

Vallejo Adobe
Near Petaluma, Sonoma County, California
5 miles from

HABS No. 38-1 ✓

HABS
CAL
49-PET.V
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 38



Historic American Buildings Survey
Northern California
Irving F. Morrow, District Officer
1605 De Young Building, San Francisco

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to:
Vallejo, Adobe (Petaluma Adobe)
Adobe Road at Casa Grande
Petaluma Vicinity
Sonoma County
California

HABS No. CA-38-1

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Addendum to: VALLEJO, ADOBE (Petaluma Adobe)

HABS No. CA-38-1

Location: Petaluma, California
Adobe Road at Casa Grande
Petaluma Vicinity, Sonoma County, California
UTM Coordinates: Zone 10; 536440mE/4234060mN

Present Owner: State of California
Department of General Services
Real Estate Services Division

Present Use: State Park

Significance: The adobe is associated with General Mariano G. Vallejo, the Mexican commandant of the Sonoma pueblo. Constructed in 1836-46 in the Monterey Colonial style, the adobe is the largest existing example of domestic adobe architecture in the United States and represents the Mexican era of California's history.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The information contained in PART I. was summarized from the *Historic Structures Report* prepared for the Petaluma Adobe by Carey & Co., Inc. (1997) which used information from the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form prepared in 1970 by Allen W. Welts of the National Park Service.

A. Physical History

- 1. Date of Erection:** 1836-1846. Construction of the adobe began in 1836 but was not completed until 1846.
- 2. Architect:** None.
- 3. Original and Subsequent Owners:**
General Mariano G. Vallejo (1836-1857)
William Whiteside (1857-1859)
William Bliss and heirs (1859-1910)
Native Sons of the Golden West (1910-1951)
State of California (1951-present)
- 4. Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:** Salvador Vallejo, brother of Mariano G. Vallejo
- 5. Original Plans and Construction:** Construction of the Adobe began in 1836 and continued in stages until 1846 when it reached its final configuration at a cost of approximately \$80,000. Originally planned as a four wing building with a central courtyard, the fourth, or east, wing was never fully completed. Labor for the construction of the Adobe was supplied almost entirely by the Native American population of the rancho, under the supervision of Salvador Vallejo. The structure is constructed of adobe brick made on site and hand-hewn redwood timbers transported from the north. The exterior walls were covered with mud plaster and a lime whitewash, which has since vanished. A "Chronology of Construction" is provided on pages 7 through 20 of the *Historic Structure Report* completed by Carey & Co., Inc. in 1997.

6. **Alterations and Additions:** Native Sons of the Golden West: Installed concrete footings under select sections of wall and other related wall repairs (December 1910), re-floored the verandah and added the picket railing (1912).

State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, c. 1951-1952: Performed emergency roof repairs, removed partitions, bathroom, kitchen and most piping and wiring; removed wood sheathing and stone shoring at east elevation of north wing; removed wood sheathing and reconfigured roof shape at east elevation of south wing; stabilized adobe walls with concrete cores and infill with new adobe bricks; leveled interior floors; installed concrete bond beam at top of wall; reconstructed the verandah; and installed a new shake roof. Interior work during this period included the restoration of existing plaster and wood trim; and installation of displays in the living quarters, "interpretive room, and monument office." Construction drawings of the work completed during this period are on file with the State of California Archives, Sacramento.

State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, c. 1978-1983: Stabilized dirt floors at grade using acrylic solution; installed new roof; repointed adobe bricks; and sprayed the walls with preservative.

State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, 1998: State Seismic Retrofit Program in progress, including installation of steel moment frames and footings, new floor-to-wall anchors, new roof-to-wall anchors, new nailing of second floor planks, new roof board sheathing, chimney bracing, adobe wall crack repair, and roof replacement. Construction drawings are on file with the Department of General Services, Sacramento, California.

B. Historical Context

The following information is excerpted from the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the Petaluma Adobe.

When the Mission San Francisco Solano (at Sonoma) was secularized in 1834, Mariano G. Vallejo, the commandant of the newly-founded Sonoma pueblo, received a ten-league grant (about 33,750 acres) for Rancho Petaluma from the Mexican government. In 1844, Vallejo received a second five-league grant which, with the original grant, formed a 67,000 acre or 100-square mile ranch.

The Vallejo (Petaluma) Adobe, begun in 1836 and completed in 1846, served as the headquarters of Vallejo's vast agricultural enterprises. More than 2,000 Indians labored as herders, plowmen, harvesters, domestic servants, weavers, tanners, and at various other trades. By 1845, Vallejo had 10,000 head of cattle, 24,000 sheep, and great herds of horses grazing on his ranch. By this date General Vallejo was the wealthiest man and also one of the most politically powerful men in California.

