

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Memorial Hall



other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Pomona Street at Alexander Avenue

not for publication

city or town Crockett

vicinity

state California

code CA

county Contra Costa

code 013

zip code 94525

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Memorial Hall
 Name of Property

Contra Costa County, CA
 County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
1	0	object
2	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

SOCIAL/ Meeting Hall

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Materials

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY
REVIVALS/Classical Revival

foundation: CONCRETE
 walls: BRICK
STUCCO
 roof: METAL/Copper
 other: WOOD (Flagpole)

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

See continuation sheets.

Narrative Description

See continuation sheets.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL HISTORY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1925

Significant Dates

1925

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Designer: A. A. Brown

Contractor: Frank H. Kress

Criteria Considerations

N/A

Property is:

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

Period of Significance (justification)

Following the end of World War I and the creation of the American Legion, a local American Legion Post was established in Crockett, California in 1920. In an effort to honor those who served and those who lost their lives, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors voted in 1922 to construct a memorial in every town within the county that had an American Legion Post. The contract for the construction of Memorial Hall was approved in 1924 and the building was dedicated on April 26, 1925. The Period of Significance is set at the year the construction was completed and dedicated.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

See continuation sheets.

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

See continuation sheets.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Included in the Narrative Statement of Significance

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Crockett Historical Society and Museum
Contra Costa County Historic Center

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 10 569300 4211950
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

Assessor's Parcel Number 354-041-020

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Boundary Justification

Crockett Heights Lots 1, 2, and 14 within Block 7 are the original boundaries of the property as defined in the early 1920s.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kimberly Butt, AIA
organization Interactive Resources, Inc. date July 2013
street & number 117 Park Place telephone 510-236-7435
city or town Richmond state CA zip code 94801
e-mail kim.butt@intres.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. As an acceptable alternative to submitting a USGS map, an electronic location map and property map are included in the Additional Documentation Section.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

A sketch map and floor plans are included in the Additional Documentation Section.

- **Continuation Sheets**

Section 7. Description
Narrative Description

Section 8. Statement of Significance
Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph
Narrative Statement of Significance

Section 9. Major Bibliographical References
Bibliography

Additional Documentation Section
Figures Log
Figures: 12 (maps, historic photographs, other)
Location map
Property Map
Sketch Map
Floor Plans

Photographs Section
Photographs Log: 16 Recent Photographs

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See continuation sheets.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Crockett Community Services District attn. General Manager
street & number PO Box 578 telephone (510) 787-2992
city or town Crockett state CA zip code 94525

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Memorial Hall is located at the east end of the small unincorporated community of Crockett, California which lies along the Carquinez Strait and at the foot of the Carquinez Bridge in northern Contra Costa County. The octagonal, Beaux Arts style building stands sited diagonally facing the corner of Pomona Avenue, the main road through the community, and Alexander Avenue, a narrow residential street. The site is generally flat with a grass lawn and a few trees at the parcel's edges. The one-story-over-basement building occupies a foot print of approximately 1,100 square-feet and is constructed of plaster-covered unreinforced brick masonry walls on a concrete foundation. The tripartite design scheme features: a stepped concrete plinth; a shaft with four large arched openings and a deeply scored cement plaster-finished surface resembling stone; and a painted copper polygonal hipped roof atop a decorative molded cornice. The original steel front doors with ornamental cast iron latticework occupy the front arched opening and remain visible and operational. The three other arched openings are each filled with a grand forty-three-lite wood sash combination-fixed-and-casement arched window. The building remains in good condition having been essentially unaltered since its construction, with the exception of a basement reconstruction to address drainage issues and the reversible enclosure of the three arched window opening with plaster-coated plywood sheets at the exterior as a protective measure.

Narrative Description

Site

Memorial Hall stands centered on a relatively level corner lot at the east end of town, uphill from the Carquinez Strait, within a residential development historically known as Crockett Heights. Many of the surrounding single-family homes were constructed during the same time period as Memorial Hall. West of the site are the town of Crockett, the C. & H. Sugar Refinery and Interstate 80. East of the site are the undeveloped rolling hills of the Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline Park. The rectilinear site is located at the intersection of Pomona Street (historically known as State Highway 40) and Alexander Avenue. The simple landscaping consists primarily of a grass lawn and features a few trees at the edges of the lot. Concrete sidewalks lined with non-original, low wooden bollards run along the south and west sides, and a concrete-paved path leads from the lot's southwest corner diagonally across the lawn, around the circular concrete base of the original wood flagpole, and to the building's entrance.

Overall

The monumental, octagonal building rises above a stepped concrete plinth that encircles the building. The building is one-story-over-basement in height and is constructed of unreinforced brick walls clad in cement plaster. Most of the cement plaster is deeply scored to resemble rusticated stone. The octagonal wood-frame roof is protected by standing seam copper panels that have been painted at the exterior. The Classical Revival design is symmetrical featuring four sides punctuated by large arched openings with the alternating four sides dominated

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by lightly scored rectangular plaster panels. The overall tripartite scheme features a concrete plinth with three steps and a concrete base below a smooth finished wall base topped by a narrow molded band; the main body of the building, or the shaft, features a deeply scored cement plaster finish and is accentuated by alternating large arched openings and lightly scored rectangular panels; and finally the cap is defined by a wide molded course, with an acanthus leaf pattern at the lowest band, below framed inscription panels and a narrow slightly projecting molded cornice at the parapet. The building's three large windows have been boarded over and are no longer visible at the exterior. At the concrete plinth, six metal grates cover openings that allow for light and air to reach the basement windows.

Exterior

Southwest Facade

The entry facade faces southwest toward the intersection of Pomona Street and Alexander Avenue, and features a deeply recessed arched entryway framed by scored plaster resembling a stone arch. A pair of steel doors, with an ornamental cast iron latticework screen in the door and above in the arched transom, provide entry into the hall. The words "Memorial Hall" are affixed to the lintel above the doors, and a bronze plaque honoring those from Crockett who gave their lives in World War I hangs on the northwest entryway wall. Apart from the banding, the remainder of the wall is finished in a deeply scored plaster finish, and a quote from President Woodrow Wilson is inscribed within the framed panel above the arch.

