

11/3/76 Scotts Valley Scott House In National Register?

The 1852 Hiram D. Scott house, the first home in Scotts Valley, will be considered by the State Historical Resources Commission on Thursday as one of 12 sites nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

The register officially recognizes the historical, archeological or cultural significance of a building and designates it for preservation, making it eligible for funding under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

This funding would be welcomed by the Scotts Valley Historical Society which has been working diligently on restoring the home now located off MacDorsa Drive. The society plans to use the home for a museum, meeting place and hall of records.

Many stories have been written about Hiram Scott, the original settler of what's now Scotts Valley, but the house he built has its own story to tell.

Its story is told in a paper written by Janice Bowman as part of her requirement for a masters degree in home economics from San Jose State University.

The tale reflects the Greek Revival architecture made popular when this country was beginning. Bowman suggests that this type of architecture reflects the founding fathers' affinity for the ancient Greeks' style of government and the Americans' desire to break away from anything associated with Europe.

The Scott House "was originally a very symmetrical, rectangular, New England style, Greek Revival house. The detailing of the columns of the front portico provoke particular interest. The corner pilasters and open pedimented gable exemplify typically Greek Revival details," Bowman writes.

For those unfamiliar with architectural jargon, a portico is an open porch supported by columns. A pilaster is a column built against a wall that acts as a support and a pedimented gable is the decorative piece above the columns.

Redwood milling began in the area about 1851 and the Scott House may be one of the first homes in the county made of local redwood, Bowman points out. Before the local lumber industry started, building materials were very expensive in California with a simple one story clapboard home costing around \$15,000, Bowman states.

Many early settlers had their building supplies shipped from New England, another reason why the Greek Revival architecture was sustained in the frontier West.

But Scott opted for the native redwood and, as Bowman stated, "the floor of the Scott House offers a lucid example of the random plank redwood floors so often used in California homes." The original house was quite simple, consisting of a parlor, parlor bedroom, sitting room and bedroom on the first floor with a small place for a bathtub near the stairway. The unfinished attic probably



The Scott House in Scotts Valley may be nominated for the National Register of Historic Place by the state on Thursday..

was used for a dormitory.

"At any rate, he (Scott) constructed a home that had the comfort and conveniences of the wooden structures of his New England homeland," Bowman writes. Scott came to California from Maine, jumping ship as a sailor when his

vessel sailed into Monterey Bay. He made his fortune running a ferry on the San Joaquin River and building the Stockton Hotel. He spent most of his life unsuccessfully searching for gold and silver, coming back and forth to Scotts Valley.

His house once sat near

Scotts Valley Drive, but was moved up the hill about 100 yards in 1936 when the road was built. Since Scott died, the house has changed hands about 20 times and has had additions, but it is still an example of an American Greek Revival country home of the 1850's.

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