After the American occupation of California in 1846, Vallejo's land titles were challenged by many squatters and his grants were in litigation for more than 20 years. He leased out the ranch in 1850 and in 1857 the financially hard-pressed General was forced to sell the Petaluma Adobe for \$25,000. The house then passed through a succession of owners. By 1880 the adobe had fallen into disrepair. The structure and five acres of land were purchased by the Native Sons of the Golden West in 1910 and, in 1951, the title passed to the State of California. Since that date the Department of Parks and Recreation has carried out a continuing program of accurate and detailed restoration.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. **Architectural Character:** Two stories in height, the building is F-shaped in plan, with the long arm running approximately north to south. The overall length of the main wing is approximately 178 feet. The two shorter arms partially enclose a courtyard that opens to the east. Each short wing is over 60 feet long. All wings are about 21 feet wide. The Adobe is completely wrapped with a two-story verandah, approximately 11 feet deep. A hipped roof shelters the majority of the building; however, a gable roof covers the reconstructed north wing. The building is adobe brick construction with some vertical concrete strengthening members, and features concrete foundations and a concrete bond beam at the eaves. The current main entry is located at the east facade of the south end of the main wing. All rooms are accessed from the encircling verandah. The Vallejo Adobe is the largest surviving domestic adobe structure in the United States.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** The Adobe is in fair to good condition. Regular maintenance procedures have prevented the general deterioration of the building; however, the roof and portions of the adobe walls require attention, discussed further below.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. **Overall dimensions:** Originally planned as a two-story, four-winged structure with a central courtyard, archaeological investigation shows that approximately one-half of the original structure remains. The three surviving wings form an F-shaped building measuring approximately 60 feet by 178 feet, with each wing approximately 20 feet wide.
2. **Foundations:** The foundations were originally open field stone, following the contours of the ground. The walls have been underpinned with non-contributing concrete footings. Stone retaining walls under the verandah and mud sills are modern at the west and south elevations of the main block.
3. **Walls:** The walls are constructed of adobe brick and measure up to three feet wide and approximately 23 feet high. The adobe bricks measure approximately 3" x 11" x 21" and have a high grass content. Historic photographs and HABS drawings indicate that portions of the walls were originally covered with mud plaster and lime whitewash. The plaster was removed between 1934 and 1959; the adobe bricks were treated with a silicone coating in 1961, sprayed with a preservative in 1983, and painted with a lime and water whitewash in 1994-1995. The uppermost portions of the walls have been repaired and rebuilt. Most damage to the adobe brick is presently caused by park visitors, park livestock, and the improper storage of firewood and other materials.
4. **Structural system:** Wood truss roof system and wood lintels above doorways and windows. A concrete bond beam was installed at the top of the walls in the 1950s.
5. **Porches:** The two-story, wrapping, wooden porch and verandah were reconstructed in the 1910s and again in the 1950s.
6. **Chimneys:** One chimney exists at the eastern end of the south wing. The chimney and hood appear in the 1934 HABS documentation, where the chimney is called out as brick. The chimney

may have been rebuilt during the 1950s and is currently covered with a cementitious coating and has a metal, barrel vault hood.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors:** The doorways appear to have their original wood sill plates and lintels, but the thresholds have probably been replaced. All door openings have wood jambs. Doorways on the second floor of the south wing have more elaborate surrounds that are wide, profiled, and occupy approximately half of the depth of the wall. Like the wood sill plates and lintels, most door and window surrounds appear to date from the building's period of importance. The majority of the doors are tongue in groove planks, but more ornamental wood two-panel doors exist at the upper level of the south wing. Some surrounds are currently unfinished and are exhibiting signs of deterioration.
- b. Windows and Shutters:** Multi-light wood casement windows with original glass.

