

Island Legacies

A HISTORY OF THE ISLANDS WITHIN CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

San Miguel Island — Santa Rosa Island — Santa Cruz Island
Anacapa Island — Santa Barbara Island



HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA

D. S. (Dewey) Livingston
2016

with portions adapted and updated from *Historic Resource Study*
Channel Islands National Monument and San Miguel Island, California
by Lois Weinman Roberts, Chambers Consultants and Planners (May 1979)

[NPS administrative / publishing information text]

This study was researched and written in 1998-2006, with updates to 2015.
Condition assessments were made in 2001-2002; conditions may have changed.

Book design, layout, contemporary maps and photography
(unless otherwise noted) by Dewey Livingston

Contractor:
Dewey Livingston
Cultural Resources Consultant
P.O. Box 296
Inverness, CA 94937
415-669-7706
dlive@svn.net

Table of Contents

Administrative.....	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Preface.....	xi
Key to abbreviations used in text and footnotes.....	xii
Section 1: The Channel Islands: An Overview.....	1
Location and Description.....	3
Brief Natural History of the Channel Islands.....	4
Introductory History of the Channel Islands.....	7
Overview.....	7
Summary of Prehistoric Occupancy.....	8
Voyages of Exploration and Interactions with Chumash Occupants.....	11
The Mission Era.....	16
Otter and Seal Hunting.....	18
Exploitation of Other Sea Mammals.....	20
Sheep and Cattle Ranching	22
Coast Surveys and Mapping	27
Shipwrecks in the Channel Islands	32
Channel Islands National Monument.....	32
Enlarging The Monument.....	35
The San Diego Years.....	38
Channel Islands National Park.....	40
Conclusion.....	41
Section 2: San Miguel Island	43
Physical Description.....	44
History of San Miguel Island.....	45
Prehistory.....	45
Contact and Exploration.....	46
The Spanish Era (1542-1821).....	46
Mexican Era (1821-1848).....	47
United States Coast Survey.....	49
Settlement and Early Industry.....	50
George Nidever’s Sheep Ranch, 1850-1870.....	50
The Heyday of Sheep Ranching.....	53
Mills Brothers Ranch, 1870-1887.....	54
William G. Waters at San Miguel Island, 1887-1916.....	55
Robert L. Brooks Lease.....	69
The Lester Years on San Miguel Island, 1929-1942.....	73
Final Ranching Lease.....	81
Filming of Mutiny on the Bounty	82
Lighthouse Reservation and Aids to Navigation	83
Military Uses.....	84
U. S. Marines Temporary Radio Outpost, 1933.....	84
Transfer to U. S. Navy Administration.....	86
World War II Coastal Lookout Stations.....	86
B-24 Crash, 1943.....	88
Post World War II: Bombing Range Established.....	89
Joint Use: Navy and Air Force.....	91
Condition of San Miguel Island in 1961.....	92
Pacific Missile Range Administration and Use.....	93
Danger Zone, 1965.....	96

The End of Sheep Grazing, 1966.....	98
Pacific Missile Range in the 1970s.....	99
Squatters and Judgments Relative to Title.....	100
Cooperation with National Park Service.....	101
Shipwrecks.....	104
Scientific Study.....	109
Historic Resources.....	115
The Landscape.....	115
Buildings.....	115
Structures and Features	117
Submerged Cultural Resources.....	129
Recommendations.....	130
Historic Base Maps.....	131
Section 3: Santa Rosa Island.....	135
Physical Description.....	136
History of Santa Rosa Island.....	138
Prehistory, Contact and Exploration.....	138
The Otter Trade at and Around Santa Rosa Island	140
Early Ranching on Santa Rosa Island.....	143
The Carrillo Family.....	144
Jones and Thompson.....	146
More Family Ownership.....	157
U. S. Coast Survey at Santa Rosa Island, 1860-1873.....	159
The 1870s.....	164
The 1880s.....	167
The 1890s.....	170
The Vail & Vickers Ranch, 1901-1998	179
Walter L. Vail, 1852-1906.....	179
J. V. Vickers, 1850-1913.....	183
Vail & Vickers Take Control of Santa Rosa Island.....	183
Transition from Sheep to Cattle.....	185
Cattle Ranching on Santa Rosa Island.....	189
Use of Buildings.....	201
Roads and Trails.....	209
Water Resources.....	212
Vegetation and Range Management.....	213
Weather and Drought.....	217
Fires on Santa Rosa Island.....	218
Ranch Management.....	219
Ranch Life.....	233
The Island School.....	236
Maritime Ranching.....	238
Transition Period: The End of an Era.....	254
Military Uses of Santa Rosa Island.....	264
U. S. Army During World War II.....	264
Post-War Military Facilities on Santa Rosa Island.....	272
U. S. Navy Operations on Santa Rosa Island.....	272
Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station at Johnson's Lee.....	274
Aids to Navigation: South Point Light Station	285
Shipwrecks and Bootlegging.....	288
Hunting & Collecting.....	292
Abalone and Shellfish.....	292
Fishing.....	295

Hogs.....	295
Elk and Deer.....	297
Scientific Study on Santa Rosa Island	299
Archeology.....	300
The Channel Islands Biological Survey: Archeology and Paleontology.....	303
Phil C. Orr.....	305
Archeological and Paleontological Study Since 1968.....	311
Geological Study and Commercial Oil Exploration	313
The Natural Sciences: Study on Santa Rosa Island	317
Park Management and Public Access	320
Significance and Recommendations.....	322
Statement of Significance and Context.....	323
Historic Resources.....	329
Buildings.....	329
Ruins.....	349
Structures and Small Scale Features (other than fences)	355
Roads.....	359
Roundups/Corrals.....	367
Fences	374
Water Resources.....	378
Vegetation.....	383
Airstrips.....	387
Nidever Cave	388
Sites.....	388
Summary List of Historic Buildings, Structures and Features.....	390
Historic Base Maps.....	393
Section 4: Santa Cruz Island.....	397
Physical Description.....	398
History of Santa Cruz Island.....	400
Prehistoric Occupancy and First Contacts with Europeans	400
Mission Era.....	403
The Otter Trade and Coastal Smuggling.....	405
Mexican Era.....	406
Andres Castellero and the Rancho Isla de Santa Cruz	408
Early Ranching and Industry.....	411
Greenwell of the U. S. Coast Survey Notes Cultural Features	415
William E. Barron Ownership, 1857-1869	418
Sale of the Island: Santa Cruz Island Company, 1869.....	423
Ranching on Santa Cruz Island, 1869-1880.....	425
The U. S. Coast Survey Maps Santa Cruz Island, 1873-1875	427
Cultural Features Noted by Stehman Forney, 1873-1875.....	435
The Caire Era, 1880-1937.....	438
Biography of Justinian Caire.....	439
Establishment of the Caire Ranch.....	439
The Main Ranch.....	442
Prisoners Harbor.....	450
Out Ranches.....	463
Scorpion Ranch.....	465
Smugglers Ranch.....	487
Campo China or China Ranch	493
Out Ranches Outside of the Study Area	495
Vineyards and Winery.....	499
Sheep Industry.....	505

Dairy Cows and Cattle	516
Poultry.....	521
Horses.....	522
Pigs and Hogs	523
Crops and Farming.....	524
Pasture Feed.....	527
Fields and Pastures.....	528
Water Resources.....	533
Masonry Walls in Creeks and Drainages.....	535
Mining.....	536
Weather and Fires.....	536
The “Mag” Line.....	537
Transportation.....	539
Roads and Trails.....	545
Labor at the Caire Ranch	546
McElrath’s Recollections.....	553
Litigation Amongst the Caire Family	556
Last Years of the Caire Family on Santa Cruz Island.....	572
Other Island Activities During the Caire Era.....	573
The Gherini Ranch, 1926-1998.....	595
The Gherini Family.....	595
Sheep Ranching: The National Trading Company	597
Fields and Pastures.....	606
Improvements at Scorpion and Smugglers, 1928-1979.....	607
Transportation and Communication.....	613
Fishing Camps During the Gherini Era.....	618
The Last Years of Sheep Ranching.....	620
Oil Exploration.....	625
Development Plans and Zoning Debates, 1960s-1980s.....	626
Hunting Clubs.....	629
National Park Service Purchase	631
Conclusion.....	635
The Stanton Ranch, 1937-1987.....	636
Edwin and Evelyn Stanton.....	636
Transition from Sheep to Cattle.....	639
Ranch Life, 1937-1987	644
The Stantons Preserve and Remove Old Buildings	647
Fields and Pastures.....	648
Water Systems.....	651
Roads.....	652
Soil Conservation Service Reports and Agreement, 1949-1950.....	652
Pier at Prisoners Harbor.....	655
Schooner <i>Santa Cruz</i>	657
Telephone System.....	657
Hunting Clubs.....	658
Oil Exploration.....	658
U.C. Field Station.....	659
Carey Stanton’s Stewardship.....	660
The Nature Conservancy.....	662
The Santa Cruz Island Foundation.....	663
National Park Service.....	663
Conclusion.....	665
Military Uses of Santa Cruz Island.....	666
World War II Coastal Lookout Station.....	666

Aids to Navigation: Santa Cruz Island Light 1943-1947.....	668
Fighter Plane Crash on Gherini Ranch, 1949	669
Naval Air Missile Test Center Facilities.....	669
Other Navy Uses, 1951-1959.....	677
Other Military Activities.....	678
Scientific Study on Santa Cruz Island.....	679
Shipwrecks.....	687
Significance.....	694
Statement of Significance and Context.....	695
Historic Resources.....	701
The Gherini Ranch.....	701
Buildings at Scorpion Ranch	701
Buildings at Smugglers Ranch.....	712
Ruins and Sites, East End	715
Rock Walls and Check Dams	718
Rock Piles.....	720
Roads and Trails.....	721
Fences, Gates and Corrals.....	725
Pastures and Fields.....	729
Water Systems and Erosion Control.....	730
Landings and Anchorages.....	732
Airfields.....	733
Vegetation.....	733
The Isthmus.....	737
Prisoners Harbor.....	737
Rancho del Norte.....	746
Navy Base.....	750
Ruins and Sites on the Isthmus	750
Roads and Trails.....	752
Fences and Gates, Pastures and Fields.....	755
“Mag Line”.....	759
Water Systems.....	759
Vegetation.....	769
Summary list of Historic Buildings, Structures and Features.....	770
Historic Base Maps.....	773
Section 5: Anacapa Island.....	781
Physical Description.....	782
History of Anacapa Island.....	782
Prehistory and Contact.....	782
Settlement of Anacapa Island.....	785
Sheep Ranching.....	787
H. Bay Webster.....	788
C. Fay Chaffee and Others.....	791
Raymond “Frenchy” LeDreau.....	793
Anacapa Light Station.....	797
Military Uses.....	809
Point Mugu: Naval Air Missile Test Center	809
Pacific Missile Range.....	812
National Park Service at Anacapa Island.....	812
Scientific Study on Anacapa Island	815
Shipwrecks.....	817
Historic Resources.....	821
Anacapa Island Light Station.....	821

Ruins and Potential Cultural Landscape Features.....	829
List of Contributing Historic Resources	831
Historic Base Maps.....	832
Section 6: Santa Barbara Island.....	835
Physical Description.....	836
History of Santa Barbara Island	837
Native Occupation and Contact	837
Early History.....	839
Government Leases on Santa Barbara Island.....	841
The J. G. Howland Lease.....	842
The Hyder Family on Santa Barbara Island	843
Resort Promotion and Unexploited Leases.....	851
Government Activities on Santa Barbara Island.....	852
Lighthouses.....	852
Proposals to Use Santa Barbara Island for Target Practice.....	855
Naval Range Finder Marker.....	856
World War II.....	856
Further Military Uses of the Island	861
Santa Barbara Island and Channel Islands National Monument.....	861
Exterminating Rabbits on Santa Barbara Island	865
Administration of Santa Barbara Island, 1955-1980.....	868
Santa Barbara Island as a National Park	869
Scientific Research on Santa Barbara Island	870
Shipwrecks.....	871
Historic Resources.....	874
Archeological Resources.....	874
Surveys and Mapping.....	874
Fishing Camps.....	874
The Hyder Ranch.....	875
Coast Guard and Military Era Resources.....	875
Roads and Trails.....	877
Historic Base Maps.....	879
Section 7: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	881
Historic Significance and Recommendations for Preservation.....	882
San Miguel Island.....	882
Santa Rosa Island.....	884
Santa Cruz Island.....	885
Anacapa Island.....	886
Santa Barbara Island.....	887
Shipwrecks of the Channel Islands National Park.....	887
Recommendations for Management and Further Study.....	888
Bibliography.....	891
Appendices.....	913
Index.....	931

Administrative

Channel Islands National Park, established by Public Law 96-199 on March 5, 1980, is comprised of five of the eight offshore islands in California known as the Channel Islands: San Miguel Island, Santa Rosa Island, Santa Cruz Island, Anacapa Island and Santa Barbara Island. These islands together measure approximately 124,114 acres, in addition to the waters surrounding the islands one nautical mile from shore, and are located in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. Prior to designation as a national park, the two smallest islands (Anacapa and Santa Barbara), comprised the Channel Islands National Monument, created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938. San Miguel Island remains under the ownership of the United States Navy but is managed by the Superintendent of Channel Islands National Park. The majority acreage of Santa Cruz Island, while contained within the boundaries of the national park, is owned and managed by a private organization, The Nature Conservancy.

The eight Channel Islands are located off the coast of southern California, stretching from San Diego on the south to Point Conception on the north. The subject islands form the group known as the Santa Barbara Islands (due to their proximity to that city) or the Northern Channel Islands, although Santa Barbara Island is usually associated with the southern group. The islands possess significance for their unique and rich natural resources and their fascinating and important archeological and historical resources, qualities that led to their designation as a National Park Service (NPS) unit.

