1953, Reprinted San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1974).

¹³ Vincenza Scrapaci, *Journey of Italians in America* (Gretna, LA.: Pelican Publishing Company, 2008), 66.

¹⁴ Perry, et al, *Martinez: A California Town*.

¹⁵ John Kawamoto, “End of Paul’s Place: ‘The fire hit me like a stab in the heart’,” *San Francisco Examiner*, March

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Like most fishermen who came to Martinez, the Costanzas came from the Sicilian town of Isola della Femmine, that is the Sister City to Pittsburg, Contra Costa County. The Costanzas arrived in 1895 and opened a fish market, bakery, and grocery store near their first Martinez home at the north end of Berrellesa Street near the water, in the village of Italian fishers that had formed there. Deliveries were made in a wheelbarrow.¹⁶ Boarding houses built by Italians for Italians usually maintained taverns on their first floors. There was a shoe cobbler and private wine making. The Costanzas opened a macaroni factory on Marina Vista later. That building, with a brick first story and a Victorian clapboard second story, exists.

Nunzio Sparacino arrived during this period of significance and in 1902 built a small Victorian residence at 305 Escobar Street to house his young sons he brought back with him after a visit to Italy. Joe Sparacino left grammar school to help with Nunzio's fishing business. After Nunzio's retirement, Joe took over and expanded into fish wholesaling. The Sparacino family followed a similar route as the Costanzas, and became connected with the San Francisco International Fish Company while creating and expanding other businesses in Downtown Martinez and beyond.¹⁷ Joe Sparacino eventually became an organizer of the National Bank of Martinez that became the Bank of Italy and then Bank of America. Vincenzo Lucido was also a fish broker to important companies in San Francisco. Chattel mortgages were lent on boats, and boat sharing on a catch basis was common. In 1900 there were 40 Italian fishing boats from Martinez.

There was also a significant economy of gathering resources directly from the land. Other self-reliance skills that infused the Italian fisher, and therefore Downtown, economy included: boat repair, net repair and sales, tanning vats, the boarding house and all its hospitality activities, pasta making, and a mutually supportive way of life in a culture of close intermarriage of families. Children learned to fish and were required to help their parents fishing in the spring and the fall.¹⁸

Fishing communities are unique cultures throughout the world and the Sicilian community in Martinez was strongly influenced by Catholicism and its rites and reproduction. The Italian women were left alone for months during the Alaskan fishing season or even for nights of local fishing before the boats were engine powered. The wives managed on average eight children as well as home, garden, and often outside work such as the cannery and boarding house work. This kind of industry is a quiet contributor to any economy and unique to fisher cultures.¹⁹ Midwifery was another self-reliance skill that can be seen in economic terms. Three

4, 1981.

¹⁶ *Contra Costa Gazette*, "Pioneer Grocery Becomes Most Modern of Stores," July 12, 1933.

¹⁷ Perry, *Handbook of Houses*. 22-23.

¹⁸ Katherine Davi-Collins, *Pioneer Italian Fishermen of Martinez: "nostri pescatori"* (Martinez, CA: Katherine Collins, 1998).

¹⁹ Carol Lynn McKibben, *Beyond Cannery Row: Sicilian Women, Immigration, and Community in Monterey*,

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Italians live in their fourth generation homes, having been born there with the help of a midwife as were all their predecessors.

The 1906 Earthquake sent several hundreds of Italian refugees from San Francisco to Martinez.²⁰ They came by train and ship from the fire that destroyed two-thirds of San Francisco. One hundred alone came from San Francisco to Martinez on the ship *Christopher Columbus*.²¹ A large portion of the San Francisco Italian fisher community came to Martinez to join their relatives among the fishing and agricultural Italian communities. The April 21, 1906 *Contra Costa Gazette* reported:

Despite the fact that the handsome buildings which the people of Martinez courageously erected after the fearful fire two years ago are practically ruined, the citizens of this town are rejoicing, for not a single life was lost, though the buildings shook as though they were about to come down, bricks and stone went hurling through the air, huge tanks toppled over, and ravenous flames ate up a portion of Granger's Wharf, not a single person was ever seriously injured...one of the sad results of the shock was the destruction of old landmarks...six houses were destroyed in the Italian Fishing Village immediately after the shock despite valiant work of local fire boys...350 Italian refugees who lost their homes and everything they possessed in the great fire that wiped out two thirds of the city of San Francisco are now being cared for by the Relief Committee of Martinez.

The May 18, 1906 *Contra Costa Gazette* reported that the community would be granted another teacher because there were 124 more (25 non-native) children in 1906 than in 1905 and that the refugee children would be likely to settle in Martinez. The Italian fisher community became an integral part of Martinez for the last two decades of the nineteenth century and continued to be so in the first half of the twentieth century. By 1910, Italian fisherman provided 90% of fish consumed in San Francisco, 80% of the commercial fishing throughout California, and 80% of the fresh and processed fish that was imported out of state. 2,500 Italians were directly connected with commercial fishing, with two-thirds of those living in North Beach and the remainder in Pittsburg, Collinsville, and Martinez.²²

The best Pittsburg fishermen made \$109.70 for a week and the lowest \$1.70. The fisherman needed a boat and an outfit of two nets, which cost at most \$450. Average price for fish in 1908 was seven cents per pound.²³

California, 1915-99 (Chicago University of Illinois Press, 2006).

²⁰ "Care of Italian Refugees: Ladies distributing sandwiches on the trains." *Contra Costa Gazette*, April 21, 1906.

²¹ "Plan to Care for Refugees." *Martinez Daily Gazette*, April 22, 1906.

²² Dondero, "Italian Settlement of San Francisco."

²³ "Fisheries Are a Great Source of Profit", Contra Costa County Historical Society "General: Fishing" file, _____, 1908.

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“Fishermen here are almost altogether Sicilians, ‘Capochotes,’ they are called and ignorant, but very picturesque set of men who reproduce faithfully here all the costumes and customs of their Mediterranean home. The boats are splendid sea craft, and their brown lateen sails glancing against the sun are a distinctly interesting feature of life on the river...it is said they are a very vindictive lot, with knife very handy, and it is worth an English-speaking man’s life to try and fish amongst them...”²⁴

Pellegrini became a fish dealer and three more generations of his descendants lived in the house that the first Italian American Martinez Pellegrini built. This house is extant at the northern land’s end of Alhambra Creek. The house was sold out of the Pellegrini family in 2012. At the time of this nomination, the fish tow hook still hung on the fence. The outbuilding, that surrounds the publicly visible cement ice storage compartment, was still barely erect as it leaned into Alhambra Creek. The home appeared to be undergoing rehabilitation to preserve the building’s character defining features. The first Pellegrinis processed the fish on the bottom floor and lived upstairs. The total size of the Pellegrini house at what is now 103 Berrellesa Street is 787 square feet. The Pellegrinis had four children. This type of family living density was common for the Shoreline Italians who usually had two or three more hundred square feet of living space and twice the children, often boarders, and a business and/or wine making on the lower floors of the house. Pellegrini began his business by peddling fish in his wagon in valley towns. He then expanded his business by selling fish to big companies in San Francisco. Fish buyers, brokering with San Francisco buyers, also rented space at Grangers’ Wharf and later the City wharf.²⁵ Much of the local economy depended on fishing and Italians in the early 1900s.

The Costanza fishing family lost their bakery, store, and home at the north end of Berrellesa Street in a fire sparked by the 1906 earthquake. They then moved just south of the railroad tracks, into the greater Shoreline Neighborhood. The Costanzas rebuilt everything, including a winery that was finished in 1908 with a maximum capacity of 60,000 gallons requiring 400 tons of purchased grapes.²⁶ The winery buildings are non-extant and the home remains. Houses that served both as businesses and residences continued to be built in and around the Italian fisher nexus in the Shoreline neighborhood during this period of significance. According to the 1906 and 1914 City Directories, 415 Alhambra was the Costanza Grocery, 66 Berrellesa was the F. Lucido Grocery, 47 Berrellesa was the G. Fazzini Grocery.

Baseball great Joe DiMaggio (1914-1999) was born in a small stilted wood house on the marshes near the Italian fisher village in Downtown Martinez’s shoreline, on what was then called Foster Street at Berrellesa. This land-filled lot is part of an industrial complex. A plaque commemorating Joe’s birthplace is situated on a building approximately one hundred feet from

²⁴ Ibid.
²⁵ Perry, et al, *Martinez: A California Town*.
²⁶ Carroll, *The Winemakers of Martinez*.

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his non-extant birth home.²⁷ Joe continued to visit Martinez where many of his family remained and his brothers—who also played professional baseball—were active in promoting local Italian boys' baseball teams. The Sons of Italy are in the process of renovating the *Joltin' Joe* boat given to Joe DiMaggio by the New York Yankee Baseball Team.

Tom Clavin wrote,

Giuseppe and Rosalio DiMaggio believed in America like millions of other immigrants at the turn of the 20th Century, they discovered that by working hard they could have a piece of the American dream...that would be available to their nine children....Both were descendants of generations of fisherman...Giuseppe arrive in Martinez, acquired a boat, named if after his wife, and eventually could afford an engine for the boat. He began his days at 4 a.m. He saved the money earned from the catch. After four years he acquired a house and passage for his wife and first child [born in his absence]. It was 1902 and with an illiterate husband, Rosalie did not know what to expect.²⁸

Gino DiTullio moved from Italy to the Shoreline Neighborhood in 1974. He became a bocce champion in Martinez and for 40 years has lived within the same two blocks in the Shoreline Neighborhood. He remembers that the Shoreline Neighborhood still contained many Italian families when he moved in. He recounted a story that the grandmother of Nancy Fahden, Mrs. Cardinali, who was then an old woman living on the corner of Talbert and Escobar Streets, relayed to him about her migration from Italy to Martinez:

She told me story that she said would never forget about coming to Martinez from Italy. She was six years old and she and her mother came on a ship to New York and then boarded a train to Martinez. It was always on long trips uncertain when the train would arrive and Mrs. Cardinali and her mother—after leaving everything they knew and understood behind in Italy—arrived in Martinez at night and it was raining. Her husband did not meet her at the train station. They both started crying. They felt as if they had gone to the moon and been abandoned there. Finally, an Italian man showed up, asked if she was Cardinali, and took them to their new home. But Mrs. Cardinali never forgot that day, when she was six, and how it felt to leave everything and arrive to a far away, unknown place with no one to meet them in the rain.²⁹

In this period of significance examples of the economic contribution of Italians to Downtown Martinez continue. Bertola and Marchi maintained their saloon, cigar room, liquor sampling, restaurant, and hotel at Main and Court Streets. A Maloche ran a barber shop at 616 Main, a

²⁷ Horace Peter "Oskie" Aiello, interview by author, Martinez, CA, Shoreline Neighborhood, 7/29/2009.

²⁸ Tom Clavin, *The DiMaggios: Three Brothers, Their Passion for Baseball, Their Pursuit of the American Dream* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013), 11-14.

²⁹ Personal communication June 20-28, 2014.

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Maloche owned a blacksmith forge at 402 Main, and a Malluchi had a boot and shore repair at 601 Main Street. There were also barber shops and cobblers in the fisher village at Granger’s Wharf. In 1910 the non-extant Bianchi Boarding house existed next to what is now 103 Berrellesa Street (Pellegrini home) and across from the extant Marazzani boarding house. Rooms were rented to fishermen and other workers in the area. Augusta Colonna Pellegrini remembered washing 100 socks at a time for boarders. Like all other boarding houses on Berellesa and beyond, the Bianchi boarding house also maintained a saloon. There were several other boarding houses in the vicinity of Downtown and the Shoreline which were operated by Italians. Tina Chantri’s husband died, leaving her to raise six children. She took in boarders, plus worked at the cannery. Rosa Della Rosa had a boarding house at Escobar and Castro, and the Chantri daughters also made beds there.