8. Roof:

- a. Roof shape, covering:** The roof is clad in profiled redwood shakes, probably dating from 1982. The roof is hipped except on the eastern end of the north wing where the truncated wall ends with a gable. The south wing was drawn with a gable roof in the 1934 HABS documentation; however, the south wing was given a hipped roof in the 1950s.
- b. Cornice, eaves:** The Adobe has wide overhanging eaves with exposed rafter tails.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers:** None.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans:** The Adobe has an F-shaped plan, with the long arm running approximately north to south. Total gross interior area is approximately 7,800 square feet. The north and south wings contain one large room each on the ground floor: the tanning room and the weaving room, respectively. The ground floor of the west wing contains three rooms: the mess hall (now the museum entrance and display area), park staff office, and the combination tool milling room/storeroom/granary. The spatial organization on the second floor mirrors that found on the ground floor. The south wing contains the Vallejo family living and dining area; the west wing contains the Vallejo family sleeping space, the Majordomo's sleeping space, and servants' quarters; the north wing contains the married servants' quarters.
- 2. Stairways:** The upper floor is accessed by two stairways on the courtyard side of the north and south wings. The south stairs are recorded in the 1934 HABS drawings and the north stairs replicate them. The steps themselves were probably replaced during the 1950s restoration. The treads were replaced in 1983. Rails and newel posts match those illustrated in the HABS drawings.
- 3. Flooring:** None of the floor finishes on the ground floor rooms are original, although the modern acrylic adobe compound imitates the original, compacted soil floor finish while protecting visitors and artifacts from dust. In addition, concrete viewing areas have been added adjacent to the door openings. The floors of the upper level consist of 8- to 12-inch planks that span from

joist to joist. Although joists were raised when the floors were leveled in the 1950s, many joists appear to be period and the wood flooring appears to be from the building's period of importance.

4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** Whitewashed adobe brick wall finishes are found at utilitarian rooms on both floor levels at the north end of the building. Applied in 1995-1996, this probably imitates the original finish, although the 1934 HABS photos show crude adobe plaster at some utilitarian rooms. The whitewash is reportedly a traditional lime wash.

Period mud plaster may be found at the more highly-finished spaces at the south end of the building. Although extant plaster is illustrated in the 1934 HABS drawings, later photographs show plaster being reinstalled. The plaster has a modern, two-coat latex paint finish.

5. **Openings:**

- a. **Doorways and doors:** Only the doors on the second floor of the south wing and southern end of the west wing are elaborated with wood surrounds and interior shutters. The surrounds are profiled and approximately 7 inches wide. Interior doors are found at both floors between interconnecting rooms.
- b. **Windows:** Windows at the second floor of the south wing and southern end of the west wing are elaborated with a wood surround that measures 7 inches wide, three-panel shutters, and plank window seats with round nosings.

6. **Decorative features and trim:** The Vallejo family living and sleeping quarters, located on the second floor of the south wing and the southern end of the west wing have profiled wood cornice, baseboard, and chair rail molding. The cornice is approximately 7 inches high, the baseboard is approximately 10 inches high, and the chair rail is approximately 3-3/4 inches high. All wood trim details are well documented in the 1934 HABS drawings. Interior wood trim has a modern paint finish.

7. **Hardware:** Hardware is found at doors, interior shutters, and casement windows, and consists of wrought iron thumb latches, bolts and hinges. The provenance of the hardware is unknown; it may date from the period of importance. Hardware is not illustrated in the 1934 HABS details of extant doors and windows.

8. **Mechanical equipment:**

- a. **Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:** None.
- b. **Lighting:** There are no original historic light fixtures in the building. The wall sconces may date from the period of importance: they may be period gas fixtures that have been converted to electric luminaries that imitate candle sticks and flickering flames. The painted wood chandeliers are not period; they are compatible modern pendants fitted out with electric bulbs.
- c. **Plumbing:** None.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation:** The Vallejo Adobe is located southeast of Petaluma in Sonoma County. Sited on a low hilltop, the adobe is surrounded by rolling hills dotted with oak trees and would have commanded an excellent view of Vallejo's 67,000-acre rancho. The F-shaped structure was constructed with the long arm oriented approximately north to south with two wings projecting perpendicularly to the east. The Adobe is now situated within a fenced area and is approached by a path leading from a parking lot located northeast of the building.
- 2. Historic landscape design:** The Adobe is located on the former Vallejo rancho. The historic landscape would have been rural and agricultural as befitting ranching and farming endeavors. The interior courtyard would have been used for domestic purposes, but no descriptive documentation survives.
- 3. Outbuildings:** No historic outbuildings survive. A modern park service latrine is located to the northeast of the Adobe near the parking lot.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings:

No drawings survive from the original construction date.
1934 HABS drawings, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
c. 1950 Drawings depicting early restoration efforts, State of California Archives, Sacramento
1998 State Building Seismic Program Construction Documents, Department of General Services, Sacramento

B. Early Views:

1934 HABS photographs, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Photographs of c. 1950 restoration efforts and various historic photographs, Petaluma Adobe State Park, staff office files

C. Interviews:

Telephone conversation with Glenn Burch, State Historian, Department of Parks and Recreation, Sonoma, CA. January 14, 1997.

D. Bibliography:

Brown, Madie D. "General Vallejo's Petaluma Adobe ... A House of the Past." *The Argonaut*. June 20 & 27, 1956.