The bronze plaques at the entry states:

In loving memory of the men of this community who gave their lives in the Great World War 1917 1919

D Crowley
W E Dunn
M H Sievers
B L Catelini
J R Carroll
V L Dunn
G M Lee
O A Sweet
F Remaini
G W Ross
R L Dingman
B A Secor

Dedicated by Crockett Post No. 33 American Legion

Finally, the two walls flanking the main entry each feature a large, finely scored rectangular panel punctuated by a long, narrow window opening filled with a decorative cast iron screen. Behind each screen is a single-lite wood sash casement window.

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Northwest and Southeast Facades

The walls facing northwest and southeast originally each featured a grand forty-three-lite wood sash combination-fixed-and-casement arched window. The window openings have been boarded over at the exterior and finished in painted plaster to match. Similar to the entry facade, the window openings are each framed by a scored plaster arch and a quotation is inscribed in each panel above the arch and molded banding.

Northeast Facade

The rear, northeast wall is nearly identical to the two facades previously described. It includes an enclosed arched opening and a quotation panel, however a steep concrete stair cuts through the stepped plinth leading down to the basement exit. Two concrete retaining walls frame the stair and a non-original metal pipe rail serves as a handrail at each side. Finally, a sheet metal-clad flush wood door opens out from the basement. Flanking the rear wall are the two least elaborate sides; each features a centered rectangular panel with a lightly scored finish and a blank panel above the banding.

Quotations

Above each of the four arches, within rectangular panels on the building’s cap, are inscribed quotations from American presidents. The four quotations are:

To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace. Washington;

Do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity – the Declaration of Independence. Lincoln;

We want no wars of conquest; we must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression. McKinley; and

There are no days when we should be more patriotic than on other days. Wilson.

Interior

First Floor

The interior occupies an area of approximately 940 square-feet at each floor level. The first floor features the main hall, or auditorium, and two small ancillary rooms flanking the entrance: one a toilet room and the other a storage or cloak room. The octagonal hall presents a gracious space with a twenty-foot high flat plaster ceiling with an inset faux skylight, original maple flooring, three large arched windows, and classically designed wall treatments. The entry and ancillary rooms project into the octagonal space as a unified, partial height, rectangular volume with the central portion extending above the flanking sections.

The leaded glass American Legion emblem set in a wood frame and surrounded by stained glass adorns the octagonal faux skylight set in the ceiling. The flat plaster-on-lath walls feature a variety of molded wood trim including: a baseboard, a chair rail, narrow rails framing either a blank rectangular wall panel or an arched window, a keystone-like trim above each window, a high picture rail, and finally, a denticulated crown molding. The room was originally illuminated by fourteen electric wall sconces and maintains five electric heating panels in the base of the exterior walls.

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The toilet room, south of the entrance, is accessed through a two-panel wood door. The triangular-shaped room contains a single-lite wood casement window, a sink, a toilet set within a bead board partition, remnants of the linoleum flooring, flat plaster walls with a simple base board and crown molding, and a flat plaster ceiling with a ceiling mounted globe light fixture. Just north of the building entrance a paneled Dutch door opens into the triangular-shaped cloak room. The small room maintains a single-lite wood casement window, built-in shelving over cabinets with bead board doors, flat plaster walls and ceiling, minimal wood wall moldings, a ceiling-hung light fixture, the original electrical panel, and ductwork for the non-original gas furnace at the location of the original dumbwaiter enclosure.

Finally, at the west side of the hall a partial height wall topped with a molded wood cap and a non-original pipe railing frames the opening for the stair leading to the basement. The stairs are comprised of linoleum clad wood treads with a metal toe and wood risers, and feature a simple wood handrail on the east side.

Basement

The basement contains the building’s utilitarian functions and includes a dining room, kitchen, toilet room, two storage areas, and two ancillary rooms. Typical finishes in the basement include linoleum over concrete flooring, painted flat plaster walls and ceilings, and a painted exposed wood frame ceiling. Most of the basement maintains a low average seven-foot ceiling height.

The central dining room occupies most of the floor area and maintains an exposed wood frame ceiling. An electric fireplace with brick surrounds and a wood mantel stands centered on the room’s exterior northwest wall. Additionally, two three-lite wood hopper windows punctuate the wall above the fireplace. The room is illuminated by two ceiling-mounted non-original fluorescent fixtures, as well as four wall-mounted original sconces.

Two doorways, one with a three-lite-over-one-panel wood door and the other open, lead to the kitchen, southwest of the dining room. The odd shaped room maintains a Wedgewood stove, gas furnace, hot water heater, sink, and wood built-in shelves and cupboards. Both the stove and gas furnace are not original to the building; the original stove was electric, as was the building’s heating system.¹ The room features two windows; one is a replacement aluminum slider and the other is an original three-lite wood hopper. The floor is covered in linoleum tile, unlike the rest of the basement. A non-original ceiling-mounted fluorescent light fixture illuminates the room. A small pantry accessed by a three-panel with diagonal slats wood door provides additional storage at the southeast end of the kitchen.

The basement maintains two storage areas: one underneath the stair and one in the northern corner. Two three-panel with diagonal slats wood doors open into the northern closet that also features an original three-lite wood hopper window, built-in shelving, and a wall-mounted light. The storage area under the stairs also maintains a built-in wood storage cabinet.

Northeast of the main dining room is a small ancillary area with the only basement exit door. Flat wood trim frames the wide opening between the two rooms, and the exit area maintains a baseboard and crown molding on

1. “Impressive Memorial Hall Dedication Sunday, April 26, to Honor Heroes Who Fought for World Democracy.” *Crockett Signal*, (April 17, 1925): 8.

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its flat plaster walls. The utilitarian exit door is covered with sheet metal at the interior. South of the exit vestibule is a small hall that connects the stair, the under-the-stair closet, the dining room, and the exit vestibule. The hall features one wall-mounted sconce and one three-panel wood door.

Finally, a two-panel wood door opens in the toilet room located at the base of the stair. The room maintains a concrete floor, plaster walls and ceiling, one sink, two toilets enclosed with bead board partitions, two urinals, and one non-original ceiling-mounted fluorescent light. Currently the room has a large hole in the concrete, due to structural investigative work, and one of the toilets is no longer installed.

