

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 941 Cold Springs Road not for publication N/A

city or town Gold Hill vicinity

state California code CA county El Dorado code 017 zip code 95633

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register

removed from the National
Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	7	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
3	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic

Agriculture: silk and tea farm

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture: pastureland

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

No style – farmhouse vernacular

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Rhyolite (local igneous rock)

roof Wood/metal

walls Wood

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Japanese Ethnic Heritage _____
- Exploration/Settlement _____
- Agriculture _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1869-1871

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

Japanese _____

Architect/Builder

N/A _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency, Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

American River Conservancy, Coloma _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 54.3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	—	—	3	—	—	—
2	—	—	—	4	—	—	—

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Allen, Ph.D., and Kimberly Wooten

organization Past Forward, Inc. date 15 March 2009

street & number PO Box 969 telephone 530-333-4547

city or town Garden Valley state CA zip code 95633

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Helen L. Veerkamp Revocable Trust, % Gary Veerkamp, Trustee

street & number 8691 Gunner Way telephone 916-965-8780

city or town Fair Oaks state CA zip code 95628

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 7 Page 5

Narrative Description

The site of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm is an intact rural landscape, located in Gold Hill, approximately 2 miles south of the town of Coloma, where gold was discovered in California. Although near the gold fields, local farms dominated the Gold Hill area. In 1869, on behalf of Matsudaira Katamori (a *daimyo* of the Tokugawa family), agent John Henry Schnell purchased land and buildings from Charles Graner to establish the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony. Japanese colonists planted and maintained mulberry trees and silkworm cocoons for silk farming, as well as tea plants and seeds. Dominant features of the landscape that convey the history of the short-lived colony are a residence, barn, associated vegetation, small pond, and expansive agricultural fields.

The residence was built by the original owner (Graner) and may date as early as 1856; physical evidence found in the basement suggests that Graner expanded the building to its current configuration during his tenure. The house is a simple two-story rectangular (58 ft. north-south by 48 ft. east-west) gable-roof farmhouse with a wrap around porch and a lean-to addition on the north side. There is a full basement, where the dressed stone foundation construction can be seen. The house is wood-framed; full dimension lumber and square nails are evident. The 10 ft. wide covered porch dominates the south, west, and north elevations. The main entrance is on the west elevation: the downstairs has a center door with a set of two windows flanking the entrance; three evenly spaced windows dominate the top floor. There is a 1950s era extended-gable rear addition placed on the east side; original exterior building elements are visible on the interior. Overall, the exterior of the building maintains excellent historical integrity. The bottom interior of the house has been modified, although many original elements remain; the interior of the second floor is divided into several small sleeping rooms, and appears to retain much of its historical integrity.

The barn is north of the main house; it measures 68 ½ ft. north-south by 65 ½ ft. east-west. It is roughly square building with a multi-pitched gable roof of corrugated iron over wood shingles. The wood-framed structure is covered with V-rustic siding, and is of post construction on a rock foundation. The floor is of tongue and groove construction. Full dimension lumber was used in its construction, and many main structural elements show mortise and tenon cutouts; square cut nails are also evident. The building has been remodeled on the exterior and interior; original lumber was used but evidence of wire nails suggests a later structural strengthening and remodeling for use as a dairy barn.

Other vegetative and physical evidence of the Wakamatsu Colony can still be seen in the local landscape. A large *keaki* (*Zelcova*) tree is next to the house and was planted by the Japanese colonists. The colonists also planted mulberries on the property to the east of the house and barn. The original mulberries have long since died, but approximately 10-12 volunteers remain,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 7 Page 6

suggesting where the colonists conducted their sericulture experiments. During their first year on the property, Wakamatsu colonists excavated and filled a small pond for fish culture. The approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ acre pond is found east of barn; its size varies according to the rainfall. Agricultural lands surround the main house and barn, and extend to the west and east of the main cluster of structures. According to the contemporary newspaper accounts and an 1871 General Land Office Map, Schnell and the Wakamatsu colonists planted these fields with tea plants and a vineyard; while these specific plants are no longer grown, the property has remained as agricultural fields since that time. Comparison of the modern landscape with an 1883 lithograph shows that the physical appearance of the house, as well as the barn, and surrounding agricultural fields has remained remarkably intact.