The 1906 City Directory reported at least 32 Italian-named adults living in the area circumscribed by the Shoreline Neighborhood. The Martinez City is a reliable data sample as the names with their addresses reported in the City Directory hold true to other resources. The 1910 City Directory showed at least 65 Italian-named adults in the Shoreline Neighborhood. The 1914-1915 City Directory revealed at least 77 Italian-named adults in the Shoreline District.³⁰ This progression in population count could be a function of assimilation and language acquisition as well as the fact that the fishermen were phasing out of living in their boats and into conventional homes as well as retrieving their families from Italy. However, the increase in Italians from the 1900 to the 1910 Census reflects the Italian influx resulting from the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake refugees as described by the newspapers.³¹

Around 1912, the Digardis bought the Joost winery in southern Martinez after the first Digardi winery had burned down across the street. Joost had been there since the 1880s. The Digardis won awards for their wines. At the writing of James G. Carroll’s 1980 *The Winemakers of Martinez*, the Digardi property continued to be used for wine-related business. The land is no longer productive, but vines and buildings are extant less than two miles outside of Downtown. Winemaking contributed to the economic vitality of Downtown as a transportation hub (distributing the wines, bringing the grapes in), and the winemakers frequented the Downtown Commercial Core. Moreover, many of the wines were sold in local shops and restaurants. Although the Italians were not the only winemakers in Martinez, they were and are at least 50% of all vine growers and wine makers in and around Martinez, and brought ancient skills to these endeavors.

ROYAL DUTCH SHELL AND 1920s BUILDING BOOM: 1915 to 1929

In 1915, Martinez began to develop as a modern regional powerhouse. Shell had announced

³⁰ *Polk’s Richmond and Martinez Directory*, (Oakland: R.L. Polk & Co. 1914-15); 1910 Microfilm.

³¹ United States Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: California*. Microfilm.; United States Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910--population : [California]*, (Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census), Microform .

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the construction of its refinery in Martinez, to be the largest west of New Jersey. Local and regional newspapers were filled with articles announcing business opportunities, building plans, and growth in Martinez. A September 25, 1915 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote in anticipation of the largest building boom in the Martinez history:

One feels glad upon beholding the vision that a city is to grow here, No place could be more delightful for human habitation, You can easily picture the transformation from escalating conditions—and it is going on fast—to streets paved with asphalt, steel and brick business blocks and hotels, long avenues of residences, electric trolley lines, more main line railroads building in, more pier and wharf buildings, and more large steamers discharging and taking on cargo. It is all to be, for the foundation has been laid.

Improvements had already occurred. In 1911, the City of Martinez built a municipal wharf at the foot of newly extended Ferry Street. Two years later, local political boss and entrepreneur John J. McNamara, along with J.W. McClelland and L.M. Lasell, formed the Martinez-Benicia Ferry & Transportation Company and restored direct ferry service. In 1915, the State of California completed what became Highway 4 between Richmond and Martinez connecting the larger population of western Contra Costa with its county seat.

The construction of the Shell refinery led to rapid population growth in Martinez. An article in the October 7, 1915 edition of the *San Francisco Chronicle* discussed how the population of Martinez had grown to around 4,000 in 1915, double what it had been just five years earlier. The number of men employed at the refinery was estimated to be between 1,500 and 2,000. Predictions were that Martinez would soon have a population of 15,000. Speculative developers and local businessmen began building residential hotels and rooming houses to fill the demand that was dominated by single men or men on their own. In October 1915, L. and J. Hilson of Salt Lake City announced plans to build a three-story hotel on Main Street. A.S. Ohem constructed a \$50,000 brick hotel on a 50 foot square lot on the southwest corner of Main and Alhambra Streets. It was first called the Hotel Ohem, later the Travelers' Hotel, then the River House. Frank Prosser moved the 1880s Jones saloon to face Howard Street in order to build a two-story apartment house on the northeast corner of Ferry and Marina Vista Streets. This building is extant but altered.

Another important apartment building constructed in 1915 is John J. McNamara's City Hall Building. Designed by architect James T. Narbett, the mixed-use, reinforced-concrete, Craftsman style building was erected next door to old City Hall at 706 Main Street. Narbett designed many of the brick buildings extant in the Downtown. The building featured four commercial storefronts on the first floor and eight apartments upstairs. In 1916, the three-story Martinez Hotel on the southeast corner of Ferry and Main Streets was remodeled into an upscale establishment for visiting Shell executives. Residential developers bought the ranches on the edges of Downtown Martinez for the construction of subdivisions of small modest frame

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dwelling for skilled workers and their families. Early subdivisions included Oak Knoll, Mountain View, Martinez Park, Homestead, and Sunnyside. The Downtown Neighborhood on the flat alluvial plane contained farm houses and Victorians that remain from before the Shell era. The area around them filled with homes from the Shell era and developmental pressure.

Because of this growth, Martinez’s infrastructure and municipal and private utilities were forced to upgrade and expand. Because of increased traffic, In December 1915, the City replaced old wood with concrete in the bridges over Alhambra Creek. This same year, Alhambra Creek was renamed from El Hambre Creek. The private booster Martinez Development Board secured a more dependable source of water in the billion-gallon capacity Chenery Reservoir. The City began paving the streets of downtown Martinez that was completed in 1923. Smith Street was renamed Alhambra Avenue in 1917 and the street was widened for the increased traffic from Highway 4 to Downtown.

The Shell period of significance produced a sharp uptick in commercial construction that continued at least until 1930. Downtown Martinez no longer resembled a late Victorian frontier community. Several extant, town character defining, commercial buildings were erected or remodeled between 1915 and 1918. These include the Bank of Martinez, the Pacific Gas & Electric office at 514 Ferry Street, and the Lasell Building at 911 Alhambra Avenue, now heavily altered.

Construction activity peaked between 1920 and 1930. Those that remained of the nineteenth century wood frame commercial buildings were replaced with one- and two-story brick and concrete business blocks. In 1920, 530 Main Street was built as Auto Zone Garage. The commercial block at 901 Main Street was built on speculation to house multiple businesses. By 1925, many of the buildings were erected that continue to define the historic character of Downtown Martinez. Through a state bond, many towns in Contra Costa County received Veterans’ Halls. Martinez’s 1924 Gothic Revival brick World War I Veterans’ Memorial Hall at the corner of Ward and Court Streets is still actively used. It was built with a community swimming pool used for almost a decade. The pool hull is now covered with hardwood and the ground floor continues to be used for dances, meetings, and even as an extra court room.

During the 1920s Martinez developed an auto row along Alhambra Avenue, in conjunction with other automotive related businesses along Escobar and Ward Streets such as the 1925 DeRose Chevrolet dealership at 406 Ward Street. Prosperity in this period afforded the populace luxuries such as automobiles and cinema. Extent and massive relative to its surroundings, the State Theater was designed by the famed Reid Brothers of San Francisco and built in 1925 at 800 Ferry Street. The State Theater was unusual for a town of Martinez’s size and it symbolized the belief in ongoing improvements in the standard of living via a growing economy. The extant National Bank of Martinez, later the Bank of Italy and Bank of America, was finished in 1924 at 659 Main Street.

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The year 1926 was the crescendo of the Downtown building boom in Martinez. Two other notable extant buildings erected in this year include the Moorish Revival-style Hook Building/Hotel James at 801 Main Street and the Sharkey Building at 630 Court Street. An article in the *Martinez Gazette* indicated that new Downtown Martinez construction in 1926 exceeded \$3 million for the first time in the city's history. 1926 was the first year the United States could call itself the wealthiest nation in the world.

During the 1920s, Martinez became a major retail center for eastern and central Contra Costa County. Improvements to regional transportation infrastructure contributed greatly to this economic stimulus, including the 1926 Antioch Bridge and the 1927 Carquinez Bridge. By 1930, five regional highways connected Martinez to the 1.5 million people in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 1930, the Southern Pacific constructed a monumental railroad bridge between Martinez and Benicia which connected the last link of the transcontinental route. Martinez was once again an important stop on a major railroad line.

In 1929, the Masons began building their extant four storied, ziggurat, Art Deco Hall at the corner of what became Mason and Estudillo Streets. It was the first and grandest Art Deco building in Martinez replete with tile exterior and interior and wooden spiral staircase. The Masons moved from the wood building they had occupied for 80 years on what became Susana Street Park. Just to the south of Susana Street Park, the School District had added a Tudor-Elizabethan addition to the two room brick kindergarten building. Across Susana Street the Moorish Revival high school was also built just before the Great Depression. Both these school buildings have been demolished and replaced.

Italians

The flu epidemic of 1918 killed Italians in the village north of the railroad tracks. Caterina Billeci DiMaggio, wife of Vincenzo, was 40 years old and pregnant with her ninth child when she succumbed. 1918 also brought Prohibition that lasted until 1933, retarding the wine making, selling, and distributing businesses—many of which were run by Italians in and around Downtown Martinez. The December 12, 1924 *Martinez Daily Standard* reported that Richard Storelli, a fish dealer living near Granger's Wharf in the Shoreline neighborhood, was the defendant in the second case in the State of California to be tried for selling liquor.

Examples of Italian businesses in this Period of Significance: 602 Castro housed an Italian sausage factory. Martellaci had a market on the 600 block of Main. Lombardo had a shoe repair shop, Gianni and Terriblini ran an Italian grocery in the Downtown. Cardinallis operated a fish market at 604 Alhambra. The Costanzas expanded their grocery business at 521 Main Street. In the village, net repair, bakeries, cobbling, hair cutting, midwifery, and winemaking continued. The Ferrantes opened a bakery in the extant home at the corner of Foster and Buckley and sold three loaves for a quarter. In the early part of this period of significance, Armando Olmeda worked for Joseph Lombardo repairing shoes and was a boarder at 414

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Escobar. By the end of this period of significance, Olmeda owned a shoe repair at 637 Main. Antone Sparacino was a barber at 608 Main Street.

The building that became the Bank of Italy was built on the northeast corner of Main and Estudillo. Bank of Italy became Bank of America and moved across the street; the elegant 1924 building is extant. Several Italians were founding officers and the bank offered services in Italian and English. It took many years for the fishermen to understand that a bank check was as good as cash. Lucido, Pellegrini, Costanza, Amato, Flores, Davi, and Sparacino were the fish buyers and brokers in this period of significance. Rocco Costanza passed away in 1925 and at the same time chain stores arose and cut into family-owned grocery operations.

Paul Pagnini opened the short-lived Curry Café in 1917. In 1928 he opened Paul's Place in the Kelly mansion on the 1200 block of Alhambra Avenue. Pagnini had saved to open Paul's Place through odd jobs including two summers in Alaska counting fish. Paul's Place became famous with movie actors and high-level politicians frequenting it. The restaurant existed for 50 years until it burned down.

In 1924, the Immigration Act was passed, setting quotas for admission and limited Italian immigration relative to other nationalities.³² The 1925 City Directory revealed at least 96 Italian adults living in the Shoreline Neighborhood. In the 1920s there was a growth explosion in Martinez that was particularly felt by the schools, and more classrooms were built. The November 8, 1927 *Martinez Daily Standard* reported that a new grammar school building would be necessary and that soon the high school would also need to expand.

A State of California legislated 1927 census reported 1,979 minors living in Martinez. This was more than predicted by the *Martinez Daily Standard's* August 22, 1927 headline "Additional Instructors Immediate School Need: Organization of five first grade classes necessary to provide for new pupils." The article continued that "Registering a phenomenal and totally unexpected gain, enrollment in the Martinez grammar school, which opened its fall term today, showed a registration of 1,104 pupils, an increase of 200 over last year's enrollment." This population pressure was provided not only by the incoming Shell employees, but also by the reproduction rate of the Catholic Italians in Martinez.

The "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927" shows that Italians own 90% of the residential blocks in the Shoreline neighborhood and conservatively 30% of the Downtown Martinez Commercial Core. The area on Berrellesa Street and Granger's Wharf was not surveyed for the "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927." Had this area north of the railroad tracks been included in the 1924 survey, it would show more residential and business activity among the Italian village than the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show. The

³² "Timeline: The Major Immigration Years 1880s-1930," *Bancroft Library*, Retrieved October 28, 2009 from http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans/timeline_immigration.html.

