DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY — NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries — complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Niagara Camp

2. LOCATION

STATE:
California
COUNTY:
Tuolumne

NE of Tuolumne in Stanislaus National Forest

The location of the site is approximately 100 feet south off of Forest Road.

CITY OR TOWN:
Tuolumne vicinity

STATE:
California

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY * (Check One)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

OWNERSHIP
- Public
- Private
- Both

Public Acquisition:
- In Process
- Being Considered

STATUS *
- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress
- Restricted
- Unrestricted

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
- Yes:
- No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Park
- Religious
- Museum
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Private Residence
- Comments
- Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Fibreboard Corporation

STREET AND NUMBER:
55 Francisco

CITY OR TOWN:
San Francisco

STATE:
California

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Tuolumne County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:
41 West Yaney Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Sonora

STATE:
California

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
National Register of Historic Places Inventory Site Form, United States

DATE OF SURVEY:
1973 (form undated)

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Federal Forest Service, Regional Office

STREET AND NUMBER:
630 Sansome Street

CITY OR TOWN:
San Francisco

STATE:
California

* Refer to continuation sheet.
At an elevation of 5,167 feet, Niagara Camp is surrounded by forest common
to that of the Transition Zone: Yellow pine, sugar pine, Douglas-fir,
white fir, and other miscellaneous vegetation. Presently, an area of ap­
proximately four acres includes the remains of a logging camp, the old
railroad bed, a trestle and a steam donkey graveyard.

Typical to most logging camps, Niagara Camp consists of two camps: A
family camp and the main camp (single men's camp.) Presently, the main
camp is composed of one cabin that is still used temporarily as a shelter,
two broken down cabins, and three piles of rotting lumber where cabins once
stood. There is also a railroad car in good shape that has functioned as
the bunk house for the steel gang and later used for food storage. The
main camp forms a semicircle around a clearing where there are two boilers
used to heat the water for the showers. Along the railbed, not too far
from the main camp, there are a series of cabins which comprise the family
camp. Three of the cabins are still functional as a shelter while two
others have become dilapidated with time. There are many parts of wood-
burning stoves that have been cast out onto the hillside in this area. To
increase the visual inadequacies of the camp, there are five abandoned
automobiles and large piles of refuse scattered indiscriminately around
the area.

The railroad bed which passes the camp on two sides still has cedar ties
but the rails have been salvaged. Approximately 200 yards from the camp,
following the railroad bed to the southeast, there is a steep creek canyon
that could not be crossed by means of a land fill. Fred Ellis is the
designer and engineer of the trestle built here in 1923-24. It spans the
creek 318 feet and has a height of 54 feet. The trestle, built of red fir,
shows natural weathering. The original fifty-gallon water barrels and rails
have been removed. Some of the lumber at the accessible end of the trestle
is being cut and removed by vandals. It is not unrealistic to think the
†restle may, over a period of time, be taken apart board by board.

Less than a quarter mile from the trestle following the railroad bed there
is a donkey graveyard. These four old steam loading machines stand to­
gether proving their obsolescence to the relatively simple and economical
cat logging. There are three large Willamette brand donkeys and a smaller
donkey whose brand is unknown. The wooden skids are rotting and the metal
has rusted but each of the donkeys is otherwise in good shape. Vandalism
is apparent; many pieces small enough to be carried away are gone.

The refuse is unsightly and the remains of the logging camps, both family
and main camp, are in a state of deterioration; nevertheless, they do
show a skeletal picture of an old time logging camp. The railroad bed,
though lacking rails, does have ties which induce the imagination to
visualize the old railroad as it must have appeared. The trestle built by
the West Side Railroad engineer still remains in all its grandeur. The
obsolete steam loading machines are located close by the trestle and camp.
Although the donkeys and trestle have held up well against time and the
elements, vandals may soon be their ruin. Four acres encompass these
classic examples of the early logging techniques that display the way the
workers lived, the machinery they used, and their method of transportation.
### 8. SIGNIFICANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Pre-Columbian</td>
<td>[ ] 16th Century</td>
<td>[ ] 18th Century</td>
<td>[X] 20th Century</td>
<td>[ ] 17th Century</td>
<td>[ ] 19th Century</td>
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| SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) | 1898 - 1958 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Aboriginal Prenistor</td>
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<td>[ ] Aboriginal Commerce</td>
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<td>[ ] Aboriginal Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Aboriginal Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[X] Prehistoric Trestle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Donkeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Railway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[X] Prehistoric (railway)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Transportation</td>
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<td>[ ] Prehistoric Urban Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Other (Specify.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>[X] Prehistoric Early logging techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Lives of loggers</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Economy based on logging</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Religion/Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Sculpture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Social/Humanitarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Prehistoric Transportation</td>
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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1900, the towns of Carters and Summerville (soon to merge and be renamed Tuolumne City) became the center of bustling activity of the West Side Flume and Lumber Company conceived by Henry Crocker and Thomas Bullock. To bring the lumber out of their 60,000 acres was a substantial reason to build the railroad although the long range plans were to have a passenger line to Hetch Hetchy and Yosemite Valleys and possibly an intercontinental railroad over the Sierra Nevadas. Thus, the Hetch Hetchy and Yosemite Valleys Railway Company of California was incorporated as a common carrier line in August 1900, which gave the line power to condemn rights-of-way. In 1903, the narrow gauge railroad was bought for four million dollars by a group of lumbermen whose ambitions ended all possibilities of a passenger line. The new owners deleted the "Flume" so the name of the company became West Side Lumber Company. William Newell, under the management of Prince, Johnson and Thorcen laid track while the railroad flourished. Fred Ellis, Newell's replacement accomplished far more; he planned 250 miles of track that saw rails.