In 1873, Francis Veerkamp purchased the Wakamatsu Colony lands. His descendants have owned the property since that time, maintained agricultural use of the property. Additional non-contributing buildings represent the tenure of the Veerkamp family. A small wood-framed rectangular (24 ft. x 12.5 ft.) tractor barn is between the primary residence and barn; based on its full dimension lumber, and possible correlation with the 1883 lithograph, it dates to the late 19th century. During the early 20th century use of the farm as a dairy, a long rectangular (68 ft. x 18 ft.) dairy barn and wood-framed residence (49.5 ft. x 24.5 ft.) were built behind (east) of the primary barn. A circa 1930s-1940s rectangular (18 ft. x 24.5 ft.) wood-framed garage was built just northeast of the main residence. Another 1950s residence (24 ft. x 28 ft.) was built east of the main residence, behind a small hill and not in the viewshed of the historic structures. Two additional non-contributing outbuildings are directly across Cold Springs Road from the primary residence. One is small wood-framed rectangular shed (18 ft. x 16 ft.) that may have materials from the early 20th century, but has been reconstructed. The second is a post-1940s rectangular (40 ft. x 60 ft.) shed.

Despite these later additions, the core of the Wakamatsu Colony lands retains integrity of their rural setting. The barn and house are adjacent to Cold Springs Road, the central road running through the town of Gold Hill. As during the tenure of the colony, expansive agricultural fields and rolling hills surround the buildings on all sides, including the lands west of the road. In addition, the vegetation and small pond convey the setting when the colonists occupied the land.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 8 Page 7

Statement of Significance

The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony site is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A at a national level of significance for in the areas of ethnic heritage, agriculture, and early settlement. It is one of the oldest properties in North America associated with Japanese permanent settlement in the United States. Members of the colony occupied the site from 1869-1871. The site has a residence and barn associated with the Wakamatsu settlers, mulberry trees (for sericulture) planted by the colonists, and associated agricultural fields and pond. The agricultural setting, including surrounding farmlands, has remarkable integrity, maintaining its rural setting. Overall, the site represents the vanguard of Japanese American contributions to the culture of the United States.

The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony contributes significantly to the broader patterns of the nation's history under the themes of Ethnic Heritage and Exploration/Settlement as the site of the first permanent settlement of Japanese immigrants in the continental United States. The Wakamatsu colonists occupied the site from the summer of 1869 to the spring of 1871, and were a critical portent of the Japanese immigration to come in the last decades of the 19th century. Of the 55 people of Japanese heritage documented by a United States census in 1870, 22 were settled at the Wakamatsu Colony in Gold Hill. The added uniqueness of the some of the Wakamatsu colonists, members of the Japanese samurai (military) class, adds another level of importance the ethnic heritage of the site. Mary Schnell, the daughter of Jou and John Henry Schnell, was two months old at the time of the census, and the first child of a Japanese immigrant born in the U.S. During the dedication of the California Historical Landmark plaque, the year 1969 was designated as the centennial of the Japanese immigration to the United States.

The contributions of the colony to California's agricultural industry are tied culturally to their Japanese heritage and include a focus on sericulture and tea, Japan's two most important export industries at the time the colony was established. While some prior experimentation with tea and silk farming had been attempted (by non-Japanese) in California, these efforts met with little success. Under the theme of Agriculture, the contributions of the Colony to the agriculture industry are recognized; they mark the beginning of Japanese influence on the agricultural economy of California and the United States. The Japanese colonists, like the later Japanese immigrants of the 1880s and 1890s, made significant contributions to the agricultural development and crop specialization, particularly in the western United States. For nearly a century and a half, the integrity of the rural agricultural setting of the Colony has been maintained, including the residence occupied by colonists and the native trees that they planted.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 8 Page 8

Historical Context

To understand the significance of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony, it is important to highlight the context of Japanese society that the immigrants were fleeing. Beginning in the early 17th century, Tokugawa shogunates emphasized cultural isolation and prohibited Japanese citizens from traveling abroad. This isolationist doctrine remained in place until Commodore William Perry, acting for United States, forced open several Japanese ports to U.S. trade in 1853-1854.

