**Form 10-306**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. **NAME**
   - COMMON: Loomis Visitor Center
   - Manzanita Lake Visitor Center
   - Loomis Museum
   - Manzanita Lake Museum
   - AND/OR HISTORIC: Mae Loomis Memorial Museum

2. **LOCATION**
   - STREET AND NUMBER: Building 43
   - CITY OR TOWN: Manzanita Lake, Lassen Volcanic National Park
   - CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2
   - STATE: California
   - COUNTY: Shasta

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   - CATEGORY (Check One)
     - District
     - Site
     - Object
   - BUILDING
   - Site
   - Structure
   - Object
   - Public
   - Private
   - Both

4. **AGENCY**
   - Lassen Volcanic National Park, U.S. National Park Service
   - REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
     - Western Region
     - STREET AND NUMBER: 450 Golden Gate Avenue
     - CITY OR TOWN: San Francisco
     - STATE: California
     - CODE: 06

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   - COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
     - Shasta County Courthouse
     - STREET AND NUMBER:
     - CITY OR TOWN: Redding
     - STATE: California
     - CODE: 06

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   - TITLE OF SURVEY:
   - DATE OF SURVEY:
   - DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
   - STREET AND NUMBER:
   - CITY OR TOWN:
Exterior

The Loomis Museum is a building of rustic appearance constructed of a gray, native volcanic rock with cut face random ashlar masonry. It is single storey and has walls topped by fortress-like crenelated parapets which are stepped in the center front and at the corners. The walls stand about fifteen feet high. The building measures 25 feet wide in from by 60 feet deep. At the rear there is a 10 by 12 foot projection on either side of the main structure which gives the building a "T" shape.

The main entrance is centered and is approached across a broad, extensive terrace that surrounds the front and both sides of the building. The terrace is confined by a low stone wall that matches the stonework of the building itself. A pair of fully glazed entrance doors have side lites on either side, and a handsome semicircular fanlight to complete the composition. Above this main entrance as well as along both sides of the building is a narrow shed roof supported on heavy wood brackets. The shed roof has a green tile finish. There are long scuppers located just above these bracketed roofs for drainage.

Interior

The interior is composed principally of a large museum room and a smaller audiovisual room. To the right as one enters the front door is an information desk. Exhibits of photographs, geological specimens from the Lassen eruptions, and artifacts of Indians of the area such as baskets as well as artifacts of white emigrants and pioneers comprise the collections on display.

About fifteen yards northeast of the Visitor Center stands a seismograph station built of the same materials and in the same design as the Loomis Museum, and considered for the purposes of this nomination a part of the museum, although it is in fact a separate building. This structure stands about ten feet square and twelve feet high.

Both buildings appear basically unchanged, except for the rear addition to the main museum building, added a year after it was completed.

The Loomis Museum, like the rest of the Manzanita Lake development at Lassen Volcanic National Park, stands on and near the edge of the Chaos Jumbles, a prehistoric rockfall-avalanche from an unstable cliff formation nearby known as the Chaos Crags. A geological study published in 1970 indicated that this is an area with high risk of another disastrous and completely unpredictable rockfall at some future date, one capable of wiping out some or all existing structures and any human or animal life present at the time of such occurrence. On April 26, 1974, the National Park Service announced that concession facilities at Manzanita Lake would not be reopened, and the Loomis Museum and other NPS visitor facilities likewise remain closed. The feasibility and suitability of preserving the Loomis Museum is vastly complicated by the public safety problem. Planning related to this problem is still in process.

Class VI land, 1 acre; Third Order of Significance; Condition, as described above, good; recommended treatment, preservation; cost uncertain due to planning problem cited above. Building No. 43.
Benjamin Franklin Loomis was born in Mantaga, Illinois, on March 21, 1857. He accompanied his parents to California in a covered wagon while he was a child, and they settled in Colusa, later moving to Red Bluff. In 1874, at the age of 18, he came to Manzanita Lake near Mount Lassen, where he built a small cabin. Here he pursued the profession of making shakes for roofing, and worked as a farm laborer during winters in Battle Creek Bottoms. Loomis later built another small cabin on Manzanita Creek along the old emigrant road below the Manzanita Chutes. In 1886-1887 he spent a year as a student at the American Institute of Phrenology in New York City.