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Costanza Macaroni factory building became the San Filippo home that Angelo Costanza (b. 1948) remembered as the site of the grape crush parties his family and the San Filippos hosted during the grape harvest.³³

In 1929, John Delchini built the first regulation bocce courts on his property in the western hills above Downtown. The Marazzani Boarding House had clay courts already.³⁴

DEPRESSION AND POST WORLD WAR II: 1930 to 1960

Like most of the U.S., Martinez suffered from the effects of the worldwide depression 1930 to 1939. Between 1920 and 1930 the population of Martinez more than doubled to 9,086. By 1940 the population declined to 7,381. Several major industries like Shell continued production and building continued in Downtown Martinez. In 1938, the Martinez airport was built on reclaimed tidelands with an 1800 foot runway. Martinez's position as a major transportation hub and the county seat also cushioned the effects of the Great Depression. Buildings erected during the Great Depression that still contribute to Downtown Martinez's historic character include the 1930 polychrome brick-clad Martinez Steam Laundry Company building, the concrete 1930 Cook Building at 636 Ward, and the 1937 Gothic Revival Deco Colombo's Liquors building at 617 Ferry Street. The completion of the retail furniture store, the J.V. Cook Building, boosted the City's morale as the center of retail trade in Contra Costa County. Cook also used local suppliers and contractors for the building's construction.

The Susana Street Park property was deeded by the Masons to the City of Martinez. It was built during a time of New Deal funding. 400 trees were planted throughout Martinez with Civil Works Administration (CWA) funds. The trees and rock work in Susana Street Park are typical Works Progress Administration (WPA) outcomes. In 1937, Shell Oil Refinery built its expansive and elegant Craftsman Club House on the eastern edge of Brown Street. In 1939, the City of Martinez—with the help of the National Youth Administration (NYA), Boy Scouts, and WPA—developed municipal Rankin Park from what was historically known as the Rankin family property. Susana Street, Rankin Park, and the Shell Clubhouse are extant.

Civic Core

The Great Depression period was also the most intense period of the Civic Core's development. The 1932 one-block, four story Hall of Records was erected. Its monumental Art Deco transitional architecture echoed the Neo-Greco revivalism of its just northern neighbor—the 1903 Courthouse. Both are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Hall of Records is now a California owned Superior Court. They were built with their entrance sides in line with each other. That line continued with the 1936 Department of Treasury Post Office in

³³ Angelo J. Costanza, "A Presentation About the Italian-American Experience Throughout Martinez's History," Martinez Oral History Project, 09/17/07, retrieved March 1, 2014 from <http://martinezoralhistory.org/video.html>.

³⁴ Perry, et al, *Martinez: A California Town*.

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the WPA Moderne architectural style. This post office has continuously operated and is pending rehabilitation.

Between 1940 and 1942, on the west side of Court Street, the City of Martinez Library and the Richmond Abstract Title Company were completed in stripped Classicism Deco style next to each other and by the same builder, C.M. Tieglund. The City of Martinez was awaiting New Deal funds to construct a library the size of the monumental Hall of Records across the street, but the New Deal programs ended before the funds were actualized. The citizens and the City of Martinez then raised the money to complete the library, although they could no longer build it to the size of the Hall of Records as was the original plan. This title company building is used as a McDonald's restaurant. The City Library continues in its original purpose and has been recently renovated and modernized keeping its historic architecture. Because the Library was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the State Historical Building Code accommodated a design that included a downstairs community room.

In 1940, the 1890 Borland Home, now Martinez Museum, was owned by Cappy Ricks, then Mayor of Martinez. He modified the home into a duplex rental. The sidewalk around the home is stamped "1940 W.P.A." In 1940 Cappy Ricks was mayor and directed New Deal funds into many City projects, including the miles of WPA stamped sidewalks, driveways, and flagpoles in Martinez.

Martinez once again found prosperity during the Second World War. Martinez was proximal to Richmond, Vallejo, Benicia, and Port Chicago's "arsenals of democracy" and booming defense industries. Defense workers found housing in Martinez. Before the 1960s construction of the Benicia Bridge, people came from Benicia to Contra Costa County via the ferry from Martinez. In World War II, extra ferry service carried defense workers between the Benicia arsenal and Martinez which created a fertile opportunity for commerce in Martinez.³⁵

As Kelley and VerPlank wrote:

World War II was the apogee of Martinez' downtown commercial district. Along Main Street, national chains such as J.C. Penney, F W. Woolworth's, and Montgomery Ward occupied large brick buildings on prominent corner lots. Local businesses such as Hilson's and Lasell's department stores, Marchi Men's Wear, and the Empire, Martinez, and Pacific Furniture stores occupied commercial spaces along Main, Ferry, Castro, Las Juntas, and Escobar Streets. Automotive-related businesses clustered along Alhambra Avenue and Ward Streets. Theater patrons could enjoy movies at the State and the Avalon while working men drank and played pool at the bars and pool halls along Ferry Street. Photos from the period show a thriving business district.³⁶

³⁵ Kelley & VerPlanck. *Downtown Martinez*.

³⁶ Kelley & VerPlanck. *Downtown Martinez*, 25.

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During World War II, there was no new construction in the Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez due to government restrictions placed on the civilian use of rationed building materials needed for the war effort. In 1945, the Civic Core received a new jail on the eastern side of the courthouse block, just north of the 1906 granite jail. The Shoreline neighborhood had new residences added to it. During World War II the Martinez Airport suspended its operations.

Postwar Development

While Downtown Martinez prospered during the Second World War, the Bay Bridge and the Caldecott Tunnel (“The Broadway Bore”) escalated vehicular access to the urbanized portions of the Bay Area from Contra Costa and Alameda Counties. After the war, the population of Contra Costa County boomed as a result of suburban growth. Martinez, already built out, was not part of the boom. Of the 200,000 new residents that settled in Contra Costa County between 1945 and 1950, only 1,000 moved to Martinez. Most of the new residential and commercial growth occurred in the formerly rural communities of Pleasant Hill, Concord, Walnut Creek, Lafayette, and Orinda. Martinez lost much of its retail and commercial businesses to these new suburbs. Shopping centers appeared on former cattle ranches and orchard lands of central Contra Costa County. The gradual decrease of importance of passenger rail contributed to a reduction in the economic activity in Martinez. Moreover, the 1962 construction of the Martinez-Benicia highway bridge ended the Martinez-Benicia ferry. On this route the Downtown was not readily seen, much less shopped.³⁷ The main transportation artery that now carries drivers by Martinez is Highway 680. Highway 680 bypasses Downtown Martinez while providing the only visual clue of the character of Martinez as the massive Shell Refinery, its oil tans, and its many smokestacks.

There were commercial buildings of note added to the Shoreline neighborhood along the west side of Alhambra Creek south of the railroad tracks and north of Marina Vista. These extant buildings are: 300 Alhambra Street (1948), 201 Berrellesa Street (1946), a rectangular building with an notable false parapet, 209 Berrellesa (1946), a rare example of an extant Quonset hut in Martinez, and 221 Berrellesa Street (1948), a common bond brick building that has unusual arched parapets capped in metal coping to mask the asphalt barrel vault roof and main entrance of a large central metal rolling overhead garage door.

The remainder of this period of significance is best described by Kelley and VerPlanck:

Civic authorities in Martinez initially tried to combat the centrifugal forces of suburban growth by trying to make downtown Martinez more appealing to motorists and diehard suburbanites. In the 1950s, the City formed a parking district, bought several city blocks, and cleared them for large, suburban-style

³⁷ Kelley & VerPlanck. *Downtown Martinez*.

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surface parking lots. Business owners were also encouraged to remodel their aging buildings in a more "modern" style. Dozens of buildings were stripped of their original ornament and covered in stucco, such as the 1905 Rankin Building at 724 Main Street, or concealed behind mounted aluminum screens, such as DiMaggio's Fine Foods at 701 Main Street. These alterations were supposed to make the aging commercial buildings look more "up to-date" and to appear more in keeping aesthetically with a typical post-war shopping center. Postcards made in the 1950s illustrate the extensive remodeling that occurred. The remodeled buildings could be comparatively attractive—with their new streamlined Late Moderne façades, canted glass storefronts, and neon sign—but the overall trend was toward inexpensive, and frankly not-so-attractive, remodels. Nevertheless, none of these projects seem to have helped reverse the slow decline of downtown Martinez. The city as a whole only grew as a result of annexations, although even this activity only increased the city's population by 150 between 1950 and 1960.³⁸

In 1960, the Martinez Airport closed forever.

Italians

The period before World War II was the most expansive for the Italians in Martinez. From 1928 through 1930, the English-Italian newspaper, *La Settimana*, was published in Martinez with 2,000 readers on average. Comparatively, the *Martinez Standard* had a circulation of 1,541 in 1928.³⁹ The American-Italian Club was formed with 80 members enrolled from its outset. Only those of Italian descent were allowed to join.⁴⁰ The Italian American Boys Club was founded. The Italian Social Club, Martinez Grove of Druids (majority of Italian descent), Martinez Circle of Druids (Italian language only), and the Marconi Circle were clubs formed in this period of significance. In 1936, half of naturalization hearings were Italians applying for citizenship.⁴¹ The Dante Society, started in 1888, was going strong. Bray reported in the August 21, 1936 *Martinez Herald*:

Italians...have now gone to work in the industries in and about Martinez, and their homes are above the average and may be found in every section of the city...In looking over the list of graduates both from the grammar and high schools it will be noted that about 50 percent of the grads are of Italian descent. The records of St. Catherine's Parish show that the majority of the congregation is composed of Italians or their descendants. The younger generation takes an

³⁸ Ibid, 26-28.

³⁹ "Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals, 1928 [& 1930]: California, Martinez," (Philadelphia : N.W. Ayer & Sons, 1900-1969), Microfilm.

⁴⁰ "American-Italian Club", *Martinez Daily Standard*, February 11, 1932.

⁴¹ Bray, "Italians Figure Prominently."

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active part in the business, political, and social life of Martinez.

In December of 1936, the Italian American Club hosted a reception for “the nation’s newest baseball hero” and Martinez native, Joe DiMaggio.⁴²

In 1930, St. Catherine of Siena Parish Church—just three blocks south of Downtown Martinez’s Commercial Core—was able to build a rectory on a corner of the one-block property it had occupied since 1850. In 1940, St. Catherine of Siena Parish wood clapboard church was replaced in its entirety with a quarter-block neo-Gothic building replete with four-story high church tower. The Italian Catholic Federation was a prominent organization at the time of Bray’s reporting. St. Catherine of Siena is one of two Patron Saints of Italy. St. Francis of Assisi is the other. An Italian language school opened in Martinez with after-school classes for children and adult classes in the evening. 50 children enrolled at the time of Bray’s article.

The aquifers beneath the outskirts of Downtown Martinez dried up and the large Italian gardens and farms ceased operations, also due in part to the developmental pressures that included the immigration of fisher Italians. The last vegetable farm was operated by G. Trebino in the 1930s, but in 1935 the Bartolinis started a winery farther out in Martinez that operated for 30 years. The Costanzas turned to wine distribution after Prohibition ended in 1933, which was mutually beneficial to their grocery business. The Cadenassos started a winery in 1933 from their own grapes. They sold their 75,000 gallon capacity winery in 1943. In this period of significance, the Martignonis also started a winery in the outskirts of Martinez that lasted over 20 years. The Vianos started a winery during this period of significance and even farther out in the outskirts of Martinez; that winery is still in operation replete with wine tasting room.⁴³

During this Period of Significance, the Italian fishermen hired a consultant to assist commercial operators to fight for a Bill to extend the bass season because times were difficult for them in the Great Depression. Between 1931 and 1932, 3,000,000 pounds of fish were caught by fishermen in Contra Costa County. 960,000 pounds were striped bass. When bass were off the market, the fishermen struggled for three and a half months by living off catching shad and salmon alone. As many store owners did for all types of residents in Martinez during the Great Depression, husband and wife Marie (Bonzagni) and Mario Menesini gave credit in their store on Main Street including to Italian fishermen, and as a result the Menesinis were the recipients of many fish.⁴⁴ As of 2014, their descendant is on the City of Martinez Council and was a former Mayor of Martinez. Costanzas also provided for people in the community during the Great Depression through their store.⁴⁵

⁴² *Contra Costa Gazette*. “165 Will Attend Reception Here.” November 21, 1936.