California State Department of Parks and Recreation, *Petaluma Adobe: Petaluma State Historic Park, Its People and its Land, Sacramento, CA*. 2nd Edition, 1987.

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**Addendum to:
VALLEJO, ADOBE (Petaluma Adobe)
Adobe Road at Casa Grande
Petaluma Vicinity
Sonoma County
California
HABS No. CA-38-1 (Page 7)**

_____. Office Memo to Bob Hatch from Petaluma Adobe State Historic Monument. December 3, 1967.

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Clemmer, John S. *The Corrals at Vallejo's Petaluma Adobe State Historical Monument*. Central California Archeological Foundation and Division of Beaches and Parks, Department of Natural Resources. June 1961.

Ewen, L. D., and Harold Green. Office memo of California Division of Beaches and Parks to William Kenyon, District Supervisor. January 19, 1953.

Gebhardt, Charles L. *Historic Archeology at Vallejo's Petaluma Adobe State Historical Monument*. Central California Archeological Foundation. Summer 1962.

Hayes, Peter. "Vallejo Palace Being Restored." *Oakland Tribune*. June 9, 1957.

Hoopes, Chad L. *The Petaluma Adobe*. California Parks and Recreation Department, Sacramento, CA. January 1965.

National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey. "Vallejo Adobe, Petaluma Vicinity, Sonoma County, California, HABS No. CA-38-1," 1934. Nine drawings and ten black-and-white photographs on file, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Nelson, Buck. *Architects Field Report on the Petaluma Adobe Restoration*. Department of Parks and Recreation. Report #1. January 24, 1978.

Treganza, Adan E. *Archeological Investigation of the Vallejo Adobe, Petaluma Adobe State Historical Monument*. California Division of Beaches and Parks and San Francisco State College Department of Anthropology. 1958.

Vallejo, G. M. Letter to Miss N. L. Denman. Sonoma, May 16, 1889.

Welts, Allen W., State Park Historian III, *National Register Nomination Form Statement of Significance of the Petaluma (Vallejo) Adobe*. Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento, CA. March 23, 1970.

Yarish, Alice. "State Considering \$112,000 Fund for Restoration of Vallejo Adobe." *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*. May 28, 1956.

_____. "Restoration of Vallejo Adobe Residence Starts." *V..Advance*. July 12, 1956.

E. Likely sources Not Yet Investigated

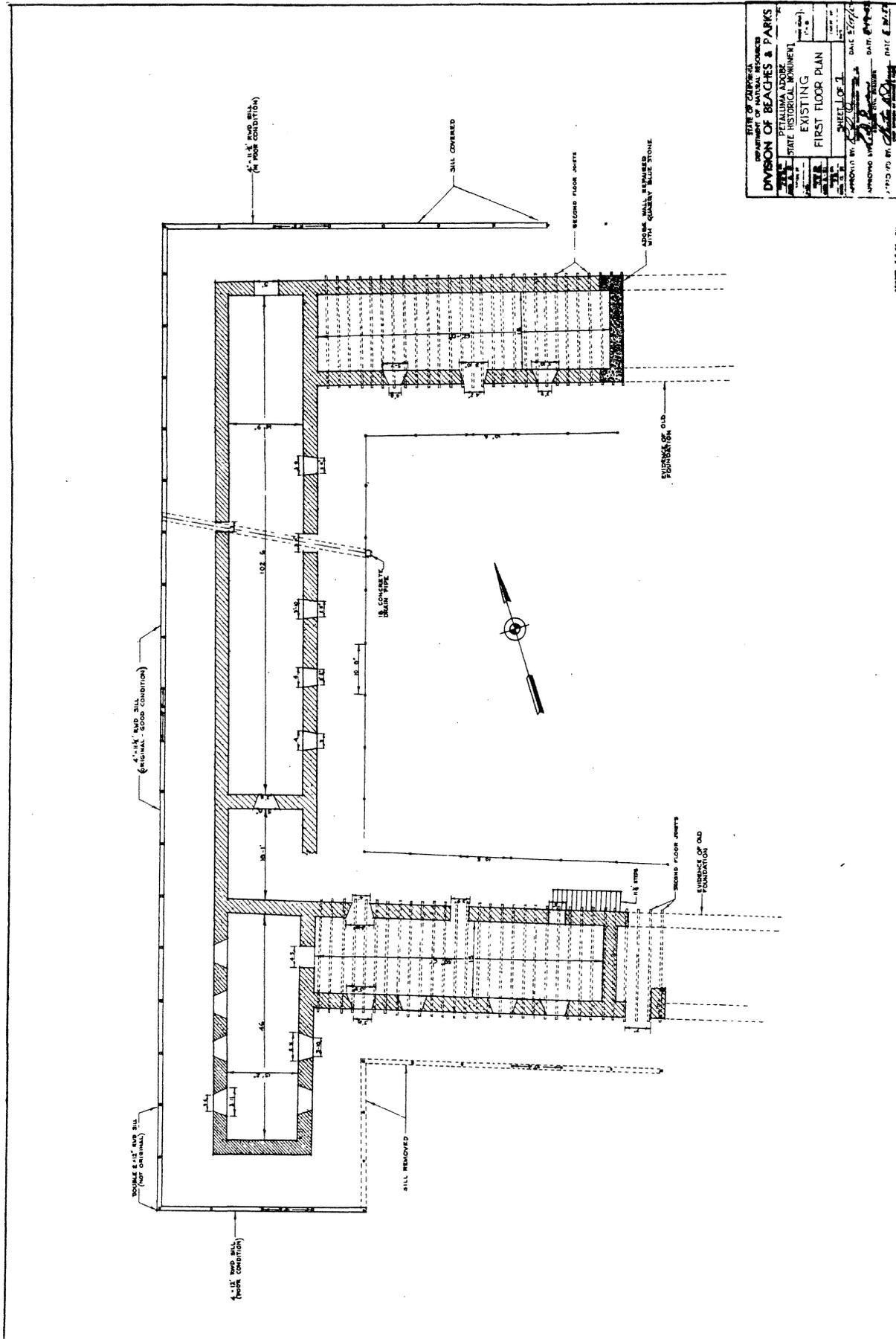
None known.