This study, while providing only a brief overview of natural resources, provides a detailed human history of the subject islands with the intent of aiding not only a general understanding of the islands and an appreciation of their history, but to help planners, resource managers and interpreters to facilitate the proper care, interpretation and management of these significant cultural properties. This study will fulfill the requirements of the National Park Service Management Policies, Directors Order 28 and Cultural Resources Management Guidelines, concerning management of NPS cultural resources. The study will also assist the National Park Service in complying with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and in the associated consultation process with the State Historic Preservation Office, accomplishing the identification, evaluation and treatment of historic resources within the park's boundaries.

This Historic Resource Study replaces an earlier study published in May 1979 by Channel Islands National Monument. That Historic Resource Study, prepared under contract with Chambers Consultants and Planners and written by Lois Weinman Roberts, provided a detailed history of three of the subject islands. The present study expands on Dr. Roberts' work with the addition of entirely new documentation of two large and complex islands (Santa Cruz Island and Santa Rosa Island), and provides additional data, reorganization and clarification of information on the three islands covered in the earlier study. As such, much of the writing concerning the Monument-era islands is Dr. Roberts' and is so referenced. Footnotes to Dr. Roberts' writing have not been updated to match the current writings due to lack of access to the original research materials.

The Historic Resource Study of Channel Islands National Park has been undertaken pursuant to Contract No. CX812098256 (formerly PX812098256) dated September 29, 1998, and amendments, issued by Channel Islands National Park to D. S. (Dewey) Livingston, a private contractor, P. O. Box 296, Inverness, California 94937.

Acknowledgements

The author has compiled herein a history of the five subject islands, but he has only built upon the works of many others, ranging from substantial and well-researched books and documents to short articles and collections of oral histories. A large number of individuals and institutions contributed to the creation of this report, and no doubt (and regretfully) some will be inadvertently overlooked.

Five people can immediately be singled out as individuals without whom the project could not have been accomplished. The late Al Vail, his brother the late Russ Vail, and their lifelong friend and associate E. K. Smith, shared their vast knowledge of Santa Rosa Island despite some initial misgivings; their cooperation meant the world to me. John Gherini, third-generation attorney with ties to Santa Cruz Island that originate with his great-great grandfather Justinian Caire, and author of one of the most important reference works about that island, opened his files to this researcher and provided pointed and valuable commentary on the drafts. Finally, I wish to thank Marla Daily, president of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, who threw her support and enthusiasm to this project early and provided access to the Foundation's extensive private archive of island history. Marla, without doubt the most knowledgeable and passionate advocate of Channel Islands historic preservation, was able to pull even the most obscure bit of information out of the files, and made detailed commentaries in reviewing the draft.

The staff at Channel Islands National Park has been uniformly supportive and helpful towards the completion of this document. I first want to thank Ann Huston, the park's Chief of Cultural Resources until her retirement in 2015, for shepherding the project through many twists and turns and for her friendly patience when things got slow. Long-time park archeologist Don Morris, now retired, provided guidance, reams of information and a good dose of levity. Others on the park staff who contributed include Laura Kirn, Rocky Rudolph, Georganna Hawley, Sam Spaulding, Yvonne Menard, Bill Faulkner, Derek Lohuis, Tim Setnicka, Jack Fitzgerald, Trish Buffington, Kate Faulkner, Sarah Chaney, Cathy Schwemm, Kathryn McEachern (of the USGS Biological Resources Division, Western Ecological Resource Center), Dirk Rodriguez, Tim Glass, Kent Bullard, Earl Whetsell, Ed Smith, Dave Brooks and Tim Jones. Park rangers on the islands, who provided tours, logistical support and information, include Ian Williams, Mark Senning, Kyle Nelson, Randy Nelson, Dave Chapman, Mike Morales, Pat Flynn and Darcy MacDonald. I especially want to thank the park's dispatchers, the late Fred Rodriguez and Doretta Burgess for their help in getting me to and from the islands so flawlessly. The park's boat crews, piloting large and small vessels from the solid *Ocean Ranger* to the speedy *Limbo*, are the best in the nation. At the National Park Service's Pacific West Regional Office in San Francisco, I appreciate the help of Shaun Provencher, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Robbyn Jackson, Gordon Chappell, Roger Kelly and Kimball Koch; at the NPS Denver Service Center, Jerry Greene and Harlan Unrau; and at the NPS Columbia Cascades Support Office, David Louter, Gretchen Luxenberg and Stephanie Toothman.

Others who added valuable information and support include Diego Cuevas, Lulis Cuevas, Bill and Meredith Wallace, Nita Vail, Will Woolley, Andrea Gherini, Tom Gherini, Jesus Ildefonso, Vivienne Caire Chiles, Mary B. Brock, Betsy Lester Roberti, Lyndal Laughrin, Jeff Howarth, Bill Dewey, Tom and Jeannie Munger, Bob Isaacson, M. Woodbridge Williams, Dr. Douglas W. Dodd, Michael A. Glassow, Andrea Seastrand, Peter Schuyler, Robert Schwemmer, Linda Bentz, Dr. Lois Roberts, Katherine Petrin, Jill Johnson, Steve Farneth, Ben Munger, Katherine Munger, Marshall Livingston, Terry and Steve Edinger, and the flight crews at Channel Islands Aviation. Special thanks to my father, the late David E. Livingston, for hosting my many stays in the Channel region, and to Jane Mueller of Santa Barbara for the great meals and fascinating insights based on her contacts with Santa Cruz Island spanning over 50 years.

At the many repositories of Channel Islands information, I am indebted to Danielle Greene, Peggy Dahl and Brian Burd, Santa Cruz Island Foundation; Michael Redmon, Santa Barbara Historical Society; Marie Holmes and Terri Sheridan, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; Charles Johnson, Ventura County Museum of History and Art; Jane Bentley, San Diego Museum of Man; Marjorie Ciarlante, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland; Kathleen O'Connor, National Archives at San Bruno; Paul Wormser, Alexandra Eller and John Howells, National Archives at Laguna Niguel; Bill Kooiman, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park; Sam Stokes, Fort MacArthur Museum; Charlotte Brown and Jeff Rankin, UCLA; Don MacNamee and Mark Herbert, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History; James Lima, Minerals Management Service; Steve Schwartz, U. S. Navy; and Chris Hayman, U. S. Coast Guard Historian's Office.

Finally, I thank my family, Kerry, Molly, Ben and Nora, for their patience and support, as I was gone from home for many months and was otherwise distracted in my obsession with the islands over six years' time. Ben and Nora, thanks for all your help as my assistants in the field during that unforgettable week (a rare one with no wind!) on Santa Rosa Island. No doubt inspired by her field work as a child, Nora grew up to become an expert on the Santa Cruz Island Scrub-Jay and provided three photographs for this study.

Preface

TO PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD, islands carry a mystique: they are places of adventure and discovery, isolation and hardship, beauty and peacefulness. California's northern Channel Islands are no exception. In fact, many of the fables of island life have a ring of truth to them. Here, some of the world's famed explorers contacted cultures that no European had yet met; a group of California pioneers, using a cave as shelter, engaged in a gun battle with raiding Aleut otter hunters; numerous lone men and women, and sometimes families with small children, tended flocks of hardy sheep in total isolation under harsh and primitive conditions; rare and unique life forms have long been and continue to be discovered and studied by scientists; and generations have sought the tranquility of our offshore islands as a way to recharge their city-weary lives.

Many books and articles have been written about the islands by scholars and amateurs alike (not to mention the many personal opinions available about their management past and present). This document attempts to consolidate the many facts, stories and myths into a clear narrative; its major hindrance is size and scope, as a wealth of information is available and the opportunities for expansion on any one subject are great. As a National Park Service historic resource study, the major purpose of this document is to aid the island managers in understanding, treating and managing any and all historic resources for the benefit of generations to come. It will also serve as a text for island interpreters and a resource for creating educational programs and interpretive documents. As such, it is not crafted to be a work of literature; it tends to run long, it offers up obscure details, and it provides somewhat dry descriptions of island resources. The author only hopes that he did not overlook too many items of interest, that the work is as accurate as possible, and that it does the job in expanding public awareness of the fascinating past of these unique and significant American places.

Key to Abbreviations used in text and footnotes

ACW Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron
CHIS Channel Islands National Park
CHS California Historical Society, San Francisco
CINM Channel Islands National Monument
CINP Channel Islands National Park
CLI Cultural Landscape Inventory
CO Commanding Officer
CSA California State Archives
CSL California State Library
ESCI East Santa Cruz Island
GMP General Management Plan
LACMNH Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History¹
MMS Minerals Management Service, Camarillo, California
NA National Archives and Records Administration
 (CP) College Park, Maryland
 (DC) Washington DC
 (LN) Laguna Niguel, California
 (SB) San Bruno, California
NCO Non-Commissioned Officer
NPCA National Parks & Conservation Association
NPS National Park Service
PMR Pacific Missile Range
PMTR Pacific Missile Test Range
RG Record Group (National Archives)
RMP Resource Management Plan
RWQCB Regional Water Quality Control Board
SBCRO Santa Barbara County Records Office
SBHS Santa Barbara Historical Society
SBMNH Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
SCIF Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Santa Barbara
SCS Soil Conservation Service
SUP Special Use Permit
TNC The Nature Conservancy
UCB University of California Berkeley, Bancroft Library
UCLA University of California Los Angeles
UCSB University of California Santa Barbara
USCG U. S. Coast Guard
USCGS U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey
USCS U. S. Coast Survey
USDA U. S. Department of Agriculture
USGS U. S. Geological Survey
VCMHA Ventura County Museum of History and Art, Ventura, California (now the Museum of Ventura County)
WASO Washington office, National Park Service
WRO Western Regional Office, National Park Service (now the Pacific West Regional Office)

¹ The Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History is referred to by three different names in the text, reflecting the changing names of that institution: 1930-40s Los Angeles Museum; 1950s-60s Los Angeles County Museum; and currently, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

Section 1

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS: AN OVERVIEW



*What Madeira, the Riviera, and the Azores are to Europe,
the Channel Islands of California have become to the United States,
a great national playground visited annually by an
army of pleasure-seekers and travelers . . .*

Charles Holder, 1910

Location of the Channel Islands



Location and Description

The Channel Islands, stretching from San Diego to Point Conception off the coast of southern California, have been divided by geographers into two groups, the northern Channel Islands and the southern Channel Islands. The northern island group has also been called the Santa Barbara Islands, separated as they are from the mainland by a stretch of water known as the Santa Barbara Channel and in plain view of that pleasant city. These four islands run in an almost straight line east-to-west, mimicking the east-west-oriented coastline that characterizes this portion of the California shore between Rincon Point and Point Conception. While these northern islands lie in a neat row as if waiting in line, each is curiously different from the other: windswept, sandy San Miguel Island of moderate size and gentle surface character; large but low-profiled Santa Rosa Island, hilly, grassy and relatively uniform in topography; Santa Cruz Island, the biggest of all the islands, with its high steep mountains, sheltered valleys and inviting coves; and Anacapa Island, actually three small islets in a row like dashes, with a lighthouse at the east end.

Unlike its northern counterparts, the southern group is scattered about the Pacific Ocean without an apparent pattern. The southernmost of these four islands is San Clemente Island far off the city of San Diego, an elongated desert island owned by the U. S. Navy. The Navy also owns San Nicolas Island, the island farthest west from the mainland. It is the site of the often-told story of the lone woman, made popular in Scott O'Dell's *Island of the Blue Dolphins* three decades ago. The best-known and most-populated island is large Santa Catalina Island, a short hop from San Pedro and Los Angeles by boat or plane. It is a partially developed island, third largest of the entire group, with a small city, resorts and services. And finally, there is the smallest of all the eight Channel Islands, Santa Barbara Island, a one-square-mile rock jutting out of the lonely ocean halfway between Santa Catalina Island and the Anacapas.

Together, the Channel Islands form an archipelago that some say rivals the French Riviera. The difference is, our islands are mostly undeveloped, almost pristine, and largely undiscovered by the masses.

Of these eight islands, five are the subject of this study: San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Anacapa and Santa Barbara islands. The five islands and surrounding nautical one mile comprise Channel Islands National Park, created in 1980 to preserve their unique natural and cultural resources. The three remaining islands have histories of their own, also unique yet tied to their northern neighbors in feel and context; their stories are told elsewhere.



Satellite view of the Northern Channel Islands and environs. From top of picture: Santa Ynez Mountains; Santa Barbara coast with Point Conception on the left, Santa Barbara center and Santa Monica Mountains on the right; Santa Barbara Channel; the Northern Channel Islands. Islands, left to right: San Miguel Island, Santa Rosa Island, Santa Cruz Island, Anacapa Island. Santa Barbara Island, located southeast of the northern islands, is not visible.
Channel Islands National Park

Brief Natural History of the Channel Islands¹

The unique environmental setting that lies behind the recorded history of the Channel Islands National Park is best understood if related to the geological history of the continental shelf for the western coast of California. Off central California the edge of the shelf almost parallels the coast; however, at Point Conception the coastline turns eastward forming a large bight, eventually regaining its original trend in Orange County. The edge of this submerged shelf, however, does not follow the contour of the bight and instead continues in a directly southern trend and extends some 120 miles further out than it did at Point Conception. This section of the continental shelf is likened to a submerged part of the continent with mountainous peaks of up to 8,000 feet and intermountain basins. These peaks are the Channel Islands, now separated from the mainland by about 25 miles.