⁴³ Carroll, *Winemakers of Martinez*.

⁴⁴ Erin Clark, “Community mourns loss of Mario Menesini [Jr.],” *Martinez News Gazette*, May 2, 2013.

⁴⁵ Angelo Costanza, “Italian-American Experience.”

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On January 19, 1938, a group of Martinez fishermen were granted a permit by the City of Martinez to erect and maintain net tanning vats on the shoreline “so as to properly care for their respective fishing nets while not in use...the commercial fishing industry is of an advantage to said parties and to the City of Martinez, and said property is not in use...it is for the best interests of the City of Martinez to permit the same.” Three of the fishermen could not write their names and so could only make a mark that their colleagues notarized.⁴⁶ The September 24, 1938 *Contra Costa Gazette* reported that the City Harbor would be improved in order to provide berths for fishermen along 90 feet of the Martinez municipal wharf and would contain a proper landing float for loading and unloading fishing craft near the Sparacino Fish Depot. During the Great Depression, commercial fishing prices dropped, but by 1938 the late summer fishing season produced 1,500,000 pounds of fish within ten miles of the Southern Pacific Bridge over the Carquinez Strait. Fishermen were paid an aggregate \$182,000.

In 1935, schools of sardines arrived in Monterey, California. The Costanzas opened a fish reduction plant in Port Chicago and then a sardine cannery near the reduction plant. In 1935, the State of California limited sardine packing in order to preserve the fish’s numbers. 700,000 tons had been fished and the environment could only withstand 300,000 tons.⁴⁷ By 1937, 70 women worked at these plants and produced 50,000 cases of sardine filets per season. At the end of 1939, after severe obstacles with their Port Chicago plants, the Costanzas were approached by the Bank of Martinez regarding the potential sale of a building on Alhambra Creek very near the Italian village on Berrellesa Street. The Costanzas and Charles Cohn purchased the building and opened a fish and produce cannery in Martinez. They then built a connecting bridge over Alhambra Creek from the village to their cannery. The first crew on September 26, 1940 was 48 men and women earning 75 cents per hour.⁴⁸ A printing shop was built on the Pellegrini property, under which nets were stored,⁴⁹ and an antique mechanism involved in cutting labels resides on the Marazzani property.

In 1942, the wharf arks were removed from the Shoreline so the ferry slip could be dredged, making the area west of the municipal pier landlocked.⁵⁰ Up until then, Italians lived on these arks and stilted houses. Oskie Aiello (1933-2011) relayed in 2009 that during his childhood there was once marshy, swampy land on what is now industrial operations and the East Bay Regional Park District parking lot on the north end of Berrellesa Street. Fishing families such as the Scolas, Romeos, Russos, Lucidos, and DiMaggios lived on the marsh. There were walkways all through the marsh. There was even someone locals called a Black Italian—an African American named Simms—who lived in these shacks and fished. The boats lined up in the creek and there were fishing racks to dry the nets and net tanning vats. There were little

⁴⁶ Contra Costa County Clerk of the Recorder. Records Index 1849 – 1985. Permit granted by City of Martinez to J. Sparacino, et al, January 14, 1938.

⁴⁷ *Contra Costa Gazette*. “State Limits Sardine Take.” October 10, 1935.

⁴⁸ *Home Tour 2013: The Costanza Family History in Martinez*, (Martinez Historical Society, 2013), 38-39.

⁴⁹ Oskie Aiello, “Interview.”

⁵⁰ “Wharf Arks to Go as Dredging of the Slip Starts.” *Contra Costa Gazette*, October 19, 1942.

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houses along the creek and a Greek named Andrew lived there too. During the lifetime of Giuseppe and Joanne Fontana, the tideline came to Buckley Street and Alhambra Avenue.⁵¹ Oskie Aiello recounted that Ferranti the baker did occupy the corner of Foster and Richardson and that the water came almost to that corner. Fishermen could get by on fishing alone if they worked hard. They could also rely on fish for personal consumption, as chicken and beef were too expensive for every day.⁵²

A sample of the Italian-owned businesses in Martinez's Downtown Commercial Core during this period of significance includes, and is not limited to the following. Armando Olmeda was listed as selling liquors at the 414 Escobar boarding house (and prior to the end of Prohibition) where he was also listed as a cook for a year. The "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927" showed Olmeda owned the property. In 1942, Nick Paginini took over the liquor business at 414 Escobar from Armando Olmeda. Armando Olmeda is remembered as the "famous singing chef." In 2014, Olmeda's grandson owns the eponymous "Armandos" in Downtown Martinez. Andruccioli had a shoe shop at 704 Alhambra. Frankie DiBetta's College Lane bar opened in 1931 on Ferry Street and operated for 50 years thereafter, albeit part of that time under the auspices of Paul Russo—son of the fisherman Salvatore Russo.

Della Pippa's Tavern in Downtown Martinez became the center for bocce during this period of significance.⁵³ At 511 Main Street is Lulu DiBetta Drugs. 521 Main was Sparacino's meat market and Costanza's grocery (although the addresses on Main Street shift during this period). The July 12, 1933 *Contra Costa Gazette* reported "Pioneer Grocery Becomes Most Modern of Stores"... "Keeping pace with the times has always been the slogan of H. Costanza Sons who have been established in Martinez since 1896 and is one of the best known merchandizing organizations in the county...keep ahead of improving conditions in the handling of foodstuff...a complete line of Italian imported...."

519 Main was Costanza Bros. Liquors, 511 Main was Gioacomo Mangini Jewelers, 500 Main was the Rampoldi building, 623 Main was Martellacci Grocery, 407 Ferry was Amatos, 531 Ferry was Mascitelli Barber, 726 Ferry was Calicura Meats, 615 Ferry was Cardinallis, 905 Escobar was Giberti Bros. Garage, 410 Alhambra was Costanza Grocery, 600 Alhambra was Cardinalli Fish Dealer, 622 Alhambra was DelVati Auto Repair, 824 Alhambra was still the Italian Hotel, and the municipal wharf housed fish businesses by the names of Joe Sparacino and George Amato. Tony Cardinalli had a bait shop. Franchi had a beauty shop on the west end of Main Street.

⁵¹ Davi-Collins, *Pioneer Italian Fishermen of Martinez*.

⁵² Erin Hallissy, "Gone: Fishing. Statue honors Carquinez Strait's old industry," *Contra Costa Times*, October 22, 1984.

⁵³ Ken Dothee, "Martinez Bocce Ball," in *Martinez Historical Home Tour 2008*, (Martinez, CA: Martinez Historical Society, 2008).

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Joseph and Rose Colombo, occupants of the Shoreline Neighborhood, had a liquor business on Ferry Street across from the Bergamini building and next to DiBetta's College Lane Bar. The building on this site was condemned and the Colombos erected an intricate three storefront Art Deco building, designed by a San Francisco architect, in its place. This building at 617-627 Ferry Street, now rented for county offices, was unusually elaborate for a town the size of Martinez and during the Great Depression. Moreover, built just one month apart from the more austere and monumental PWA. New Deal Downtown Martinez Post Office, and for \$70,000 less, the Colombo building is a testament to the private capital of Italians in Martinez during the Great Depression.

While World War II was generally positive for the Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez, it was painfully complicated for the Italians. In February 1942, the Enemy Alien Act forced the relocation of 300 Martinez Italians who had not been naturalized.⁵⁴ The result was the smallest Naturalization Examination applicant pool in the county's history because Italians had always been the majority of applicants.⁵⁵ Ironically, the Costanza cannery, in the Shoreline area, simultaneously won a big war packing order that required the hiring of 250 more cannery employees—traditionally Italians.⁵⁶ This packing order also required the laying of new water mains to the cannery building.

The laws regarding enemy aliens did not distinguish between pro-Fascist Italian businessmen coincidentally in the United States at the time World War II broke out, anti-Fascist refugees from Italy who had arrived just a couple years earlier and whose naturalization endeavors were not yet complete, and those who had emigrated from Italy at the turn of the twentieth century and raised entire families of native-born and non-naturalized Italian Americans—many of their children serving in the military or contributing to the military complex. All were considered enemy aliens.⁵⁷

Even Joe DiMaggio's parents were not allowed at his restaurant in San Francisco. Another bitter irony is that the enemy aliens were urged by the United States Department of Agriculture California War Board to keep farming right up to the day the enemy aliens were banned from restricted coastal areas as "an act of good faith."⁵⁸ 250 Martinez residents were given until February 24, 1942 to vacate the Martinez area circumscribed by "Alhambra Valley Road, Muir Station, Arnold Industrial Highway, to all Contra Costa County Shorelines...no Enemy Alien can be in, live in, or be employed in any Alien area."⁵⁹ The Alaskan salmon-packing fishermen

⁵⁴ "Alien ban hits 2,000 in this area: Pittsburg worst hit as break up of families threatened." *Contra Costa Gazette*, February 03, 1942.

⁵⁵ "Only 72 Aliens on Naturalization Examination List." *Contra Costa Gazette*, February 03, 1942.

⁵⁶ "Local Cannery Gets Big War Packing Order." *Contra Costa Gazette*, February 05, 1942.

⁵⁷ Stephen R. Fox, *The Unknown Internment: An Oral History of the Relocation of Italian Americans during World War II* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990); *Una Storia Segreta: The Secret History of Italian American Evacuation and Internment during World War II*, ed. Lawrence DiStasi. (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2001).

⁵⁸ "Aliens Urged to Continue Planting." *Contra Costa Gazette*, March 09, 1942.

⁵⁹ "No Exception to U.S. Alien Eviction Rule." *Contra Costa Gazette*, February 05, 1942.

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met to discuss the feasibility of making the spring run to Alaska as the numbers of their members had been so badly depleted by the Enemy Alien ban.⁶⁰ The salmon pack run was held after all, but was “seriously crippled by alien restriction.” Usually there were 125 boats that supplied four distributors, but without their “Enemy Alien” fellow fishermen, only 50 boats worked.⁶¹ However, Mayor C. A. “Cappy” Ricks made many political pleas to the Federal government to keep the economically valuable Italians in place in Martinez.⁶²

By 1943, the Costanza cannery had capitalized \$300,000 in Martinez. Costanza and Cohn continued the Martinez cannery for four more years after the war with a payroll of \$17,000 a week and buying \$250,000 a year in tomatoes and apricots. Downtown Martinez often smelled of whatever was being packed. In 1950, Costanzas and Cohn sold the cannery.⁶³

In 1934, the City Directory shows at least 99 Italian named adults living in the Shoreline Neighborhood. In 1942, the year of the Enemy Alien Act, there were at least 91 adult Italians reported in the Shoreline Neighborhood.⁶⁴

After World War II, Sparacinos continued with several businesses including a delicatessen. There were many Italian-owned businesses in the Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez. For example, Dominic’s Seafood Grotto at 430 Ferry catered to the Catholic meatless Friday and it was the place to go for Friday dinners. Calacari Brothers Meats was behind Martalachi the Butcher. Calacari owned a plane named “The Spirit of Martinez.” Catelli Ice Co. was behind 610 Main Street, Angelo’s Place was at 436 Ferry, the Colombo Building (617-627 Ferry) housed the Martinez Club and next to it College Lane continued. Paul’s Place continued to thrive. Sparacino’s Men’s Wear was at 732 Main Street. The Rampoldi bar was on the southeast corner of Main Street and Alhambra Avenue.

Food establishments such as Pardinis, Amatos, Snack Shack, Ciaramitaros, and Signorinis existed during this period of significance. Belleci (life-long resident of the Shoreline Neighborhood) owned a pharmacy in Downtown Martinez for decades. Cardinalli’s fish market had a crab pot outside on the sidewalk. There was Sinsitch’s, Grande’s Shoe Store, Martini Liquors, Mennetti Meat Market, Spikes Produce, Troja’s Barber Shop. The grandson of Delchini, who in the 1920s installed the first ever regulation bocce courts in Martinez, now had a disposal company. The Costanzas ran the Yacht Club bar and restaurant at Ferry and Escobar Streets, an establishment that lasted 37 years. Fresci’s delivered milk, ice cream, and butter to residences. Angelo Costanza reminisced, “Main Street Was Thriving” and the Italians were “warm hearted, good people, and they liked to eat” and everyone in the community played a part.⁶⁵ Oskie Aiello stated, “Good little village, it was really great...Town within a

⁶⁰ “Salmon Fishermen to Meet Saturday.” *Contra Costa Gazette*, March 19, 1942.

