

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

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*Resource Name or #: 771 North Rensgtorff Avenue

P1. Other Identifier: Immigrant House

***P2. Location:** Not for Publication Unrestricted
and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

***a. County:** Santa Clara

***b. USGS 7.5' Quad:** Mountain View

Date: 1995 **T 6S;** **R 2W B.M.** Mount Diablo

c. Address: 771 North Rengstorff Avenue

City: Mountain View

Zip: 94043

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation: APN#: 153-04-028

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Immigrant House was constructed around 1888 according to the Sanborn Maps and was one of the three original outbuildings on the Charles Pearson property located at 902 Villa Street. The structure was the oldest of the three original outbuildings on the property. In 2012, a commercial development was approved by City Council on the 902 Villa Street site which necessitated the removal of all the structures on the site, including the Immigrant House. As part of this development application it was determined that the structure would be temporarily moved to the City Municipal Operations Center (MOC) property at 231 North Whisman Road until a permanent location could be identified, where it is currently located. In 2013, City Council approved a new park site at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue and determined that this would be the new site for the Immigrant House. The structure is proposed to be moved to the park site at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue during park construction in approximately spring/summer 2016.

Located facing Bryant Street, the single-story vernacular building was originally a two-room house measuring 14 feet by 20 feet. Channel rustic siding covers the front, while board and batten siding covers the other three sides. The house has a front-facing gable roof, a front and rear door, and four windows. Square nails were used in the original construction. (See continuation Sheet, Section P3a, page 3)

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP2 - Single Family Property

***P4. Resources Present:** Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

Looking west at the front of the building at its original location near the corner of Villa Street and Bryant Street. Photo date: 2012

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**

Historic Prehistoric Both
1888; Sanborn Maps

***P7. Owner and Address:**

City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

***P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)

Rey Rodriguez and
Stephanie Williams
City of Mountain View
500 Castro Street
Mountain View, CA 94041

***P9. Date Recorded:** 10/2/2015

***P10. Survey Type:** (Describe) Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") Carey & Company- Downtown Mountain View Precise Plan Historic Resources Survey, 2003 and Citywide Historic Properties Survey, 2008; and Mountain View History Center.

***Attachments:** NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

State of California & The Resources Agency Primary #
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION HRI#
BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) _____ *NRHP Status Code _____
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B1. Historic Name: Immigrant House
 B2. Common Name: NA
 B3. Original Use: Residence B4. Present Use: Vacant

*B5. Architectural Style: Vernacular

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
 Constructed around 1888. Alterations include replacement of the front door and enclosure of one window on the left-side elevation. An appendage was added for a bath and toilet room in the 1940's to 1950's in place of the rear porch. The rear window was replaced to accommodate a kitchen in place of the sleeping quarters. By the early 1960's gypsum board was added on top of the wallpaper. Based on wiring in the attic space, knob and tube was installed for electrical around the 1920's. Plumbing was introduced when the kitchen was installed. Evidence in the rear of the building where the appendage was constructed reveals whitewash was applied to the exterior.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: February 2013 Original Location: 166 Bryant Street

*B8. Related Features: None

B9a. Architect: Unknown b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme Architecture and Shelter Area Mountain View
 Period of Significance 1888 - 1960 Property Type Residential Applicable Criteria None
 (Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The original location of the Immigrant house on the 902 Villa Street property is located one block from what has been the main business district in Mountain View since the railroad was built in 1864. Prior to that, land surrounding and including the property was part of the *Rancho Pastoria de las Borregas*, composed of almost 8,800 acres granted to Francisco Estrada by the Mexican government in 1842. After Estrada's death (and the death of his father Jose Estrada), ownership was transferred to his father-in-law Mariano Castro (circa 1843).

Throughout the years, Castro and his heirs sold acreage, but maintained ownership of the property and the area it until the San Jose and San Francisco Railroad was built through the rancho in 1864. After Castro's death in 1856, his heirs struggled to protect the vast rancho from squatters. The family also had to appeal to the Land Commission to verify their claim to the land. They hired Sherman Houghton, a San Jose attorney, to represent them in court. The Castro's claim to *Rancho Pastoria de las Borregas* was eventually confirmed by the Land Commission, but not before cases were held locally in the California Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. (See continuation Sheet, Section B10, page 3)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP2 – Single Family Property

*B12. References:
 Carey & Company- Downtown Mountain View Precise Plan
 Historic Resources Survey, 2003 and Citywide Historic
 Properties Survey, 2008; and Mountain View History Center.

B13. Remarks: None

*B14. Evaluator: Rey Rodriguez and Stephanie Williams

*Date of Evaluation: 10/2/2015

(This space reserved for official comments.)



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(Continued Section P3a from Page 1)

Between 1888 and 1897, a rear porch was added. The front parlor has 3 different layers of wallpaper applied directly to the interior side of the batten siding. The rear room had one layer of wallpaper. It appears a potbelly stove was located in the front parlor based on the floor finish and side vents to the exterior.