Building Chronology

- 1922 County Board of Supervisors voted to construct a veterans’ hall in every town within the County with an American Legion Post.
- 1924 July: The land was donated by C. & H. to the County for the construction of a veterans’ memorial hall.
- August: Board of Supervisors approved the plans and specifications for Memorial Hall.
Local members of the American Legion began excavating and preparing the site for construction.
- Sept.: The County Board of Supervisors awarded the construction contracts.
- 1925 April 26: Memorial Hall was dedicated in a grand ceremony.
- 1938 October: Extensive reconstruction of the Memorial Hall basement was undertaken by the County to mediate damage caused by flooding.²
- 1939 May: C. & H. installs new landscaping around Memorial Hall and the Roll of Honor monument across the street.³
- 1977 The American Legion stopped operating and leasing the building.⁴
- c. 1980 The three arched windows were encased by plaster finished plywood at the exterior and acoustical panels at the interior.⁵

2. “Improvements Made,” *The Cubelet Press*.
 3. “War Memorial Grounds Given New Landscaping,” *The Cubelet Press*.
 4. “Vets to vet hall rescue,” *West County Times*, May 19, 1982.
 5. Ibid.

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- 1982 V.F. W. Post U.S.S. Argonaut Ship No. 1928 began their lease of the building from the County.⁶
- 2008 Nov.4: V.F. W. Post U.S.S. Argonaut Ship No. 1928 terminated their lease of Memorial Hall with the County.⁷
- 2009 October: Contra Costa County deeded Memorial Hall to the Crockett Community Services District.⁸
- 2012 Acoustical panels removed at the window interiors.

Integrity

Overall, Memorial Hall maintains sufficient historic integrity to convey its historical significance. The property remains at its original site and retains the integrity of location. The property retains its integrity of design. Very few significant, permanent alterations have been made to the building. Some of the alterations that have occurred include: the elevation of the ground level around the base, the reconstruction of the basement, the painting of the copper roof, and the enclosure of the window openings. The raising of the ground elevation and the reconstruction of the basement were completed to amend a water intrusion problem and did not impact the overall design of the building. Both the painting of the copper and the enclosure of the window openings are reversible, and would not impact the building's overall design integrity.

The building was constructed at generally the same time the surrounding residential neighborhood was also being developed, and the lot remains essentially the same as when the building was dedicated. Therefore, the subject property retains the integrity of setting. Further, the building retains its integrity of materials. The building maintains its original brick structure, cement plaster exterior finish, copper roofing, doors, windows, interior plaster, wood trim, and much of the flooring. Additionally, the building retains the general integrity of workmanship, because the craftsmanship of the original construction is still evident within the building's character defining features such as the cement plaster, the wood windows, and the entrance doors. The property maintains its integrity of feeling, as it clearly illustrates its aesthetic and historic nature as a World War I memorial. Finally, the property maintains its integrity of association to the national and county-wide effort to memorialize World War I.

6. Ibid.

7. Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Agenda, November 4, 2008.

8. "Veterans Memorial Returns to Local Ownership," Crockett Community Foundation Blog. <http://www.crockettcommunityfoundation.org/blog/veterans-memorial-returns-to-local-ownership/> (accessed April 18, 2012); and Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Minutes, October 6, 2009.

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8. Statement of Significance

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Memorial Hall is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A Memorial Hall is associated with the national and regional effort to commemorate veterans of World War I through the construction of local monuments and memorial halls. As part of a Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors' initiative the building was one of thirteen memorial structures constructed to honor World War I veterans throughout Contra Costa County, and was the only one of its scale and style constructed. The project required the cooperation and funding of the Board of Supervisors, C. & H. Sugar, and the American Legion. The building served not only as a memorial, but also as a meeting location for the American Legion members and all local veterans. Further, under Criterion C the building is a significant example of the Classical Revival style of architecture as executed by a local designer, an employee of C. & H. Sugar, and constructed by local veterans. The building retains a high degree of historic integrity, with the only significant alterations being reversible. The memorial is the only one of its kind in both the community of Crockett and Contra Costa County.

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

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Town of Crockett

The unincorporated town of Crockett, located in northwest Contra Costa County on the Carquinez Strait, was originally settled in 1867 by Thomas Edwards, Sr. Edwards purchased the land from and subsequently named the town after Judge Joseph B. Crockett. The town's location along the Strait, in conjunction with the construction of the railroad in 1877, made it a prime site for industrial development. In 1884, the Starr Flour Mill and Warehouses were erected as part of the expanding grain industry along the Carquinez Strait. In 1897, the newly formed California Beet Sugar and Refining Company purchased the site and buildings of the Starr Flour Mill and the Edwards' Ranch lands. In 1899, the company changed its name to California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Company and continued to operate until 1903, when the plant briefly shut down. The plant reopened in 1906 under a newly organized California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Corporation (C. & H.). With the establishment of C. & H., Crockett essentially became a company town in the first half of the twentieth century.⁹

9. The facts for the history of Crockett are summarized from the following sources: J. D. Keith, "The Story of Crockett," (unpublished typescript in the Crockett Historical Museum, 1931); Richard Boyer, *A Shorty History of Crockett*, (Crockett, CA: Crockett Historical Society, 1997); and David A. Billeci, *Crockett and Its People*. (Crockett: Crockett Improvement Association, 1981.)

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C. & H. Sugar Company

C. & H. was integral in the development of Crockett. The company funded town infrastructure such as roads, sewers, parks and playgrounds; built community buildings including schools, libraries, community halls, and recreations centers; and sponsored annual town-wide celebrations. Further, the company opened up tracts of land for residential development, such as Tenney Terrace and Crockett Heights, and helped C. & H. employees with the financing of their homes. Early in the twentieth century the majority of Crockett residents were employed by C. & H., and the company served as the town benefactor. George Morrison Rolph, the first plant manager, is credited with spearheading the development of many of the town amenities, and was additionally involved in the construction of Memorial Hall.¹⁰

Brief History of the American Legion

The American Legion was originally conceived in Paris in March 1919, by members of the American Expeditionary Force. Two months later, the Legion's constitution was formally approved in St. Louis, Missouri. Among the Legion's initial vision outlined in its preamble was the commitment "to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great War."¹¹ Additionally, the constitution established an Executive Committee to grant charters to state organizations, which in turn would charter local posts.¹² All honorably discharged veterans and current U.S. military personnel who served in World War I were eligible to join the Legion. The American Legion has championed veterans' issues since its inception and was instrumental in the creation of the U.S. Veterans' Bureau (now known as the Department of Veteran Affairs.) The American Legion is still an active nonprofit veterans' organization with over 3.5 million members and 14,000 posts worldwide.¹³

The American Legion Post 33 in Crockett was established soon after the American Legion was organized. A newspaper article from January 1920 announced that the Crockett Post was already holding a membership drive.¹⁴ The Post appears to have been dissolved by 1977 when the group gave up their lease on Memorial Hall.¹⁵

Memorial Hall Construction

Following the end of World War I, government bodies and veterans' groups across the nation began erecting memorials dedicated to those who served and to those who lost their lives. Using a federal initiative that

10. J. P. Munro-Fraser, *History of Contra Costa County, California*, (Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1926), 927-930.