⁶¹ “Salmon Pack Fair Despite Alien Exodus.” *Contra Costa Gazette*, March 23, 1942.

⁶² Fox, *Unknown Internment*, p. 113.

⁶³ “Costanza Family History in Martinez,” *Martinez Home Tour: 2013*, (Martinez, CA: Martinez Historical Society, 2013), p. 38-39.

⁶⁴ *Polk’s Richmond and Martinez Directory*, (Oakland: R.L. Polk & Co. 1942).

⁶⁵ Angelo Costanza, “Italian-American Experience.”

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town...Italian people and kids ran the town. Grew up together. Peppis, Compagna, Cardinali, Caroni, Lucido, Belleci...Everyone got along in those days.” Many of the Martinez Italians of this generation attended St. Catherine of Siena private grammar school.

Italians also worked at the canneries and continued in the self reliance of midwifery, bakeries, wine making, net making, net repairing, net tanning and boat repair. The Davis owned a plane. The fishermen dredged the creek and leased the land from the city for one dollar a year. Fishers continued to sell to Pellegrini and other brokers. At the Pellegrini house fish were loaded in boxes and weighed, then gutted, iced, and shipped to the Aliotos in San Francisco. In 1957, there were 200 boats harbored at Martinez during the fishing peak. Pellegrini fishing receipts show Chantri the fisherman exchanging 16 pounds of salmon for 30 cents a pound.

The Shoreline neighborhood was brimming with Russos, Aiellos, Ferrantis, Fontanas, Bellechis, DiMaggios, Ballesteris, Trojas, Brunos, Mercurio, Campanos, San Filipos, Ciaramitaros, Vincinzis, Costanzas, Frescis, Tarzias, Quonameteo, Masettelis, Sparacinos, Pagninis, Compagnos, Chantris, Gerbardis, Romas, Cardinalis, Cellinis, Franchis, Scolas, Lucidos, and Savionis. These families remained through the next period of significance. Thomas Greerty (b. 1948) recalled that growing up on Escobar, there were 17 Italian families on that street in addition to his own. They were, even in Thomas Greerty’s youth, a people whose group was difficult to break into.⁶⁶ They all had wine sheds and the kids could not get away with much because the adults would tell each other what was going on.⁶⁷

The separation and struggle of the first Italian immigrants had become justified by the upper mobility of their descendants. Italian pioneers received a special Italian word of respect from the following generations. The Italian word for "respect" in the pioneer context was pronounced differently between northern Italians and Sicilians because Sicilians’ consonants were sharper and there was more vivaciousness to the Sicilian speech.⁶⁸

Angelo Costanza noted that Italians had unique idioms in both English and Italian that mollified or made sense of any situation, with accompanying Italian hand gestures and shrugs, e.g. “It’s just one of those things...what are you going to do?...it’s just one of those things, those things happen.” This author remembers Leah Calderazzo (d. 2010) saying comforting things such as “There’s a lid to every pot” (regarding marriage) and “Everyone takes their turn in the pickle barrel” (a game where people shoot fish in a barrel, and meaning everyone has their time of trouble or when their due comes). Costanza recounted that he would not exchange his growing up in the Shoreline Italian neighborhood for anything in the world. Italians were and still are full of stories and humor, and exuberance for life. They were always talking to each other, always on the go, and always had special occasions as reasons for get-togethers, meals, and celebrations. Italians loved parties.

⁶⁶ Thomas Greerty, *Pop-Up Press: Martinez History*, Armando’s, Martinez, CA, March 7, 2012.

⁶⁷ Aiello, “Interview.”

⁶⁸ Angelo Costanza, “Italian-American Experience.”

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Even after World War II, Italians continued to live off the water and land. The children had to fish in spring and fall with their parents, and the children were generally athletically gifted. Angelo Costanza remembered that Dominic DiMaggio (cousin to Joe) was the fastest runner at Alhambra High School. He could have attended the University of Southern California on scholarship. However, Dominic had to drop out of high school to go to work to support his family. Tom Clavin noted Tom DiMaggio, Joe's older brother, was known by his family to be a better athlete than Joe, and because of economic demand of the family and fishing, Tom had to pursue fishing instead of athletics.⁶⁹ Many Italian sports clubs for children arose and baseball was headed by Chuck DiMaggio whose relation, Joe, was a big supporter of and frequent visitor to the teams.

Angelo Costanza came home from school one day to find Joe picking figs with Costanza's mother in their yard which had peach and other fruit trees, and a large garden with zucchini and other vegetables. Italian was still spoken in the Shoreline Neighborhood and many customs remained in place such as mushroom picking from cow pastures, boiling sperm sacks of fish, wine and whiskey on the table all the time, gardens, fruit growing, celebrations, social gatherings, bread making, Giuseppe Feasts, and Catholicism. Oskie's father made a wine barrel 15 feet around and six feet tall. Oskie Aiello swam in this vat of wine as an eight and nine year old. Angelo Costanza received his first haircut from a Marazzani. Marazzani's son was his barber for thirty more years.

The Italians had survived and succeeded despite the 1906 Earthquake, the 1918 Flu, the Great Depression, Prohibition, and the Enemy Alien Ban. Joe DiMaggio continued to visit Martinez and his family and support local sports teams. In 1957 a State of California's Assembly Bill banned commercial gill net fishing east of the Carquinez Bridge. The Martinez fishers and their families fought alongside the International Fisherman's Allied Workers of American Union to keep their livelihood, but they lost. Many fishers were forced to sell their equipment at a great loss and many had no other training in order to take up different occupations.⁷⁰ The harbor died away after the fishermen went away and the Shoreline Neighborhood began to change.⁷¹ Because those Italians that had fished had to find a new income, they took regular jobs at places like Shell Refinery and were therefore unable to fish in the Alaska season.

⁶⁹ Clavin, 26.

⁷⁰ Katherine Davi-Collins, *Martinez Educational Foundation Calendar* (Martinez, CA: Martinez Printing, 1986) Contra Costa Historical Society, "General: Fishing" file.

⁷¹ Aiello, "Interview."

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Shoreline Neighborhood Properties Associated with Italians

Due to discrepancies among the Old Town Committee plaque dates, the Contra Contra Costa County Assessor’s Office build dates, and County Clerk of the Recorder reports (or lacks information) for dates and persons who acquired specific lots in the Shoreline Neighborhood, the Historic Context accesses in cursory fashion the Old Town Committee’s plaques, and some of the Clerk of the Recorder documents. It is possible that the Italians built their homes, particularly in the area north of the railroad tracks along Alhambra Creek near Granger’s Wharf (now Berrellesa Street), before they owned the land under those homes.

This context relies heavily on Charlene Perry’s and Katherine Davi-Collins’s books, the “Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927,” Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, and City Directories to compare residents, activities, and surmise build dates for the Shoreline Neighborhood homes that appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.⁷² They are over fifty years old, retain their architectural integrity, and are associated construction and/or residency for decades by Italians who immigrated to Martinez from Italy, many fishermen by trade, and their descendants. These people were directly responsible for the development of the Shoreline Neighborhood, and are also substantially significant to the development of Martinez.

A 2014 reconnaissance survey from the public streets that include and are bounded by Alhambra on the east, Talbart on the west, Main to the south and East Bay Regional Park land to the north indicates there are at least fifteen residential buildings that appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places based on their exterior architectural integrity and the homes’ association with Italian settlement of the Shoreline Neighborhood of Downtown Martinez, California.

The Pellegrini Home is positioned on the northernmost end of where Alhambra Creek now flows. The County of Contra Costa Assessor’s office lists this building as built in 1900. The first deed—accessed from the Contra Costa Clerk of the Recorder Index—obtained by the Pellegrinis near Alhambra Creek was in 1917. 1920 was the first year a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map assessed the Granger’s Wharf/Berrellesa Street area north of the railroad tracks. A building very similar to the Pellegrini home at the appropriate location is depicted on that 1920 map. According to the City Directories, the first Pellegrini lived in the Shoreline Neighborhood in 1914-1915, listed as living on Granger’s Wharf (Berrellesa Street north of the railroad tracks). Pellegrinis are listed as living on Granger’s Wharf throughout the existence of Martinez City Directories.⁷³ Louis Pellegrini is listed in two City Directories at 200 Granger’s Wharf. The addresses changed over time and that could have been another

⁷² City Directories mentioned are the City Directories accessed by the author. When it says “first appears in year _____” it is possible the name appeared in an earlier year. Enough City Directories were accessed to provide a thorough data sample.

⁷³ City Directories are available at the Contra Costa County Library to 1961 after a hiatus after 1945.

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Pellegrini business or residence. It is well reported the Pellegrinis lived in their house for four generations and bought and processed fish from it and the extant ice house where fishermen pulled up with the catches that were weighed on hooks.

The Chantri and Marazzani Boardinghouses are both on Granger's Wharf. Both of these boarding houses—built for Italians by Italians—are similar in architecture with the Chantri having a salt box roof. Both have simple finishes, relatively expansive square footage, and multiple fenestration and entrances with a shared walkway front porch. Both are now internally multiple dwellings but the exterior of these buildings retain much of their integrity. The Chantri boardinghouse, no longer owned by Chantris, is in need of at least cosmetic maintenance. The Marazzani boardinghouse appears to exist on the 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, the Chantri does not. The Chantri boardinghouse seems to exist on the 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, and a County Clerk of the Recorder "Affidavit of Birth" showed Andrew Chantri, born in Italy, fathering a child in 1939 at 134 Berrellesa. The City Directories show an Andrew Chantri first living in Martinez in 1925 at 134 Berrellesa and other Chantris living on Granger's Wharf as early as 1910. The 1961 City Directory shows Chantris at both 126 and 134 Berrellesa. The first time a Marazzani appears in the City Directories is 1934 at 120 Berrellesa (Granger's Wharf), the extant Marazzani Boardinghouse.

403 Berrellesa and 405 Marina Vista were not built together and are completely different architectural styles, the former being an early Victorian and the latter a New England style home. Charlene Perry relayed that there was oral history that 405 Marina Vista was built on the East Coast and shipped around the Horn to San Jose where it was assembled and then barged to Martinez.⁷⁴ According to Perry, 405 Marina Vista appears in an 1887 photograph but is not in the 1887 tax book. A sea captain named Hewitt owned it during the 1906 Earthquake and Perry reported Hewitt spent weeks hauling refugee San Francisco residents to safety in Solano and Contra Costa Counties, including Martinez. Moreover, the first City Directory in which Ciaramitaros appear is 1906 at 427 Berrellesa that is on the same lot as the Hewitt home. Santoni Aiello is the first of the big family of Aiello to show up in a City Directory and that too is 1906 and is also at 427 Berrellesa. Inexplicably, there is no home behind 405 Marina Vista per the 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, but there is one on the 1920 map.

Perhaps the addresses were realigned between 1908 and 1920. 403 Berrellesa was 427 in 1908. 403 and 427 are the only addresses on the odd side of the 400 block of Berrellesa. In 1915, Ciaramitaros are also found living around the corner in the former Hewitt home at 405 Marina Vista that they occupied until at least 1961. Aiellos lived here too over time. This is where Oskie Aiello swam in a wine vat in the basement. Oskie Aiello and Phillip Ciaramitaro share a grandmother. Aiellos also occupied the non-extant and adjacent Webster-Aiello house at 403 Berrellesa that was built prior to 1884 as the Webster house for the Anglo supervisor of the prominent San Francisco Bray Bros. Shipping Company. In 2013, the Webster-Aiello house was dismantled and moved to historic preservationists David and Kirstin Fisher's

⁷⁴ Perry, *Martinez: Handbook of Houses*, 1998, 19-21.

