DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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FOR NPS USE ONLY
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wawona Hotel and Pavilion (Thomas Hill Studio) consists of eight buildings, and although precise usage of specific buildings has varied over the years, it still serves during summer months as a resort hotel. The National Park Service owns the land and buildings and Yosemite Park and Curry Company (MCA Subsidiary) operates the hotel as the concessioner.

Wawona Hotel - Main Building - Building 4417 - This rather plain building is roughly "T" shape in plan, with the main block over 150 feet long and about 45 feet wide. A large irregular wing at the rear was added at an undetermined later date. The building is two stories high with an attic, covered by a hipped roof finished with composition shingles. The front of the building faces a gentle downward slope, and overlooks a broad lawn with a sweeping driveway and an ornamental fountain. Together with four other buildings it forms a kind of square containing old evergreen and shade trees. The building features a broad, lean-to porch surrounding both first and second floors, with attractive patterned railings. Four bays of the north end of the lower porch have been enclosed into a dining room. The main floor is 8 or 10 steps above the entrance drive. The basement level is screened with an elaborate latticed wood grille.

Pavilion - (Thomas Hill Studio) - Building 4414 - This single storey wood frame building has a wood porch across the entire front. The central block is square in plan with a hipped shingle roof, and is flanked with a small wing on either side, also hip-roofed. The central roof is topped by a small scale widow's walk with railing with heavy corner posts and shaped wood balusters. The porch roof has very little fall. and is covered with wood shingles. The walls of the building are finished with alternated 10 inch and 6 inch horizontal wood siding. Just beneath the eaves is a decorative frieze. The porch is supported on slender wooden posts which form bays. Each bay is decorated with a delicate design of slightly oriental quality, laths suspended on spools and squared brackets at each post, all open and attractive. The railing is decorative, a top handrail with a picket infill below it. The doors and windows are surrounded with decorated architraves. The skirting of the building is a simple undecorated vertical board infill with lattice vents of wood on each side. The main entrance is a pair of wood doors, 28 lites each. Windows are wood, four over four, double hung. The interior consists of one large open room used for meetings and as a small auditorium. A modified restoration of the building was accomplished in 1964-65, and the building is in excellent

Long White Building - (Clark Cottage) - Building 4420 - This long, low, wood-frame structure, rectangular in form, is a storey and a half high with a gable roof, the exterior finished with white painted horizontal siding. The main floor is surrounded by a generous lean-to wood porch which has its own roof carried on square wood columns. The half-storey contains dormer windows on each side, 5 dormers a side. Each is for a separate room. These small rooms are now closed, the stair to them removed, access today only through the dormers. The roof is now covered with composition roofing rather than the original wood shingles. The building today contains 8 guest rooms with baths, with access to the rooms only from the front porch. Low steps lead down to the lawns on each side of the building. The capitals of the columns around the porch are slipped down the shaft and there are decorative curved open brackets at each corner of the capital springing up to the main lintel. The effect is to enlarge the capital by the decorated openwork bracket system. The result is airey, open, and attractive. porch railing, the only other decorative feature of the building, is of classic design, Each bay is divided at the centre with a vertical, and each resulting panel has two diagonal cross pieces. This too is open and airey, achieving a nice sense of repose and relaxation. Inside, the guest rooms are in good condition.

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Manager's Cottage - (Little White Building) - Building 4421 - Known also as the "White Cottage", this small Victorian house is "T"-shaped in plan with a porch on all sides. The structure is wood frame, the finish is white-painted horizontal wood siding, and the windows are double-hung, four over four, and the roof has three large gables, one over each arm of the "T". The roofing now is composition and not original wood shakes or shingles. The porch roof is a lean-to, hipped at all corners. The porch is wide and probably contains more square feet than the residence itself. The decorations on the porch posts are similar to those on the porch of the "Long White" Building, but of less elaborate design. The capital is slipped down the shaft, and open curved brackets on two sides only spring to the lintel. The porch railing has two simple horizontal rails. Inside, the house is in good condition. There are four rooms, and the one in the center in the back has been divided into a kitchen and a bath. Two other rooms are bedrooms and the fourth room is a sitting room. Ceilings are high. Maintenance has been very good at this building. It was once used for rental to guests, but is now the manager's cottage.