11. William Penack, *For God and County: The American Legion, 1919-1941*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989), 48.

12. Ibid, 61.

13. History, the American Legion website, <http://www.legion.org/history> (accessed April 2012.)

14. "Crockett Legion Post Drives for Members," *San Francisco Chronicle*, (January 18, 1920): 1.

15. "Vets to vet hall rescue," *West County Times*, (May 19, 1982.)

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authorized counties to raise funds through a temporary sales tax increase, Contra Costa County's Board of Supervisors voted in 1922 to construct a memorial in every town that had an American Legion Post. Each hall would nominally be in the custody of the American Legion, but they were also to be made open to all veterans' organizations. In many of the towns the memorials also functioned as community centers, libraries, meetings halls, and, in one case, even as a public swimming pool.¹⁶ The Crockett Memorial Hall was considerably smaller than most of the other halls constructed throughout the County, however C. & H. had already constructed several large public meeting halls and auditoriums for the town. Therefore, a building serving multiple functions was unwarranted in Crockett.¹⁷

In July 1924, C. & H. donated three lots at the corner of Pomona Street and Alexander Avenue within the Crockett Heights residential development to Contra Costa County for the sole purpose of constructing a "building, memorial hall, or meeting place for Associations of Veterans."¹⁸ Just a month later on August 8, 1924, the County Board of Supervisors approved plans for the "Crockett American Legion Memorial Hall."¹⁹ A. A. Brown, an employee of C. & H., was hired by the company to complete the design for the memorial.²⁰ Brown designed the octagonal hall in the Classical Revival architectural style and, according to a newspaper account, he based the design on contemporary European war memorials.²¹ The Classical Revival architectural style developed as a more refined stage of the Beaux-Arts style in the early decades of the twentieth century. The style expressed an interpretation of classical architectural design and was extremely popular in the development of U.S. government buildings and monuments.²²

On September 2, 1924 the Board of Supervisors awarded several construction contracts for Memorial Hall. Four of the contracts went to local Crockett men, and Frank H. Kress was awarded the general contract for a total construction cost of \$20,250. Kress, a member of the American Legion, also constructed the local grammar school.²³ Prior to the start of construction, much of the initial excavation was completed by members of the Crockett American Legion Post.

16. Munro-Fraser, 356.

17. "Impressive Memorial Hall Dedication Sunday, April 26, to Honor Heroes Who Fought for World Democracy." *Crockett Signal*, (April 17, 1925): 8.

18. Contra Costa County Recorder, California and Hawaiian Sugar Refining Corporation, grantor, to Contra Costa County, grantee, Lot 1, 2, and 14, Block 7, (July 19, 1924), 37-38.

19. "Bids for Crockett Memorial Hall Will be Opened Soon," *Crockett Signal*, (August 8, 1924.)

20. "Impressive Memorial Hall Dedication Sunday, April 26, to Honor Heroes Who Fought for World Democracy," *Crockett Signal*, (April 17, 1925): 1 and 8; and "Memorial Hall Contracts Won by Local People," *Crockett Signal*, (September 5, 1924): 1. The later article refers to A. A. Brown as "the well known C & H engineer," however the only A. A. Brown identified as an employee of the company was the main sales manager Andrew A. Brown of San Francisco. His portrait is included in Dan Gutleben, *Gutleben's Sugar Thesaurus, 1958-1965*, Vol. 2 (self-produced notebooks on file at the Bancroft Library). Andrew A. Brown worked for C. & H. up to his death in October 1925 at the age of 65. (San Francisco Area Funeral Home Records, 1895-1985, www.ancestry.com.)

21. "Impressive Memorial Hall Dedication."

22. John C. Poppeliers, et al. *What Style is it? A Guide to American Architecture* (Washington D. C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1983), 70.

23. "Memorial Hall Contracts Won by Local People." In various newspaper accounts Kress is spelled in alternative ways including both

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A concerted effort was made in the construction and outfitting of Memorial Hall to ensure that the majority of the work was undertaken by veterans and involved the local community. The general contractor and most of the workers were members of either the American Legion or the Spanish American War Veterans. Additionally, most of the materials and furnishings were purchased in Crockett. Even the selection of the four quotes that encircle the building’s cap was carried out in the form of a contest between local school children.²⁴

Memorial Hall Dedication

Memorial Hall was officially dedicated on April 26, 1925 with a grand ceremony that included not only local veterans, clergymen, and businessmen, but also Contra Costa County Supervisor Oscar Olsson and the State Commander of the American Legion Nathan Coombs. Presentations were made by members of the Spanish American War Veterans, Civil War Veterans, Boy Scouts, and American Legion Auxiliary. The orator of the day was Captain S. N. Dancey, a World War I hero and journalist.

The elaborate description of the building in the *Crockett Signal* states that the upstairs “auditorium” could seat at least 142 people and was finished in a buff color with cream blue reliefs at the base and ceiling. The room also featured a phonograph-radio donated by the Crockett Music Company and an electric piano purchased by local merchants. Further, heavy drapes adorned the hall’s large windows. The article continues with a description of the basement which contained the office of the Post Adjunct, a library, and a “taproom.” The basement floors were finished in battleship grey linoleum; an electric fireplace provided heat; and the charter of the Crockett Post of the American Legion hung above the mantel. Additionally, the building was outfitted with a “first class electric kitchen,” that was described as being “one of the most complete electric kitchens to be found anywhere.”²⁵

Memorial Hall to the Present

Although the building was owned by the County, it appears that it required a combination of funding and contributions from the County, C. & H., the American Legion and other organizations who might have used the hall to maintain the property over its 87-year existence. In 1938, the County funded an extensive reconstruction of the building’s basement due to excessive water infiltration.²⁶ Most likely the grade around the base of the building was raised above the lowest concrete step, which had previously been exposed, during the basement reconstruction. Then in 1939, C. & H. took on the task of re-landscaping the grounds surrounding both Memorial Hall and the Roll of Honor, which at that time stood across the street. C. & H. planted a new lawn and shrubs and

Criss and Cress.

24. “Impressive Memorial Hall Dedication.”