**Addendum to:
VALLEJO, ADOBE (Petaluma Adobe)
Adobe Road at Casa Grande
Petaluma Vicinity
Sonoma County
California
HABS No. CA-38-1 (Page 8)**

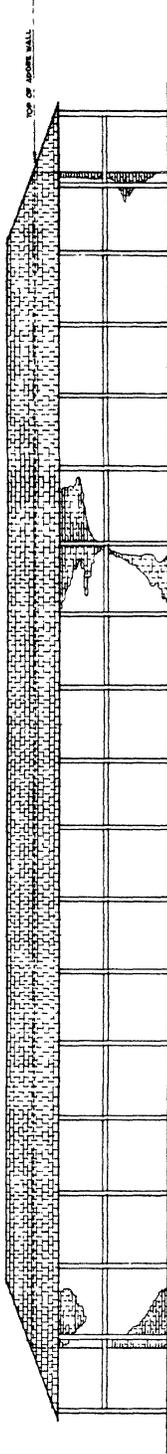
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was initiated by the State of California, Real Estate Services Division (RESD), as part of the State Building Seismic Program. In consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), RESD agreed to complete HABS photography of the building prior to the commencement of any seismic retrofitting work and compile existing historic documentation into the standard HABS outline format. The State of California hired Carey & Co., Inc., of San Francisco to complete a Historic Structure Report documenting the existing condition of the building, outlining the elements of historical importance, and making recommendations to guide decisions on locating structural and other new elements within the building. The SHPO agreed that the Historic Structure Report could be used to supplement the HABS documentation. Gail F. Miller of Myra L. Frank & Associates, Inc., in Los Angeles, California, made a site visit to the structure with photographer, David De Vries of Mesa Technical, to visually document the building to HABS requirements.

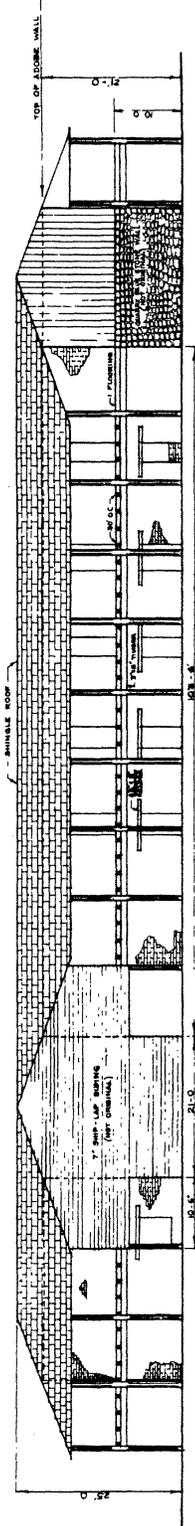
Addendum to:
VALLEJO, ADOBE (Petaluma Adobe)
 Adobe Road at Casa Grande
 Petaluma Vicinity
 Sonoma County
 California
 HABS No. CA-38-1 (Page 11)