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property on a hill west of the Shoreline Neighborhood. The "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927" shows Antonio Aiello owned the lots where the Webster-Aiello house was until recently located, and F. & C. Ciaramitaro owned the lot upon which 405 Marina Vista and 427 Berrellesa exist.

234 Foster Street is the former home of Hope Savage who restored the home inside and out, led the Old Town Committee fight to save the Shoreline neighborhood, and purchased and restored other homes in the neighborhood. Many persons have unsuccessfully attempted a County Clerk of Recorder title search for the origins of 234 Foster Street. 1888 is the earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance Map that depicts a building on the property that is now 234 Foster. The residence appears to change shape and features between the 1888 and 1891 Sanborn Maps. These could be additions as Ms. Savage indicated that during rehabilitation, she found square nails. Between 1908 and 1920 the building again changes shape and features as expressed on the respective Sanborn Maps. It appears to be an American Four Square Classic with pyramidal roof and second story centered dormer window, and it is unlikely the building was erected as such. Foster Street on this block is still a dirt road with mature flora.

As the Old Town plaque states, sons of the pioneer fisherman and merchant, Rocco Costanza, did live in this house. The "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927" shows R. Costanza does own the two lots on that quarter of that block, including 234 Foster. The City Directories show several male Costanzas living at 234 Foster but only in the 1925 and 1934 City Directories. The Costanzas are not listed at 234 Foster in either the 1914-1915 or 1942 Directories. However, this house was proximate to the Costanza winery and the earlier City Directories and "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927" show other Costanzas living just two lots away.

236 Richardson first appears on the 1920 Sanborn map. The Ferrantis are listed as bakers living at this address in the 1925 City Directory. The Brunos are listed at 236 Richardson in the 1934 and 1942 City Directories. The 1920 and 1949 City Directory show a two-story building, which it is if the high ground level story is taken into consideration. There was a fire on the second floor and the Italians built the now double gabled roof over the first remaining floor.⁷⁵ The "Martinez Survey: Original, Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927" shows G. Ferante (Ferranti) owning the lot with the shoreline right at the northern edge of his property. Oskie Aiello in his 2009 interview and Katherine Davi-Collins in *Pioneer Fisherman* both reported these facts.

The 236 Buckley Old Town Committee plaque states that the stucco Spanish-Revival home was built in 1926. 236 Buckley is not on the 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, but it is on the 1949 map. Salvatore DiMaggio lived at 135 Berrellesa according to the 1925 City Directory and then in the 1934 is shown living at 236 Buckley. However, the "Martinez Survey: Original,

⁷⁵ Personal communication with Hope Savage, 2009.

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Additional, and Tracts: Block Numbers and Property Owners 1924-1927” shows Salvatore DiMaggio owns the lot. Therefore, the plaque build date can be assumed accurate. The architectural style is consistent with such a build date. Salvatore DiMaggio’s sons also became commercial fishermen. Salvatore’s son, Michael, was serving in World War II when Salvatore and his wife were forced to relocate to Concord during the Enemy Alien ban. As was often the case, a pair of Italian brothers married a pair of Italian sisters. Hence, many of the families in Martinez are interrelated. Brothers Giuseppe and Salvatore DiMaggio married Mercurio sisters.⁷⁶ The plaque reads that Joe DiMaggio had his wedding reception with Marilyn Monroe at 236 Buckley where his uncle lived.

The buildings discussed in this Historic Context are not an exhaustive list of extant historic resources associated with Italian immigrants in the City of Martinez, as it appears that at least fifteen homes in the Shoreline Neighborhood retain sufficient integrity and association with Italian settlement to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.

⁷⁶ Angelo Costanza. “Italian-American Experience.”

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F. Associated Property Types

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

INTRODUCTION

The *Architectural and Historic Resources of Auburn, California* Multiple Property Submission (2009) by Carmel Barry-Schweyer was used as a guide for this section. The residential property type architectural style descriptions were derived from Barry-Schweyer, several texts on architecture referenced in the Bibliography and footnotes, and Page & Turnbull, Inc.'s *Historic Context Statement City of Benicia*. (2011). The information was then modified to describe the built environment of Martinez, California. The property type description of Downtown Martinez's Commercial Core was developed by Kelley & VerPlanck, LLC in 2008 in *Architectural and Historical Survey of Downtown Martinez, California: Historic Context Statement* for the City of Martinez, Department of Community and Economic Development.

RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

The Commercial Core

The Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez contains few remaining residential buildings. Most residential buildings that survive are large, multiple-unit buildings, including several residential hotels built in 1915 and 1916 to accommodate workers who came to Martinez to work at the new Royal Dutch Shell Oil refinery. These hotels are built with reinforced concrete or brick with retail spaces on the first floor and individual apartments or hotel rooms on the upper floors. In addition, there are single-family frame dwellings on the fringes of the Commercial Core where it melds with the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Examples include one Stick-Eastlake Victorian on the east side of Estudillo Street at Green Street (date unknown) and a one-story, wood frame Craftsman bungalow at 415 Green Street (1916). In many cases business owners lived next to their establishments; and often the dwelling was physically linked to the business.

The Civic Core

Contra Costa County's Civic Core is defined by the presence of civic buildings, and as such no residential buildings are nestled between civic buildings. The Civic Core developed over its own edges, displacing residences as it grew. The Borland Home/Martinez Museum is the only extant residential building in the Civic Core and the best example of Late Victorian Stick-Eastlake architecture in Downtown Martinez. It sits at the very north end of Court Street and prominently presents on the end of the Court Street view corridor. The Borland Home/Martinez Museum is surrounded by monumental multi-story Civic buildings to its south and west and a civic parking lot to its north and east. The Borland Home is the closest property on Court

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Street to the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks. The Home is used now as the museum of the Martinez Historical Society. The Contra Costa Community College District owns the Home. The Borland Home has been used for civic purposes since 1949. It is also a residence purpose built for multi commercial/professional purposes (dentist office).

The Residential Shoreline Neighborhood

The Shoreline Neighborhood is primarily residential except where industrial activities, infill of marshlands, and East Bay Regional Park boundaries supplanted a portion where Italian fishers resided and worked. Industrial uses supplanted areas where the Italian fishers first lived. The extant Residential Shoreline Neighborhood is separate from but adjacent to these other land uses. Shoreline Neighborhood residences are one to three stories high and range in architectural style from New England, Vernacular, Salt Box Roof Vernacular, Folk Victorian, Italianate Victorian, Queen Anne Victorian, American Four Square Classic, Craftsman, any of the Revival styles, and Mid Century Modern Ranch House derivative. The Old Town Committee plaques refer to this house as “Art Deco.” There are two extant residential boarding houses, one with a Salt Box roof. The buildings have been converted into residential multiplexes but are historically classified as hotels. Many of the homes in the Shoreline Neighborhood were built as residences on the upper floor(s) while the ground floor was used for commerce. Most of the residences in the Shoreline Neighborhood are associated with Italian occupancy and Italian influence on the development of Downtown Martinez.

The Downtown Neighborhood is historically eclectic as each block often was a small farm with an Italianate Victorian built onto the corner of the lot. There are residences that are farmhouses and converted farm outbuildings that predate the Victorian area. There are several types of Victorians, all the Revival Styles, Minimalist Cottages, Prairie, American Four Square Classic, Mid-century Modern, and multi-family dwellings in the Downtown Neighborhood. This is also true of the area south of Brown Street and the unincorporated areas of Martinez, California. However, the bedroom neighborhoods south of Highway 4 and the train tracks that parallel it are primarily tract homes built less than 50 years ago.

Character Defining Features of Residential Architectural Styles in Martinez, California⁷⁷

Spanish Colonial/Adobe (1600-1900)

- Low pitched or flat roof
- Thin masonry walls of adobe brick or rubble stone, covered with stucco
- Multiple doorways, few and small window openings lacking glass
- Two story examples rarer

⁷⁷ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

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Greek Revival (1850s – 1880s in Martinez, California)

- Low pitch gable or hipped roof with gable returns
- Wide frieze or trim at the main and porch rooflines emphasizing cornice and echoing classical entablature
- Porches entry or full length with prominent square or rounded columns supporting a gable roof and acting as a portico
- Typically rectangular with a symmetrical façade

Gothic Revival Style (1840s – 1880s):

- Steeply-pitched gabled roofs with steep cross gables, sometimes with centered or paired gables on the primary façade
- Lacey barge boards that run to the gable ends
- Wall surface extending into gable without break and usually no eaves or trim under the gable
- Windows that extend into the gable
- Windows with lancet, or pointed arch tops, sometimes crowned with drip or label moldings; at least one window with Gothic detailing
- Blocky, not fine or scrolled, repeating ornamental motifs (Carpenter Gothic)
- Verticality emphasized with peak finials and/or clapboard orientated vertically

Italianate Style (1840s to 1885)

- Highly symmetrical façades and massing, most two-storied
- Low pitched, pyramidal hipped roofs with deep eaves and heavy brackets
- Tall narrow windows with elaborate bracketed hoods; stronger examples often have bay windows and curved tops
- Recessed entries, and entry porticos with Classical columns

Stick (1860s-1890s)

- Front facing roof gable(s) with steep roof
- Steeply pitched gabled roof with cross gables, often decorative trusses at apex
- Overhanging eaves with rafter ends or brackets
- Wooden cladding interrupted by raised horizontal, vertical or diagonal boards (stick work) that emphasize building's structure and distantly echo Medieval half-timbered houses
- Wood siding and/or shingles fill the spaces created by the stick work
- West coast: box bay window and factory produced decorative architectural detailing made of redwood
- Porches with diagonal or curved braces
- Later examples scrollwork, floral motifs, and spindle work (Stick-Eastlake)

Eastlake (1880-1910)

- Heavy lathe turned spindle-like porch posts

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- Lathe turned balusters, pendants, and extensive use of lathe turned spindles
- Preforated bargeboards
- Heavy curvilinear brackets
- Carved panels
- Ornate manufactured hardware and trim
- Geometric (vs. curvilinear) stained glass
- Elegance of surface ornamentation contrasts massing

Queen Anne (1880s-1910s)

- Steep and irregular roofs, dominant front facing gable
- Patterned shingles
- Cutaway bay windows
- Unsmooth wall appearance
- Asymmetrical façade with one story porch
- Cottages with an integral porch on one side, larger examples full width
- Bay window or flat façade on other side
- Larger examples feature rounded towers and/or rounded bay windows
- Copious use of applied ornaments, often concentrated on porches or in the gable ends, i.e. scrolled brackets, half timbering, and spindle work.
- Patterned wood shingles in gable ends
- Paneled main entry door located off central axis

Folk Victorian

- Rectangular or L-Shaped with symmetrical façades and simple lines: simple folk house forms with lack of texture and varied wall surfaces
- Porches may have spindles and lacey spandrels, prominent posts
- Cornice line often bracketed
- Folk Victorians almost always gabled in California; pyramidal common in southern states
- Gable-and-wing usually features a projecting gable end adjacent to a covered porch
- Gable ends typically feature eave returns
- Simple window surrounds

Colonial Revival (1880-1955)

- Emphasized front door often with ornamental crown/pediment supported by pilasters or extended forward supported by slim columns to form entry porch.
- Doors commonly with overhead fanlights or sidelights
- Symmetrical placed fenestration
- Windows often coupled and are double hung sash often with poly panes
- Red brick façades after 1920

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Neoclassical (1895-1955)

- Façade dominated by full height porch
- Porch roof supported by classical columns often with Ionic or Corinthian capitals
- Symmetrically placed fenestration

Prairie (1900-1920)

- Low pitched, usually hipped, roof with deep overhanging eaves that typically are boxed
- Two storied with first story wings and deep porches that act as porticos and have massive supports
- Trim details emphasize horizontal lines
- American Four Square Classic is a subtype

Craftsman Style (ca. 1905 – 1930)