25. Ibid.

26. “Improvements Made at War Memorial Building,” *The Cubelet Press*, (October 13, 1938.)

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sought to unify the two memorials.²⁷ Over the years, the building was used for a variety of purposes including: veterans’ functions and meetings, religious services, weddings, and even ordinance storage during World War II. Crockett native Neil Desmond recalls artillery shells being stored in the building, which were to be used at the nearby artillery battery in the hills if an enemy attack came to the Carquinez Strait.²⁸

The American Legion continued to lease, operate, and care for the building until 1977 when the expenses became more than the small group could support.²⁹ In 1982, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post U.S.S. *Argonaut* Ship No. 1928 took on the lease of the building. While the County would maintain the building’s exterior and roof, it was up to the tenant to assume all interior maintenance.³⁰ The U.S.S. *Argonaut* Post terminated their lease on the building in 2008, and a year later the property was deeded from the County to the Crockett Community Services District.³¹

Criterion A

Memorial Hall is associated with the national and regional effort to commemorate veterans of World War I through the construction of local monuments and memorial halls. Within Contra Costa County the structure was one of thirteen World War I monuments, mostly veterans’ halls, which were constructed with county funding during the intra-war years. Locally, the hall was completed primarily through the efforts of Crockett citizens and with the significant assistance of C. & H. Sugar, who donated the land, paid for the design, and helped to maintain the property for a number of decades.

As soon as the war ended the national discussion of memorials almost immediately began. Editorials and articles appeared in art and architecture magazines that explored the best method for memorializing World War I and its veterans. The debates surrounded the benefits of sculpture versus structures; the appropriate uses of memorial structures; and, to some extent, the appropriate style of memorial buildings.³² Although there was a national movement and a national debate, most memorials were constructed through local municipal or countywide initiatives and were undertaken as a localized effort by invested citizenry.

The American Legion Memorials in Contra Costa County

27. “War Memorial Grounds Given New Landscaping,” *The Cubelet Press*, (May 25, 1939.)

28. “Crockett Churches Prepare Special Easter Services,” *The Cubelet Press*, (April 14, 1938); and communications with Kent Peterson of the Crockett Community Services District.

29. “Vets to vet hall rescue,” *West County Times*, (May 19, 1982).

30. Ibid.

31. Contra Costs County Board of Supervisors Agenda, November 4, 2008; and Board of Supervisors Minutes October 6, 2009.

32. Frank Weitenkamp, “A War Memorial Bibliography,” *The Architectural Record*, (September, 1919): 278-85; Eugene Rodman Shippen, “Community Houses as Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Memorials,” *The American City* (January, 1919): 27-31; and “Liberty Buildings’ as Soldiers’ Memorials,” *The American City* (September, 1918): 173.

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The countywide effort approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1922 to construct memorials in every town within Contra Costa County that had an American Legion Post led to the construction of thirteen memorials during the 1920s and 1930s. Most of the structures were realized as “living memorials,” meaning the buildings were constructed not only as a commemoration to veterans, but they also served functional purposes such as community centers, libraries, or town meeting halls.³³ By 1934, the following towns had memorial halls: Richmond, Martinez, Crockett, Walnut Creek, Pittsburg, Antioch, Concord, Brentwood, Danville, Port Chicago, and El Cerrito.³⁴ Lafayette did not construct its Veterans Memorial Building until 1939. Further, the Soldier’s Memorial Monument, a traditional sculptural memorial, was constructed in 1927 at the intersection of Victory Highway and Pacific and Redwood Highways. It was eventually moved, and now stands on Boyd Road in Pleasant Hill. A portion of the inscription on the sculpture reads, “the Board of Supervisors caused to be erected memorial halls to be used by all veterans.” The statement is followed by a list of sites, “Antioch Crockett Brentwood Danville Pittsburg Martinez Walnut Creek Richmond.”³⁵ In several communities the memorial halls have been demolished including: Richmond, Pittsburg, Walnut Creek and Lafayette.³⁶ In recent decades Contra Costa County no longer was able to appropriate funding to maintain all of its properties, and subsequently has deeded ownership of most of the remaining buildings to their respective communities.

The Crockett Memorial Hall clearly illustrates its association to the memorialization of World War I as undertaken by local communities. The building was constructed during a period when there was a broad national movement of memorialization. This project specifically was executed through both local funding and the significant assistance of Crockett’s primary employer, C. & H. Sugar, and was physically realized through the efforts of a local designer, A. A. Brown; a local contractor and veteran, Frank H. Kress; and numerous veterans from the area who built the structure. Memorial Hall stands as one of the few remaining examples of a significant local World War I memorial within Contra Costa County.

Criterion C

Additionally, Memorial Hall stands apart from other memorials in its unique style as a small, Classical Revival meeting hall. The building was not designed by a licensed architect, but rather by an employee C. & H. Sugar. Nonetheless A. A. Brown clearly understood classical form and learned from his personal studies of contemporary European memorials. Crockett Memorial Hall embodies several of the distinctive characteristics of a Classical Revival style war memorial.

The Classical Revival style emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and continued to be popular through to the 1930s. The style emerged out the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893. It was greatly influenced

33. Andrew M. Shanken, “Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II,” *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 84, no.1 (March., 2002): 130.

34. Roster of American Legion Posts, 1934-1935, Districts No. 1-12, http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~npmelton/amle_1.htm (accessed April 16, 2012.)

35. “Soldier’s Memorial Monument, (sculpture)” Art Inventories Catalog website, <http://www.siris.si.edu/> (accessed April 2012.)

36. The fate of the Port Chicago Memorial Hall is still unknown by the author.

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by the Beaux-Arts tradition and was similarly based on ideals of classical and Renaissance architecture. The style offered formality, scale and a sense of permanence; all characteristics that were embraced by both national and local governments in the early decades of the 20th century.

Features of the subject building that reflect its Classical Revival style are its strong symmetry, classical ornament, and classically proportioned forms. The building’s symmetrical octagonal plan offers a unique footprint that presents itself as monumental, rather than simply functional. Further, the evenly spaced, large, arched openings and vertical tripartite scheme are direct expressions of a revival of the Renaissance. As the budget for the building did not allow for a more expensive cladding such as limestone, the designer instead scored the cement plaster in order to give the appearance of a rusticated stone. The use of the cement plaster also allowed for the variation in the texture of the scoring pattern at the building’s solid rectangular panels. Other exterior stylistic elements typical of the Classical Revival include: the stepped base; the wide molded stringcourse, with an acanthus leaf pattern; the framed inscription panels; and a narrow projecting molded cornice at the parapet.

