Form No. 10-306 (Rev. 10-74) PH0352012

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 17 1976
DATE ENTERED OCT 8 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
** Olema Lime Kilns
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
4 mi SE of Olema on CA 1
(Not applicable) __NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN
X VICINITY OF Olema
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fifth

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
California	06	Marin	041

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	__MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X PARK
X STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	__EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	__YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)*
National Park Service - Western Regional Office
STREET & NUMBER
450 Golden Gate Avenue - Box 36063
CITY, TOWN
San Francisco —— VICINITY OF
STATE
California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Marin County Recorder's Office, Marin County Civic Center
STREET & NUMBER
No street address
CITY, TOWN
San Rafael
STATE
California (94903)

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
California State Historical Landmark (No. 222)
DATE
1970 __FEDERAL X STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
California State Department of Parks and Recreation
CITY, TOWN
Sacramento
STATE
California

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
_EXCELLENT	_DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
_GOOD	X RUINS	_ALTERED	_MOVED DATE_____
_FAIR	_UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Olema Lime Kilns consist of three long-abandoned barrel-shaped stone vaults lying in ruins against a hillside on the east side of Olema Creek about five miles south of Olema and about 100 yards west of California State Highway No. 1 in Point Reyes National Recreation Area.

The kiln on the south was built of gray limestone which on the interior of the barrel was cut and fitted to enable application of a smooth coating of fireclay and, running halfway around the back, firebrick. Use of firebrick as a lining at the back suggests treatment for higher temperature there. The outer casing, rectangular in shape, was also built of cut limestone. Between the inner and out casings is a filling composed of irregular chunks of limestone set in mud or clay mortar. When these kilns were abandoned, Kiln No. 1 was loaded with limestone but not fired, rendering measurement of its interior impossible.

Kiln No. 2 was built adjacent to Kiln No. 1 and immediately to the north, similarly facing west towards the creek. It consisted of limestone laid in lime mortar probably produced by Kiln No. 1. It was larger, being oval in vertical section, nine feet in diameter side to side and nine feet ten inches in diameter front to rear. It was lined entirely with fireclay applied like plaster. This kiln sat farther forward than the other two, its front face extending seven feet beyond Kiln 1 and four feet beyond the front face of Kiln 3. A large Douglas fir, which according to tree ring dating sprouted after 1870, grew from the rubble between Kiln 1 and Kiln 2, severely damaging both kilns. Kiln No. 2 still has a well-preserved front arched entrance, measuring six feet from side to side at the base and two feet six inches wide at the entrance to the barrel, tapering inward.

Kiln No. 3, to the north of Kiln No. 2, was about the same size, being an oval barrel nine feet six inches in diameter from side to side and nine feet nine inches in diameter front to rear. A large Douglas fir tree grew up from the pit of this kiln. At an undetermined date before 1940 the entire arched entrance to this kiln was removed and rebuilt in Bolinas as part of a barbecue pit. Some individual moss-covered stones were removed from that and perhaps the other kilns for such uses as rock gardens, fireplaces, walls, and the like. Such vandalism has contributed to the decay of the kilns, along with the growth of trees and bushes on them.

North of Kiln No. 3 was a low stone structure believed to have formed a bin for storage of burned lime produced by the kilns. It was apparently only two feet high.

Combined, the three kilns and storage platform formed a single stone structure erected in the creek bottom backed up along the hillside and stretching about seventy feet north to south. At its greatest depth (Kiln 2), the structure was about 18 feet 6 inches in width. It was about sixteen feet high.

About fifty yards down the creek and on the opposite (west) side is the site of a house which may or may not have been associated with the kilns. Built reportedly of Douglas spruce [sic], it was destroyed by fire at an undetermined date before 1940.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	X INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1850-1852 BUILDER/ARCHITECT James A. Shorb, William Mercer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Olema Lime Kilns are of regional historical significance in the category of industry representing a Gold Rush-triggered pioneer American effort to establish a lime-producing industry in Marin County, California, only two years after cession of Alta California to the United States by Mexico. The short-lived and unsuccessful character of this enterprise in no way diminishes its significance.