Small Brown Building - (Moore Cottage) - Building 4418 - This is the architectural jewel of the Wawona Hotel, and currently the most neglected and in poorest condition. It is comparatively small, a square house with a second floor contained within a steep hipped roof topped by a cupola. There is a lean-to porch surrounding the house on all sides, with a roof hipped at the corners. The roof of the cupola is a steep-sloped concave hip, a "chinese hat". The eave is supported on paired brackets, four pairs on each side. Each face of the cupola is elaborately glazed with three double hung windows, treated as a triumverate with pilaster mullions between. Each corner of the cupola carries an engaged pilaster, and there is a continuous molded base at window sill level. All roof surfaces are covered with composition roofing, and all exterior walls are of horizontal wood siding. In descending order the next architectural features are the large gable on the west front and side dormers on the north and south. Each side dormer has a pair of one over one double-hung windows. The centre gable has a single round window and diamond-pattern shingles. The major decoration on the dormers is a fretwork infill of wooden lace suspended in the pediment of the gable. The wall surface behind is finished with diamond-pattern shingles. Next in order, the main eaves are supported on paired brackets which match the cupola brackets. The porch is the most elaborately decorated part of the house. The square wood posts are spaced ten feet apart. The head of each bay is filled with wooden lacework made up of diamonds freely suspended and scrolled fillers all worked to give a wonderful open cutwork quality. Such openwork is rarely found today in such complete condition. The porch railing, equally complex, is made up of two horizontal bands of pattern. The top band is narrow and pierced with two sizes of diamond-shaped openings; the lower band is made up of vertical balusters connected by pointed arches. Finally, the space between the porch floor and grade is screened with a plain wood skirt composed of vertical, butt-jointed wooden boards containing large latticed vents in the center of two bays on each side, and others in the front and rear. This simple vertical wood skirt is the perfect foil for the richness of the porch above. Wooden steps lead to the lawns and walks. Railings are repeats of the porch railing. Newell posts occur in front only, and one is in very poor condition. The other is complete enough to use as a pattern for restoration. Inside there is plaster damage

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due to faulty flashing at the cupola. There are five rooms and two baths on the first floor, five rooms on the second floor, and one room in the cupola, all in need of repainting. The whole exterior also is in need of two coats of paint, and the porch floor requires repairs. All the decorative trim should be repaired and renailed.

"Long Brown" Building - (Washburn Cottage) - Building 1419 - This guest building is over 90 feet long and about 40 feet wide. It is wood frame and has horizontal siding which today is painted white, although its name suggests that it and the preceding building were at one time painted brown. There are two full stories with a large attic space above. The first floor is surrounded on three sides by a porch, the decorative features of which nearly duplicate those on the "Small Brown" Building or Moore Cottage. The lacey woodwork at the head of each bay is similar, as is the handrail around the porch and at the steps down to the lawns. The gable roof is presently covered with composition roofing that matches the other composition roofing in the complex, none of which is the original material. The eaves are supported on curved wooden brackets. There is an enclosed staircase at one end of the building, and an open stair to the second floor at the other end. This stair pierces the roof of the porch to reach its second floor level. The building sits on a base of horizontal wood board skirting with lattice grills all painted dark green. Inside there are guest rooms and baths, all of which on the ground floor are accessible from the porch; all on the second floor are accessible from a central corridor reached from the stairs described above.

Sequoia Hotel - (Employees' Dormitory) - Building 1416 - This large building is "L"-shaped in plan. The short leg makes up the front of the building. It is two stories high with attic gables at each end perpendicular to the facade. There is a porch across the front at the mail floor level, with a low-pitch hipped roof. The surprisingly long back leg of the "L" extends along the north side, perhaps twice the length of the front. The inside corner of the "L" has a porch roof carried on posts over a concrete slab. This composes with the trees and some lattice fencing a pleasant, south-facing open courtyard. The building is finished with white-painted wood shakes and is nearly devoid of applied decoration, clean and simple in design. The handrail on the front porch is simple, top and bottom horizontals with closely spaced verticals between. There is a plain diamond-style lattice skirting at the porch which screens the crawl space. In each of the twin gables there is a decorated grille venting the attic. There are simple wood brackets at each end and the peak of the pediment in the gables. The condition of the building is not good. The building is at present an employees' dormitory, but may at one time have housed guests.