The interior of the main hall also strongly illustrates the architectural style of the buildings. At the interior the grand, arched wood windows remain visible and are set within a classical motif of wood trim boards that accentuates the formal geometry of the walls. The wood trim boards that surround the room includes a baseboard, chair rail and denticulated crown molding.

Sited at the east end of the community and away from any other civic or commercial structures, the memorial stands as an idealized monument, unlike any other structure within the residential neighborhood. Finally, the community of Crockett maintains a small commercial district with numerous buildings from the early 20th century and a large stock of homes also constructed during the same period; however Memorial Hall is singular in its type and style within the community and Contra Costa County.

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Figures Log

1. Sanborn map of Crockett from 1924.
2. Sanborn map of Crockett from 1929.
3. View of Memorial Hall under construction, looking south, circa 1924.
4. View of Memorial Hall under construction, looking north, circa 1924.
5. View of Memorial Hall under construction, looking southwest, circa 1924.
6. View of Memorial Hall under construction as the scored plaster is being applied circa 1924.
7. View of Memorial Hall just after completion, looking northeast, circa 1924-25. Note there is no landscaping and there are four concrete steps and a base visible at the plinth.
8. View of Memorial Hall after completion with landscaping, circa late 1920s.
9. Postcard of Memorial Hall after the 1938 basement reconstruction and re-landscaping. Note only three concrete steps and a base are visible.
10. View of the Walnut Creek Memorial Hall in 1925.
11. View of the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building in 1939.
12. Recent image of Brentwood Veterans Hall c. 2010.

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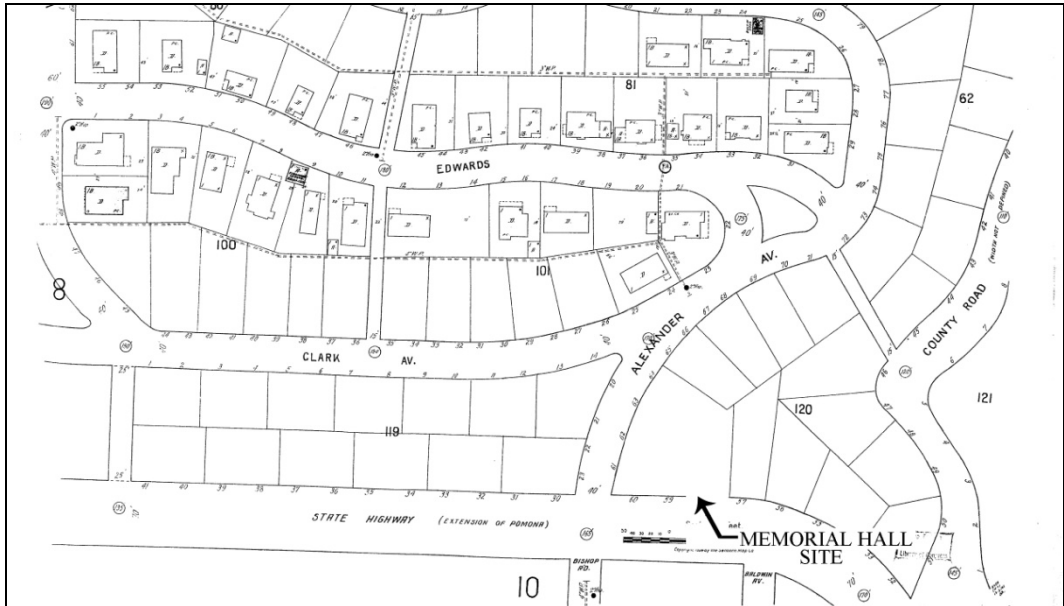


Figure 1: Sanborn Map of Crockett 1924

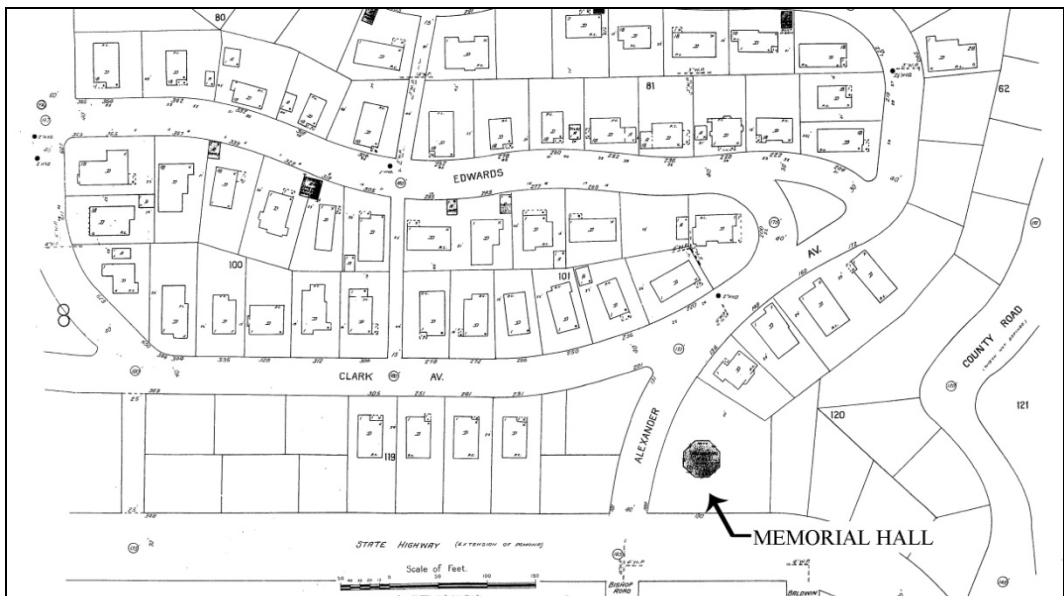


Figure 2: Sanborn Map of Crockett 1929

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Figure 3: Memorial Hall under construction, looking south, circa 1924.
Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.



Figure 4: Memorial Hall under construction, looking north, circa 1924.
Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.

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*Figure 5: Memorial Hall under construction, looking southwest, circa 1924.
Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.*



*Figure 6: Memorial Hall under construction circa 1924. Note the scored plaster is being applied.
Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.*

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*Figure 7: Memorial Hall just completed, looking northeast, circa 1924-25.
Note there is no landscaping and there are four concrete steps and a base visible at the plinth.
Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.*



*Figure 8: Memorial Hall after completion with landscaping, circa late 1920s.
Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.*

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Figure 9: Postcard of Memorial Hall after the 1938 basement reconstruction and re-landscaping. Note only three concrete steps and a base are visible.