This separation gives the islands their significant natural and cultural characteristics, as the isolation has resulted in the evolution of numerous species, subspecies or varieties of unique flora and fauna. The island ecosystems tend to be less diverse than their mainland counterparts while providing habitat for

¹The following sections also contain revised text originally researched and written by Roberts, 1979.

species that may not occur elsewhere. The isolation has also contributed to the protection of many of those resources, and so the islands have been regarded as laboratories for the study of unique ecological systems.

The islands subject to this study range in size from 639 acres (Santa Barbara Island) to over 62,000 acres (Santa Cruz Island), and in height from 2,434 feet (Santa Cruz) to 635 feet (Santa Barbara Island). The larger islands are so big that one often forgets one is on an island. It was once thought that this island chain had been connected to the mainland by a land bridge, but investigations over the past fifty years have led most researchers to accept the theory of a singular, unconnected island, recently named *Santarosae*, that existed during the Pleistocene. The northern islands are seen as a geological extension of the Santa Monica Range, developed from the end of the Miocene through the processes of faulting and uplift. This 100-mile stretch of rugged ridge became the four northern islands as the sea level rose. The islands now appear as a mostly-submerged range with its peaks above water, the eroding cliffs at shore side adding to their scenic beauty and danger. They represent examples of some of the most extensive marine terraces in the world, containing sea caves, rugged shorelines, sandy beaches, mountain peaks and valleys. Fossil resources are abundant on the islands, representing former flora and fauna such as the caliche forests, an extensive “grove” of sand castings of trunks, branches and roots from an ancient forest, and the famed fossilized skeletons of pygmy mammoths found on three of the islands.

The islands of Channel Islands National Park abut the boundary of two major biogeographical provinces, especially evident in the marine environment. San Miguel and Santa Rosa Islands are bathed by cold northern waters of the boreal Oregonian province carried south by the California current. Santa Barbara and Anacapa Islands, on the other hand, are at the northern extent of the California province that supports a warm temperate biota. In the middle is Santa Cruz Island, which benefits from both cold and warm zones and thus has a unique assemblage of species adaptable to the variable conditions of the transition zone. Park waters harbor biota representative of almost 1,000 miles of the North American coast from Ensenada, Mexico to San Francisco.

Prevailing winds and the bathymetry of adjacent basins also greatly influence biological communities in the park. Rain falls in higher quantities on the northern shores, while a drier environment is found southward. The confluence of major oceanic currents and the shape of the continental shelf create a rare phenomenon of persistent upwelling, which brings nutrient-rich water from the deep sea on the northwest, producing exceptionally productive food webs in the waters around San Miguel and Santa Rosa islands. The richness and diversity of the marine communities are reflected by an abundance and diversity of marine mammals and seabirds. As many as 26 species of cetaceans (whales and dolphin) have been observed, as well as six different species of pinnipeds such as the California elephant seal and Steller sea lion. Forty percent of all kelp beds in southern California occur around the Channel Islands, providing food and shelter for approximately 125 fish species and hundreds of other animal and plant species.

The fauna of the islands include many unique species such as the small island fox and the island night lizard. The threatened California brown pelican has enjoyed resurgence through protection of habitat on the islands, and peregrine falcons have returned to the park islands. The flora of the islands have been altered by historical practices including grazing and crop production, yet the islands support numerous endemic plant varieties. Outstanding plant communities include the island oaks and Torrey pine of Santa Rosa Island, the giant coreopsis found on all park islands, and the unique Santa Barbara Island live-

forever, once thought to be extinct but now recolonizing its range on that island. Exotic species including imported grasses and eucalyptus trees are also found on the islands, some of which are of historical interest, as seen in the following narrative.



Top, an Island fox on Santa Cruz Island; bottom, Santa Cruz Island Live-forever, *Dudleya nesiotica*.
Photographs by Nora Livingston

Introductory History of the Channel Islands

Overview

The northern Channel Islands have hosted people of many backgrounds for some thirteen thousand years. Archeological and paleontological studies undertaken over a span of a century have shed light on the islands' earliest inhabitants, and ongoing research regularly adds to the information about the Island Chumash, a group that was uniquely adapted to their maritime environment. The arrival of Spanish soldiers and missionaries, preceded by explorers seeking new lands for conquest and development, resulted in the removal of the Chumash from their island homes. The distribution of Mexican land grants on Santa Cruz Island and Santa Rosa Island and the inclusion of the others in the public domain set the stage for their future development.

While the themes of stock raising, fishing and hunting dominated the uses of the islands, each had its individual and very different history, predicated on the somewhat surprising physical differences between each island. San Miguel Island, being the farthest to the west and featuring the harshest climate, saw its vegetation stripped by decades of sheep grazing to the point of being called a huge sand dune. Its occupants, however, did not intend to produce such consequences, but through tradition and need for livelihood continued in business until the world situation and the country's need for strategic defenses, ended the family ranching era. San Miguel Island's historic significance lies in its prehistoric resources, its role in coastal exploration (notably Cabrillo), its occupation by ranchers living under unusually harsh conditions, and in its part played in national defense.

The Island Chumash occupied Santa Rosa Island and the archeological resources on the island are particularly important in the search for knowledge about early human occupation and settlement along the coast. After becoming part of the State of California in 1850, the island gained importance as a livestock ranch, until 1901 with the More family's massive sheep business and the cattle operation of Vail & Vickers for almost a century after that. Santa Rosa Island also played a role in national defense, with Army, Air Force and Navy installations protecting the coast beginning in 1943. Archeological sites and an intact 19th/20th century ranching landscape are the prominent remaining resources.

Santa Cruz Island, the largest of the California islands, has also the most complex history. The island hosted the largest population of Island Chumash, and was in fact considered as a potential site of a California mission to serve the Indians of the surrounding islands. Its first legal owner was Andres Castillero, a prominent figure in Mexican Alta California history. Under Castillero's successors, the island was developed as one of the finest sheep ranches in the west, made more distinctive by its location. Frenchman Justinian Caire took full control of Santa Cruz Island from his business partners in the 1880s and developed a diversified agricultural operation consisting of sheep, cattle, poultry, vineyards and orchards. Caire's physical developments were unique in the region, as he brought architecture and culture from the old country. During the heyday at the Caire ranch, before 1900, more than 100 workers, mostly Italian but including French, Americans, Mexican Californians and Indians, labored at the many tasks involved in running a complex island enterprise. Tourists and hunters made the island popular through newspaper and magazine articles, and the riches of the sea were exploited by amateur and professional

alike. An extended and complicated series of litigation among family members resulted in the division of the island and the sale of much of it in 1937. For 50 years following the Stanton family ran fine beef cattle on the ranges, while the Gherini family, descendants of Justinian Caire, continued the tradition of sheep raising on the east end. Prehistoric resources, 19th and 20th century architecture and landscapes are the prominent historic features remaining.

Anacapa Island saw a limited amount of exploitation due to its barrenness and government control, yet provided a home for a number of people. Its major cultural resource is the light station, constructed in 1932. Santa Barbara Island, the smallest at one square mile, also had a limited use except for lighthouse purposes. The short but fascinating occupation by the Hyder family is the highlight of Santa Barbara Island's history, but few features remain to mark their labors.

Each of the islands played a part in the development of industries such as otter and seal hunting, fishing and shellfish harvesting and kelp production. Operators of the west coast's busy maritime commerce found these islands a hazard, evidenced in the large number of shipwrecks documented on the shores. Scientists, both in the prehistoric and natural resources disciplines, have studied the islands for more than a century and have made discoveries of local, national and international importance. The country's military forces exploited the islands' strategic location off the coast of the most populated region on the West Coast, developing sites for defense, communications and testing. The islands' current management as public and private reserves is a significant development in environmental protection and affords valuable opportunities for research. The following overview of general islands history is followed by chapters detailing the history of each island, with descriptions of extant historic resources and recommendations for their protection and preservation.

Summary of Prehistoric Occupancy

The prehistory of the Channel Islands is linked with their geological and natural histories, as the prehistoric inhabitants developed their social structure and economy on the resources available to them: volcanic bedrock, chert, chalcedony, and sandstone provided stone material for groundstone and flaked artifacts; the islands' topography and water courses providing locations for settlement; the plants that grew in the islands' varied soils, plentiful bird life, and the rich and diverse flora and fauna of the surrounding sea provided sustenance. The earliest inhabitants of the islands adapted well to their environment and, at least at times, thrived.

The islands' origin is volcanic and evidence shows dramatic past seismic activity, particularly in the faults visible on Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands. While research continues, it is currently considered that at least parts of the larger Channel Islands have been continuously above sea level for the last half million years. Fluctuating sea levels produced islands of varying sizes at various times. At the time of minimum sea levels perhaps 18,000 years ago the northern islands were probably one large island, dubbed *Santarosae* by Phil C. Orr of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Parts of Santa Cruz Island would have been the highest point on this landmass. By 9,500 years ago *Santarosae* would have separated

into the four northern islands, as a result of sea level rise caused by glacial melting. As a result, the total land area of the islands diminished by more than 75 percent.

The islands' archaeological resources relate to a rich heritage of island occupation over a period that may have begun as early as 13,000 years ago. Because of their age, abundance and high degree of preservation, these resources have the potential to inform on aspects of prehistory and history that cannot be adequately revealed through archeological research on the mainland.

The oldest radiocarbon date from the islands is from a femur fragment found by Philip Orr in 1959 on Santa Rosa Island. Known as "Arlington Springs Man," the bone dates to 13,000 years before present. A large number of sites on Santa Rosa and San Miguel islands are dated from 9,000 to 12,000 years of age, the largest concentration of sites of this antiquity in North America. Other sites are well distributed through the contact and pre-contact period, providing evidence of cultural and technological evolution and maritime adaptations.²

The islands' occupants of the last several thousand years belonged to a group that would be called the Chumash, whose major branches lived on the mainland from San Luis Obispo to Malibu and the Santa Monica Mountains.³ The Chumash on the islands spoke one of several distinct Chumashan languages. The island Chumash developed a culture based on a trading economy, mainly the shell beads manufactured on the islands being traded for mainland products such as grass seeds, acorns, roots and bow and arrows. The manufacture of disc beads from shells has been considered as the "mint" for the Chumash economy overall, as the beads were used as we do money today. The islands' rocks provided tools for the manufacture of the beads; for instance, on the east end of Santa Cruz Island the Chumash obtained chert to make microblades for drilling holes in the flat beads.

That the Island Chumash relied on the sea for the major part of its sustenance has been seen in excavations at Daisy Cave on San Miguel Island, where analysis of fish bones suggest to archeologists that "early Channel Islanders fished relatively intensively in a variety of habitats using a number of distinct technologies," including the earliest known uses of boats, hook-and-line technology and cordage and basketry found on the Pacific Coast of Northern America. The islands' archeological record has produced "some of the oldest evidence of maritime adaptations in the New World," according to archeologist Jon Erlandson, who with his associates have dated fish bones found at Daisy Cave at up to 11,500 years before present.⁴

² Glassow, Michael A., Editor and Compiler, *Channel Islands Archaeological Overview and Assessment* (National Park Service, December 2010).

³The name Chumash did not exist as a reference to the central coast group as a whole until John Wesley Powell published the name in 1891 as a linguistic grouping. Alfred L. Kroeber in the early 20th century gave the name Chumash to the entire group as a general demographic, although the language differences among the region was pronounced. "Chumash" was reportedly the name of Indians on either Santa Rosa Island or all the northern islands. McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, p. 30.

⁴Torben C. Rick, Jon M. Erlandson and René L. Vellanoweth, "Paleocoastal Marine Fishing on the Pacific Coast of the Americas: Perspectives from Daisy Cave, California" in *American Antiquity*, 66(4), 2001, pp. 595-613; Jon M. Erlandson, *The Search for Early Shell Middens on San Miguel Island, California*, Research Report submitted to The Foundation for the Exploration and Research on Cultural Origins and National Park Service/Channel Islands National Park, September 15, 2001, p. 1.

The use of well-constructed wooden plank canoes, called *tomols*, is unique in the western Americas. The canoes could navigate the channel, providing trade routes to and from the mainland, and for fishing and harvesting in the seas around the islands. The use of these large canoes has been considered to be the earliest evidence of such technology in North America or, possibly, the New World, as long as 1,500 years ago. The plank boats appear to have been owned and controlled by chiefs and men of wealth.⁵

While the islanders ate mostly from the sea and shore, they also harvested bulbs and tubers and reportedly imported various plants from the mainland. However the islands' flora, generally noted as diverse in vegetation types, has been considered to be a "relatively poorly endowed resource base" for plants as food relative to the abundant marine life.⁶

Of the five islands subject of this study, only three supported full-time occupancy with permanent settlements and distinct subcultures. Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands were evidently used on a seasonal basis for food gathering and toolmaking, but lack of water and other resources made it unlikely that a population could survive for a long period of time. San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands supported relatively large numbers of residents with numerous villages and seasonal camps. Approximately 3,000 Island Chumash lived on the three islands in the 17th and 18th centuries, although the numbers fluctuated especially prior to and following missionization, after which populations declined dramatically. Researchers have drawn information on these settlements from the accounts of passing European mariners, mission records and oral histories recorded from the 1880s to the present.⁷

According ethnographer J. P. Harrington's Chumash informants of the early 20th century, the island settlements may have been organized in hierarchies as "supervillage political groups" with a senior chief in one village holding authority over the other island villages. More recently, researchers have concluded:

At the time of European arrival, the basic sociopolitical units consisted of towns that were largely independent from one another. Sometimes a particularly effective chief would have some form of authority over several towns, but he was by no means all-powerful. While the basis for his leadership may partly have been determined by birth, it was more dependent on personality, the ability to control certain economic activities, and success in creation of alliances with other chiefs.⁸

Evidence suggested that in some cases several island towns would organize as "federations." Ethnohistorian John R. Johnson wrote that the island towns "were to some extent linked to mainland society through a pan-tribal political group known as the "*antap* cult." The amount of trade and communication between the islands and the mainland documented through archeological work proves that some intensive interaction would have been necessary.