In the 1860s, the cultural isolation was faltering. Matsudaira Katmori (1835-1893) was distantly related to the Tokugawa family and was a *daimyo* (local lord) of the Aizu Wakamatsu province. Matsudaira disagreed with the Tokugawa policy of isolation, and instead chose to walk a line between "Eastern ethics, Western science." John Henry Schnell and his brother were arms dealers in Japan, and also dabbled in merchandizing other Japanese goods. Matsudaira was one of the Schnell's best customers, and the brothers trained Matsudaira's samurais in the use of firearms. Matsudaira's relationship with Schnell was close enough that he gave him an honorary Japanese name that included two of same *kanji* characters as were in Matsudaira's name. Schnell married a Japanese samurai class woman. Strife between the Tokugawa faction and those who propped up the Emperor for their own benefit resulted in civil war, ultimately leading to the Meiji Restoration, as well as Matsudaira's surrender in 1868 (Van Sant 2000:119-123). Matsudaira was condemned for execution.

After Matsudaira surrendered, the Schnell brothers were in jeopardy. John Henry Schnell, his Japanese wife Jou, and six other Japanese colonists left Japan on May 20, 1869 and arrived in San Francisco seven days later. Schnell intended to purchase lands on behalf of Matsudaira, who thought he may need a place of exile. Schnell was to establish an agricultural colony that would grow tea and mulberry trees, and cultivate silk worms. Schnell chose California as their destination as the state of California (beginning in 1866) used government financing to entice farmers to speculate with sericulture (Starns 1993:86). Parasitic epidemics had destroyed much of the lucrative European sericulture, and many areas were trying to take advantage of this lucrative export trade (Van Sant 2000:124). The 1869 arrival of the colonists received the attention of the San Francisco newspaper *Alta California*, as Japanese immigrants were a relative rarity in the United States.

Prior to the arrival of Schnell's group, there were only a handful of Japanese who came to the continental United States (the history of Japanese influence on Hawaii is complex, and not considered here, as Hawaii did not formally become part of the U.S. until 1959). Van Sant (2000) suggests that the first two Japanese arrivals were castaway sailors, who arrived in the 1840s, and eventually returned to Japan. In 1860, the Japanese Tokugawa shogunate established an embassy in the United States, and staffed it with 77 members; their stay in the U.S. was temporary. In 1864, a young Japanese man stowed away on a merchant ship, eventually making his way to Massachusetts. There, he became a student and converted to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 8 Page 9

Christianity, returning to Japan as an influential missionary in 1874. A few overseas students (*ryūgakusei*) attended colleges in the west, including two who attended Rutgers University in 1866. More came later to study at Rutgers; with the exception of five students who died, all returned to Japan. In 1867, Six young Japanese samurai men joined the utopian community in upstate New York, known as the Brotherhood of New Life. They had met the charismatic leader of the commune two years earlier, while in England to study Western science and technology. When Civil War erupted in 1868, the six left for Japan, accompanied by several other Japanese who had also come to the commune. Other than these few stories, specific knowledge about the presence of Japanese in the United States prior to 1869 is limited, in part because U.S. census records did not record the Japanese at the embassy, nor did they count temporary visitors, including merchants and other officials.

The Wakamatsu colonists were different from previous Japanese visitors to the continental United States because they intended to permanently settle in California, in contrast to Japanese students, merchants, and diplomats. It was the rarity of this group of Japanese immigrants that caught the attention of the San Francisco *Alta California* newspaper, which noted that the colonists brought means for their agricultural productivity with them, including “50,000 three-year old kuwa [mulberry] trees” used for sericulture, and that 6 million tea seeds would soon be sent to them (Van Sant 2000:124). The newspaper praised the Japanese work ethic, as well as Jou Schnell’s beauty and grace. This was an attitude in contrast to the more prevalent discrimination towards Chinese miners, perhaps because the Wakamatsu colonists cultivated Japanese plants, so that the threat of direct economic competition was generally not perceived.