(Continued Section B10 from Page 2)

As payment for representing the Castro's in court, Houghton was given land. A portion of the land Houghton received included the property. It was part of what he named "Villa Lands." Circa 1869, Houghton sold a good portion of his land in Mountain View to Doctor Bowling (D.B) Bailey for \$3,500 (he was not a medical doctor; his first name was Doctor). Over the next twenty years Bailey began developing Villa Lands and by 1887 had recorded a subdivision map. Bailey died in 1888, but his widow, Margaret, carried on the real estate transactions that he began.

The property at 902 Villa Street had two houses built on it by 1888 (Sanborn, 1888). Mathurin LeDeit, a French immigrant who worked as a butcher in San Jose and his wife, Georgette, were one of the earliest, if not the first, owners of the property. A few years later in 1892 they sold the house to Charles Pearson and his wife.

Pearson owned and occupied the main house on the property for 44 years until his death in 1946. He was a native of Sweden who had come to San Francisco as a crewman on a merchant ship. He married Hildah (sometimes spelled Hilda) Peterson in 1883 in San Francisco. They settled in Mountain View and he worked as a ranch foreman on the Hollenbeck ranch.

Three outbuildings were located on the site: a garage, a small dwelling (the Immigrant House) and an additional small dwelling/shed. The oldest of the three outbuildings is the small dwelling now referred to as the Immigrant House and was located at the east corner at the rear of the property. According to the Sanborn maps, this building was constructed by 1888. This building was used continuously as a dwelling until approximately the late 1980's when the building was used as a small commercial space and ultimately left vacant. Another building on the site faced northeast with its rear elevation facing Villa Street. It is theorized that the rear portion of this building was the "shed" that first appears on the Sanborn maps in 1897. The shed was constructed sometime between 1891 and 1897. The remainder of the building was used as a small dwelling. The garage does not appear on the 1908 Sanborn map; however, it is present on the 1921 Sanborn map. It is possible that the garage was built around 1911, when the main house was remodeled. Throughout the years various other outbuildings came and went such as a privy, well, stable, and barn.

All the structures on the site were demolished as part of a commercial office development in 2012, except for the Immigrant House building, including the main dwelling on the site which was listed on the Mountain View Register of Historic Resources (MVRHR) until its demolition and was known as the Pearson House. The Immigrant House was moved to a temporary site at 231 North Whisman Road until a permanent location could be identified, where it is currently located. In 2013, City Council approved a new park site at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue and determined that this would be the new site for the Immigrant House.

Santa Clara County led the transformation of the California agricultural industry as it shifted away from wheat production. As farmers subdivided and sold their lands, new proprietors replaced wheat fields with more specialized crops, such as asparagus, beet root, avocados, and nuts, which required less work and yielded higher profits. In Mountain View in 1878, a collective group of Italian immigrants bought fifty acres of the former Robles rancho. Over the next sixteen years, their land became well known as the Italian Vegetable Gardens. Wine production also proved popular in the Mountain View vicinity. The San Jose *Mercury* counted no fewer than eighteen orchards in 1892, one of the largest of which was owned by John Bergin at Brookside Farm, two miles south of Mountain View.

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Fruit orchards came to dominate the Santa Clara Valley. Indeed, so many orchards were established in the valley by 1868, that the market was overwhelmed with apples, peaches, and pears. This, along with J.Q.A. Ballou's success at drying fruit in 1867, the completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, and Dr. James Dawson's canning experiments in 1871 encouraged innovation, diversification, and expansion of fruit orchards and canning in the Santa Clara Valley. During the last two decades of the nineteenth century Santa Clara County experienced an exponential jump in the number of small farms: in 1880 the number was approximately 700, while by 1900 it had grown to over 3,000. The region thus became known as the "Valley of Heart's Delight."

Resident immigrant and migrant laborers were an important element during the agricultural era in Santa Clara County and Mountain View. The building is historically significant for its association with the orchard and canning industry that was the most important economic industry in Mountain View and the greater Santa Clara Valley from the early 1900s through the 1940s, remaining a contributor to the economy into the 1960s. Residents of the cabin likely worked at the Mountain View Fruit Exchange, the California Supply Co (also known as the Pickle Factory) located on the same block in the early 1920s or the Libby fruit cannery in Sunnyvale, as well as in orchards and construction in Mountain View and surrounding cities.

This association qualifies it for inclusion on the Mountain View Register for Historic Resources under Criterion D (Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to the City's prehistory or history) as an example of a residence for early agricultural laborers associated with local industry.

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Figure 1 – Immigrant House in its original location at 166 Bryant Street. Looking west at the front of the building.



Figure 2 – Immigrant House in its original location at 166 Bryant Street. Looking south at the side of the building.

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Figure 3 – Immigrant House in its original location at 166 Bryant Street. Looking north at the side of the building.



Figure 4 – Immigrant House being prepped for relocation to its temporary location at 231 North Whisman Road. Looking north at the side of the building.

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Figure 5 – Immigrant House circa 1990. Deidre Meyer holds her three year old in front of her business “Field Mice & Herb” at 166 Bryant Street which specialized in an array of old-fashioned medicines.