⁵Erlandson, *Early Shell Middens*, p. 1; Lynn H. Gamble, "Archaeological Evidence for the Origin of the Plank Canoe in North America" (*American Antiquity*, 67(2), 2002), pp. 301-315. Current literature refers to permanent settlements as *towns* rather than the more commonly used *villages*.

⁶Johnson, *Island Chumash*, p. 3.

⁷The work of Juan Estevan Pico and Henry Henshaw in the 1880s and J. P. Harrington in his 40 years of work commencing around 1912, contributed much to the knowledge of Chumash history and culture.

⁸McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, p. 432.

The first descriptions of Chumash culture and their physical setting arrived in Spain with European explorers such as Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño and Sebastian Vizcaíno. All three had contacts with the island Chumash and recorded such encounters, although usually briefly. The prehistory of the Chumash on the islands gave way to recorded history with Cabrillo's voyage of 1542, although more than 250 years passed before the island cultures would be virtually removed from the islands and eventual settlement of the islands by European-Americans.

Voyages of Exploration and Interactions with Chumash Occupants

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, called the discoverer of Alta California, happened upon the Channel Islands in 1542, an encounter that would become an integral and fateful turning point in his historic voyage. Cabrillo's background is clouded with historical gaps and intense debate. Long thought to be a Portuguese navigator in the employ of the Spanish throne, recent research has determined that he was probably born in Spain although the site and date of his birth have not been found. Cabrillo biographer Harry Kelsey believes that Cabrillo, known by his original name Juan Rodríguez until adding the name Cabrillo while in the New World, came from Seville although he may not have been born there. Cabrillo received a practical education as a merchant, investor and seaman before he came west in 1510 or 1511 to take part in the conquest of Cuba. Cabrillo traveled to Mexico with the troops of Pánfilo de Narváez to challenge Cortés in 1520. While the challenge failed, Cabrillo joined with the forces of Cortés in the conquest of Mexico. Cabrillo then served for more than a decade with Pedro de Alvarado as the Spanish forces overtook much of Central America. Cabrillo became a rich and influential man in Guatemala where he settled. Alvarado, as the governor of the province, commissioned Cabrillo around 1535 to build a fleet of ships to sail for the Moluccas. One ship that Cabrillo built and owned was named *San Salvador* but referred to by all involved as the *Juan Rodríguez*. By 1540 the armada consisted of seven or eight ships built by Cabrillo and five or six taken from other sources. After Alvarado's death in an Indian uprising, Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza determined to instead send two exploratory expeditions out into the Pacific, one which would head west and the other which would sail north up the coast, presumably to meet the former ships, as it was believed that the west coast of America curved to the west and so would lead the latter fleet to Asia. In 1542 Mendoza appointed Cabrillo in charge of the northern expedition "to discover the coast of New Spain."⁹

The expedition comprised two ships, *San Salvador* and *Victoria*, and a small number of launches for the purpose of exploring the coast and bays and gathering supplies from the shore. A *bergantín* or *frigata*, named *San Miguel*, may have been one of these. The *San Salvador*, according to Kelsey,

⁹This section on the voyage of Cabrillo is derived from the following sources: Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986), pp. 4-6, 11-16, 26-28, 41, 50, 61-71, 95-112, 123, 143-161; Henry Raup Wagner, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1941), pp. 23-26, 48-55; Robert Glass Cleland, *From Wilderness to Empire, A History of California, 1542-1900* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 10-15; and Lois J. Roberts, "Revising the History of San Miguel Island, California" in *Third California Islands Symposium: Recent Advances in Research on the California Islands* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1993), pp. 607-608.

was a galleon of two hundred tons, the flagship of the expedition, and the personal property of Juan Rodríguez. The *San Salvador* was about a hundred feet long, with a high sterncastle and a lower forecastle. She had a slim hull—about twenty five feet of beam—a square stern, and a good deal of taper or “tumble home” from the main deck to the top of the Sterncastle.

The small fleet carried anywhere from 200 to 300 people, including seamen, soldiers, laborers and slaves. It carried about two years’ supply of staple foods but would rely on collections from the sea and shore for general foodstuffs. Men on the voyage, besides Cabrillo, included Gerónimo de San Remón and Antonio Correa, masters of the ships, Lorenzo Hernández Barreda, a pilot, and Bartolomé Ferrer (or Ferrelo), chief pilot of the voyage and probably pilot of the *Victoria*. An Augustinian monk named Fray Julian de Lescano came along as the priest.

The fleet set sail from Navidad on the mainland coast of Mexico on June 27, 1542. After crossing the Gulf of California the armada headed up the coast until, three months after their departure, they sailed into a port that they called San Miguel after the smallest boat in the fleet. This was the first landfall in Upper California, at a location later named San Diego. After less than a week in that port during which the men met the natives of the area, the ships sailed on, landing on a large island that they named San Salvador. Here, on the island later named Santa Catalina, they also met Indians. The ships continued to San Pedro and Santa Monica bays and beyond, where they observed a large village with houses, doubtless located at Mugu Lagoon. Cabrillo and his men were impressed by the fine plank canoes built and used by these people and named the village Pueblo de las Canoas.

The ships then entered the Santa Barbara Channel, noting the islands offshore and naming them the *Islas de San Lucas* but staying close to the mainland coast where they observed numerous other villages equipped with the wood canoes. One or two of the vessels explored the offshore islands during this time. As the ships approached Point Conception the winds picked up and so they steered the ships toward San Miguel Island on which they landed. Taking possession of the island, Cabrillo named it *La Posesión*. Poor weather caused the fleet to remain at anchor there for a week. Cabrillo reportedly made attempts to “sort out the geography of the island” while harbored at San Miguel and may have made journeys from that harbor when weather allowed. Cabrillo supposedly named and took formal possession of a number of islands at this time. He called the principal island in the channel *Capitana*, but also referred to it as *La Posesión* as well. This may have been Santa Cruz Island, the only one possessing the qualities to have been considered the principal one, although Kelsey believes that Santa Catalina was the one so named. Unfortunately, the naming of the islands was handled in a confusing manner, with repetitive and multiple names given to different islands.

The fleet sailed north when the weather cleared on October 25, reaching San Luis Obispo, Point Reyes and the Russian River before turning back. Keeping an eye out for a great river the Indians had described, the ships passed San Francisco Bay twice without noticing its entrance. On the 23rd of November the voyagers returned to the *Islas de San Lucas*, “at one of those called *Posesión*” where they anchored and made repairs on the leaking *frigata San Miguel*. The anchorage may have been Cuyler Harbor again, but the double naming of the islands makes this unsure. The fleet wintered in a harbor at one of the islands, but positive identification remains difficult. Most historians of the past have considered San

Miguel to be the location, while Kelsey determined the island to be Santa Catalina. The possibility exists that the island was Santa Rosa or Santa Cruz, both of which were not far from San Miguel, and both of which afforded a good anchorage as well as water and wood. It is known that later, early in the year 1543, the fleet encountered storms and sailed around the islands in search of shelter and it is unlikely to this author that the fleet sailed as far south as Catalina until its return to Mexico.

As the ships sat at anchor during December of 1542, the Indians on the island continually fought with the intruders. Around Christmas a shore party in search for water was attacked. Cabrillo assembled a group of men to rescue them and, in landing on the shore, injured himself. He reportedly shattered a shinbone, although other accounts claim the injury being to his arm near the shoulder. Nevertheless, the injury proved to be fatal, as gangrene spread and Cabrillo died on January 3. His crew buried him on the island, one of those called Capitana. Before his impending death Cabrillo had attempted to put his papers in order and appointed his chief pilot Ferrer as his successor.

The fleet continued its explorations, first encountering storms that caused them to shelter in the lee of Santa Cruz Island. The ships made their way north again, this time as far as Point Arena before turning back. On the return trip south the ships were separated for a time, not to be reunited until reaching the Mexican coast. The battered ships arrived at Navidad on April 14, 1543. The voyage was considered a failure: Cabrillo had died, the expedition had not found the way to Asia, and had not located anything considered to be of any importance. However, the voyage was of great importance in California history. Cabrillo and his men were the first known Europeans to stand on California soil, to comment on the nature of the land and its inhabitants, and to claim it for the Kingdom of Spain. As for the question of where Cabrillo wintered, died and was buried, no answers can be considered to be absolute until Cabrillo's log is found. It is unlikely, however, that San Miguel Island was the site of Cabrillo's demise.

Perhaps the most important records of the voyage of Cabrillo are the unfortunately brief accounts of Chumash culture at the time of the visit. The later accounts of Juan Paez de Castro noted the name and number of settlements on the islands and detailed some of the natives' habits. For instance, Paez provided the Chumash names for six towns on Santa Cruz Island; an account written by Antonio de Herrera published in 1615 noted that on San Miguel, the Indians "go naked and have their faces painted in a checkerboard fashion." But overall, Paez de Castro did not seem to think highly of the island occupants:

The Indians of these islands are very poor, being fishermen, and eating nothing but fish. They did not sleep on the ground. All their business and occupation is to fish. In each house they say there are fifty souls, who live very filthily, going naked."

More detailed descriptions are found in the sections pertaining to individual islands following.

The California Indians were apparently not wealthy enough to warrant Spanish exploitation, hence no further exploration of the California coast took place until a port of call was needed for the Manila galleons returning around a northerly great circle route in order to catch the winds and the Japanese current that would propel it eastward. This route brought them to the California coast at about Cape Mendocino whence they sailed down the coast of California to homeport, usually at Acapulco. Only one account has been found that mentioned the Channel Islands during the early part of the Manila galleon era: the crew of the *San Pedro* sighted San Miguel Island (which they called La Deseada or "that which is desired") and

Richardson Rock in 1565. Profit on the galleons' cargo ran about 400 per cent, so the hold and even the deck would be packed solid, leaving little space for food and water for crew and passengers. The four to six month journey made the galleons prey to English pirates on the last leg and held out a good chance of starvation and scurvy for all on board. And so, a port of call along California's coast became a prime goal of shipping administrators in Mexico City. Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño, a Portuguese navigator in charge of a Spanish galleon called the *San Agustín*, was assigned to explore the coast on his way south with the intent of identifying potential ports and supply stops. Cermeño's ship wrecked while at anchor in Drakes Bay at Point Reyes in 1595 and so his men assembled a knocked-down launch they had taken along for shore work. To the chagrin of his starving crew, Cermeño continued his explorations as they miraculously made their way down the coast. Upon entering the Santa Barbara Channel they sighted Santa Rosa Island and the "small island" of San Miguel; Cermeño's log noted Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands as "bare and sterile, although inhabited by Indians." People in a canoe visited the boat when it was anchored off of Santa Rosa Island, giving fish and a small seal to the starving men. Cermeño wrote that the Chumash were "well made and robust, of good size and go naked. The crafts in which they sail are like the board boats of the Philippines."¹⁰

The financial disaster brought about by the wreck of the *San Agustín* damaged Cermeño's reputation in the eyes of the Spanish administrators, but it also persuaded the Viceroy to send the next California explorer north from Mexico rather than chance the wreck of another galleon. Sebastian Vizcaíno, a pearl fishing concessioner, received the commission from Viceroy Monterey in 1602 with orders to look for a suitable port for the cargo-laden galleons.

His three ships set off from the tip of Baja California and eventually reached the Channel Islands. Vizcaíno anchored at Santa Catalina Island, giving it that name and leaving a long account of his encounters with Indians there. Vizcaíno sailed northwest from Santa Catalina "with the intention of examining other islands near by . . ." He entered San Pedro Bay and, on departure, noticed two islands. While entering the Santa Barbara Channel in early December, a canoe "came flying out from the mainland" with four singing men who came aboard and attempted to communicate with the explorers. Wanting the visitors to come to their mainland village, they offered ten women to each man as an incentive before returning to their canoe. Vizcaíno gave the name Santa Barbara Island to what is now Anacapa, and his chronicler Father Antonio de la Ascensión made other observations:

From [Anacapa] island a line of islands large, small and of medium size runs on four or six leagues apart. They are well settled with Indians who trade and communicate with each other and those on the mainland . . . Between them and the mainland there is a very good and safe passage, so wide that in places it measures twelve leagues and at the least eight. This passage is named "La Canal de Santa Barbara" and extends from east to west. When those who came from China passed in view of these islands, they never thought them to be islands, because they were so close together, and therefore they kept away from them.

¹⁰Henry R. Wagner, "The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595" in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 1, April 1924, pp. 17-18.