- Simple rectangular massing
- Low pitched, usually gabled roof with wide unenclosed overhang with exposed rafters.
- Under gables are decorative beams or braces
- Gable porches supported by “battered” columns or pediments wider at the base and reach to ground level past porch floor
- Windows with geometric division in the upper sash
- Wood shiplap, bevel, novelty or shingle siding (sometimes in combination)
- Smooth river boulders as porch skirting, or at the base of chimneys (rare)

Spanish Revival Style (1915 – 1940)

- Rectangular or L-shaped massing
- Asymmetrical façades
- Gable, or combination gable and flat roof (often with a shaped parapet for flat roofs)
- Typically no roof overhang
- Stucco cladding, either smooth or textured
- Clay tile roofing; also clay tiles used as decorative accents
- Arched openings
- Stucco wing walls and courtyard enclosures
- Metal balconettes beneath windows
- Clay pipe attic vents

Tudor Revival Style (1890s – 1940s)

- Rectangular massing with asymmetrical façades
- Façade dominated by one or more front facing gable
- Steeply-pitched usually side gable roofs
- Usually tall, grouped, narrow, multi paned windows
- Shallow eaves or eaveless
- Stucco cladding, smooth or textured
- Tudor-arched entries, sometimes set within gabled porch elements

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- Rusticated masonry accents around doors and windows
- Vertical attic vents in the gable end, sometimes with arched tops
- Half timbering in 30% of examples
- Exterior dominating chimney, typically at the side

Minimal Traditional Style (1935 – 1950)

- House is defined by its small size
- Simplicity and unbroken lines of the exterior creates look of maximum size
- Non essential elements absence creates solid look to tiny house
- Rectangular or L-shaped massing
- Moderately low pitched roof with little or no overhang
- Shallow eave gable roofs, often in a side and front-facing gable configuration
- Typically shiplap wood siding or stucco
- Porches with wood posts
- Double hung windows
- Decorative window shutters

Ranch Style (1935 – 1975)

- Wide, one story, built low to the ground, varying low roof types with some overhang
- Rectangular massing most common with asymmetrical façades with no dormers
- Off center entrance covered by main roof
- Posts or poles supporting gable ends and overhangs are common
- Cladding often a combination of stucco, brick, wood or concrete block
- Large picture window usually present amongst a variety of sizes of manufactured windows and window surrounds nearly absent
- Windows double hung or casement
- Often garage door and approach to driveways integrated into façade design

Residential Hotels in the Commercial Core

Residential hotels were once quite common in Downtown Martinez and have for a long time been a popular source of housing for single male workers of various social classes. In addition, as Contra Costa County seat, Martinez relied on hotels to provide accommodations for those in town on government business. Many of the early hotels, such as the Commercial Hotel and Martinez Hotel (neither extant), were wood frame and designed in popular Victorian-era styles. After Royal Dutch Shell announced its intention to construct a massive refinery in Martinez in 1915, various entrepreneurs constructed modern concrete and brick residential hotels along Main Street, including the former Hotel Oehm at Main Street and Alhambra Avenue, the former Hotel James at Las Juntas and Main Streets, and the Hotel Marconi at 600 Castro Street.

All remaining hotels in Downtown Martinez's Commercial Core feature a lobby and retail

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spaces at the first floor level and residential units on floors above. Unlike an apartment building, most residential hotels typically have just one residential entrance to aid in security and supervision. Lobbies for residential hotels often contain a business office with a desk for the attendant and mail boxes for the residents. From the lobby, stairs provide access to the guest rooms on the upper floors. Depending on the quality of the hotel, amenities could range from shared rooms without private bathrooms to full house keeping service with private bathrooms and kitchens. Residential hotels were geared toward various ethnic and socio-economic groups, with the Martinez Hotel catering to Shell executives, Hotel Oehm to middle management at Shell, the Italian and Marconi Hotels to Italian immigrants, and the Hotel James to those in town on county business. The Italian boardinghouses on Berrellesa are rectangular and massive with second story salt box roof dipping towards the back of the building. They have extensive first floor front porches and minimalistic surrounds on multiple fenestrations. They are clad in wood boarding.

Significance

Residential building resources may be significant under Criteria A, B, or C during the periods of significance in which they were built and continued their associations with either events or patterns for Criterion A or with a historically significant person or group for Criterion B. Residential properties nominated under Criterion C must reflect the residential architecture as described in applicable historic contexts and retain the character defining features that classify the property as the indicated specific style.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for National Register of Historic Places listing as a Residential property type, the nominated property must be located in Martinez, California and must have been built during the relative period of significance. They should be significant examples of a style or type of architecture and/or be associated with significant historic contexts or individuals or groups. Properties that are eligible for listing under Criterion C must retain enough of their original character defining materials, setting, architectural style, workmanship, design, and ornamentation to have historic integrity. A building that has been altered by intrusive additions, reconfigurations of fenestrations, use of materials uncharacteristic to the applicable period of significance, or has had character defining architectural elements removed, cannot be nominated under Criterion C. Appropriately scaled additions are acceptable.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Commercial buildings are the most numerous types in the Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez. During the nineteenth century, most of Downtown Martinez consisted of one- or two-story, stud frame, vernacular commercial buildings designed in the Folk Victorian or sometimes in later period styles such as the Italianate, Eastlake, or Queen Anne. Historic

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photographs indicate that most were utilitarian buildings with gable roofs concealed behind Western false fronts. A series of fires during the 1890s and early 1900s destroyed much of Victorian Martinez in the Commercial Core. Pre-1904 commercial buildings still stand but most have been heavily remodeled, providing few clues to their original appearance. One of the most intact is the College Lane Saloon located at 613 Ferry Street (1892). Built as a saloon during the 1890s, this building is still in use as a bar. It consists of a central bar room in the front and a storage room in the rear. The otherwise heavily altered façade retains its original false front parapet.

After 1904, most new commercial buildings in Downtown Martinez were built of permanent fire-resistant materials such as brick, stone, and later concrete. A building boom in the mid-1920s resulted in the construction of dozens of new brick and concrete commercial blocks designed in the American Commercial style with simplified Renaissance Revival, Mission, and Art Deco detailing. A subset of the commercial block was the automobile showroom/repair facility. Constructed along Alhambra Avenue or on the fringes of downtown, automotive buildings are typically one-story, steel or heavy timber frame, brick or concrete buildings with bowstring or saw tooth truss roofs. They are differentiated from standard commercial buildings by their uninterrupted interior spaces, large vehicular entrances, and expansive display.

Post-1904 Commercial Buildings

After the 1904 fire, much of the Commercial Core of Downtown Martinez was rebuilt out of masonry. Several important purpose-built commercial blocks and banks were built during this era which ends in 1915 with the announcement by Royal Dutch Shell of its intention to construct a refinery in Martinez. Several of the buildings constructed between 1905 and 1913 include a selection of the most architecturally significant commercial buildings in the Commercial Core and many retain a high degree of integrity. Virtually all were built to replace buildings destroyed by the 1904 fire and all were built by their owner for a specific use. Most were also two-stories, consisting of commercial storefronts at the first floor level with offices or other specialized uses on the second floor. Nearly all buildings constructed in Downtown Martinez after 1904 are either brick or cut stone. Important examples include the Maximilian Bergamini Building at 624 Ferry Street (1905), the reconstructed Bank of Martinez at 634 Ferry Street (1905), and the Curry Building/Royal Theater at 600 Ferry Street (1913). The Curry Building is a mixed-use commercial building that originally consisted of commercial storefronts along Ferry Street, with a funeral parlor on the second floor and a large public theater at the rear of the lot. The building replaced the wood frame Odd Fellows Hall/Curry Livery Stable that had been destroyed in the 1904 fire.

1915 to 1940s Commercial Buildings

The announcement by Royal Dutch Shell of the company's intention to build a large oil refinery in Martinez sparked a downtown building boom that lasted, with a brief gap during the First

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World War, into the late 1920s. After the announcement, property owners began replacing older frame commercial buildings with one- and two-story brick commercial blocks. Most were built of reinforced-brick, with reinforced-concrete becoming more popular during the late 1920s and into the 1940s. Open floor plans and non-structural interior partitions were designed to be reconfigured for new uses.

Nearly all of the commercial blocks in Downtown Martinez built during this era are one-story buildings comprised of one to seven commercial storefronts with internal mezzanines for additional display or office space. Their façades are typically very simple, composed of several rectangular bays with metal or wood storefronts with transoms above. Each bay is typically demarcated by brick piers and the entire ensemble capped by a simple brick frieze embellished with recessed panels, polychrome brick patterns, ornamental tiles, and sometimes a corbelled brick or sheet metal cornice. Examples include the Georgian Revival, brick, one-story Pacific Gas and Electric Company (1915) at 514 Ferry Street, the F.W. Woolworth & Co. Building at 828 Main Street (1927), the Montgomery Ward Building at 531 Main Street (1929), and Dr. Kassels' Building at 829 Main Street (ca. 1929). The exuberant 1937 Art Deco Colombo Building built as a liquor store in its main bay and retail space in the other two bays is an example of a Depression era reinforced concrete commercial building.

1920s Era Automotive Buildings

The decade that elapsed between the First World War and the Great Depression was characterized by tremendous growth in private automobile ownership across the nation. Many former livery stables were converted into crude automobile showrooms/repair facilities. By the early 1920s, automobile manufacturers began to require their agents to build more substantial buildings to display their wares. Meanwhile, automobile agents seized on the idea that their businesses would be better served by being strategically located along heavily traveled corridors, in particular regional highways or streetcar lines, to catch the eye of passersby. The resulting concentration of auto dealerships, repair shops, filling stations, auto supply shops, and other auto-related businesses became known in many communities as auto row. Alhambra Avenue (formerly Smith Street) became Martinez' own auto row after 1917 after it was widened to serve as the primary link between downtown Martinez and State Highway 4.

There are automotive buildings from the 1920s in Martinez. With the exception of their location, large metal roll-up doors, and trussed roofs, most are largely indistinguishable from standard multi-purpose commercial blocks. Examples are quite heavily ornamented as well, with polychrome brick and terra cotta. In contrast to the exterior, the interiors were mostly unfinished. Seeking to maximize space for stock and service bays, designer/builders of automotive buildings often employed modern bowstring truss roofs to create vast areas of uninterrupted floor space with few columns. A portion also employed skylights or monitor roofs to maximize natural light sources. Several of the best automotive-related buildings in Martinez are located along Ward Street and Alhambra Avenue, including the former DeRose Chevrolet

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dealership at 406 Ward Street.

Office Buildings

In addition to commercial buildings, Downtown Martinez has several office buildings. Most were built in the 1920s and 1930s within the eastern side of the Commercial Core, near the Contra Costa County Courthouse. Many were built to house title companies, law offices, or newspaper offices. As purpose-built construction by prominent title companies and law firms, most of these office buildings typically display advanced architectural design qualities and more expensive detailing than the typical speculative commercial blocks of the same era. Structurally, most of the office buildings are concrete or brick. Buildings designed to accommodate title companies are almost always reinforced concrete, frequently containing fireproof vaults for storing company records. Several good examples include the Sharkey Building at 630 Court Street (1926), and the Richmond-Martinez Abstract & Title Co. Building at 700 Court Street (1941).

Light Industrial Buildings

Downtown Martinez contains over ten one-story concrete and brick light industrial buildings, particularly along Escobar Street and Marina Vista Avenue and often on generous corner lots. Structurally, most buildings of this type are concrete or reinforced brick with an interior steel frame consisting of regularly spaced columns that support either a monitor or a bowstring truss roof. Monitor or saw tooth windows provide natural light within the work area. The exterior is typically amply fenestrated with large multi-lite steel industrial windows with operable awning or hopper sash. Ornamentation is usually quite restrained, consisting for the most part of concrete or sheet metal cornices and string course moldings, shaped parapets, and corbelling (if brick). Loading docks toward the rear of the secondary elevations allow goods or supplies to be loaded into or out of the building. The best example of this type is the Martinez Steam Laundry Building at 701 Escobar Street (1930). Other examples include 201, 209, and 221 Berrellesa Street and 300 Alhambra Avenue, all built in the 1940s.