To establish the Wakamatsu Colony, John Henry Schnell purchased two parcels of land in the town of Gold Hill, near Coloma (where gold was discovered) from Charles Graner on 18 June 1869. He also purchased a third-interest in a nearby quarry, south of the town of Gold Hill. The history of these lands is complicated, as not all land transactions were recorded at the El Dorado County Recorder’s Office. Graner had purchased 160 acres of land from Samuel and Mary Hill in 1856; the Hills had preempted and filed a claim for the land, in anticipation of patenting the land at a later date. Graner already settled an odd-shaped smaller piece of land adjoining the southern border of the Hill property. Although his legal preemption is not on file at the Recorder’s Office, Graner claimed the land, and constructed a house and barn on the smaller piece of land. The Graners sold two acres of this property to the local district in 1868, creating an irregular southern boundary. To further complicate interpretation of land ownership, property boundaries somewhat shifted to the south and west in 1871, when the Government Land Office officially surveyed the land. Through study of neighboring claims, physical survey (Willson 2009), and some approximation, it can be closely estimated that the size of the two parcels of land that Schnell purchased was around 180 acres. Because of the complexity of land transactions, there is confusion in the published literature over the size of the original property. Starns (1993:89-90) lists the acreage as 160, but she noted that Schnell reported to the *Alta California* that he had more than 600 acres under cultivation. Van Sant (2000:125) lists the acreage as 640 acres. It is possible that Schnell’s report may have been misconstrued, as

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 8 Page 10

the Japanese measurement of 640 *tan* is equivalent to about 160 acres. Alternatively, Schnell may have embellished. Schnell's report to the newspaper about the size and equipment at the Colony was expansive: he claimed a "large orchard, thousands of bearing vines, grain fields, a good brick [sic] house well furnished, a barn, well-appointed wine house, implements of husbandry, horses, wagons, cows, pigs, fowls, and good and abundant water" (Starns 1993:90). It is difficult to tell how much Schnell was hoping for and what he understood from Graner, as he had yet seen the property. Schnell's purchase certainly included a house, barn, and fields.

In any case, once at the Colony site, the colonists quickly went to work, establishing their farm, planting mulberry trees, oil plants, and constructing a pond for breeding fish. Schnell successfully displayed silk cocoons at the 1869 California State Agricultural Fair in Sacramento. In March 1870, a California newspaper noted that the colonists had received and planted more than 140,000 tea plants. The tea plants were likely planted in the flat fields west of the main residence and barn.

During the fall of 1869, and summer of 1870, at least 26 more Japanese colonists came to join the Wakamatsu Farm. Some of the colonists were farmers, some skilled workers such as a carpenter, and some were of the lower samurai class. According to the 1870 U.S. census, there were 55 Japanese in the United States. Of these, 22 were colonists at Wakamatsu: 14 men, 6 women, and 2 children. The two children were Schnell's daughters, one born in Japan, and one at the Wakamatsu site. Van Sant (2000:125) estimates that the number of Japanese colonists at Wakamatsu was more likely 35, by far the largest grouping of Japanese settlers in the United States at that time.

At the 1870 Horticultural Fair in San Francisco, Schnell and two colonists displayed tea plants and silkworms. The colonists also planted grapevines and the 1870 census lists Fred Dielbol, a Swiss winemaker, present at the Colony. The 1871 General Land Office map makes note of "Schnell's Vineyard." The local newspaper, the *Mountain Democrat*, praised the industriousness of the Japanese colonists (Starns 1993:93; Van Sant 2000:126-127).

The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm was destined to be short-lived. Many factors contributed to the Colony's collapse: temporary drought, competition for water with local miners who "jumped claim," poor management skills, and the withdrawal of financial support from Matsudaira. Surprisingly, the new Meiji government pardoned Matsudaira; he chose to become a Shinto priest and remain in Japan. A short but ill-timed drought caused the tea plants to wither and die. To make matters worse, a few local miners diverted water from a stream on the property. Documents at the Recorder's Office show that Schnell was in legal trouble regarding the land ownership by the end of December, 1870. In June 1871, Schnell left California, along with his wife Jou, and their two daughters. Although he promised to return, he did not, effectively abandoning the other Japanese colonists. According to Sioli (1883:112), whose source was likely Francis Veerkamp, Schnell was killed after he returned to Japan.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 8 Page 11