Photo from the collection of the Crockett Museum and Historical Society.



*Figure 10: Walnut Creek Memorial Hall 1925.
Image from <http://www.lafayetteveterans.org/history.html>*

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Figure 11: Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building 1939.
Image from <http://www.lafayetteveterans.org/history.html>



Figure 12: Brentwood Veterans Hall, c. 2010.
Image from <http://www.brentwoodveteranshall.org/news>

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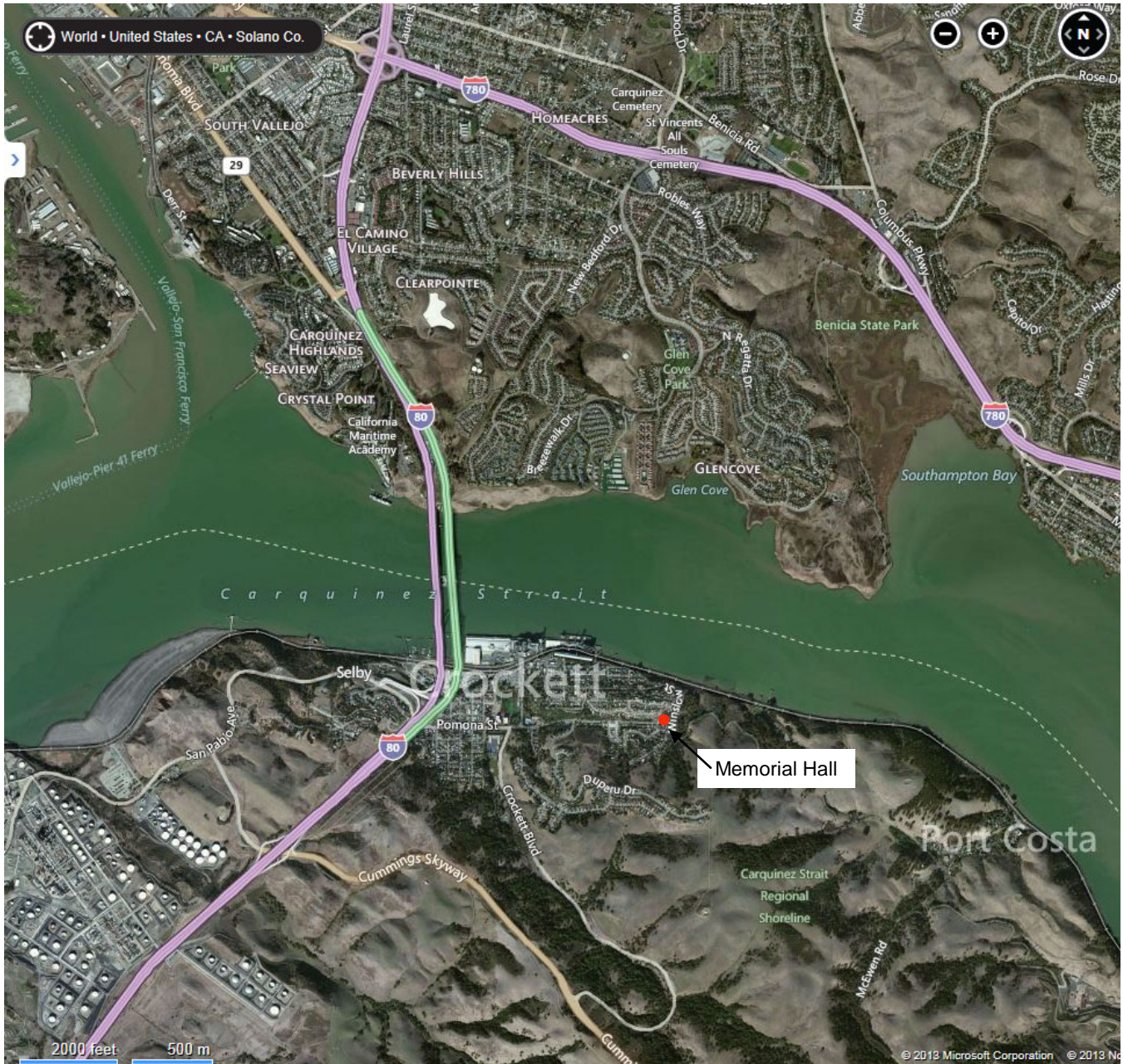
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Memorial Hall, Location Map



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Memorial Hall, Property Map



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3. 38.053014, -122.209399
4. 38.053198, -122.209721