Annex - Building 4422 - This is a 200-foot long rectangular wood frame building, two stories high, with partial basement at one end. The walls are faced with hand-split wood shakes, painted white. The roof is a hipped gable covered with wood shingles thought to be original, and in bad condition. There are wide porches surrounding the building at all levels. Due to the building length, the main structure is divided into three parts with open cross passages from side to side containing the stairs. The porch roof is a continuation of the main roof, adding to the sweep of the surface and simplifying the roof line. Porch posts are square wood spaced 12 feet apart. Each has a simple diagonal bracket with a short reverse knee brace returning to the column. The device occurs at each level of the porches and adds what little decoration is found on the building.

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The porch railings are simple horizontals top and bottom with a series of closely spaced verticals between. Everything is painted white except the green lattice skirting at the ground and some ground floor posts at the basement or ground level on the low end of the slope. The lowest level of the building houses a golf shop at the west end. There is one large room just above the golf shop which is a lounge for the Annex. This contains a large rock fireplace, wood paneling, and gilt decoration on the ceiling moulding, the latter somewhat out of character in this building. Other than the rooms just mentioned and some minor service spaces, the rest of the building contains guest bedrooms. All are in good condition and well-maintained.

This complex of buildings has served as a hotel throughout its history and continues to serve in this capacity today. Overall, the complex is basically unchanged, but in detail there have been many changes in the use of rooms and buildings, the installation of modern appliances such as electricity and modern plumbing, removal of barns which once supplied horses and buggies and served freight wagons and stagecoaches. Thus although there are many changes in detail, the essential architectural character of the complex and the basic historic scene has changed very little.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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ATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The complex of buildings which constitute the Wawona Hotel is of national significance in the area of art, regional significance in the areas of commerce, conservation and transportation, and local significance in the area of exploration/settlement.

Wawona Hotel is of regional historical significance to the history of commerce as a major California resort hotel for over a century. It catered to vacationing Los Angelenos and San Franciscans, as well as to citizens from the smaller cities and towns in the state and some vacationers from outside the state and from other countries. more famous visitors and guests included former U.S. presidents Ulysses Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes and President Theodore Roosevelt, as well as perennial presidential contender William Jennings Bryan. This significance is enhanced by the fact that the buildings and their historic scene have retained, with minimal change, much of the Victorian/Edwardian atmosphere of the historic past.

Wawona Hotel is of local historical significance in terms of exploration and settlement because it was established by and was the site of the homestead of one of the Yosemite region's earliest settlers and pioneers, Galen Clark.

Wawona Hotel is of regional historical significance to conservation because its founder, who was the original settler here, Galen Clark, was in 1864 appointed the first official protector of Yosemite as a state park.

Wawona Hotel is of regional historical significance in transportation because of its connection with the development of transportation routes in the region. located at an important crossing of the South Fork of the Merced River, and Galen Clark enhanced this strategic location by building a bridge over the river there. He and his successors, the Washburns, built the most important roads in the region, and the Washburns operated the stagecoach line in conjunction with their hotel. Their stagecoach road has evolved into part of the automobile highway which today is California State Highway 41. The term "station" in the early names for the Wawona Hotel signified its role as a stagecoach station.

A part of the complex of buildings known as the Wawona Hotel, but not actually a part of the hotel itself, the Thomas Hill Studio is of national significance in the area of art because it was here during the summers between 1886 and his death in 1908 that the nationally and perhaps internationally significant American landscape artist Thomas Hill did much of his work. Hill was perhaps more famous in his own era than today, when landscape art is less prominent and more distant from the mainstream of American art than it once was, but Hill's role in the history of American art is indisputable and his paintings still hang in significant art galleries, museums and private collections nationwide. He was a prominent member of the so-called "Hudson River School! considered one of the last important representatives of that school, and is ranked with the more famous Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran in the quality and importance of his work.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRA	PHICAL PEF	ERENCES		
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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

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The above statement of significance is based on the following historical background:

Wawona was first settled by Galen Clark, a Canadian who had moved to the United States and joined the Gold Rush to California, and who after a series of personal tragedies culminating in diagnosed tuberculosis, moved to the site of Wawona in 1856 for his health. Clark called the location "Clark's Crossing" (of the south fork of the Merced). Here he established a 160-acre homestead and built a rough, rambling ranch house at which he provided overnight lodging for tourists visiting the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of California Redwood trees. In 1857, Clark built an open bridge over the river. In 1864, he was placed in charge of the California state park established in the Yosemite Valley.