The fate of only three of the colonists is specifically known. Matsunosuke Sakurai, likely a former samurai, worked for the Veerkamp family who had purchased the Wakamatsu lands in 1873. According to Veerkamp family oral tradition, he was a “wonderful gardener” and friend of the family (Yohalem 1977:220). Matsunosuke lived in Gold Hill until his death in 1901. Okei, a young nursemaid for the Schells, also stayed with the Veerkamp family. She died at age 19 in 1871, and is buried on Veerkamp property, nearby (but outside of) the Wakamatsu property. Her gravesite is still maintained by members of the local Japanese American community, and a replica of her gravesite has been created in Aizu Wakamatsu, Japan. Masumizu Kuninosuke, a young carpenter, moved to nearby Coloma and became a farmer and miner. He married Carrie Wilson, a woman of African and American Indian descent, in 1877. He and his family eventually moved to Sacramento. Masumizu Kuninosuke died in 1915, at the age of 66. His descendants remain in the area and were interrogated by the FBI in the 1940s (during World War II) to determine if they should be classified as “enemy aliens” (they were not). As for the others, some traveled to, and stayed in, San Francisco. Only a few possibly returned to Japan; records are scarce because they would have been considered enemies of the Meiji government (Van Sant 2000:128-129).

Although it was short-lived (1869-1871), the Colony had an affect on U.S. agricultural traditions. The colonists themselves were the vanguard of Japanese *Issei* (first-generation Japanese immigrants) into the United States. Large numbers of Japanese began to arrive on U.S. mainland in the 1880s. The Meiji restoration had brought an end to Civil War, but it also began a period of rapid modernization, due to contact with the Western world. The resulting social upheaval caused many to look for new places to settle and continue their traditional agricultural practices. Many of the *Issei* adopted the agricultural colony model as a mechanism for maintaining their cultural connections. By 1900, there were more than 24,000 Japanese living in the continental United States (Daniels 1988:115). Most lived in the western states, and their affect on local agriculture was profound (Daniels 1988:143); in California, for example more than 10% of all California farm products were produced by Japanese Americans (Van Sant 2000:129). As Daniels (in Van Sant 2000:x) notes, the story of the earljest Japanese immigrants highlights the facets of multiculturalism in the United States. The National Park Service commissioned *Five Views, An Ethnic Site Survey for California*, intended to celebrate and highlight the country’s ethnic diversity; the story of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm is featured in the section on Japanese American heritage.

In 1924, a resurgence of interest in the Wakamatsu story began. Late attorney and Sacramento Japanese American community leader Henry Taketa interviewed Henry Veerkamp, who was one year older than Okei, and 75 at the time of the interview (Taguma 2007). Local Japanese Americans started to tend Okei’s gravesite, and the story of the Wakamatsu Colony re-emerged. In 1969, then governor Ronald Reagan proclaimed the Wakamatsu Colony site to be a California Historical Landmark No. 815. The Japanese American Citizens League and the Japanese Consul General Shima Seiichi supported the proclamation. Matsudaira Ichiro, the grandson of the colonist’s *daimyo* financier, also attended the ceremony. The Japanese

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 8 Page 12

American community designated 1969 as the Japanese American centennial. In 1986, Yoshiki Inomata, the Mayor of Aiza Wakamatsu, Japan wrote a letter of thanks to Malcolm Veekamp, praising the family for their care of the gravesite. In 2001, the Veerkamp family donated an original Wakamatsu banner with the Colony's lotus blossom crest, and a ceremonial dagger (possibly a short samurai sword) that may have belonged to Jou Schnell to the nearby Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park. In 2007, a Veerkamp descendant found photographs of the colonists in an envelope; the photographs were taken at an historically known photography studio in Placerville, California.