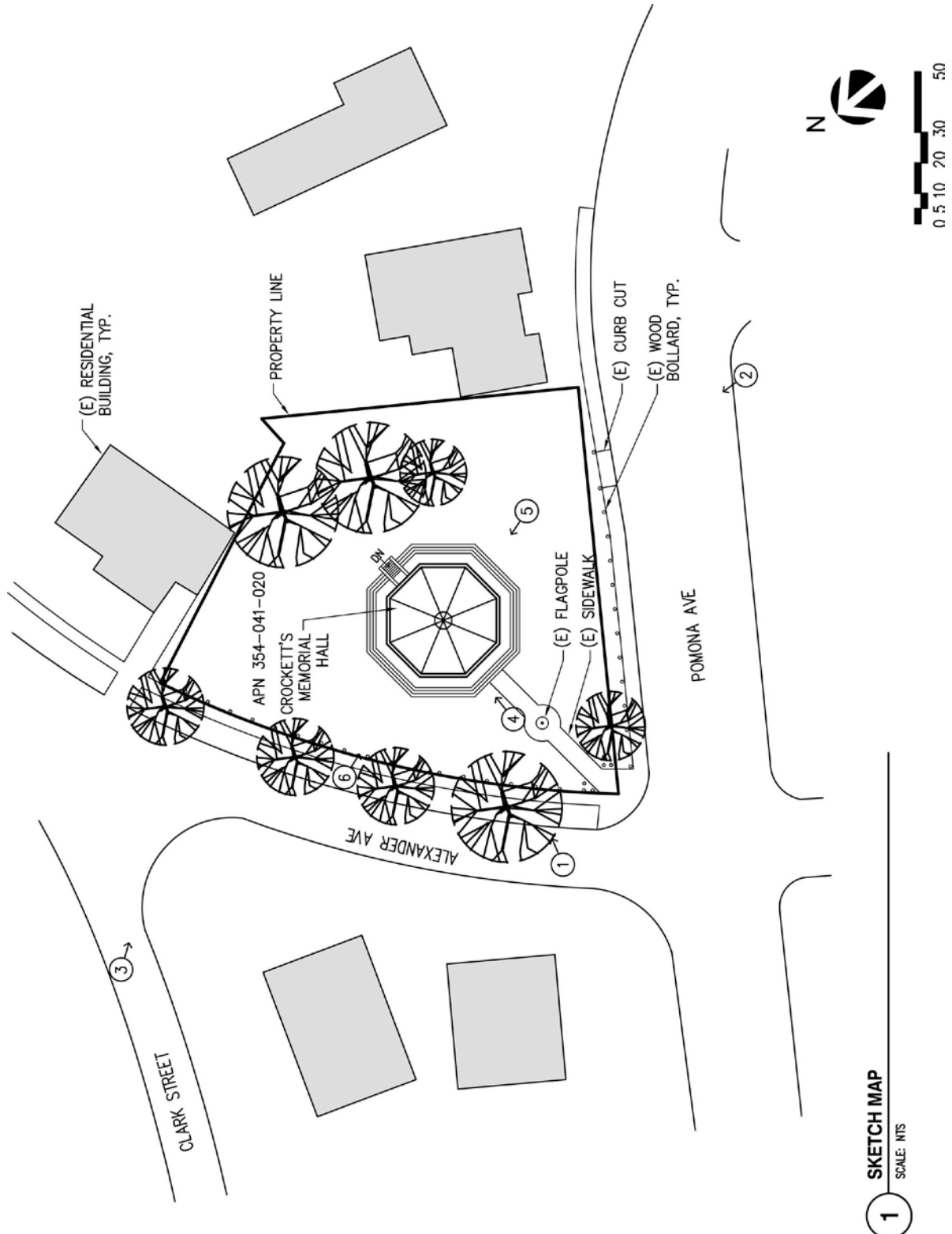
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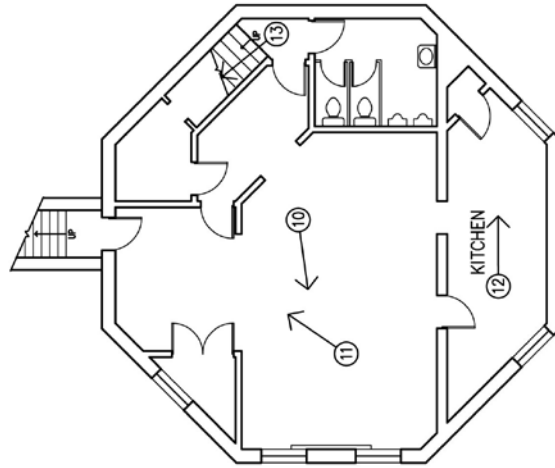
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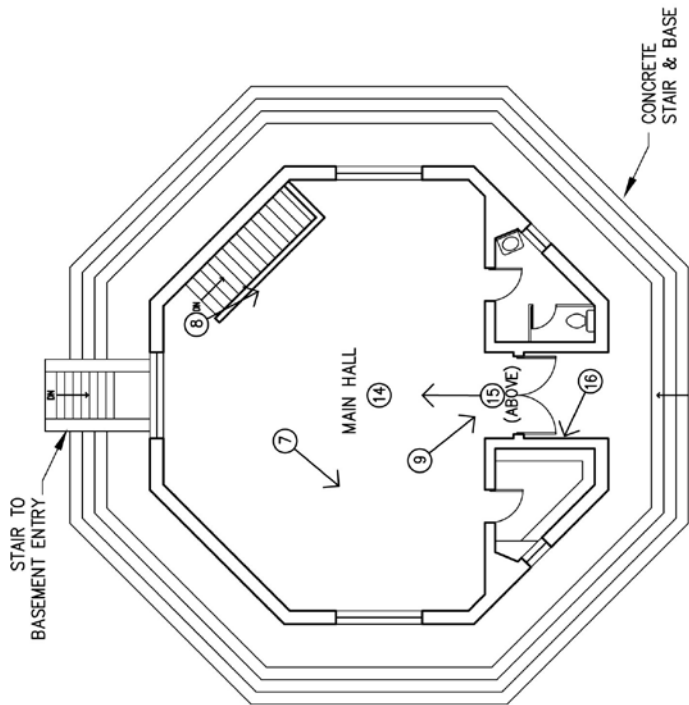
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BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: NTS



1
GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: NTS

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Memorial Hall

City or Vicinity: Crockett

County: Contra Costa County

State: California

Photographer: Kimberly Butt

Date Photographed: February to May 2012

Number of Photos: 16

Description of Photographs and number:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0001.tif
Memorial Hall entry facade, camera facing northeast |
| 2 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0002.tif
Memorial Hall southeast facade viewed from across Pomona Ave., camera facing northwest |
| 3 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0003.tif
Memorial Hall northwest facade and neighboring residence viewed from across Alexander St., camera facing southeast |
| 4 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0004.tif
Memorial Hall entry facade close-up, camera facing northeast |
| 5 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0005.tif
Memorial Hall northwest facade close-up, camera facing southeast |
| 6 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0006.tif
Memorial Hall west facade close-up, camera facing east |
| 7 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0007.tif
Interior view of building's western corner showing the northwestern window and storage room, camera facing west |
| 8 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0008.tif
Interior view of building's southern corner showing the southeastern window and door to the toilet room, camera facing south |
| 9 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0009.tif
Interior detail of the entry doors, camera facing south |
| 10 of 16 | CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0010.tif
Interior view of the basement dining room, camera facing northwest |

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Memorial Hall

Name of Property

Contra Costa County, CA

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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11 of 16	CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0011.tif Interior view of the basement exit vestibule, camera facing northeast
12 of 16	CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0012.tif Interior view of the basement kitchen, camera facing southeast
13 of 16	CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0013.tif Interior view of the stair from the basement, camera facing north
14 of 16	CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0014.tif Interior detail of the main hall ceiling's faux skylight, camera facing up
15 of 16	CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0015.tif Interior view of the attic, camera facing east
16 of 16	CA_Contra Costa County_Crockett Memorial Hall_0016.tif Detail view of bronze plaque at entry, camera facing west