In 1867, Edwin Moore acquired half-interest in Clark's Station, as the ranch was called, and it thereafter became known as Clark and Moore's. In 1869, the partners mortgaged the ranch to build a road between their station and Mariposa, known as the Chowchilla Mountain Road. It was opened in 1870, at which time the partners began work on a road between their station and the Yosemite Valley. Moore and John Conway supervised construction by Chinese laborers. Clark also built a cabin at the Mariposa Grove, and as his ranch served as a base for tourists visiting that attraction as well as the Yosemite Valley, it was known to some as Big Tree Station.

In December 1874, Clark and Moore sold out to the Washburn brothers (principally Henry, John and Edward), who for a time were in partnership with William Coffman, E. W. Chapman and Charles and John Bruce. It was they who in 1875 completed the road between Wawona and the Yosemite Valley, thus further enhancing the importance and strategic location of their ranch.

In 1878, four years after they purchased the property, Galen Clark's original hotel building burned to ashes, and it was the Washburns and their partners who built the present complex of buildings which replaced it.

After the fire, the first building to be built was the rather plain new Wawona Hotel, erected in 1879. This was followed by a single storey building known both as the "Long White" and the "Clark Cottage," erected at an unknown date but probably in 1884. Next to it, an individual residence, originally rented to guests but used today as the manager's cottage, was erected in 1884. Behind the main hotel, the company built in 1896 the "Small Brown" building, also known as the "Moore Cottage," a two-storey building with cupola which housed additional guests. In 1900, behind the "Long White" and the manager's cottage, the company built the two storey building with additional guest rooms known as the "Long Brown" and as the "Washburn Cottage." In 1917, the company built the large two and three storey "Annex" building. In 1920 they built the "Sequoia Hotel" which probably housed guests at one time but which today serves as an employees' dormitory.

In connection with their toll roads the Washburns and their partners organized the Yosemite Stage and Turnpike Company, and operated the summer stagecoaches which served the Wawona hotel complex and connected it both with Mariposa and with the Yosemite Valley. In time these were replaced by motor coaches, and dirt roads by paved highways.

Form No. 10-300a (Rev 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

Northwest of the main hotel building and across from and facing the Annex is the "Pavilion" which served as a studio for the famous landscape artist, Thomas Hill. in Birmingham, England, on September 11, 1829, Hill was brought to Massachusetts at age 11 by his parents. He began his career by painting coaches, and this led him into art. He studied at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, and moved to San Francisco for his health in 1861. He was soon making frequent sketching trips to Yosemite. By 1868 his work had gained sufficient favor and public recognition that he went to Paris for six months' study under Paul Meyerheim, the portrait artist and member of the Salon. But when Meyerheim saw Hill's painting of a forest scene at Fontainebleau, he advised Hill to concentrate on landscapes. Hill eventually returned to the United States, and for awhile lived in Boston. But in 1871, poor health again forced him to move to California, and again he frequented the Sierra Nevada and especially the Yosemite region. In 1885 one of Hills' daughters, Estella, married John Washburn of the Wawona Hotel Company. In 1886, he built his summer studio adjacent to the hotel. It enhanced the reputation of the resort to have a nationally famous artist in residence during the summer, and as many of the resort's guests were wealthy and patrons of the arts, the location enhanced the sale of many of Hills' paintings. Hill continued active in the art work until his death on June 29, 1908.

Note: Available data includes many contradictions in facts and dates, especially dates of construction of the various buildings, and a major research study of Wawona history is needed to resolve these conflicts and contradictions.

Level of Significance: 1st (national), 2nd (regional), and 3rd (local) Order as indicated above with respect to particular buildings and areas of significance.

Recommended treatment: Preservation

Cost of treatment:

\$158,806.

(Estimate by Regional Historical Architect Robert Cox as of March 1975 based on Denver Service Center

Acres - 163 Unit cost estimates.)