The ship visited Santa Cruz Island where the captain met some of its occupants. No mention was made of Santa Rosa Island, but the ship encountered Indians at San Miguel Island before continuing northward. Vizcaíno named what would become Richardson's Rock, Farallon de Lobos (island of wolves, possibly referring to sea lions), although on his map it appeared as Isla de Bajos or Baxos. His name for what surely was Anacapa in the accounts of the voyage was labeled as Tres Isleos, while Santa Barbara Island was marked with its present name. Other names appearing on the map included Isla de Gente Barbuda (Santa Cruz), San Ambrosio (Santa Rosa) and San Cleto, probably a mistaken spelling of San Aniceto, for San Miguel Island. Vizcaíno noted a small island or rock east of Santa Cruz Island, which was named Isleo Grande; this could have represented Gull Island, which is actually on the south coast of Santa Cruz.¹¹

Miguel Costansó, an army engineer who joined the expedition that the Spanish Visitador-General José de Galvez sent to occupy California, was the next Spaniard to leave a record of the islands. Marching north with Gaspar de Portolá's party on August 24, 1769, he wrote that "we discovered in the afternoon, the three last islands of the Canal de Santa Barbara: these are San Bernardo, the most westerly [San Miguel], then Santa Cruz [actually Santa Rosa], to the east, and Santa Barbara [Santa Cruz], the most easterly of the three." The confusion between Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz etc. illustrates the overall problems historians have encountered in attempting to sort out the travels and reports of these early journeys. Costansó reported on the Chumash names for these islands: *Thoa* [*tugan*] for San Miguel; *Lotolic* for Santa Rosa; and *Anaju* [*'anyapax*] for Anacapa Island. Costansó added new names for the Anacapas: La Falsa Vela (false sail) for West Anacapa and Las Mesitas (little table lands) for the middle and east islands. A diary kept by the priest aboard the party's supply ship also left references to the islands. Captain George Vancouver adopted and published what would be the presently used names for the islands in 1793:

the westernmost, or first island, forming the canal of Sta. Barbara, called in one of the Spanish charts St. Miguel, in the other St. Bernardo, (the former of which I have adopted) bore S. 25 E. to S. 32 E.; the next called in one of those charts Sta. Rosa, in the other St. Miguel, (the former of which I have continued) bore S. 42 E., to S. 54 E.; and a high hill on the third island, called in the Spanish charts, Sta. Cruz, bore S. 70 E.

The old names lingered in some instances; San Miguel was listed as Juan Rodríguez on an 1837 map issued by the Mexican government. When Duflot de Mofras sailed the coast in the 1840s, he noted the names of the islands as we know them today.¹²

¹¹Henry R. Wagner, "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century" in *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. VII, No. 4, December 1928, pp. 352-356.

¹²Miguel Costansó, *The Portolá Expedition of 1769-1770, Diary of Miguel Costansó*, Frederick J. Teggart, Ed. (Berkeley: Academy of Pacific Coast History, 1911), p. 207; George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World*, Vol. II (London: G. G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798), n. p.; Duflot de Mofras, *Travels on the Pacific Coast*, Margaret Wilbur, Ed. (Santa Ana: Fine Arts Press, 1937), Vol. I, p. 363.

The Mission Era

Spanish rule in California commenced in 1769 as the title to the land, including the Channel Islands, became vested in the King of Spain under the Law of Indies. The arrival of the padres and their missions in the 1780s spelled disastrous change to the Chumash people in general, but the effect on the islands was somewhat delayed. Even before a mission would be established in the Channel area, Viceroy St. Croix instructed Governor Pedro Fages that Indians must not be taken from the islands, but hinted that missions may be established at appropriate island locations:

The inhabitants of the islands that form the Channel of Santa Barbara must not be taken from there, not even for the purpose of reducing them to the missions of the mainland; for besides the grave consequences that might result from depopulating these islands, the Indians that live on them can be instructed by the Fathers of the missions in the vicinity when such Indians pass over to the mainland. If the soil and conditions on said islands are suitable for establishing the missions there, however, the corresponding means will be provided which particular matter I am also communicating to the Rev. Fr. President.¹³

Fages responded with a letter stating that “the Fr. Presidente of the missions [Junipero Serra] and I have agreed that the inhabitants of the islands that form the channel of Santa Barbara should not be removed to the mainland.” Serra himself wrote in agreement, but added that the missionaries “should aim at winning the good will of those who come regularly from the islands to the mainland; they should also try to understand their language.” Serra suggested that missionaries, “with a good escort,” should explore the islands with a potential mission location in mind. Seven years later, Serra wrote to the new viceroy, nephew of the former one, of their previous correspondence and noted that the islands were “teeming with pagans”:

I went near these said islands by boat on three separate occasions and had the great pleasure of seeing a number of their inhabitants. They came out in their canoes to visit us. Some, in fact, came aboard our ship. And, believe me, when I saw their general behavior, their pleasing ways and engaging manner, my heart was broken to think that they are still deprived of the light of the Holy Gospel.¹⁴

However, when missions were established across the Channel at San Buenaventura (today's Ventura) in 1782 and Santa Barbara in 1786, the island Chumash were slow to arrive for conversion: only nine were baptized at San Buenaventura in its first four years of operation. Of those baptized at Ventura, most were from the east Santa Cruz Island settlements of *Lu'upsh*, *Swaxil* and *Nanawani*. Subsequent establishment of missions at La Purísima (1788) and Santa Inés (1804) provided locations for conversion of residents of Santa Rosa and San Miguel islands.¹⁵

¹³Engelhardt 1923:84, quoted in Johnson, *Island Chumash*, pp. 51-52.

¹⁴Tibesar 1956:251 quoted in Johnson, *Island Chumash*, p. 53.

¹⁵William Henry Ellison, “History of the Santa Cruz Island Grant.” *The Pacific Historical Review*, Volume VI, Number 3, September 1937, p. 272; McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, p. 63; Johnson, *Island Chumash*, pp. 52-54.

Apparently not until 1804 did the subject of a mission specifically for the island Indians arise again. That year Father Estevan Tapis reported the desirability of establishing a mission on Santa Cruz Island using neophytes from the mainland to instruct the island residents in religion and farming development. The occupation of the island as a means to stem the increasing illegal hunting and smuggling activities by outsiders also was suggested.¹⁶

Indeed, the hint of smuggling would have brought a response from officials. Governor Castanares had urged a presidio on Santa Cruz Island, calling the islands “the resort of smugglers,” no doubt referring to the illegal trade in otter pelts. Governor Arrillaga, probably responding to the anti-contrabandista theme of the Tapis proposal, approved the mission plan in 1805. Within a short time an outbreak of measles caused the death of more than 200 island natives and put a damper on the mission plans.¹⁷ Tapis had written in his report for 1807:

Only with difficulty will these Gentiles abandon their native soil to take the to settled life at La Purisima, Santa Barbara, and San Buenaventura . . . but they say that they will settle in just as soon as a Mission is founded on the aforementioned island [of Limú].

. . . if the Islanders were settled [at a mission], they being extremely superstitious, the Christian education of the settled Indians at the [other] three missions referred to would progress. These latter inevitably have dealings with the former; and having been in the same condition in their gentility, the [Neophytes] are in danger of relapsing into their [spiritual] errors, the Islanders continuing in theirs. In addition to this, if a Mission were established on the island, and the natives settled in, the opportunity would be taken away from the Neophytes to flee to any of the islands, and to die there without the Sacraments, which has happened on enough occasions.

. . . by means of an adequate garrison or guard that be posted at the Mission, there can be prevented the trafficking of foreign ships, which every year return to the two islands for the purpose of trading with the Indians for sea otter pelts

It is to be noted as well that the Gentile and Christian Islanders who previously gave assurances of finding on the island all of the prerequisites for a Mission, later inquiries having being made with them, now differ in their information, especially concerning water sources and good lands, sufficiently moist and irrigable, and in plentiful or adequate amounts for crops. The preceding thus makes it clear that there is still needed a reliable reconnaissance of the island by competent [people], before an attempt is made to carry out the foundation.¹⁸

At the time Santa Cruz Island had a reported ten Indian settlements, including three with adult populations between 122 and 145 persons who were reported to be “eager for a mission.”¹⁹

The island’s Chumash occupants did have some relations with the mainland mission, although few details are known. Father Zephyrin Engelhardt studied the subject in the 1920s and noted that Santa Barbara mission Indians had occasionally traveled to the islands to instruct its inhabitants; according to

¹⁶[Father Estevan Tapis to Governor Jose Joaquin de Arrillaga, 1805], SCIF.

¹⁷Ellison, “*History*,” p. 272-273; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California IV* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1884-1890), p. 640.

¹⁸“Noticia de las Misiones . . . años 1805 y 1806. Fray Estevan Tapis, Presidente. March 3, 1807.” Translated by David D. Earle, courtesy of SCIF.

¹⁹McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, p. 76; Bancroft, *History of California II*, pp. 33-34.

historian Father M. Geiger, in late November of 1814 the “well-versed neophyte” Francisco Jalauehu traveled to Santa Cruz Island to baptize 39 aged or infirm Indians who could not make the journey to Santa Barbara. Every year some islanders traveled to the mainland to join the mission, or sent their children there. Some 365 island Indians were baptized at Mission Santa Barbara. The largest number of conversions occurred between 1814 and 1816 at Santa Barbara, with the last being in 1822. Many baptisms occurred at San Buenaventura between 1813 and 1817, and Santa Inés recorded 121 baptisms before 1816. In total, 1,270 Island Chumash were baptized in the mission churches. By the late 1820s the Chumash inhabitants of Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel islands vacated their homelands entirely, most moving to Santa Barbara, Ventura or the Santa Inez Valley. Various reports of events of that decade have been passed on: some claimed that the island was vacant by 1822 and during the revolt against the Santa Barbara Mission in 1824 some Chumash unsuccessfully attempted to resettle Santa Cruz Island; it has also been reported that the earthquake of 1825 frightened islanders to finally leave for the missions, but that report has not been substantiated. High mortality rates followed contact with explorers, soldiers and missionaries, and were especially severe during the mission period, resulting in “what was effectively a remnant population at most missions” by the 1830s.²⁰

Otter and Seal Hunting

When the Spanish settled California in 1769, Russians had been in the Aleutian Islands hunting and trapping fur-bearing mammals for twenty-five years. To protect her northern frontier from what Spanish administrators felt was the Russian menace, the Spanish government sanctioned a voyage by the *Santiago* to the northwest in 1774. Natives eagerly traded the crew otter pelts for some abalone shells the sailors had picked up around Monterey, and the next Spanish voyagers took along trinkets and old clothes to trade for skins. Captain James Cook sailed to the north Pacific in 1778, and his men exchanged trinkets and mirrors for pelts; but they subsequently went to China and found, as the Russians had much earlier, that the pelt was prized above all other furs and would bring \$100 and more. A detailed report of Cook’s voyage published in 1784 was widely circulated. Entrepreneurs under several flags flocked to the north Pacific where the herds of otter were the largest, but they soon discovered herds off the coast of California.²¹

The otter they sought varied from four to six feet in length and had a lovely dense soft fur, lustrous white at the roots and darkening to brown or black at the tips. The pelts exhibited a shimmering gloss, and were loose and stretchable. The young were born at sea in a bed of kelp, hence the Channel Islands kelp beds made attractive breeding grounds. Adele Ogden in her classic *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848* described the otters as curious and playful and “seen to toss a piece of seaweed up in the air from paw to paw, apparently taking great delight in catching it before it could fall into the water.” Great herds blackened the kelp beds beyond the surf and lay upon the beaches along the coasts. Hunters found them

²⁰Ellison, “*History*,” p. 273; M. Geiger, *Mission Santa Bárbara* (Santa Barbara: Mission Fathers of California, Santa Barbara, 1965) pp. 30-32; Bruce W. Miller, *Chumash, A Picture of their World* (Los Osos, CA: Sand River Press, 1988), p. 39; McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, pp. 73, 180.

²¹Ellen A. Traver, *Alaska, A Chronological and Documentary Handbook* (New York: Oceana Press, 1972), p. 2.

concentrated in the far northwest Pacific, scarce off Oregon and Washington, but again abundant off California. In 1800 ship logs recorded the great numbers of sea otters in the kelp around Santa Barbara Island and good hunting at San Miguel Island.²²

The Spanish attempted to exploit the otter trade, and to protect their interests, set up regulations against killing otter pups and tried to enforce laws in their mercantilistic code, which would have kept out poachers. Yet those who controlled spending in New Spain could not provide the patrol boats or the men to enforce the regulations; and thus, intruders continued to hunt off the coast until the otter was nearly exterminated. English and American companies and individuals outfitted their ships with experienced Aleut hunters from the northwest numbering up to a hundred per ship. The Aleuts provided their watertight sea otter kayaks, called baidarkas, and their women, and harvested 3,000 to 5,000 pelts a trip out. The Aleuts used buckshot to kill the otters. They would usually send several kayaks out together and surround the otter, making escape impossible. Taking their hunters on board in Alaska, the ships would come directly to California without doing any hunting along the way. So dependent were they upon northwest Indians that Captain Winship of the *O’Cain* complained in 1810 that he could not catch the numerous otters around Santa Barbara Island because he had no Aleuts. The next year he employed sufficient numbers of Aleuts to hunt and to arrive in Canton, China, with 3,952 pelts. Pelt counts were often broken down into grown, yearlings and pups, thus documenting the thorough and indiscriminate nature of the killings. Wintering in the islands was popular, the Aleuts being left on them for several months. In 1810, the schooner *Albatross* left a party of hunters with their kayaks and women at Santa Barbara Island. They took sixty prime otters in three days. The Russian ship, *Ilmen*, took 150 sea otters and some fur seals around the Channel Islands in 1814.²³

The otter boom waned in the 1820s, and only a few men could support themselves from the sea otter in 1870. C. M. Scammon, writing in the *Overland Monthly* in 1870, reported that only 2,600 otters were taken along the entire coast the year before. Still, in 1890 some otters were seen killed near San Miguel Island. By then, scarcity had pushed the price up to \$475 on the London market. A few sea otters were reported back on the California coast in 1938. One sea otter was observed asleep on the rocks on the northwest side of Santa Barbara Island on March 17, 1940. In 1961 the California Department of Fish and Game counted approximately 800 otters along the entire coast, and the population had been building.²⁴

Yankee frontiersmen entered California by land in the late 1820s. As veterans of Indian wars and experts on survival in the wilderness, these men were known for their resourcefulness and tough exteriors. Such a man was George Nidever who in 1833 in a party led by Joseph Walker, made the first east-west crossing of the Sierra Nevada by white Americans. In the 1850s, Nidever resided in an adobe house on San Miguel Island and participated in the early ranching period for that island. He was preceded to the Channel Islands by trapper Isaac Galbraith who had staggered into Mission San Gabriel after a sixty-day walk from Utah in 1826 with Jedediah Smith and his party. Galbraith was the first of the “reckless breed” to switch

²²Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1941), p. 8 et seq.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

²⁴Letter, Herbert Maier to A. B. Hawell, April 1, 1941, NPS Records, Box 202302, NA(SB); R. A. Boolootian, “The Distribution of the California Sea Otter” in *California Fish and Game*, Vol. XLVII, No. 3, July 1961, pp. 287-288.

from trapping beavers to chasing otters. He left his party to remain in California and he worked under the license of William Goodwin Dana, a naturalized Mexican. Galbraith would shoot at the otter, and then Kanakas (Hawaiian swimmers brought to California for the purpose) would swim out to bring in the game. George Yount, a trapper from North Carolina, arrived at the San Gabriel Mission in February 1831. Since it was too late to trap on the San Joaquin River, he too headed for the sea, broke into the otter industry, and in a few days had taken ten sea elephants and many otters on Santa Barbara Island. Then he resourcefully built himself a boat of sea elephant skins fashioned after the boats used by trappers on the inland rivers.

