

Cultural Resources Nomination Application

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure of Merit
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Please check the Designation for which you are applying

IDENTIFICATION

1. Common name: Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13
2. Historic Name: Mercantile Hall, Stokes & Wiley Grocery Store
3. Street address: 2931 12th Street (Other addresses: 2933 & 2935 12th Street)
City Riverside State CA Zip 92507
4. Assessor Parcel number: 211-203-015
5. Present Legal Owner: Lodge #13 F&AM TRS
City Riverside State CA Zip 92507
6. Present Use: Fraternal Hall
7. Original Use: Commercial/Assembly

Date form prepared: November 27, 2024

Preparer: Jennifer Mermilliod, JMRC

Sponsoring Organization (if any): (for: Riverside Housing Development Corporation)

Address: 4076 Brockton Avenue, Suite 201

City, State and Zip: Riverside, CA 92501

Phone: (951) 233-6897

DESCRIPTION

8. Legal property description: LOT 15, BLK 4 MB 006/014 SB SANTA FE TR

Include approximate property size (in feet): Street Frontage 50 Depth 150

9. Architectural Style: Commercial Vernacular

10. Construction Date: Estimated _____ Factual 1905
Source of Information: Assessor's Records _____ Building Permit _____ Sanborn Map
X Publications _____ Oral Interviews

11. Architect's Name: unknown Builder's Name: David Samuel Stokes

12. Condition: Excellent X Good Fair Deteriorated
No longer in existence

13. Alterations: Facade remodel (1951), building stuccoed (1951, 1993), stone veneer (1993)

14. Surroundings:
X Open Land X Scattered Buildings X Densely Built-Up
(across block) (same block) (vicinity)

15. Use type:
Residential Industrial X Commercial Civic
X Other (Fraternal)

16. Is the structure on its original site?
X Yes No Unknown
If moved, approximate year _____

17. Related features and/or out-buildings: None

SIGNIFICANCE

18. Historical Attributes:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown | <input type="checkbox"/> Government Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Folk Art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Street Furniture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ancillary Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Depot | <input type="checkbox"/> Trees/Vegetation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hotel/Motel | <input type="checkbox"/> Train | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Open Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Open Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Canal/Aqueduct |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm/Ranch | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Dam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utility Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Lake/River/Reservoir |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CCC/WPA Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Minority Prop. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Highway/Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Auditorium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amusement Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Woman's Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Monument/Mural/Gravestone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital | <input type="checkbox"/> Stadium |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mine | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Center/Social Hall | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial Building, 1-3 stories | <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial Building, over 3 stories | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |

19. Architectural Description

IS Architecture 2022, attached

20. Statement of Significance

IS Architecture 2022, attached

21. Bibliography

IS Architecture 2022, attached

22. Photographs

23. Letter from property owner (if other than applicant)

Historic Photos (attached):

1. 1912 Mercantile Hall
2. 1933 Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13 28th Anniversary Dinner
3. ca. 1950s Orange Valley Lodge #13 Credit: African American Museum & Library at Oakland
4. ca. 1950s Masons in Front of Orange Valley Lodge #13 Credit: AAM&L at Oakland
5. ca. 1950s (2) Masons in Front of Orange Valley Lodge #13 Credit AAM&L at Oakland
6. ca. 1950s Order of Eastern Star in Front of Orange Valley Lodge #13 Credit AAM&L at Oakland
7. 2013 Group in Front of Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13



JM Research and Consulting
Jennifer Mermilliod, M.A., Principal
Architectural Historian | Historian | Preservation Planner

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 27, 2024
TO: Scott Watson, Historic Preservation Officer
City of Riverside
FROM: Jen Mermilliod, JMRC
SUBJECT: Mercantile Hall/Orange Valley Masonic Lodge No. 13

JM Research & Consulting (JMRC) is pleased to submit a Cultural Resources Nomination Application for Riverside City Landmark for the Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13, historically known as Mercantile Hall and Stokes & Wiley Grocery Store.

With a period of significance spanning 71 years, from 1905 to 1976, the building embodies a long history of engagement with the Eastside African- and Mexican-American communities. Constructed in 1905 by David Stokes, treasurer of the Second Baptist Church and member of the Orange Valley Masonic Lodge No. 13, the Colored American Mercantile Hall first housed the Stokes and Wiley Grocery Store and Will Goodman ice cream and sweet shop on the first floor and a meeting room on the second floor. Promoting African American entrepreneurship and patronage, Mercantile Hall also supported Black fraternal orders, social meetings and gatherings, community engagement and education, and local civil activism significant in the broader civil rights context, from raising funds for the defense of the Scottsboro boys in 1931 to serving as a Freedom School in the 1965 during the boycott of de facto segregation in Eastside public schools (Lowell, Irving, and Casa Blanca) after the burning of Lowell School.

