

FIELD SURVEY FORM - FOLK ART ENVIRONMENTS

This form has been prepared by SPACES as part of a national survey of American folk art environments. It is intended to serve as a basic information sheet on an individual site. Any additional information can be added to this sheet or attached to it. Please send SPACES a copy of this form, along with xeroxes of any photographs or printed materials. Direct any questions to SPACES at the address and phone number listed above.

ARTIST: Name, address and phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Is artist still working on site \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No  
Emanuele "Litto" Damonte

Dates of Birth Feb. 2, 1892 Death \_\_\_\_\_ Place of Birth Aranzano, Genoa (Italy)

ENVIRONMENT: Name of site (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

Years of construction: started collection in 1943. Began installation in 1957, when he hung a few hubcaps on the wall.

Location: (if located in a rural area, give directions to find site)  
Pope Valley Road, near Pope Valley Garage  
Pope Valley, California  
(60 acres, 100 miles northeast of San Francisco) (St. Helena)

Description of site: (Describe here the materials used and the general appearance. Attach other sheets as needed. Use the reverse side of this form to draw map.)

On his rural property of some 60 acres, Litto has decorated the fences, house, barns, sheds and trees with his collection of hubcaps (estimated to be 2,000 - 3,000 in number), plus bottles, cans, pencils, pots, pails, pieces of metal, bones saved from meals, cattle skulls, discarded toilets, road signs, creche, flower pot, lantern, TV-dinner plates, license-plate holders and bird houses.

Biography: Born in Italy, Litto moved to the U.S. (San Francisco) in 1907. Although he wanted to be a priest, he worked as a marble cutter--mosaic and terrazzo, and did contract <sup>cement</sup> work, from 1920's - 1940's. He so hated paying taxes, that he moved to Pope Valley in 1942, to farm. He was married (his wife died in 1954), had 7 children and 25 grandchildren.

Quotes: regarding his hubcaps, "I never buy, sell or give them away. I just collect. That's all." "When I die and go to heaven, I want a hubcap with my name and years I lived instead of a tombstone." regarding the bones, "I look at those bones and remember all those good meals." "I just did it." "I'm Litto. I'm here." "I didn't know myself why I started. People come, they bring hubcaps, and I hang them up. I didn't have no idea it was going to turn out like this." "This is my place; Litto's place. It's nobody's but mine. You can travel all you want, you don't see no hubcap ranch, no hubcap king all over the world."

Present owner, custodian (if different from artist) Name, address, phone (or closest relative)

Litto: (707) 965-2342 / address: Pope Valley Road, Pope Valley CA  
nearest relative: Emanuele Damonte, Jr.: San Francisco (his son)

Local person or group involved with site, or potential information source: (Chamber of Commerce, closest paper, Historical Society, local college or library):

Local attitudes toward site (how big a sample?):

CONDITION: Present Condition (Check appropriate lines and explain)

- Excellent (structurally sound, well-maintained)
- Good (Structurally sound, needs routine maintenance)
- Fair (in need of repairs other than routine maintenance)
- Deteriorating (in need of major repairs)
- Ruins
- Destroyed (Date)

Threats to Survival (Check appropriate line and explain)

- Weather
- Vandalism
- Deterioration of site or materials
- Inappropriate alteration
- Long range plans for area (e.g. redevelopment)
- Are local attitudes toward the site a threat to its survival?
- Other

SITE PLAN: Sketch map of site with directional arrow showing north. Give overall dimensions of site. Mention any streets that bound site. Give scale used (1/4" = 1')

PHOTOGRAPH: We encourage the photodocumentation of the site: a long shot to establish the context of the site and any important details. The photograph should be labeled with the name of the environment and the direction from which it was photographed, i.e., from the south, etc. Also include the photographers name and date of shooting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: e.g. any awards, newspaper articles, etc.

California State Landmark #939

ABOUT THIS FORM: Prepared by: Name, organization, address and phone  
Susan Alderson Hoffmann, SPACES  
Date: July 1, 1984