Adele Ogden, in her work on the California sea otter trade, claimed that George Nidever was the outstanding hunter of this whole period. The 31-year-old Nidever arrived in California with Captain Joseph Reddeford Walker's expedition in November of 1833. For 13 years he had trapped, fought Indians and built a reputation as one of the best shots in the west. Intrigued with stories of California, he joined Walker's party on what was by orders a reconnaissance of present western Utah and Nevada. That Walker interpreted this to include the California coast is a good example of the role mountain men made in extending the borders of the United States westward.²⁵

Following the deer and elk down the Tuolumne River, the party reached Yosemite Valley and finally Monterey. Yount was there and invited Nidever to make an otter and beaver hunt around San Francisco Bay. Following this, Nidever sailed to Santa Barbara on Alfred Robinson's *California* and began hunting otter under William Goodwin Dana's license out of Santa Barbara at the Channel Islands. In an autobiography Nidever dictated to an assistant of Hubert Howe Bancroft in 1878, he told how he divided his time between hunting otters around the Channel Islands and killing grizzly bears on the mainland. In 1837, he shot forty-five bears. Nidever married a Mexican woman, owned land and hunted freely.

At one point Nidever and two companions established a base camp in a cave on Santa Rosa Island. He told of an attack by Aleut otter hunters that forced Nidever and his companions to hide in the cave and flee to the hills. Nidever settled down somewhat around 1850, when he bought an interest in a sheep ranch on San Miguel Island. These stories are told in full in the San Miguel Island and Santa Rosa Island sections.

Exploitation of Other Sea Mammals

For centuries the rocky shoreline of the Channel Islands teemed with pinnipeds, sea mammals that could live both on land and in the sea: seals, sea lions and elephant seals. These animals used the beaches and ledges of the islands to rest in the sun, shed their skins, satisfy their sexual instincts and give birth to their young. The first threat to their survival by humans probably came about 12-13,000 years ago with the arrival of humans on the Channel Islands. The fur seal may have been most affected, as one study found that Indian middens had higher counts of fur seal bones than other pinnipeds. When the European settlers discovered the sea mammals and the commercial possibilities for their products on a world scale, the

²⁵William Henry Ellison, Ed., *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever [1802-1883]* (Santa Barbara and Tucson: McNally & Loftin, Publishers and Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1984 [reprint of edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937]), pp. 33, 40-45. Whether the adobe house on San Miguel Island was built by Nidever or existed at the time he came to the island, is unknown.

pinnipeds' thousands of years of relatively peaceful existence on the islands came to an end. The hunters of the early 1800s began to stalk not only otter but also pinnipeds, killed for their pelts and fat (and often, for "sport" only), and captured alive for use in circuses around the world.²⁶

Fur seals were slaughtered by the thousand in California between 1790 and 1835. San Miguel Island, closest island to the organically rich marine upwelling off Point Conception, was an important source. In the early years when fur seals abounded, they were killed easily in large numbers with an ordinary seal club. The crew of a boat, sometimes up to twenty men, would get between the seals and the water, raise a lot of noise, and then slay the animals by one or two blows to the head. Hundreds were taken in these knock downs, as they were called. When the animals became scarce, the boat would leave a few men on the island to watch out for single seals approaching the island and then shoot them one at a time as they came ashore. The California islands had gullies where the seals congregated, thus the men drove them back up into the land far enough so that none of them could get away. Since only the two- and three-year-olds yielded prime skins, the hunters screened the flock as they drove them inland allowing the older seals to escape. The hunters also wanted the seals away from the breeding grounds near or on the beaches since the blood and carcasses disturbed the survivors. Although the fur was the most valuable product, the flesh of the young was said to taste like mutton, the hearts and livers of the young were excellent, and an inch and a half of fat or blubber lay just under the skin which yielded one and a half gallons of oil which would be rendered in large iron pots in a central location.

Elephant seals were reportedly first taken by whalers early in the 1880s. When the gray whales were gone in the summer whalers went after elephant seals for oil. Charles Scammon, writing in 1874, reported on a bull taken at Santa Barbara Island, eighteen feet long, that yielded 210 gallons of oil. Among the favorite islands for the hunt was Santa Barbara Island. They were captured in knockdowns as described above, although their large size and power made the task greatly more difficult. Occasionally, a large male would give battle, but one well-placed musket ball, a lance through the roof of the mouth, or clubbing by two men with heavy oaken clubs beating at its head would kill it. After the kill, the men would flay the skin with a large knife for the whole length and cut out pieces of fat about eight by fifteen inches. These were hauled out to the boat by ropes and there boiled in large pots to extract the oil.

The sea lion supplied several useful products: a silky skin for luxury items, the sex organs of bulls which Chinese used as a cure for impotence, and the whiskers, used for ornaments and to clean opium pipes. It took many animals to satisfy the trade for genitals and whiskers. In the 1930s they were used to make dog food. Sea lions proved faster and harder to club to death, and so the favored method of killing was a shot through the ear. E. G. Rogers, a partner in Rogers and Company of Santa Barbara during the late 1870s, reported that sea lion hunters rendered the animal's blubber for its oil in large kettles set up on the beach. During the season a man could obtain fifty to one hundred barrels of oil, which he sold for fifty cents per gallon. The skins of the sea lions were sold for five cents to seven cents per pound.²⁷

²⁶R. S. Peterson and S. M. Cooper, "History of the Fur Seals of California" in *Año Nuevo Reports*, Vol. 2, 1967-1968, p. 50; Charles M. Scammon, *The Marine Mammals of the Northwestern Coast of North America* (San Francisco: John H. Carmany & Co., 1874). The material that follows is drawn from this work, pp. 113-160.

²⁷Francis Ross Holland, "San Miguel Island: Its History and Archaeology" in *Journal of the West*, Vol. II, No. 2, April, 1963, p. 151.

Pinniped populations have been steadily recovering since the heyday of hunting, although modern environmental factors, especially loss and disturbance of habitat, have posed their own challenges. Creation of Channel Islands National Monument in 1938 and Channel Islands National Park in 1980 has provided further protection and study. The marine mammals of the islands are under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service, which has a field station devoted to pinniped study on San Miguel Island, the National Park Service and the California Department of Fish and Game.

Sheep and Cattle Ranching

Ranchers took an interest in the Channel Islands during the Mexican period although extensive development of the island ranches did not occur until after 1850. The Gold Rush of the late 1840s and 1850s brought not only thousands of people to California but also the eyes of the east coast and other parts of the world looking to exploit the new state's material riches. What would be called the state's "other gold"—agricultural products—came into prominence as the state's major industry and its contribution to the growth of the country during the industrial revolution and 20th century. While the island enterprises were relatively small, they nevertheless contributed to the state's economy and reputation as a premier region for various agricultural products.

The largest of the islands, Santa Cruz, produced at one time wool, meat from sheep and cattle, wine and grapes, fruits, nuts and grains, all while yielding many of its own building products; the island gained widespread attention as a diverse island kingdom of one man and his family. Its neighbor to the west, Santa Rosa Island, supported a huge sheep ranch until the turn of the century, then operated for almost one hundred years as one of the biggest cattle ranches in the state by a family company, Vail & Vickers. The three other subject islands, smaller than the first two described, held their own as isolated sheep ranches with tenant families as caretakers. The stories that have been recorded of the Waters and Lester families of San Miguel Island, and the Hyders of Santa Barbara Island, are proof that adversity didn't stop the California pioneer spirit even well into the 20th century. The history of the northern Channel Islands is one of plain people, new to the state and ambitious, some taking on large-scale enterprises and finding success, and some scraping along as best they could, sometimes with tragic endings. These are the stories of the west, but what makes these enterprises unique is the fact that the activities took place on islands; all commerce was done by boat, from shipping livestock to bringing the doctor over. This factor kept the ranches operating somewhat in 19th-century fashion, which was key to preserving the historic feel and integrity of the resources that remain there.

The dominant agricultural use of the Channel Islands was sheep ranching, reflecting the economic and agricultural trends in California, as interpreted by Charles Howard Shinn in 1891:

There was a time in California, after the days when Spanish cattle roamed over the unfenced valleys, and before the wheat farmer had yet broken up the leagues of wild oats, when the great industry, aside from mining, was the raising of sheep.²⁸

²⁸Charles Howard Shinn, "With the Sheep, in California" in *Home-Maker*, March 1891.

Sheep provided many useful products: wool for clothing and other products, meat in the form of mutton and lamb, fats for industrial uses, and stock increase for sale to other ranches. While native sheep are found in the North American mountains, domestic sheep arrived on the continent with the first Spanish explorers; Columbus is said to have brought sheep on his 1493 voyage to Santo Domingo. Cortés brought sheep and cattle to the mainland of the New World around 1520 and Coronado's overland expedition in 1540 included 5,000 sheep and 500 cattle. By 1700 the sheep industry in Mexico thrived, and soon moved north into New Mexico and Texas. Meanwhile, New England's sheep industry commenced in 1609 with arrival of unimproved English sheep to the colonies. By the time of the American Revolution, sheep ranching was a common and necessary enterprise in the eastern states.²⁹

Sheep came to southern California with the Spanish missions. Although an inferior breed (called *churro*) compared to the fine sheep that would later serve the market, the herds thrived in the vast rangelands of the state. The old Spanish proverb, "Wherever the foot of the sheep touches, the land is turned into gold," was followed by the padres and settlers as sheep herds grew in the early 1800s, the greatest numbers found in the 1820s in Los Angeles County. The transition to statehood and the Gold Rush caused a boom in sheep ranching as the need for meat and wool mushroomed. The Channel Islands figured prominently in this era, as Santa Cruz Island and its smaller neighbors became sheep ranges specializing in fine breeds such as the French and Spanish Merino. Harris Newmark noted that in 1853,

The raising of sheep had not yet developed any importance . . . most of the mutton then consumed in Los Angeles coming from Santa Cruz Island, in the Santa Barbara Channel, though some was brought from San Clemente and Santa Catalina Islands . . . Santa Cruz Island had much larger herds, and steamers running to and from San Francisco often stopped there to take on sheep and sheep-products.³⁰

Under the management of James Barron Shaw between 1852 and 1869, the Santa Cruz Island sheep ranch was apparently the first in the region to focus on high-grade wool and meat products involving the importation of the best breeds of sheep from Europe and the east coast. Santa Cruz Island became known as California's finest sheep ranch, giving impetus to the development of high quality sheep ranches elsewhere in the state. The years of Shaw's enterprise coincide with the dramatic rise in sheep ranching in the state, which by 1860 supported some 100,000 head. A scarcity of cotton during the Civil War dramatically increased the need for wool, feeding the boom in California.³¹

Sheep raisers (often called sheepmen) varied from those with scientific interests to uneducated shepherds. Literature was available pertaining to breeds and breeding, range management, wool

²⁹Edward Norris Wentworth, *America's Sheep Trails* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State College Press, 1948), pp. 13-28; Fred S. Hultz and John A. Hill, *Range Sheep and Wool in the Seventeen Western States* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1931), p. 16.

³⁰Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913*, edited by Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1916), p. 216.