In 1923, the area around Niagara Creek was first used as a tent camp for 10 to 12 men who laid rail and built the trestle under the direction of Fred Ellis. In 1929, for the first time the Niagara area was logged of cedar, sugar pine and ponderosa pine from Camp 37. These were the days of steam equipment and bountiful rail which followed the loggers into the woods wherever trees were being felled. Steam donkeys with cable 1,200 to 2,000 feet long dragged the individual logs (leaving deep gullies on the ground surface) to a platform next to the railroad. When the cable from one donkey could not reach some desirable timber, another donkey was placed at the end of the first donkey's cable, so that another 1,200 to 2,000 feet could be covered. Yet another donkey loaded the logs onto the steam-pulled railcars. Later the spar tree was the axis for the cable used for loading.

When the depression hit, all logging operations closed down from 1930-1935. When West Side reopened, they started off with new equipment that was much easier and more economical than the steam equipment. Cats were used to bring logs to the landing; A-frame loaders loaded the logs onto the trucks which took the timber to the diesel-converted train where there was another A-frame to load the logs onto the railcar. By 1953, the white fir market picked up so that the Niagara Creek area was worth relogging. Fifteen to eighteen million board feet of lumber per year was brought out for five years. George Couture, camp boss until 1957, built the Niagara Camp. The number of men needed to log had decreased to 100 and was to *

* Refer to continuation sheet.
Couture, George. Retired Niagara Camp Boss. Interview, Tuolumne City, May 6, 1974


**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
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<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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<td>SW</td>
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**APPRAISABLE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** 4 Acres

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:** Earlene Daniels Forestry-Aid (Historian)

**ORGANIZATION:** Stanislaus National Forest

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 175 South Fairview Lane

**CITY OR TOWN:** Sonora

**DATE:** June 3, 1974

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [ ] Local [x]

**Name:**

**Title:** State Historic Preservation Officer

**Date:** MAR 17 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**Date:** 6/5/75

**ATTEST:**

**Keeper of The National Register**

**Date:** JUN 4 1975
2. Street and Number:
   Service Road No. 1N04 (Cottonwood Road) one-half mile west of the junction of Forest Service Roads No. 3N01 and No. 2N084 approximately 35 miles from Tuolumne City; Township 2N Range 17E Sections 21 and 28.

3. Category:
The trestle and railway would be classified as a structure, the steam-donkeys historical objects, and the camp, buildings.

3. Status:
   Loggers still occasionally use the camp along with others wanting a temporary shelter.

3. Present Use:
The trestle, railway and the steam donkeys are not being used while the camp is used intermittently.

6. Representation in Existing Surveys:
   Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Region 5, Numbers: 05-16-54-08 (trestle) and 05-16-54-09 (donkey graveyard).

7. Condition:
   Each component of the nomination is treated separately for accuracy. Cumulatively the condition can be considered fair.

8. Statement of Significance:
decrease even more as technology progressed.

Logging has been the major source of economic stability for Tuolumne County since the early 1900's; therefore, the local significance is great. Also to be taken into consideration should be the fact that the trestle was built during a time when tools were relatively primitive. The ties and rail were laid by men. The amount of man power the steam donkeys demanded and all other aspects of 1920 logging is not comparable to present day logging. While the logging of the 1950's had advanced considerably from those of the 1920's, it was also another era of logging--a transition stage from the 1920's to the 1970's.

The phases of history pertaining to the logging industry from 1923 to 1958 remain to be seen at Niagara Camp. There is an example of each phase of history: The railbed, trestle and steam donkeys were built and utilized in the 1920's, and the camp represents the 1950's. These 35 years depict a time when rapid technological advances affected peoples lives and the logging industry itself.
Key To Historic Buildings And Sites

1. St. Anne's Catholic Church
2. Catholic Cemetery
3. Methodist Church
4. Methodist Parsonage
5. Rock Bridge Plantation House
6. Wells Fargo Building and Warehouse
7. D. C. Hills Bank
8. Baker and Hatchett Building
9. McClenney and McElroy Building
10. Hillabama Building
11. Time Building—Train House
12. South Broadway Building
13. North Broadway Building
14. Franklin and Wells Building
15. Schwertner Building—“New York Drugstore”
16. Wiltse and Son Building
17. Loomis and Walker Building
18. Loomis and Walker Building Addition
19. Fontaine Engine Co. No. 1
20. Columbia Drugstore Building
21. McClenney Building (second Co. No. 1 Hotel)
22. Haywood’s Saloon
23. Morgan’s Hotel
24. St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church
25. Knap (Napier) Building
26. Greer Building and Warehouse
27. Shaker Building
28. Wither Building
29. Soder and Marshall Building
30. Columbia Fire House
31. Jail
32. Morgan’s Saloon
33. Register Office
34. Judge’s Saloon
35. Ann Arbor Hotel
36. Gage Building
37. Old Barn
38. Public School
39. Public Depot

COLUMBIA HISTORIC STATE PARK

The State Park System holds in trust for generations yet unborn a small but very valuable portion of this State’s rich heritage. Help keep it thus.

For specific information write Supervisor, Columbia Historic State Park, P. O. Box 265, Columbia, California

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