**NAME**

Chris Jorgenson/Studio

**LOCATION**

**Pioneer Yosemite History Center (Wawona District)**

**CITY, TOWN** Yosemite National Park

**STREET & NUMBER**

**STATE** California

**CODE** 06

**COUNTY** Mariposa

**CODE** 043

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>—DISTRICT</td>
<td>—PUBLIC</td>
<td>X—OCCUPIED</td>
<td>—AGRICULTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X-BUILDING(S)</td>
<td>—PRIVATE</td>
<td>—UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>—COMMERCIAL</td>
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<td>—STRUCTURE</td>
<td>—PRIVATE</td>
<td>—WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>—EDUCATIONAL</td>
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<td>—SITE</td>
<td>—PRIVATE</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>—PRIVATE RESIDENCE</td>
</tr>
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<td>—OBJECT</td>
<td>—PRIVATE</td>
<td>YES: RESTRICTED</td>
<td>—RECREATION</td>
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<td>—PRIVATE</td>
<td>YES: UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>—TRANSPORTATION</td>
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<td>—PRIVATE</td>
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</table>

**AGENCY**

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063

**CITY, TOWN** San Francisco

**STATE** California

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**Administration Building**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

**CITY, TOWN** Yosemite National Park

**STATE** California

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE**

National Register of Historic Places-Preliminary Inventory

**DATE** 1971

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

National Park Service, Western Regional Office

**CITY, TOWN** San Francisco

**STATE** California

**94102**
The Jorgenson Studio was built in 1904 by artist Chris Jorgenson in Yosemite Valley. It was moved to Wawona in 1962.

It is a one story, one room log structure measuring 22' x 37'. It has a steeply pitched overhanging gable roof, covered with wood shingles. The front gable projects ten feet beyond the front wall of the cabin and covers the porch; it is supported by five log posts. The gable end is treated decoratively with infill logs placed in a vertical pattern. On the interior, this projected gable is used as a small sleeping loft, reached by ladder.

The structure is placed on a rubble granite foundation and is built of peeled logs in alternating tiers, interlocked at the corners with a V-notched joint. The horizontal spaces between the logs are chinked with white cement. An exterior chimney is located on the south end of the building; it is made of granite in an uncoursed rubble pattern. An original stained glass window, in a sunburst design, is located on the facade of the cabin.
Yosemite National Park has been a lodestone for artists since 1856 when lithographer Thomas Ayres accompanied the first tourist party to the Valley. One of the park's most prolific scenic interpreters was the noted California painter Chris Jorgenson, who maintained a seasonal residence and studio in Yosemite Valley for 20 years. This studio, now an integral part of the Pioneer Yosemite History Center, is of local significance in Art.

In 1962 the Jorgenson studio was moved from Yosemite Valley to the Pioneer History Center in Wawona. The move was deemed necessary in 1959 with the National Park Service "Mission 66" directive to raze the structures in and near the Old Village and return the meadow to a natural state. The historic significance of this building, then in use as an employee residence, was recognized and funds were allocated to salvage it. In its new, compatible setting the building's interior was authentically restored as the studio. Aside from the rationale behind the move, the studio is the remaining structure associated with this significant Yosemite artist and thus merits consideration for the National Register.

Chris Jorgenson arrived in Yosemite Valley in the late 1890's already an established artist. At 14 he had been the first student at the California School of Fine Arts, organized in San Francisco in 1874. From 1881 to 1883, he served as Assistant Director, as well as an instructor, at the school. Jorgenson and his wife, Angela Ghiardelli, had studies for two years in Italy in the early 1890's but discovered their true milieu during those first visits to Yosemite. They established their studio on the bank of the Merced River in 1899. Jorgenson did several canvases depicting the local Indians and began an extensive collection of Native American Basketry, specializing in California products. Both the paintings and the baskets are part of the Yosemite Museum Collections and provide a valuable resource in visually interpreting the ethnic history of the park around the turn of the century. (In Galen Clark's book, "Yosemite Indians" (1904), are four Jorgenson drawings and the cover design and drawing are by Angela Jorgenson.) Jorgenson used both watercolors and oils to record Yosemite scenes, accumulating an extensive portfolio in the process.

The National Park Service acquired the Jorgenson studio in 1919 and in 1920, it began service as the first Yosemite Museum. Jorgenson donated his basket collection to this fledgling interpretive effort in 1923. After his death in 1935, his widow donated over 150 Chris Jorgenson originals to the new Museum. For years there was a separate "Jorgenson Room" to house the collection. When the Museum was closed, the paintings were placed in storage or exhibited in offices or the visitor center. Today, the Jorgenson Studio is used as part of the living history program at the Pioneer History Center. NPS employees portray Jorgenson or his wife and a large number of his original canvases are once again on display in the studio.
9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Superintendent Annual Report, Yosemite National Park 1956-1966
Annual Report of Chief Naturalist, Yosemite National Park, 1959
Interpretive Prospectus/Pioneer Yosemite History Center, (Douglass Hubbard) 1959
Yosemite Nature Notes 1923, 1944
Jorgenson biographical file/Yosemite Research Library

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: N/A
UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
C | W | E | N | S | E | N | W | E | N |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries are defined by the walls of the building.

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Leslie Starr Hart/Cultural Resources Specialist (Historian)
Merrill Ann Wilson/Historical Architect

ORGANIZATION National Park Service, Denver Service Center
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 25287
CITY OR TOWN Denver (Lakewood)
STATE Colorado
DATE 6/2/76
TELEPHONE (303)234-4509 (Hart)
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X NO N/A

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Asst. Asst. Dir. Cultural Resources
DATE 2/1/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 4/1/79

ATTEST:

KEEPS OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE March 15, 1979
1 NAME

HISTORIC
Chris Jorgenson's Studio

AND/OR COMMON
Jorgenson's Studio

2 LOCATION

Yosemite Nat'l pk, Wawona

CITY, TOWN
Pioneer Yosemite History Center

VICINITY OF
Mariposa

COUNTY

STATE
California

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT
Dean Shenk
National Park Service

DATE OF PHOTO
10/75

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

Chris Jorgenson Studio South and East sides
CHRIS JORGENSEN ✱ (PYHC)
Yosemite National Park: UTM reference:

A 11/265400/4157755

Published by the Geological Survey

Holograph by photogrammetric methods
955. Advance field check 1956

North American Datum
California coordinate system, zone 7
Inverse Mercator grid ticks.

CONTOUR INTERVAL 80 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929