³¹Mark T. Swanson, *Historic Sheep Ranching on San Nicolas Island* (Report prepared for Naval Air Weapons Station Point Mugu, 1993), pp. 1-2; Earl Warren, Jr., *The Agriculture of Santa Cruz Island* (Thesis, University of California College of Agriculture, Davis, 1952), pp. 30-32; L. G. Connor, *A Brief History of the Sheep Industry in the United States* (Washington: 1921), pp. 128-129.

production, marketing and medical problems. An early concern in California ranching was range quality, as the fine perennial native grasses that had invited stock raising in the first place quickly succumbed to grazing and seasonal imports such as burr clover, foxtail and filaree. The burr clover, while nutritious to the sheep, deposited spiny seeds into the fleece, which lowered its value. The smart sheepman sheared before the burr clover went to seed, a practice used later on Santa Cruz Island and perhaps others. Although often cited in literature as native California grasses, many forage plants were imports dating back to the time of Spanish occupation. Overgrazing in these pastures caused gullying and erosion, seen to a noticeable extent on some of the Channel Islands. Another, and more costly, scourge were the southern California droughts. The great drought of 1862-1864 mostly affected the cattle ranches in the region, and actually paved the way for increased sheep production. With their palate more varied than cattle, sheep were less susceptible to feed shortages and they didn't require as much water to survive. Another drought occurred in 1877, a time when sheep ranching was recovering from a panic and so stocking numbers had been increasing. The drought caused sheep ranchers, including those on the islands, to hold *matanzas* in which thousands of sheep would be killed and boiled for their fats.³²

The 1870s has been called California's era of wool, with ups and downs that lost and made fortunes for many. Worldwide demand for wool, coupled with higher land values and industrialization in the east, pushed the sheep industry west where land was cheap. With the state population rising, exports to the east and Europe growing, and herds increasing to sizes beyond the capacity of the range, numerous problems arose. Overgrazing affected the landscape, in many places irreversibly. Speculation led to a "wool craze" in 1872-1873. In 1871 the price of wool climbed from 10 to 12 cents per pound to 45 cents and more. Investors scrambled to increase stock and buy at high prices before the market dropped. Newmark wrote that 1872 was "on record as the most disastrous wool season in our history, when millions were lost" Sheep numbers rose again, to 6,750,000 in California in 1875 (the largest count in the country at the time), only to see a drought in 1877. The health of the sheep industry leveled out after the stormy 1870s as the west settled into its permanent status as the dominant wool-growing region of the country. California consistently ranked as number two behind Texas in numbers of sheep and wool clip. By the 1880s the 17 western states produced 82 per cent of the nation's wool crop. By this time wool and lamb were the major sheep products, the demand for mutton having diminished. Being a marginal enterprise for its owners, sheep producers gained help from the government's National Wool Act of 1954, which provided price supports for the industry. In Santa Barbara County, sheep production was not as important during the twentieth century as it had been in the previous decades. By the time sheep ranching ended on the Channel Islands, wool and lamb were only a minimal segment of the county's agricultural production. The last sheep producers on the Channel Islands were the Gherini family, who finally gave up in 1984 after over 100 years in the business.³³

³²Thomas Rowlandson, *The Sheep Breeder's Guide* (San Francisco: J. Q. A. Warren, 1861), pp. 128-133; Swanson, *Historic Sheep Ranching*, p. 9; Wentworth, *America's Sheep Trails*, pp. 190-191; Donald Warrin, "An Immigrant Path to Social Mobility: Portuguese Atlantic Islanders in the California Sheep Industry" in *California History*, Vol. LXXVI, No. 4, Winter 1997/98, pp. 94-95. A *matanza* is described in the Santa Rosa Island section of this study.

³³Connor, *Brief History of the Sheep Industry*, pp. 112, 117, 134-136, 139; Hultz and Hill, *Range Sheep*, pp. 17-19, 22; Newmark, *Sixty Years*, p. 437-438; Warrin, "An Immigrant Path," p. 95; C. Kerry Gee and Albert G. Madsen, *Sheep Production in the 17 Western States* (Fort Collins, CO: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research

The sheep ranches of the Channel Islands received note both in the popular press and economic and scientific journals. The Shaw and Caire regimes on Santa Cruz, and the Mores on Santa Rosa, were heralded as among the biggest and best in California if not the west. Extensive descriptive articles appeared about these two large islands. The smaller island ranches, although not having economic importance, supplied the newspapers and periodicals with human-interest stories of families living with their sheep on bleak outposts in the Pacific, sharing their triumphs and tragedies with their counterparts on the mainland. Writers often noted the unique method of sheep raising on the islands, where herders were unheard of and the sheep ranged freely in the mountains until rounded up like cattle in lively *corridas*.

Island owners and lessees also raised cattle: Waters of San Miguel had a herd, the Caires kept a sizable herd along with their sheep, the Stantons of Santa Cruz Island were cattlemen for almost 50 years, and Vail & Vickers ranched cattle on Santa Rosa Island exclusively from 1902 to 1998. Unlike the hides and tallow industry of the Mexican period, these provided beef and market calves to consumers in the west and farther and required the skills of animal husbandry and marketing. No dairying occurred save for products needed for domestic use. The distances from the mainland and other factors made dairy ranching a poor proposition for an island business.

Cattle also arrived in the New World with the earliest explorers and settlers. The first herds reportedly reached Texas in 1583, and came to California with the padres and their sheep. The establishment of the ranchos of southern California led to the stocking of vast cattle ranches. The major uses for cattle during the Mexican period was for hides, which were dried and sent east by ship for tanning, and tallow, a crudely-made fat product with many uses. Much maritime activity occurred off the coast of California in the hide and tallow trade, although none of these activities was recorded on the Channel Islands. It is likely, however, that Alpheus Thompson raised the first cattle on Santa Rosa Island for this purpose.³⁴

The transition to beef production occurred with the Gold Rush. Prices jumped from four or five dollars a head to up to a hundred dollars in the mines. The old California ranchos became American ranches, stocked with new breeds of cattle made for fattening and slaughter. The arrival of the railroads opened new markets to the western cattle ranchers, including the famed stockyards at Chicago and Kansas City. But with this prosperity came imports from Mexico, Texas and other areas that resulted in a glut in the market, and prices fell before the 1850s were over. The drought of 1862-1864 brought the industry to its knees. On the islands and elsewhere, ranchers took on more sheep; the heyday of cattle ranchos ended, resulting in a moderate cattle industry that only grew during the 20th century as the nation's taste for beef, coupled with improved transportation of perishables, grew with it.³⁵

During the last half of the 19th century, and especially throughout the 20th, most original land grant ranchos were divided and subdivided. Eventually few ranchers could claim an intact land grant ranch. Vail

Service, 1983), pp. 1-9. The following statistical references, and many others, can be seen at the Agricultural Economics Library, University of California Davis: California Livestock Statistics, Compiled by George A. Scott (Sacramento: USDA, Bureau of Agricultural Economics/California Department of Agriculture, 1937); County Agricultural Statistics, July 1965; California Livestock—Annual Report 1972, California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

³⁴Paul I. Wellman, *The Trampling Herd* (Philadelphia/New York: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1939), pp. 13-58; Cleland, *From Wilderness*, pp. 132-133.

³⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 278-281, 285, 293-295.

& Vickers of Santa Rosa Island could, up to their last days in operation in 1998. Vail & Vickers bought the island in 1901-1902 with the intention of restocking it with cattle. They ran, for most of their 97 years there, a stocker operation, wherein young cattle arrived at the island for two seasons of fattening. On Santa Cruz Island, Edwin Stanton made the switch from sheep to cattle in the late 1930s. His operation, later run by his son Carey Stanton, operated as a cow/calf outfit, in which cows gave birth and the calves were raised and fattened for market. Both the islands' owners raised Herefords, the most popular market beef cattle. More detail on the operations will be found in Sections 3 and 4 following.

The Vail & Vickers ranch was a major part of Santa Barbara County's cattle industry, raising a large percentage of the county's beef cattle at various times between 1940 and 1980. Even larger in acreage, the Stantons' cattle operation on Santa Cruz Island also contributed to the local economy during the last half of the twentieth century. Most large local beef cattle ranches, such as the 34,000-acre San Fernando Rey Ranch and the 28,000-acre Bixby Ranch, operated as cow-calf farms with small numbers of stockers adding up to a maximum of three to four thousand head, as compared with the island's stocking of 5,000 to 8,000 head. Santa Barbara County, while never a leader in California's beef industry, nevertheless held a position among the top ten or twelve cattle producers throughout the twentieth century and usually led production in coastal Southern California. California became the nation's largest agricultural producer by 1948, with cattle the major commodity of the state's production. California cattle production followed only Texas and a few other western states in economic importance nationwide.³⁶

Livestock ranching in northern Santa Barbara County took a downturn in the 1920s through the 1940s with the development of row crop farming, a result of improved transportation opportunities, organized marketing and irrigation. Military acquisitions of coastal ranches around Point Conception to the northwest also contributed to the demise of many family ranches, mostly dairies; beef cattle ranching continued in the Santa Ynez Valley, along the coast between Vandenburg Air Force Base and Goleta, and on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands. The industry revived during and after World War II. While the number of cattle and prices for cattle sold steadily rose in Santa Barbara County during the 1940s and 1950s, the acreage

³⁶See California Livestock Statistics, 1937; Agricultural Crop Reports [1945-1959]; County Agricultural Statistics, July 1965; California Livestock—Annual Report 1972; and Economic Briefs for Agricultural Extension Service [1974]. Information in this section on cattle ranching in California has been gleaned from the following sources: *An Analysis of the California Beef Cattle Industry* (Cooperative Extension, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California. Special Publication 3281. 1982), pp. 16-19; The Easton Gallery, *Ranchos: Santa Barbara Land Grant Ranchos*, text by Bjorn Rye (Santa Barbara: The Easton Gallery, 1996); Lynn Huntsinger, "End of the Trail: Ranching Transformation on the Pacific Slope" in *Ranching West of the 100th Meridian: Culture, Ecology and Economics*, Edited by Richard L. Knight, Wendell C. Gilgert and Ed Marston (Washington: Island Press, 2002), pp. 77-81; David Iglar, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller and Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Lawrence J. Jelinek, *Harvest Empire—A History of California Agriculture* (1982); Kevin (Lex) Palmer, *Central Coast Continuum—From Ranchos to Rockets. A Historic Overview for an Inventory and Evaluation of Historic Sites, Buildings, and Structures, Vandenburg Air Force Base, California* (Santa Maria: BTG, Inc., 1999); Ann Foley Scheuring, Editor, *A Guidebook to California Agriculture* (Berkeley: U. C. Press, 1983), pp. 187-202; Paul F. Starrs, *Let The Cowboy Ride: Cattle Ranching in the American West* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 121-122; U. S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Agriculture—California—Statistics by Counties (USGPO, 1931); U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture, 1950, Volume I: Counties and State Economic Areas—Part 33, and Volume II General Report—Statistics by Subjects, California (Washington: USGPO, 1952); U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture, 1964, Volume I, Part 48—California (Washington: USGPO, 1967); phone interviews by the author with Santa Barbara County ranching historian Bob Isaacson and rancher Andy Mills, August 4, 2004.

devoted to stock raising dipped from 610,000 acres to 426,000 acres between 1955 and 1958, and continued to decline through the 1960s and 1970s.

Per capita consumption of beef in California more than doubled between 1940 and 1970, and the number of cattle on state farms reflected this rise, although national growth of cattle numbers did not match that of California's. Prices for beef off the farm rose almost 400% during the same period, with the most dramatic growth between 1940 and 1959. The industry took a dramatic downturn during the 1970s, which opened a period of instability that lasted two decades.

A science- and economy-driven revolution in production took place in the 1950s as cattle fattening in feedlots became popular with surpluses of grain and dwindling quality grazing land. Cattle feeding started in the 1930s but exploded after World War II, focused especially in the Midwest. In the twenty years following the war, the number of cattle on feed jumped by over 600%. Vail & Vickers followed this trend, switching in the 1950s from a cow-calf ranch (where cows produce calves for sale) to a stocker operation, in which steers are imported solely for preparation for feedlot finishing.

Coast Surveys and Mapping

Immediately following California's entry into the United States in 1850, federal surveyors commenced mapping projects that would continue through much of the 19th century. While the theme of mapping and survey does not carry particular historical significance related to the islands, the activities of the various military and civilian surveyors promoted knowledge of the islands to both their contemporaries and researchers of today. For instance, the islands survey undertaken during the early 1870s noted the rich and undisturbed archeological deposits on the islands, which prompted a number of expeditions that, in retrospect, ravaged the resources at the expense of future researchers. The maps made at that time aided the occupants of the islands and were used until the U. S. Geological Survey completed modern topographic maps of the islands in the 1940s. The mapping efforts also, and perhaps most significantly, contributed to the safety of passing ships, thereby protecting coastal commerce. For the purposes of this and other studies, both historical and scientific, the maps produced by these early surveyors reveal details of development, land use and vegetation. The following narrative provides insight into mapping activities on the islands.

The area included in the State of California is part of the territory acquired from Mexico by war and by the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo of February 1848. The southern boundary ran "across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific Ocean." Since the Channel Islands were not specifically mentioned, claims that they belonged to Mexico (by private individuals with an interest in the islands) persisted for more than a century.³⁷

"Excerpts from a Geological Survey Pamphlet," kept as title evidence by the U. S. Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Real Estate Division, San Bruno, rather effectively sets this issue to rest. Its arguments are that the boundaries of the State, as described in the constitution of 1849, not only follow those of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, but in addition add the phrase, "Also all the islands, harbors,

³⁷George P. Hammond, *The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo*, (Berkeley: Grabhorn Press, 1949), p. 2.

and bays along and adjacent to the Pacific coast.” The pamphlet went on to state that among the principal islands claimed as part of the State of California were Santa Catalina and San Clemente in Los Angeles County; San Nicolas in Ventura County; and Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel islands in Santa Barbara County.³⁸

Many smaller islands also passed into the control of the United States, and the following points clarify the fact that after the treaty was signed the islands were part of the territory ceded to the United States. First, Congress approved the State constitution of 1849, which mentioned the islands, in 1850. Secondly, an act of Congress approved August 31, 1852, appropriated funds for subdivision of the islands so that they could be disposed of under the laws of the United States. Third, the Supreme Court in 1859 acted on a case relating to a land grant on the island of Santa Cruz, and thus its jurisdiction must have been considered valid. Further, patents had been issued for land on several of the islands by the General Land Office, reservations have been made for lighthouses, and leases have been granted by United States governmental agencies. No formal claim has been presented or won by the Mexican government, and it is certain that none could be made now with any hope of a reversal of claim.

The United States Coast Survey ascertained for the first time the number of islands lying off the coast between San Diego and Point Conception, their position and topography. The earliest record we have of island mapping and survey after they fell under the control of the United States is a map sketched by the U. S. Coast Survey Assistant George Davidson, who camped near Point Conception in 1850. The Channel Islands are located more or less correctly, but their contours are indefinite and show his lack of familiarity with them.