Long known to be an important place on the Eastside and within Riverside's African American community, a reconnaissance pedestrian survey of the property was completed in 2022 by Teri Delcamp as part of the development of the City of Riverside African American Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Statement (1870-1976) by IS Architecture. The study found Mercantile Hall significant under National Register and California Register Criterion A/1 for "serving as a place of continuous work in economic nationalism, labor issues, and civil planning over decades before, through, and after the Civil Rights Movement," and under Criterion B/2 "for its association with David Stokes and Aaron Wiley who were significant in Riverside's African-American history under themes of Education, Employment & Entrepreneurship, and Social Groups, Organizations & Formalized Resistance." Although not clearly stated, the assignment by the 2022 survey of a California Historical Resource (CHR) Status Code of 5S3 allows for eligibility at the local level only, which is likely due to reduced integrity from alterations over time that have masked original architectural details particularly on the façade.

JMRC unreservedly supports the finding of Delcamp 2022. As eligibility is considered on the local level, and is based not on architecture, but on the strong association of the building with important events and people in our history, a lower threshold is properly applied to assess integrity. The building remains in its original location and within the historic setting of its time, a neighborhood of modest single-family historic dwellings, across the street from a community park and near the railroad and citrus commercial and industrial corridor. This contributes to



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retention of feeling and association as does the fact that the building is still under the ownership and active use by the Orange Valley Masonic Lodge No. 13 for fraternal meetings and events as well as a social and community gathering space. Integrity of design, craftsmanship, and materials has been reduced by modifications over the course of the 20th century, which include the infill of the façade storefront and windows, balcony overhang, and application of stucco over wood siding; however, the essential mass and form remains intact. Further, historic photos show that the first façade improvement that infilled the storefront and added the second floor balcony and port hole windows was completed between 1933 and the 1950s, placing the most critical modifications well within the historic period and significant in their own right (see Landmark Nomination Application: historic photos). Thus, Mercantile Hall retains integrity in those aspects most closely relate to its significance and an overall sufficiently high degree of integrity to reflect the full breadth of its time and place in the Eastside community, from 1905 to 1976, qualifying as a City of Riverside Landmark under Criterion 1: “Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history” and under Criterion 2: “Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history.”

This modest building is deserving of rightful historic recognition among its Riverside peers such as the Community Settlement House and the Harada House. The local *Colored Citizen* newspaper succinctly stated the importance of the endeavor in its time: “This was the biggest enterprise undertaken by the colored people of Riverside.” Designating the Mercantile Hall – Orange Valley Masonic Lodge No. 13 as a City Landmark contextualizes the full realization of the promise of that endeavor, 120 years later, for the African-American community and all of Riverside.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jme', is positioned below the text 'Best Regards,'.

Jennifer Mermilliod, Principal, JMRC

Statement of Qualifications

Jennifer Mermilliod, M.A., Principal Architectural Historian exceeds the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards as a Historian and Architectural Historian based on her Master of Arts degree in History with a Focus in Historic Preservation from the University of California, Riverside, and 25 years of professional work in southern California. She has extensive experience in the production and management of a variety of projects, including National Register and California Register nominations, local designations, large-scale surveys, and Section 106 and CEQA reviews. She has engaged in policy and preservation planning, project management, and oversight of restoration work, served as a consultant and expert witness, developed training and educational programs, and presented professionally on historic preservation and related topics. Ms. Mermilliod is fluent in regulatory compliance and proficient at applying eligibility criteria, analyzing project impacts, and developing successful design solutions, mitigation, and specifications. With project size ranging from a single property to thousands of parcels, Ms. Mermilliod works extensively throughout the region and is thoroughly familiar with the history and development of southern California.

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

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*Resource Name or #: Mercantile Hall

P1. Other Identifier: Stokes & Wiley Grocery Store

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County: Riverside

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Riverside East, CA Date: 1984

c. Address: 2931 12th Street

City: Riverside

Zip: 92507

d. UTM: 33.984932463242899 mE/ -117.37321007723099 mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data:

2933 & 2935 12th St; circa 1908: 263-269 12th Street

***P3a. Description:**

This two-story, wood-frame structure was built on a square plan with a flat roof. Circa 1912, the building had a false front parapet, clad in wood siding with glass storefronts and transoms on the first floor and two rectangular windows on the second floor. By the 1950s, the false front parapet had been removed and wide horizontal coping had been added between the first and second floor. The coping and the first floor were clad in stucco with a brick veneer wainscot below multi-lite windows, and the second floor was clad in vertical siding and three porthole windows had been added by that time. In 1993 the building was entirely re-stuccoed, the four columns and the brick wainscot were clad in stone veneer, and the first-floor windows were removed, which achieved the building's current Commercial Vernacular style. The second story front façade includes a solid door to access the coping roof and three porthole windows. (See Continuation Sheet)

*P3b. Resource Attributes: HP13. Community Center/Social Hall

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing



P5b. Description of Photo:
Front Elevation looking NE
IS Architecture, 2022.