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

On July 13, 1850, Rafael Garcia, holder of a large Mexican land grant, leased to James A. Shorb and William F. Mercer "all that tract or parcel of land known as the Ranch of the party of the first part and called or named 'Ponta lastera de Malo,' for all limeing & timber & wooded purposes." The lessees, respectively a county judge and a clerk in the judge's court, were to have the "privelege of building lime kilns, quaring /quarrying/ & using lime stone, wood for burning the kils and the entire timber privilege of the Rancho." In exchange, Shorb and Mercer were to give a third of all the lime burned to Garcia. Furthermore, they were to pay four dollars each for trees cut for timber or fuel, and they were prohibited from cutting any trees over three feet in diameter at the base--that is, the trees most useful for lumber. Garcia, in turn, was to furnish oxen, carts and Indian labor, to haul all the lime to the embarcadero (point of embarkation) at Bolinas lagoon, and to provide assistance in loading the lime onto ships there.

Undoubtedly the developers of this short-lived lime producing industry hoped to find a large and ready market in a San Francisco made a boom-town by the Gold Rush which had commenced only a year before and which was destined to continue for several years. Employing no doubt Indian labor, Shorb and Mercer built three lime kilns along Olema Creek. The first of these barrel-shaped kilns was built of locally quarried stone laid up in clay mortar. Very likely, lime burned in this kiln was used in constructing the other two immediately adjacent to the north, and a platform on the north end for storage of lime. The fine grained dark-gray limestone was quarried from a Franciscan formation on the hillside above the kilns, using a stripping technique which took advantage of natural fractures, rather than explosives. Archeological investigation suggests that no single kiln was fired more than four times, and that there were no more than a total of twelve firings for all of the kilns. The quantity of limestone excavated from the quarry site supports this conclusion of very limited use. A contract dated March 15, 1852 indicates that the kilns were then in use, being tended by a "Spaniard" (meaning, no doubt, a Californian of Mexican background). A deed dated September 25, 1856, suggests that the kilns were idle by that date if not abandoned. Maps dated 1852 show a house located about fifty yards downstream and on the opposite (west) side of the creek; it may have been associated with operation of the kilns, but today only traces of the structure remain, as it reportedly burned at an undetermined date long ago.

Presumably there were better and cheaper sources of lime for use in San Francisco with which the Olema industry could not compete, resulting in its failure between 1853 and 1856, no doubt with financial loss to its builders.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bliss Brown, "The Old Limekilns of Marin County," California Historical Society Quarterly, Volume 19, Number 4 (December, 1940), pp. 316-322.

Adan E. Treganza, "Old Lime Kilns Near Olema," in Geologic Guidebook of the San Francisco Bay Counties, California State Division of Mines Bulletin No. 154, December 1951.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .92

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	10	522300	4210436 0
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The kilns are bounded on the west by the east bank of Olema Creek; on the east by the top of the limestone ridge; and on the north and south by lines drawn east and west between the other two boundaries, each 200 feet from the center of Kiln No. 2.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

(This form is a revision of a form initially prepared by Historian F. Ross Holland, Jr., in 1973)

NAME / TITLE
Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian

ORGANIZATION
National Park Service, Western Regional Office

DATE
October 17, 1975

STREET & NUMBER
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063

TELEPHONE
(415) 556-4165

CITY OR TOWN
San Francisco

STATE
California

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

NOV 17 1975

YES____ NO____ NONE____

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ____National ✓State ____Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Deputy Assistant Secretary

