UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY
CONCUR
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED 3/8/77

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Le Conte Memorial Lodge

AND/OR COMMON
Le Conte Memorial Lodge

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Yosemite Valley
__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Yosemite National Park
__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fifteenth

STATE
California

CODE

COUNTY
Mariposa

CODE
043

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__ DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	__ AGRICULTURE	__ MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	__ PRIVATE	__ UNOCCUPIED	__ COMMERCIAL	__ PARK
__ STRUCTURE	__ BOTH	__ WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	__ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
__ SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	__ ENTERTAINMENT	__ RELIGIOUS
__ OBJECT	__ IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__ GOVERNMENT	__ SCIENTIFIC
	__ BEING CONSIDERED	__ YES: UNRESTRICTED	__ INDUSTRIAL	__ TRANSPORTATION
		__ NO	__ MILITARY	__ OTHER

4 AGENCY National Park Service

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (If applicable)
Western Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER
450 Golden Gate Ave., Box 36063

CITY, TOWN
San Francisco
__ VICINITY OF

STATE
CA

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
National Park Service

STREET & NUMBER
Box 577

CITY, TOWN
Yosemite National Park

STATE
CA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE
__ FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

SCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	X MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		(roof structure moved from old Lodge to new in 1919)

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Le Conte Memorial Lodge was designed by John White and built by the Sierra Club in 1903 at the base of Glacier Point. By 1919 the commercial activities of Camp Curry were crowding the Lodge, and it was rebuilt on another site, not far away, in a more natural setting. The roof structure from the original building was moved and reused in the 1919 Lodge. The stone walls of the present building date from 1919.

The building in plan is a rectangle, 36' x 25', with the corners trimmed, and two small wings, each 8' x 12', extend off the N.E. and N.W. corners, 45° from the central block. These wings, the N. end of the building, and two lower stone walls define a hexagonal stone terrace or walled entrance courtyard with stone steps. The walls of the lodge are solid masonry, of rough cut granite laid in a random ashlar bond. The lodge has a very steep wood shingled roof; the central block is hipped, the wings are gabled. The entrance on the N end is in the form of a Tudor arch, flanked by narrow casement windows with 9 lights. The Tudor arched Dutch door is a decorative form of the board and batten type, with large hand wrought studs or nails on the exterior. The E. and W. walls of the lodge are 3 bays wide with casement windows, 9 lights, and 3 light transoms. The sash and window frames are apparently from the 1903 building.

The interior is one large meeting room with two small rooms in the wings which are used for storage and office space. The door openings to the two smaller rooms are also Tudor arched, and the doors are similar to the entry door. The S. end of the lodge is 1½' lower to define the library and reading space, and features a large interior granite chimney and fireplace in the form of a segmented arch. A pair of handcrafted andirons decorate the hearth. The roof structure is the dominating element of the interior, and is made of four hammer beam trusses supported on granite piers.

One large table and a set of four leather upholstered chairs are possible original 1919 furnishings.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	X CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	X EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
X 1800-1899	___COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1898, 1903, 1919

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John White, Architect (1903)
Gutleben Bros., Contractors (1919)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Le Conte Memorial Lodge is of regional significance in conservation as representative of the historic involvement of the Sierra Club in Yosemite National Park. The Lodge also possesses local significance in the areas of education - as the first center of naturalist activities for Park visitors, and in architecture - for its design, the use of fine materials, and the quality of craftsmanship employed in its construction.

Le Conte Memorial Lodge is an exception to the criteria because it was both moved and reconstructed; however, it qualifies for nomination because of its architectural significance. The design of the building, dating 1903, is completely unique. It exhibits characteristics of both the Tudor Revival and the Rustic styles.

The Sierra Club was originally conceived as an "Alpine" Club for faculty and members of the University of California, who were interested in "exploring the heart of the Sierra, and in establishing a mountaineering library/trail center in Yosemite Valley." With the formation of Yosemite National Park in 1890, the idea expanded into an organization that would serve as a guardian of the public, versus private or commercial, interests in the park.

The Sierra Club was formally chartered in 1892, and at that time the directors discussed locating the headquarters in Yosemite Valley. A city location was deemed more appropriate in furthering the broad objectives of the Club; however, in 1898 they agreed to a request from the California State Commission to establish a public reading room and information center for visitors to The Valley. A report by one of the Commissioners (1898) speaks well of the venture: "The Sierra Club building is a complete success, and should bring the Commissioners into sympathetic touch with lovers of nature in California. The Sierra Club ... is a center of information for travels into the wonders of these peaks, glaciers, rivers and lakes."[1]

After Joseph Le Conte's untimely death in Camp Curry (Yosemite Valley, 1901), the Club arranged with the Commissioners to erect a permanent stone building to replace the cottage they had used as a summer headquarters since 1898. The Lodge was deemed an appropriate memorial to Le Conte, a charter member of the Sierra Club. Le Conte was on the original faculty of the University of California (1869) - a noted geologist who sponsered field trips into the

Yosemite region for students and fellow mountaineers during his 30 year tenure. The Lodge was completed in 1903 and was rebuilt on its present site in 1919. In both locations it served as the scene of the Le Conte Memorial lectures and other naturalist activities preceding the development of the National Park Service programs. The Yosemite headquarters played an important role in the Sierra Club visitor contacts, enabling them to educate the public in conservationist policies and to garner additional members. These facts were especially important in the successful effort to recede Yosemite Valley to the federal government.