Warehouses

Warehouses are storage buildings whose function is to accommodate irregularities of seasonal and market fluctuations in commerce. Warehousing involves the storage, processing, and distribution of goods, as well as occasional light manufacturing. Warehouse design has traditionally been guided by three interrelated factors: security from fire and theft, economics, and advances in construction technology. Security from fire and theft were paramount and usually addressed through heavy masonry walls, slow-burning timber frames, and iron fire doors and shutters. Another important factor was based in economics, i.e., maximizing the amount of goods that could be stored in a given area. In order to "pencil out" as a business venture warehouses needed to be able to accommodate enough goods to

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ensure a sufficient return on the investment in both land and construction. Anything that consumed valuable space, such as columns or partition walls, ate into the potential profitability of the building.

In Downtown Martinez, warehouses were historically concentrated north of the railroad tracks near the wharves and piers that once lined Carquinez Strait. Several warehouses are designed In the American Commercial style, with load-bearing masonry walls with minimal detailing, flat roofs and flat or stepped parapets, regular fenestration with jack-arch window and door openings, and slow-burning heavy timber framing The best examples are the former Colton's Bonded Winery warehouse at 620 Marina Vista (ca. 1915) and a brick and hollow clay tile warehouse located at 724 Marina Vista Avenue (ca. 1925).

The Commercial Buildings in Downtown Martinez exist only in the Commercial Core and Shoreline Neighborhood and in the two wineries associated with Italians outside of Downtown Martinez. However, just as there are residences built or occupied with accompanying commercial purposes in all three Downtown areas represented by this Multiple Property Submission, there are residential aspects above first floor primary commercial concerns in the Commercial Core that are not associated with hotels. These buildings are considered commercial, with mixed-use.

Significance

Commercial historic resources and the above listed subtypes and the Italian winery properties may be significant under Criteria A, B, or C. Nominated properties must reflect historically significant trends in Downtown Martinez as described in the applicable Historic Context.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for National Register of Historic Places listing as a Commercial property type, the nominated property must be located in Martinez, California. The property may be a general commercial type or one of the previously listed subtypes and must have been built during the period of significance, used for commerce activities, and retain sufficient architectural and historic integrity to reflect type and historic significance.

Properties eligible under Criterion A must demonstrate association with Downtown Martinez’s commercial, professional, manufacturing, retail, service sector, or other business use. Properties eligible under Criterion B must demonstrate direct association with individuals or groups significant to the historic development of Downtown Martinez. Properties that are eligible for listing under Criterion C must retain enough of their original character defining materials, setting, architectural style, workmanship, design, and ornamentation to have historic integrity.

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PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

Commercial Core

For the purposes of this Multiple Property Submission, public assembly buildings include government buildings such as libraries, courthouses, post offices, swimming pools, memorial halls, parks, sidewalks, fraternal halls, union halls, business clubs, theaters, and any space indoor or out where citizenry gather for public purposes. Public assembly buildings do not always have to be located in specially designed buildings; frequently they are placed in existing buildings built for other uses. There are no local government buildings or churches located in the geographic area of this Multiple Property Submission at this time.

The Commercial Core contains very few public assembly buildings. There are two historic union halls in the Commercial Core: the Tunnel Aqueduct Local #324 hall at 611 Berrellesa Street (ca. 1946) and the Contra Costa County Central Labor Council (and former Post Office) at 721 Castro Street (1926). Both buildings resemble typical commercial buildings of their respective eras; both are one-story, masonry buildings, with typical exterior detailing.

There are also two surviving theaters in the survey area, although both have been converted into other uses. They include the former Novelty Theater at 716 Main Street (1910) and the former State Theater at 800 Ferry Street (1925). The latter was historically an excellent example of a first-class movie theater, with a large auditorium, public lobby, and exterior marquee and blade signage, most of which was removed when the building was converted into a County office building in the 1990s.

Civic Core

At the northern end of Court Street and the northeastern segment of Pine Street, are the public government offices of the county seat of Contra Costa. As Martinez grew, developers produced monumental buildings projecting its authority in and meaning to its citizenry. The oldest building at the northernmost end of Court Street is the Borland Home/Martinez Museum (1890). The next oldest is the 1903 and 1906 Neo-Federalist granite masonry Court House and matching jail. The next buildings to have been erected are the Gothic Revival Veteran's Memorial Hall (1923), then the 1932 Hall of Records, the 1937 PWA Moderne Post Office, and the 1941 Art Deco Library. The Hall of Records and Library share an architect (E. Geoffrey Bangs) and the Library and 700 Court Street share a contractor: C.W. Tiegland.

The Library, Post Office, Hall of Records, and Court House block are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Veterans' Hall and the Borland Home appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The active jail, the District Attorney's office building, and the two buildings at the northwest end of Court Street are less than 50 years old. The public assembly buildings on streets east of Court and south of Green Streets are less than 50

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years old, with the exception of the Old New 1945 jail at the northeast corner of the Court House Block. This jail is not a contributing resource to the Court Block National Register listing.

The Post Office and its art work are the most significant expression of the New Deal in Martinez. Other publicly accessible historic resources that are significant to the Great Depression include the miles of WPA stamped sidewalks in Martinez. A WPA stamp sits on the entrance corner of the Borland Home, placed there when Cappy Ricks was the Mayor of Martinez and owned the Borland Home building. 400 trees were planted in Downtown Martinez with CWA funds during the Great Depression.

Downtown Neighborhood

Masonic Hall, Shell Club House, Susana and Rankin Parks, and the Catholic Cemetery are examples of historic Public Assembly resources in the Downtown Neighborhood.

Significance

Properties nominated as public assembly buildings may be eligible under Criterion A in the areas of community development, commerce, architecture, business, industry, government, or education, or other criteria that can be adequately shown to be significant of the historic contexts of this Multiple Property Submission. Public Assembly historic resources nominated under Criterion B must have a direct association with individuals or groups historically significant to the development of Downtown Martinez. Properties nominated under Criterion C must demonstrate significance as examples of architectural styles found within Downtown Martinez or as the work of a master architect or craftsman.

Registration Requirements

A historic resource will qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C as a Public Assembly property type if the resource is located in the Civic or Commercial Cores of Downtown Martinez or is located in the Shoreline Neighborhood. The resource must have been built during its associated period of significance and express an aspect of that period of significance, and must have been used for Civic activities, entertainment, education, community welfare, fraternal, or social events. Properties that are eligible for listing under Criterion C must retain enough of their original character defining materials, setting, architectural style, workmanship, design, and ornamentation to have historic integrity.

Historic Resources Associated with the Contributions of Italians

Historic Properties whose histories solely or partially associate those properties with Italian

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builders, and occupiers of any type of property in Martinez, further connect specific buildings to the contributions Italians made to the development of Martinez in any Historic Context of this Multiple Property Submission. These historic resources are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B as long as they retain sufficient architectural integrity. Examples of these are the Marazzani, Bertola, Pellegrini, Chantri, and Sparacino homes, and the Viano and Digardi winery properties. Most of the Shoreline Neighborhood is associated with Italian-originated building and/or occupancy. These are primarily residences and many were built and used for commerce as well as residence. They may be of any architectural type. The properties in the Shoreline Neighborhood may be nominated under Criteria A, B, or C. If nominated under B it may be for a specific Anglo or Italian individual of historic significance to the development of Martinez, or if the property reflects the Italian group that dominated the neighborhood for a century.

There are at least three extant buildings in the Commercial Core associated with the contributions of Italians to the development of Downtown Martinez that retain historic architectural integrity: the Bergamini (1905) and Colombo (1937) Buildings on Ferry Street between Main and Escobar Streets, and the National Bank of Martinez (1924). The National Bank of Martinez Building, at 649 Main Street, was co-founded by influential Martinez Italian Americans and became the Bank of Italy with bank services in Italian.

There are no historic resources in the Civic Core that can be associated directly with Italians in Martinez. The Shoreline Neighborhood was built up by Italians and housed the majority of the Italians who contributed significantly to the development of the fishing village and the Commercial Core, to which the immigrants and their descendants contributed and still contribute to the development and vitality of Downtown Martinez’s economy, culture, and political life.

St. Catherine of Sienna Parish Catholic cemetery is a Public Assembly resource, and is also associated with the historically significant impact of Italians in Martinez, California. The Cemetery is directly across the street from Alhambra Cemetery, listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

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G. Geographical Data

This Multiple Property Submission is limited to properties within the incorporated and unincorporated limits of the City of Martinez. For clarification of definitions particularly for the public, any resource associated with the Italian American contribution to the historic development of Martinez can be located in any area of Martinez, California. Civic and Commercial buildings are by definition located in the Commercial and Civic Cores of Downtown Martinez. Resources located in the Shoreline Neighborhood may or may not be associated with Italian Americans. A portion of the Shoreline Neighborhood—as discussed in this Multiple Property Submission—is defined by the City of Martinez as the “Downtown Neighborhood” in its Downtown Specific Plan. The Shoreline Neighborhood as defined by this Multiple Property Submission also includes the areas that are named by the City of Martinez Downtown Specific Plan as the "Downtown Shoreline" and the part of the "North Downtown Shoreline" west and inclusive of Alhambra Creek. Said Shoreline areas are as defined by the City of Martinez Downtown Specific Plan. The Civic Core, Commercial Core, and Shoreline Neighborhood for the purposes of this Multiple Property Submission are bounded as follows:

1. The Civic Core is both sides of Court Street from the Southern Pacific railroad tracks on the north to Green Street on the south, and the section of Pine Street that parallels Court Street and terminates at Green Street.
2. The boundaries of the Commercial Core reach from the Southern Pacific railroad tracks on the north, both sides of Las Juntas Street as the east boundary, Green Street as the south boundary, and Berrellesa Street as the west boundary.
3. The Shoreline Neighborhood area as named by this Multiple Property Submission is contiguous to the west boundary of Commercial Core. The Shoreline Neighborhood is bounded for the purposes of this Historic Context on their east by Alhambra Avenue until its northern terminus. North of where Alhambra Avenue terminates, the boundary is west and inclusive of Alhambra Creek. The northern boundary is the southern edge of East Bay Regional Park property. The west boundary is the Alhambra Cemetery, Carquinez Scenic Drive, and Talbart Street. The south boundary is both sides of Escobar Street.
4. The "Downtown Neighborhood", as defined by the Multiple Property Submission, is the residential area from Green Street to Brown Street on the east side of Alhambra Creek and the area from Green Street to Soto Street.

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

Author Kristin Henderson has successfully nominated three buildings to the National Register of Historic Places, one building to the California Register of Historical Resources, and an olive grove as a California Point of Historical Interest. She has a Master of Library and Information Science and a post graduate certificate in Online Teaching and Learning, received the 2008 Doty Tile Heritage Foundation Grant, and twice has been a winner of the City of Martinez photography contest. She has also lived and/or worked for ten years in the relatively small space of Downtown Martinez. Ms. Henderson has also undertaken multiple historic research projects over the course of ten years, including contributing significantly to a long running major display at the Martinez Historical Society Museum. The Bibliography is a non-exhaustive list of the references used to compose this MPS.

Over a decade, the author has conducted multiple field surveys of all Downtown Martinez, the Shoreline Neighborhood, and much of the Downtown Martinez Neighborhood. Integrity requirements for property listing were based on the author's knowledge of the condition of existing properties and their historic uses. This MPS historic context was partially derived from Kelley & VerPlanck, Historical Resources Consulting, LLC's *Architectural and Historical Survey of Downtown Martinez, California: Historic Context Statement* (2008) as well as this author's own extensive research prior and subsequent to that documented by Kelley and VerPlank.

Page & Turnbull, Inc.'s *Historic Context Statement: City of Benicia* (2008), Teresa Grimes' *Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles* Multiple Property Submission (2008), and Carmel Barry-Schweyer's *Architectural and Historic Resources of Auburn, California* Multiple Property Submission (2009) were utilized as models. This MPS was composed by following the directions of the U.S. Interior National Park Service's National Register Bulletin 16B, *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* by Antoinette J. Lee and Linda F. McClelland (1999), and with guidance from "Writing Historic Contexts" by Marie Nelson of the California State Office of Historic Preservation.

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I. Major Bibliographical References

(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

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