When Francis and Louisa Veerkamp purchased the Wakamatsu Colony lands in 1873, they blended local and national history. The Veerkamps had settled in Gold Hill in 1852, and purchased land adjacent to the Colony and in nearby communities to settle their six sons. The Veerkamp family maintained the rural agricultural nature of the property, preserving the heritage and landscape of the Wakamatsu Colony. Through many complicated land transactions, the Wakamatsu lands have passed to several Veerkamp sons and daughters of subsequent generations. The Helen L. Veerkamp Revocable Trust (Gary Veerkamp, Trustee) currently holds approximately 127 acres of the original approximate 180 acres of the Wakamatsu Colony lands; they also hold much adjoining acreage. The 54.3 acres included in this nomination constitute the heart of the Colony, centered on the main structures, mulberry plantings, pond, vineyard, and surrounding flat agricultural lands to convey the rural setting of the Colony farmlands. The association of the Wakamatsu Colony with the remaining acreage is not as immediately apparent, although archaeological survey and investigation may enhance the association. The remaining acreage (outside of the nominated 54.3 acres) has retained its agricultural setting, but is comprised of more rolling hills that are less likely to have been farmed by the Wakamatsu colonists, and has been further influenced by cattle grazing and the early 20th century construction of a small 6-acre lake.

The American River Conservancy currently leases portions of the land from the Helen Veerkamp Trust. The Conservancy's intention is to preserve the site, rehabilitate the structures, and to identify appropriate governmental partners to develop an historical park celebrating the heritage of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm. *Nichi Bei Times*, Northern California's oldest Japanese American newspaper, has recently published an article supporting these efforts (Taguma 2007). The National Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Citizens League (Florin, Placer, Sacramento and National Chapters), Congresswoman Doris Matsui, Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi, El Dorado County Supervisor Ron Briggs, the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, and many others public figures and private citizens also support this preservation effort.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 9 Page 13

Bibliography

Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, CA

var. Land patent and General Land Office Management records.

Daniels, Roger

1988 *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.

El Dorado County Recorder's Office, El Dorado County, CA

var. Preemption and land ownership records.

Inomata, Yoshiki

2006 Letter to Malcom Veerkamp. Online at <<http://www.directcon.net/pharmer/Wakamatsu/Wakamatsu.html>>. Mayor of Aizuwakamatsu City.

National Park Service

2004 A History of Japanese Americans in California. Part of *Five Views, An Ethnic Site Survey for California*. On-line book found at <http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/5views/5views4a.htm>.

Sioli, Paolo

1883 *Historical Souvenir of El Dorado County, California*. Paolo Sioli, Publisher, Oakland, California. Reprinted in 1998 by Cedar Ridge Publishing, Georgetown, California.

Starns, Jean E.

1993 *Gold Hill: Bonds of Time, Families & Land*. James Stevenson, publisher, Fairfield, California.

State of California, Executive Department

1969 "Proclamation by Governor Ronald Reagan," February 3, California State Archives, Sacramento.

Taguma, Kenji G.

2007 Where it all Began: Preserving the First Settlement of Japanese in America. *Nichi Bei Times* April 26. Available at: <<http://www.nichibeitimes.com>>.

Van Sant, John E.

2000 *Pacific Pioneers: Japanese Journeys to America and Hawaii, 1850-1880*. University of Illinois Press, Chicago.

Willson, James E.

2009 Letter to Rebecca Allen, 13 March 2009. Licensed land surveyor, Carlton Engineering.

Yohalem, Betty

1977 "I Remember..." *Stories and Pictures of El Dorado County Pioneer Families*. El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce, Placerville, California.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number 10 Page 14

Geographical Data

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>10S</u>	<u>683568</u>	<u>4293385</u>
2	<u>10S</u>	<u>684399</u>	<u>4293217</u>
3	<u>10S</u>	<u>684401</u>	<u>4293008</u>
4	<u>10S</u>	<u>683781</u>	<u>4292944</u>
5	<u>10S</u>	<u>683484</u>	<u>4293022</u>
6	<u>10S</u>	<u>683458</u>	<u>4293163</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is an irregular shape, located in Township 11 North, Range 10 East of El Dorado County, California, north of the main intersection in Gold Hill, and two miles south of the town of Coloma. Most of the land is in the N 1/3 of the NE 1/4 of Section 32, with smaller portions jutting eastwards into the NE 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of Section 32, and northwards into the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 29 and the SE 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of Section 29.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes 54.3 acres of the approximate 180 acres that comprised the original purchase of lands for the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm. (The Helen Veerkamp Revocable Trust, and another family through a different Veerkamp daughter, own portions of the remaining acreage). The nominated acreage maintains sufficient physical integrity and integrity of rural setting to convey the history of the Wakamatsu Colony. Included in this acreage is the heart of the Wakamatsu Colony lands, including a residence, barn, associated vegetation (including a *keaki* and mulberry trees), pond, and surrounding flat agricultural fields.