Today the building is owned by the National Park Service and operation is shared with the Sierra Club through a special use permit. The Lodge serves as a Junior Nature Center with programs sponsered by both organizations. The Mountaineers' Library and club information bureau are still maintained by the Sierra Club for the use of park visitors.

The architect, John White, worked in California in a style which was similar to that of the architects Greene and Greene, and Bernard Maybeck.

1. Abbot Kinney, "Report of Work Accomplished and with Recommendations of Further Improvement of Yosemite Valley", June 1, 1898, p. 2

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Sierra Club Bulletin V.4, "Joseph Le Conte in the Sierra Nevada", pp.1-2
V.5, "The Completed Le Conte Memorial Lodge", pp.66-69
V.10, "Professor Joe" (illus. p.143) p.400

Le Conte, Joseph A Journal of Rambling Through the High Sierra of California (1875), Sierra Club reprint, 1930

Farquhar, Francis P. A History of the Sierra Nevada, San Francisco (UC Press),196

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	11	27,28,1,1	41,79,89,1	B			
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE
Leslie Starr Hart, Cultural Resources Specialist

ORGANIZATION
National Park Service, Denver Service Center/TWE/YPT

DATE
2/76

STREET & NUMBER
Box 25287

TELEPHONE
(303) 234-4509

CITY OR TOWN
Denver

STATE
Colorado

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

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

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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AND/OR COMMON
Le Conte Memorial Lodge

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN
Yosemite Valley

____VICINITY OF

COUNTY
Mariposa

STATE
CA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT
Dean Shenk, National Park Service

DATE OF PHOTO
9/75

NEGATIVE FILED AT
Western Regional Office, NPS, 450 Golden Gate Ave, Box 36063, San Francisco, CA

4 IDENTIFICATION

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

PHOTO NO 1

Le Conte Memorial Lodge, north-east side

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Le Conte Memorial Lodge

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN: Yosemite Valley

___ VICINITY OF

COUNTY: Mariposa

STATE: CA

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Dean Shenk, National Park Service

DATE OF PHOTO: 9/75

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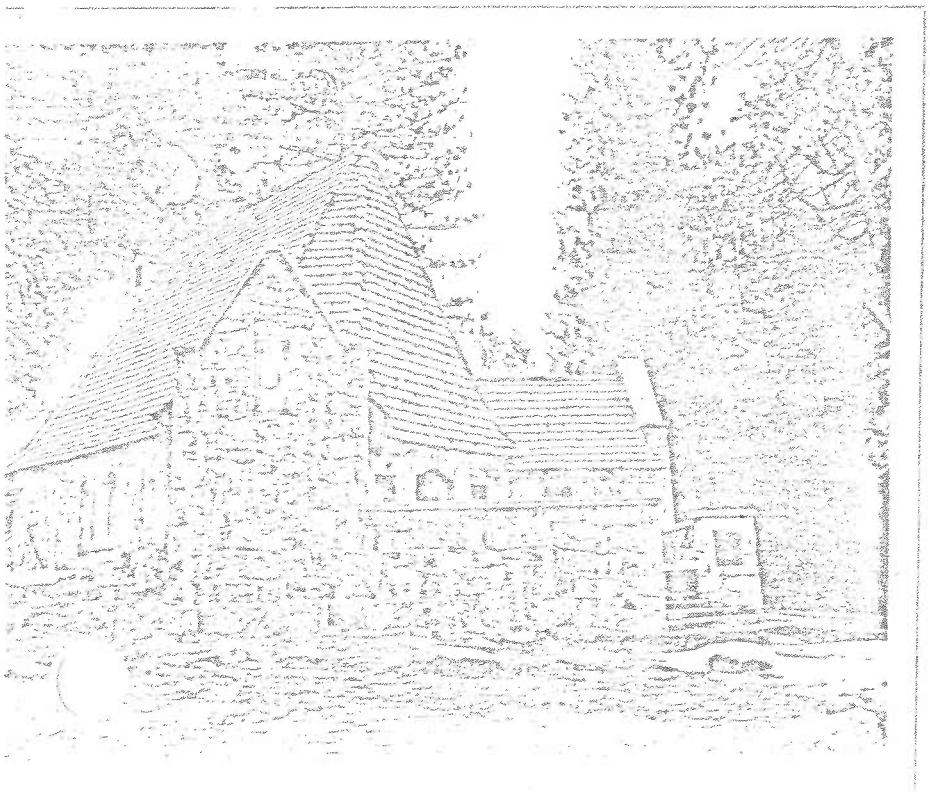
4 IDENTIFICATION