DATE MAR 8 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

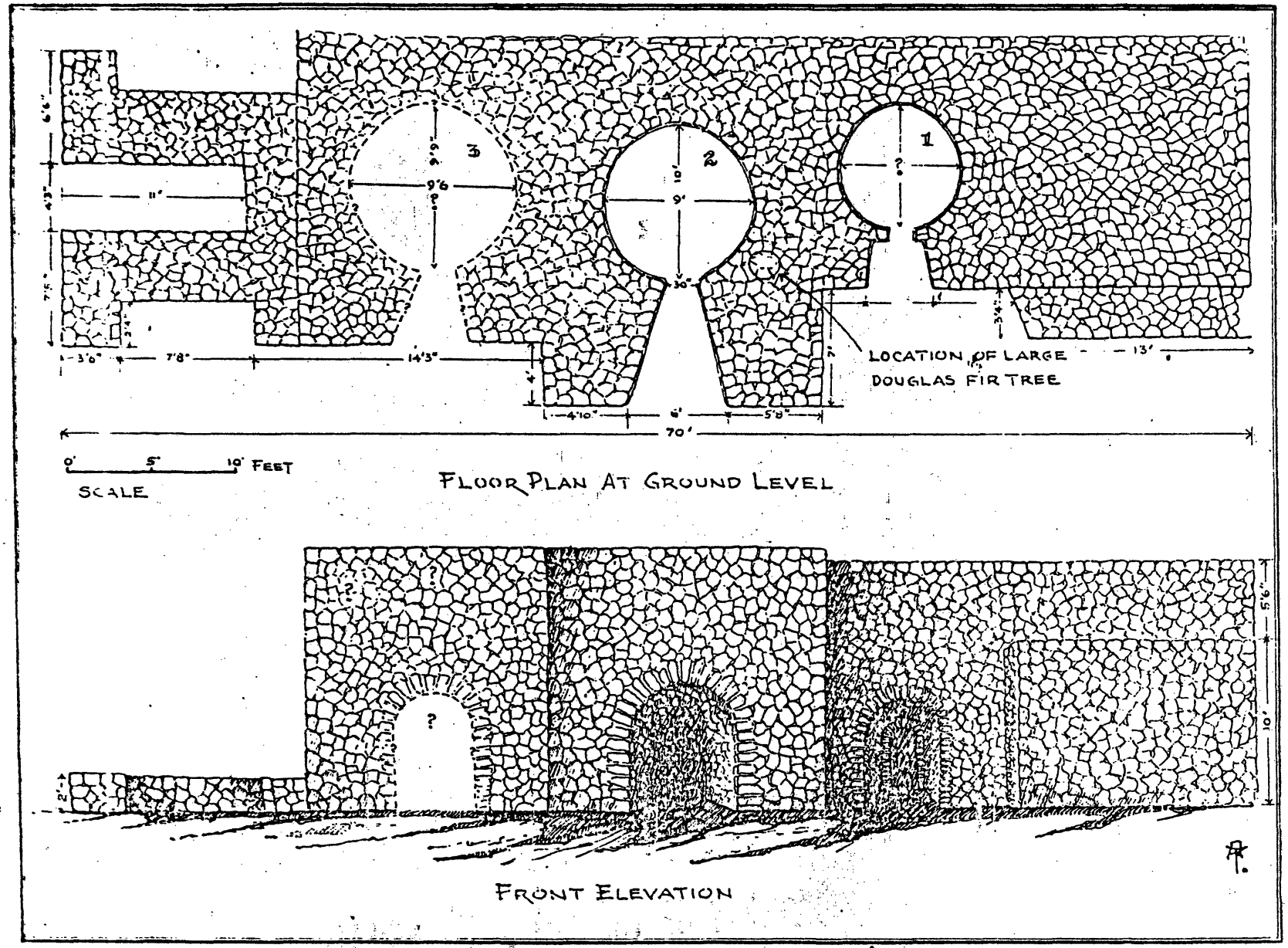
Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 10/8/76

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10/7/76



Site plan, Olema Lime Kilns, from: Adan E. Treganza, "Old Lime Kilns Near Olema," in Geologic Guidebook of the San Francisco Bay Counties, California State Division of Mines, Bulletin No. 154. December 1951. Page 66.

PHOTO NO. 1

from NW

OLEMA LIME KILN NO. 2

POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE photo

BY GORDON CHAPELL

SPRING 1975

Form No. 10-301a
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1 NAME

HISTORIC Olema Lime Kilns

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN x VICINITY OF Olema

COUNTY Marin

STATE California

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT National Park Service photo by Gordon Chappell

DATE OF PHOTO Spring 1975

NEGATIVE FILED AT National Park Service, Western Regional Office, 450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063, San Francisco, California, 94102

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO 3

Olema Lime Kiln No. 2 from southwest, showing destruction of corner of kiln by Douglas fir tree which during the 1870s sprouted on top of the kiln, between Kilns 1 and 2

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PHOTO NO 2

Olema Lime Kiln No. 2 from west, showing top of partially buried arched entrance to firebox