STATE OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	
DIVISION OF BEACHES & PARKS	
PETALUMA ADOBE	
STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT	
EXISTING	
FIRST FLOOR PLAN	
SHEET NO. 11	DATE 5/21/61
APPROVED BY: [Signature]	DATE 5/21/61
DESIGNED BY: [Signature]	DATE 5/21/61
DRAWN BY: [Signature]	DATE 5/21/61
21651	



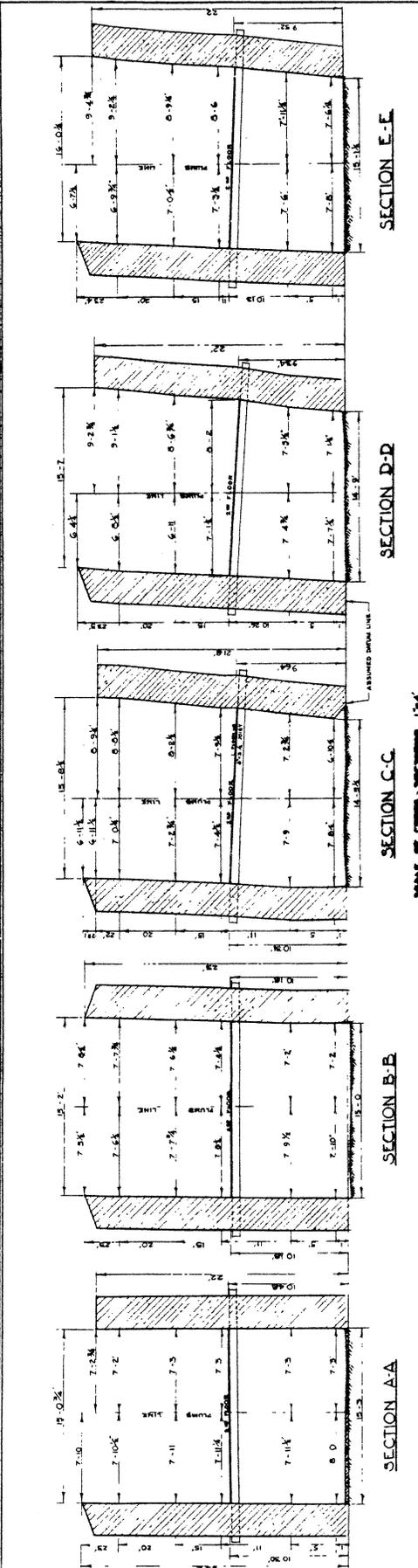
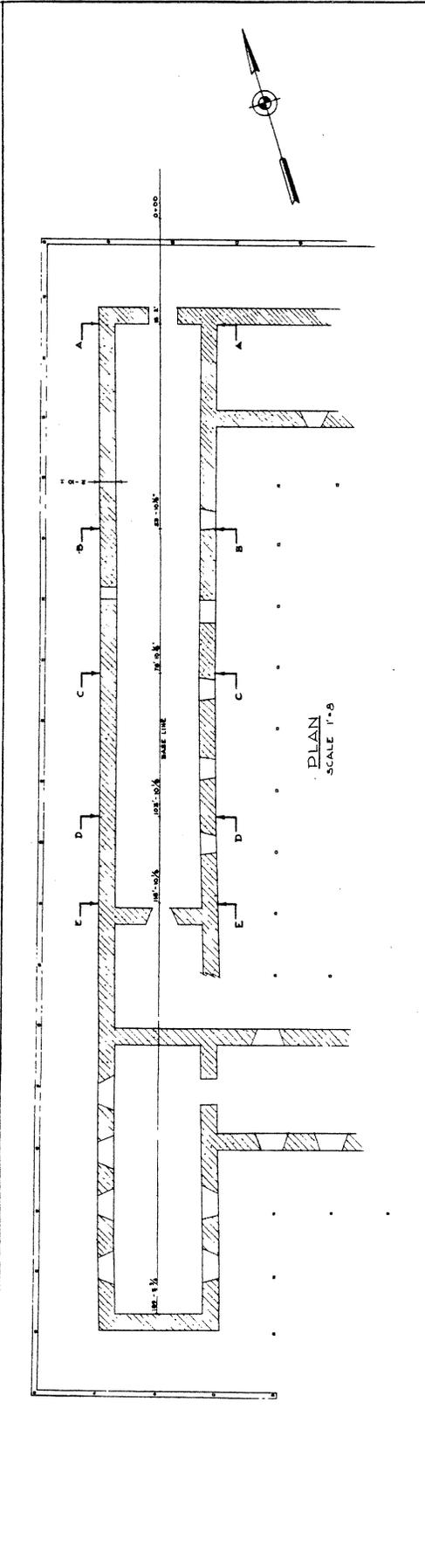
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ELEVATION OF S.E. SIDE