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

PHOTO NO. 2

Le Conte Memorial Lodge, East corner



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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1 NAME

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Yosemite Valley

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Mariposa

Maripop

STATE

CA

3 MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE U.S.G.S.

SCALE 1:62500

DATE 1956

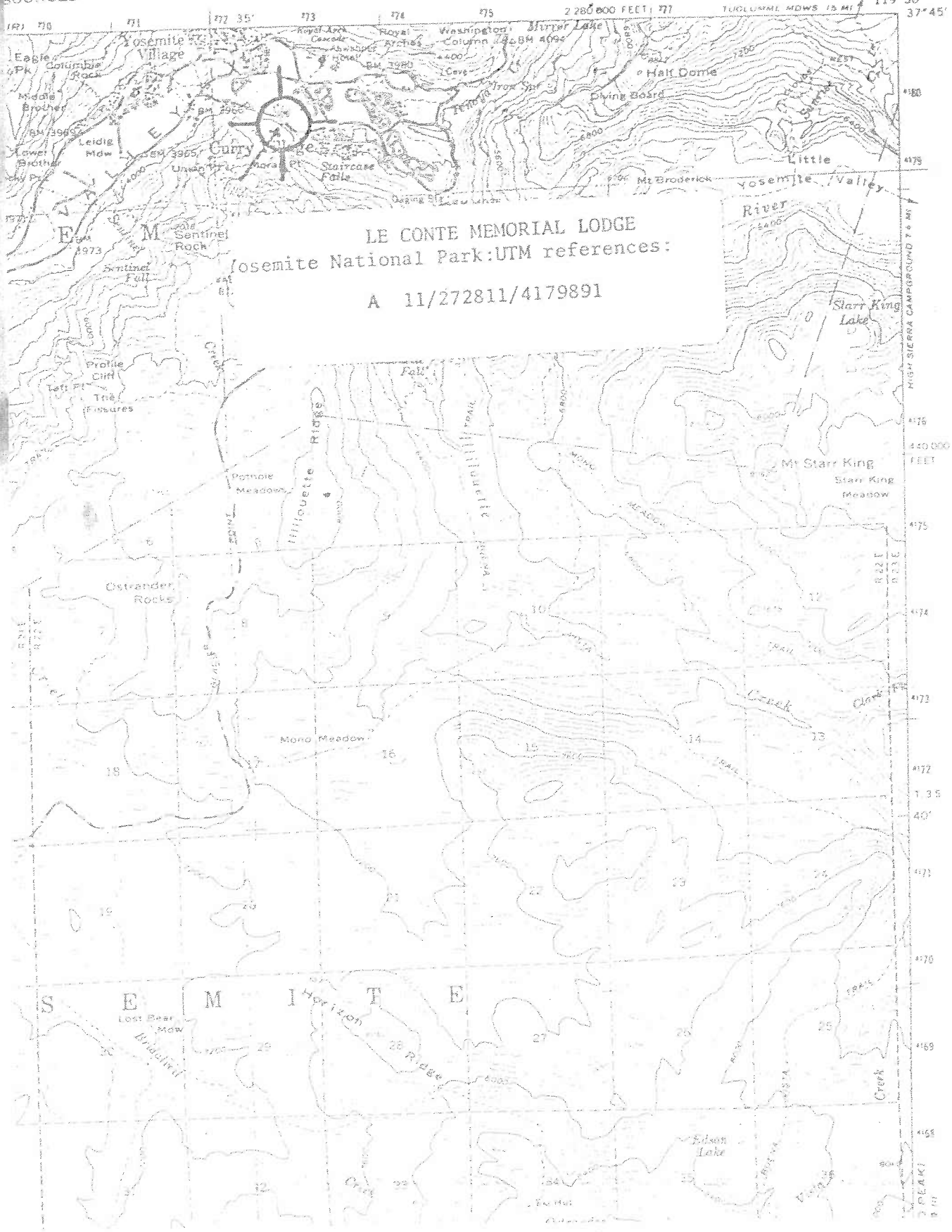
4 REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES

INT: 3454-

YOSEMITE QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA
15 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



LE CONTE MEMORIAL LODGE
Yosemite National Park:UTM references:

A 11/272811/4179891