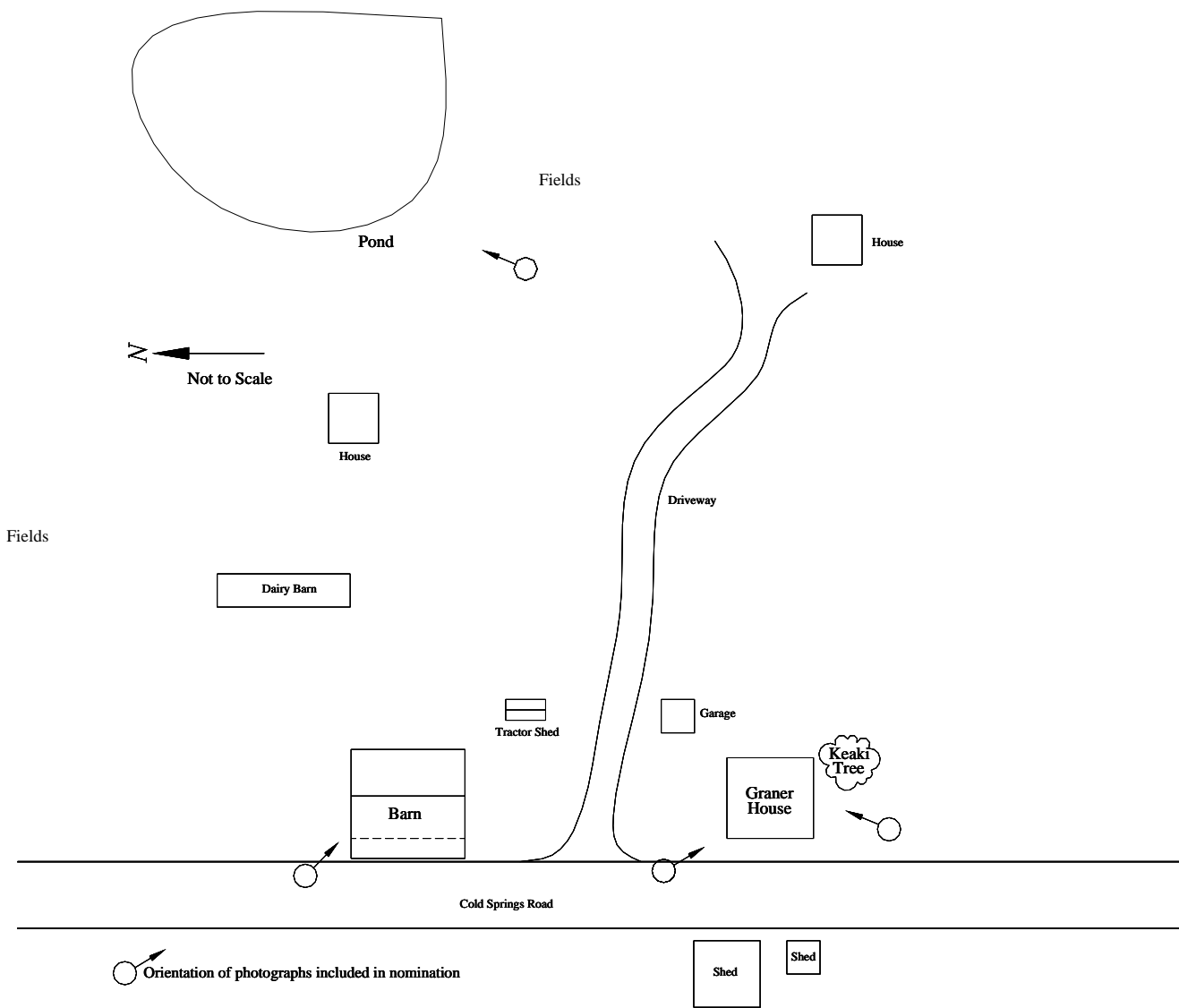
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number Additional Documentation Page 15

SKETCH MAP



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm
El Dorado County, CA

Section number Additional Documentation Page 16

Aerial View