In 1891, Loomis homesteaded on the present site of Viola. In 1896 he built a store there which was patronized by the sawmill workers. The following year he married Estella Loomis, daughter of L.V. Loomis, an eminent pioneer of Shasta County. Loomis developed a business hauling freight to Viola and shakes from there to the Sacramento Valley, while his wife tended the store and operated the Viola post office. Later Loomis purchased a quantity of timberland and a Viola sawmill and began logging.

Loomis' hobby was photography, which proved fortuitous when on Saturday, May 30, 1914, the dormant volcano known as Mount Lassen began to erupt. Loomis did not see this initial eruption, but advised by telegram, on the following day he and other parties went to Manzanita Lake. Loomis thereafter photographed the eruptions and wrote up his experiences with the volcano for the Courier Free Press. Loomis was neither the first nor the only photographer of the Lassen eruptions, but he took many photographs, which have been of use to scientists ever since. Loomis obtained a particularly clear sequence of photographs of the June 14 eruption. On Saturday, May 22, 1915, Loomis obtained some interesting photographs of the aftermath of floods of hot water, hot rocks and hot mud which had come down Hat Creek and Lost Creek the day before; unfortunately he used up all of his glass plates on the flood debris, so that when later that day the greatest of the Lassen eruptions occurred, he was without means to photograph it.

Loomis was active in urging the creation of Lassen Volcanic National Park, and in addition to his own photographs, collected photographs of the eruptions from others. Upon creation of the national park in 1916, he urged location of park headquarters at Manzanita Lake, but the National Park Service chose Mineral instead. In 1926, however, Loomis and his wife commenced construction at Manzanita Lake of a museum to exhibit photographs, specimens from the eruption, and historic artifacts of the Indian tribes, emigrants, and pioneer white settlers in the area. The Mae Loomis Memorial Museum was dedicated on July 4, 1927, in the memory of the Loomis' only child, Luisa Mae, who had died on January 13, 1920. In 1929, Loomis deeded
9. Major Bibliographical References


Loomis Family Papers, in Headquarters, Lassen Volcanic National Park.


10. Geographical Data

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Approximate acreage of nominated property: One

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries:

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11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian, Western Region Office

Date: Oct. 21, 1974

Business Address: Historic Preservation Team, National Park Service, Western Regional Office

Street and Number: 450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063

City or Town: San Francisco

State: California

12. Certification of Nomination

State Liaison Officer recommendation: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] None

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

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 2/3/75

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: 2/25/75

GPO 938-449
8. Statement of Significance (continued)

the museum, the adjoining seismograph building, and forty acres of land on which they stand to the National Park Service, which subsequently used the Loomis Museum as a museum and visitor center. Loomis died on June 11, 1935, and his wife on December 27, 1953, and both were buried in the Ogburn Cemetery west of Shingletown, California.

The Loomis Museum has since 1927 served as the focal point for visitor information and entertainment in Lassen Volcanic National Park, and as the depository for the Loomis collection of photographs of the Lassen eruptions which have aided scientists in the study of Lassen, the structure is of local historical significance. The Loomis Museum (including the seismograph structure) qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places as of local historical significance, or significance of the Third Order.

RECEIVED
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NATIONAL REGISTER
Form No. 10-301a

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(TYPE ALL ENTRIES - ATTACH TO OR ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH)

1. NAME
   COMMON: Loomis Visitor Center
   AND/OR HISTORIC: (B-43) Loomis Museum

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER:
   CITY OR TOWN:
   Lassen Volcanic National Park
   STATE: California

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: Richard Sellars
   DATE OF PHOTO: June 1973
   NEGATIVE FILED AT:
   Lassen Volcanic National Park

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   1) Entrance to Loomis Visitor Center

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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| PHOTO CREDIT: | Richard Sellars |
| DATE OF PHOTO: | June 1973 |
| NEGATIVE FILED AT: |
| Lassen Volcanic National Park |

4. IDENTIFICATION

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PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER #183
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**County:** Shasta  
**ENTRY NUMBER DATE:**  
**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

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**PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

**INT: 154-72**