*P6. Date Constructed/Age:
 Historic Prehistoric Both
1905 Riverside Enterprise

*P7. Owner and Address:

*P8. Recorded by:
Teri Delcamp, MA
IS Architecture
5645 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, California 92037

*P9. Date Recorded:
August 2022

*P10. Survey Type: Reconnaissance/pedestrian

*P11. Report Citation: *City of Riverside African American Civil Rights Movement Historic Context Statement (1870-1976)*

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name: Mercantile Hall

*NRHP Status Code: 5S3

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B1. Historic Name:

B2. Common Name: Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13

B3. Original Use: Commercial/Assembly

B4. Present Use: Fraternal Lodge

*B5. Architectural Style: Commerical Vernacular

*B6. Construction History:

1951, Permit 10692, Orange Valley Masonic Lodge #13 - Stucco outside, reinforce foundation, remodel front

1993, Permit 93-0468, Masons/David Jenkins - Restucco building, install 4' stone veneer

1993, Permit 93-0708, David Jenkins - Reroof, replace electrical, add door

(See Continuation Sheet)

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: N/A Original Location: N/A

*B8. Related Features: N/A

B9a. Architect: Unk

b. Builder: David Samuel Stokes

*B10. Significance Theme: 1,2,3

Area: Eastside

Period of Significance: 1905-1976 Property Type: Fraternal Hall Applicable Criteria: A/1, B/2

The two-story wood-frame Mercantile Hall was built by David Stokes along with other black investors and opened in 1905. David Stokes was treasurer of the Second Baptist Church and a member of the Orange Valley Masons Lodge No. 13. David Stokes and Aaron Wiley ran the Stokes and Wiley Grocery Store on the first floor along with an ice cream/sweet shop run by Will Goodwin, and the second floor was used for a multi- purpose gathering space. According to The Colored Citizen newspaper, "This was the biggest enterprise undertaken by the colored people of Riverside." Places such as Mercantile Hall promoted both the establishment and patronage of Riverside's African American-owned businesses. By the 1950s its primary use was the Orange Valley Masonic Lodge. It served as a multipurpose building for the Eastside African- and Mexican American communities. It housed businesses and was home to African-American fraternal orders. In 1931, the African-American community met at Mercantile Hall to raise funds for the defense of the Scottsboro boys. It was the site of meetings, strike planning, and arrests. (See Continuation Sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes:

*B12. References: *Riverside Permits Online.*

City of Riverside, Planning Department Address Files.

City of Riverside City Directories

Digital Sanborn Maps.

McAlester, Virginia, and A. Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses.

New York: Knopf, 2013.

B13. Remarks: None.

*B14. Evaluator: IS Architecture

*Date of Evaluation: August 2022

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Property Name: Mercantile Hall
Page 3 of 3

P3a. Description: Continued

A full-width/full-height mural on the front elevation features the profiles of Cesar Chavez and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the second floor. The masonic symbol is painted on the center of the front elevation at the first floor. "Orange Valley Lodge #13 is painted on the front of the coping, and an internally-lit cabinet sign projects from the building and rests on the top of the coping at the east end. There are no windows on the first floor; three solid doors provide access to the building, each raised above the public sidewalk by a set of two or three concrete steps. The west side elevation features a full-width/full-height mural painted by Juan Navarro, Maryam Crogman and Willis Salomon that celebrates Eastside Riverside history and personages and includes a representation of the Stokes & Wiley store. The upper level of this elevation features a double hung window near the rear corner, and two louvred vents below the roofline that has one step along its edge. The east side elevation exhibits a long, horizontal rectangular frame along the upper level that contains one double-hung window near the rear corner. The coping with the stone veneer cladding below it wraps the front corner of this elevation by about six feet. The roofline has the same step as the west elevation.

***B6. Construction History: Continued**

2002, Permit No. 02-0284, Lodge #13 - Reroof

***B10. Significance: Continued**

It also became a "Freedom School" along with churches and homes in 1965 during the boycott of de facto segregation in Eastside public schools (Lowell, Irving, and Casa Blanca) after the burning of Lowell School. Mercantile Hall is significant under criterion A/1 for serving as a place of continuous work in economic nationalism, labor issues, and civil planning over decades before, through, and after the Civil Rights Movement, and under Criterion B/2 for its association with David Stokes and Aaron Wiley who were significant in Riverside's African-American history under themes of Education, Employment & Entrepreneurship, and Social Groups, Organizations & Formalized Resistance.