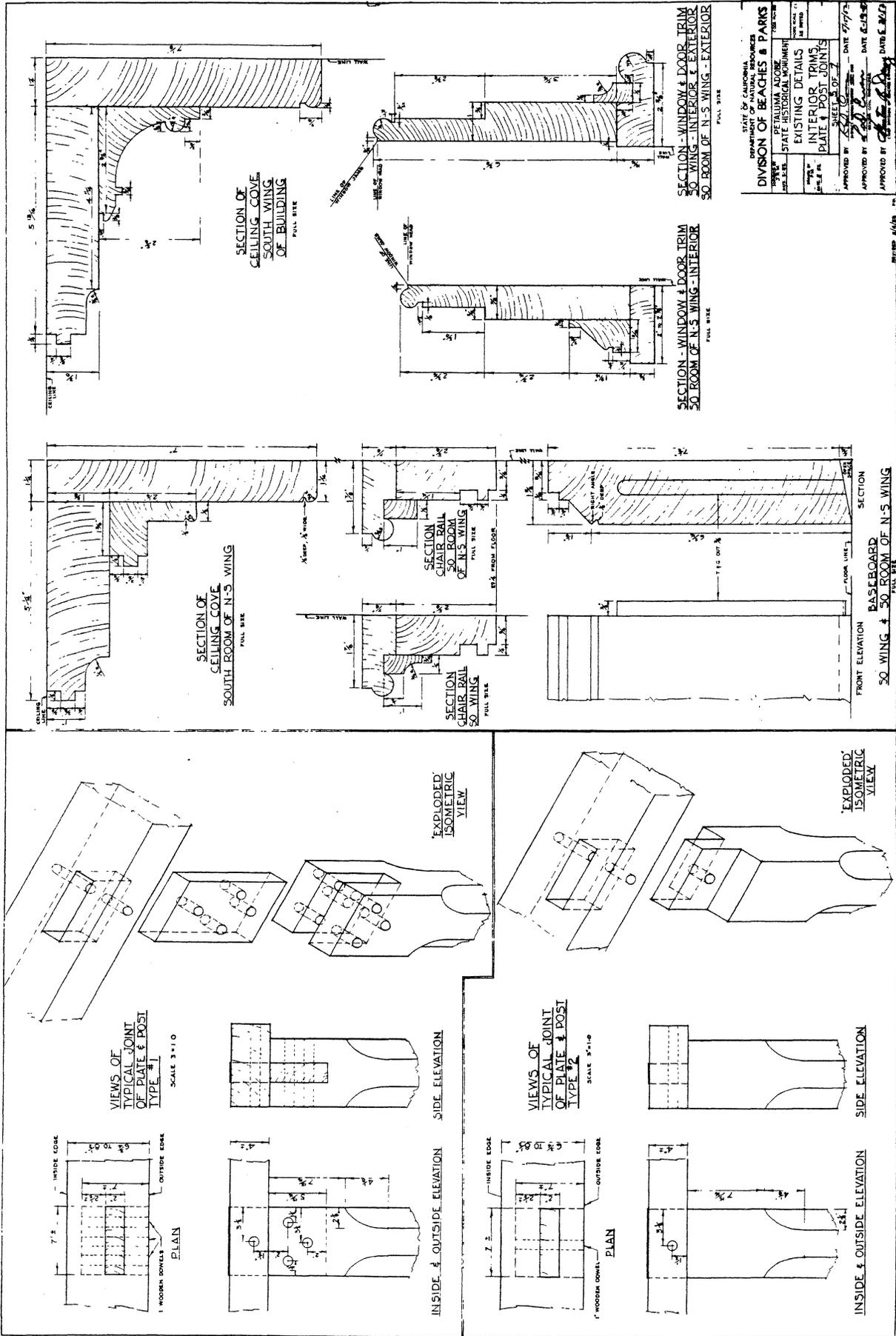
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DIVISION OF BEACHES & PARKS	
PROJECT VALLEJO, ADOBE	DATE 1-2-11
PETALUMA ADOBE STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT	
EXISTING ELEVATIONS	
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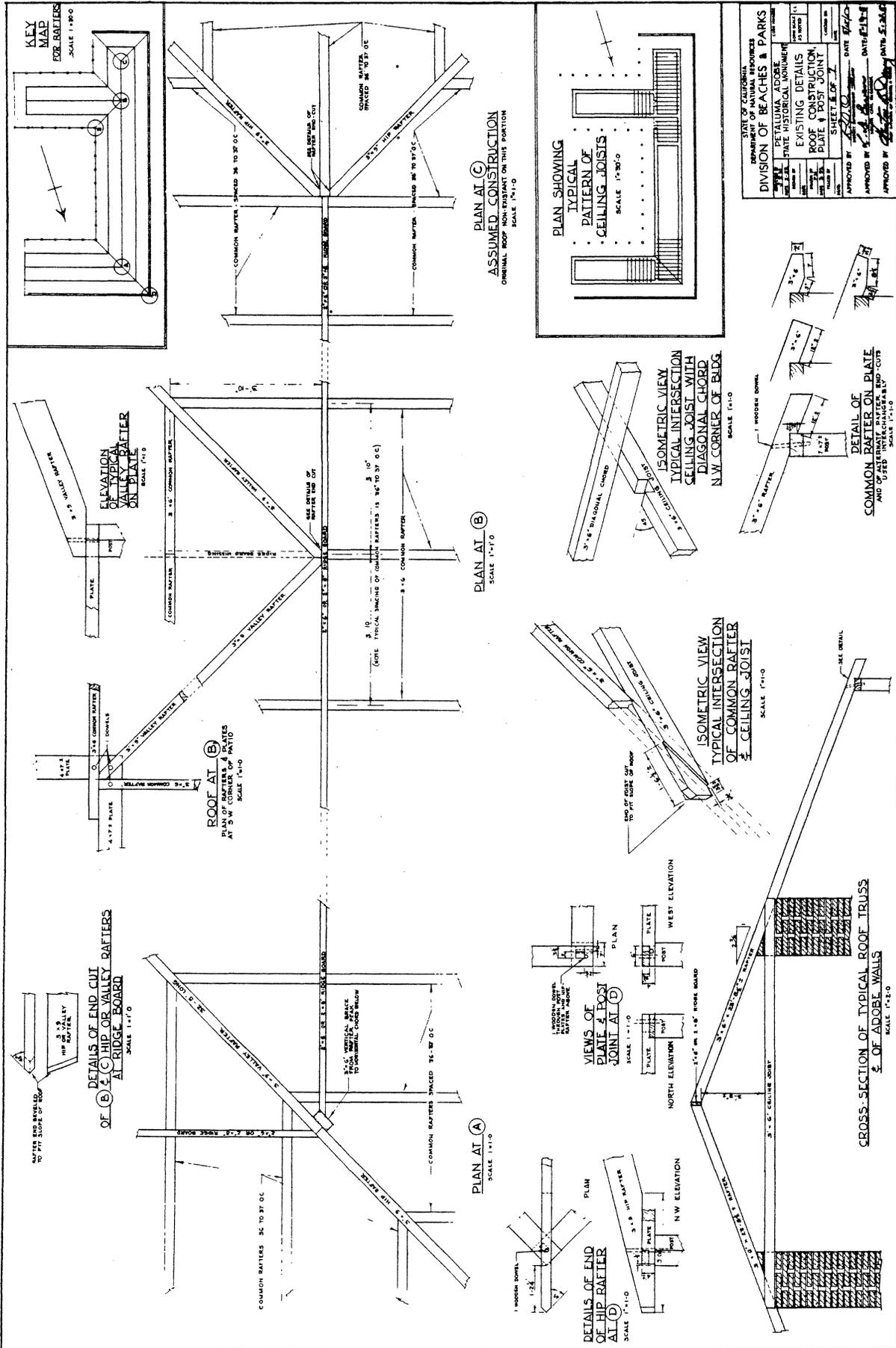
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DIVISION OF BEACHES & PARKS	
PROJECT VALLEJO, ADOBE	DATE 11/11/77
STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT	DATE 11/11/77
EXISTING DETAILS CROSS SECTIONS OF ADOBE WALLS	
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DATE OF ARCHITECTURAL RECORDS		DATE 5/19/73
DIVISION OF BEACHES & PARKS		DATE 6/15/73
PETALUMA ADOBE		DATE 6/15/73
STATE HISTORICAL MONUMENT		DATE 6/15/73
EXISTING DETAILS		DATE 6/15/73
INTERIOR TRIMS		DATE 6/15/73
PLATE & POST JOINTS		DATE 6/15/73
APPROVED BY	DATE 5/19/73	DATE 6/15/73
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STATE OF CALIFORNIA	
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	
DIVISION OF BEACHES & PARKS	
DATE: 5/27/80	DATE: 5/27/80
SCALE: 1"=1'-0"	SCALE: 1"=1'-0"
PROJECT: VALLEJO ADOBE	PROJECT: VALLEJO ADOBE
EXISTING DETAILS	EXISTING DETAILS
ROOF CONSTRUCTION	ROOF CONSTRUCTION
PLATE & POST JOINT	PLATE & POST JOINT
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2/656