The next maps appear in a “Sketch Book of the South Coast of California” executed by U. S. Navy Lieutenant Commander James Alden in 1851. Coast Survey habitually borrowed a detail of naval officers for hydrography survey. Alden was assigned to make a reconnaissance of the coast from Monterey to San Diego, examine anchorages, and thus provide data to Alexander Dallas Bache, Superintendent of the U. S. Coast Survey, 1843-1867. Alden made pencil sketches of Anacapa, San Miguel, and Santa Barbara islands and wrote that San Miguel was somewhat similar to Santa Rosa but much smaller and with reefs to the north and west. He mentioned Cuyler Harbor by name, and described it as one and seven-eighths mile at its mouth with a good deep landing, sand beach, and without surf.

The name “Cuyler” had not appeared earlier and it would seem logical to assume that the harbor was named after Navy Lieutenant Richard M. Cuyler who came from Savannah to join Alden’s party in 1850. Alden lauded Cuyler in his correspondence with Superintendent Bache. Writing in 1853, Alden stated, “I know of no one in the service who is better qualified for taking charge of a hydrographic party than Mr. Cuyler.” Cuyler transferred to the east coast in 1853, but Bache placed him in charge of a party in Puget Sound in 1855. The survey parties made common practice of naming geographical points after members of the party.³⁹

³⁸“Boundaries, Area, etc., of the United States,” p. 243, see in file, “Channel Islands,” Real Estate Division, NA(SB).

³⁹Bache Correspondence, 1852, Vol. IX, Western Coast, RG 23, NA(CP). James Alden became a Commander in 1854 and retired as a Rear Admiral in 1871; he died in 1877. Richard M. Cuyler obtained the rank of Lieutenant in 1854, and resigned from the Navy in 1859. Edward W. Callahan, *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1969), pp. 19, 146.

In 1852, the U.S. Senate resolved that the Secretary of the Treasury determine the costs of extending the Coast Survey's work to include the offshore islands, and "also to report whether the usual land surveys, dividing the islands into townships, sections, half sections, quarter sections, and eighth sections could not at the same time be made by the officers of the Coast Survey under the direction of the Superintendent." Superintendent Bache, thus advised, collected information from Major Stevens, his assistants in Coast Survey, and from surveying parties on the West Coast in order to calculate the costs of a survey and for drawing the maps and charts and engraving the sketches for a report he was to submit to the Secretary of the Treasury. This survey, to

connect these islands with each other, and with the main[land], should determine the latitudes and longitudes of prominent points, should give the topography of the surface of each, and the hydrography of the shores as far seaward as may be necessary and including a general examination of the vicinity.⁴⁰

Bache suggested that the survey party use the Schooner *Ewing* for the year. He allowed the group to count on a naval detail for the hydrography and to hire a steamer for the latter work. Bache appropriated \$136,000 on August 31, 1852, but as a subsequent correspondence showed, this left the survey parties under-budgeted.

Captain E. O. C. Ord was charged with the triangulation of the islands in 1853; this consisted of measuring a series of connecting triangles in which many sides were common to the adjacent triangles. The points were called stations and marked. On September 23, 1853 one was erected on Middle Anacapa near the east end and described as "a white pine pole some 30 feet long supported by three braces covered with white cotton [at the] junction of braces and pole The usual notices in English and Spanish are tacked to the pole. There is a wooden cap at the top of the braces, painted black."⁴¹

Ord had as his assistants, George Davidson and William E. Greenwell. Meanwhile, Alden was making soundings from Point Conception to San Miguel Island, thence to San Nicolas, San Clemente, and on to San Diego. In his correspondence he discussed the need for a lighthouse on either Anacapa or Santa Cruz.

In 1854 the Coast and Geodetic Survey in Washington D.C. had in their employ a draftsman who was "habitually late, frequently absent, given to graffiti, and inclined to doodle on its official charts." He was James Abbott McNeill Whistler, a senior year dropout from West Point, who at the age of 20 attempted for three months to work as a government employee. The Bureau instructed him in etching and copper engraving. He decorated his first assignments of the east coast with little heads, mermaids, and smiling whales. His next assignment was Anacapa Island. In addition to the map, his assignment included a sketch of East Anacapa from the south with arch rock. Unfulfilled, Whistler added two flocks of gulls flying gracefully south over the tip of the island. For this wrongdoing, Whistler was threatened with discharge, but he reportedly responded, "Surely the birds don't detract from the sketch; Anacapa Island couldn't look

⁴⁰Letter of Asbury Dickens to Sir [Bache], August 5, 1852, in *Ibid.*

⁴¹GA Series 941, Box 105, RG 23, NA(CP). Edward Otho Cresap Ord rose in the Army ranks to major general and, after his service for the Coast Survey in the 1850s, was decorated for his service during the Civil War. He died in 1883.

as blank as that map did before I added the birds.” Due largely to tardiness, Whistler was asked to leave the following month, and he went on to study in Paris, eventually to become a celebrated artist (and to create such works as the famous portrait of his mother).⁴²

In 1856, W. E. Greenwell headed a party making triangulations of the Channel Islands. Bache wanted the Channel Islands off Santa Barbara given priority even over the mainland due to the heavy shipping traffic. Greenwell reported that Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands were the only remaining islands fit for habitation. He curiously omitted Catalina.

The base for the main triangulation was the Los Angeles plan, so Greenwell stationed himself at the San Pedro Hill Station and tried to throw points on Catalina and Santa Barbara Island and Point Dume and another point still further west of Dume known as Point Conversion. When these were established, a line could reach out to Santa Cruz Island and the island work could get underway. The plan involved “four long lines all centering on the little island of Santa Barbara This little island was the turning point, as it were, or where these four long lines centered, the shortest of which would be 35 miles more or less.”⁴³

After the main triangulation points were established, heliotropes (an instrument used for making long-distance observations by means of the sun’s rays thrown from a mirror) would be posted but, as Greenwell explained, these had to be placed before the southeasterly winds set in. The first real obstacle would be funds. Greenwell’s allotment was cut from \$12,000 to \$7,198 in January and he, therefore, made plans to break camp in March and call it quits for the year. Then there was the lack of visibility. During the two months and some days he was at San Pedro trying to observe the angles Santa Catalina-Santa Barbara and Santa Barbara-Point Dume, the island of Santa Barbara was only visible for nine days. The winter was unusual, Greenwell wrote, with no rain, the islands enveloped in fog, yet the inland fairly clear. Due to these problems, Greenwell triangulated the coast up to San Buenaventura and wrote to Bache that he would carry on the triangulation to Santa Cruz from there. A lag in correspondence then left Bache perplexed. He only knew that the islands were getting attention after the mainland and wrote critically to Greenwell on this. Greenwell, experiencing illness by April, explained again, but he also complained that the exposure he suffered on the west coast made east coast service seem like a mere exercise.

In May 1858, Greenwell set out for the islands on the old Schooner, *Humboldt*; and his log, “Description of Stations,” recorded not only the secondary triangulations on San Miguel, but also the island’s appearance. There is no mention of a tree, only cactus, sage and dark looking bushes. West from “Green Mountain” Station he saw a strip of sand drift and at “Cactus” Station, no bushes or undergrowth. The log reports nothing about the human habitation or the sheep, which were by then on the island.

At the end of July 1858, Greenwell’s party headed for San Nicolas while Sub-Assistant W. M. Johnson worked on Anacapa, and James Alden continued hydrographic measurements on the *Active*. In the summer of 1859 Greenwell complained from Santa Rosa Island that they had made little progress. The

⁴²William A. Stanley, “Three Short Happy Months,” NPS, *Channel Islands*, (Washington D.C.: Gov. Printing Office, 1963), The material on Whistler is based on this article.

⁴³Greenwell to Bache, April 9, 1856, Bache Correspondence, Vol. XVI, RG 23, NA. See Correspondence, January 25, February 16 and March 16 for material on 1856. The other source for this part of the report is Coast and Geodetic Survey, GA Series 941, RG 23, NA(CP), where the Log Books are held. See Boxes 25467, 2083, 2086, 2096, 52211, 75 and 25047.

approximately six to eight thousand cattle on the island knocked down his signals daily, and a northeast gale was so strong that for ten days they could do nothing.

Work began again in the summers of 1860 and 1861. Efforts to complete the triangulations were started but the topographic work was left for another time. Greenwell erected a signal on the west end of Santa Cruz Island and adjusted others on that island and on Anacapa Island. The Civil War brought with it a breakdown in communications, mail was late, and Bache was cut off from his men. Money depreciated, and Greenwell's men would only accept gold for pay in the face of devalued legal tender so that he had to cut down on the size of his camp. Throughout the period, Bache failed to grasp the problem of weather on the west coast, which was reportedly mild. The survey team had worked around the country beginning along the coasts of Maine, but in California, exposure and illness plagued them. Johnson reported at Point Conception, "We took the heaviest gale I have ever seen, the sea was certainly running 20 to 25 feet."⁴⁴

When the Coast Survey returned to San Miguel Island in 1871-1872 Stehman Forney was Chief of the Party. He calculated and sketched the topography and placed a Bench Mark (a fixed point of known elevation that is established at intervals throughout an area to provide a permanent point of reference. Greenwell had only drawn a base line on the east arm of the island which was "merely a mean elevation above water") on the southerly tip of Prince Island. Forney executed further triangulations and erected signals at eleven new points. Looking down on the water from Harbor Station, he described a hill to the right covered with sand. Greenwell saw it covered with low sage brush and cactus; this was graphic evidence that erosion had taken place in the dozen years in between, helped along no doubt by grazing and the drought George Nidever wrote of in 1863.⁴⁵

Topographers also worked on Santa Barbara Island, performing the standard tasks of triangulation, signal construction and topographic mapping. The National Archives does not hold logbooks or other materials describing the work on Anacapa, nor was this island mentioned in the Superintendent's correspondence used to bring to light some of the first observations made by Americans of the islands. With Forney's triangulations on San Miguel, Richardson's Rock was positioned, and Coast Survey commenced the main triangulation between the islands and Monterey in 1872.

The most prolific period of island mapping occurred with Forney's work on San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands between 1871 and 1876. Other mapping activities followed, including an update of San Miguel Island after a massive landslide in 1895, and updated shoreline surveys during the 1930s. The United States Geological Survey published photo-based topographic maps of all the islands beginning in 1943.

More detail on the surveys of the individual islands can be found in the island chapters. The surveys resulted in aid to mariners and landowners, the spread of information about the islands to the general public, and today provide information to scholars and scientists.

⁴⁴Bache Correspondence, 1860; *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), p. 66.

⁴⁵Ellison, *Life and Adventures*, p. 76.

Shipwrecks in the Channel Islands

Ships traveling between San Francisco and Los Angeles have historically followed the Coastwise Traffic Lanes, which lie in the Santa Barbara Channel between the Northern Channel Islands and the mainland coast, Point Conception southward to Port Hueneme. The traffic in lumber schooners became extremely heavy after the 1880s as in that decade many of the small communities of Southern California such as Pasadena, Fullerton and Pomona had their start. The real estate boom was largely a product of railroad competition. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad broke the monopoly of Southern Pacific with a route to Southern California from the east, rates tumbled, and hundreds of the curious bought one-way tickets to the west. And, the railroads needed coal, which was brought to California from England on such ships as the *Goldenhorn* and the *Crown of England*, both of which wrecked on the Channel Islands. Masts of schooners bringing lumber to build new homes and public buildings, coal for industrial uses and other goods created a regular forest in San Pedro Harbor. But these ships first had to clear the often-dangerous Santa Barbara Channel. At Point Conception, they entered a graveyard for shipping, the foggiest and roughest waters off the coast of California. Individual shipwrecks are described island-by-island in the appropriate chapters. Among the most important of the wrecks are the *Winfield Scott*, a gold rush-era steamer loaded with passengers and gold which wrecked on Anacapa in 1853; the steamers *Anubis* and *Cuba*, both of which wrecked on San Miguel Island; and the aforementioned *Goldenhorn* which wrecked on Santa Rosa Island in 1892 and the *Crown of England* which met a similar fate two years later.⁴⁶

Channel Islands National Monument

In the spring of 1932, the Bureau of Lighthouses brought Santa Barbara and Anacapa Islands to the attention of Horace Albright, Director of the National Park Service (NPS), and proposed that the islands be turned over for national park purposes. The Bureau explained that they customarily leased the islands for five-year periods and that they would soon expire. Before renewing the leases or releasing them again to private individuals, they wanted to see whether they could be put to some public good. Superintendent H. W. Rhodes was clearly behind the move and at the same time pressed for leases by private hunting clubs and groups interested in exploiting the islands for gas and oil. At this time the NPS did not have a chance to come out and investigate the islands and hence suggested that they were probably more important from a State standpoint than from a national one. NPS advised the Bureau of Lighthouses to introduce legislation at the next session of Congress to have the islands transferred from the Department of Commerce to the State of California for park purposes without cost. Evidently, no one followed up on this suggestion.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ See Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56 (Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996).

⁴⁷ H. W. Rhodes, Superintendent of Lighthouses, to Chief Landscape Architect [Thomas Vint], July 15, 1932, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files 1932-53, Box 14, File 201, NA(SB).

The Bureau of Lighthouses contacted the National Park Service again in March 1937 to advise that the greater part of Anacapa Island Lighthouse Reservation and the major part of Santa Barbara Island were surplus to the needs of the Lighthouse Service. The National Park Service answered in May asking for detailed information about the land available for transfer and the nature of outstanding grazing leases. Correspondence continued on this matter, and in September 1937, Dr. H. C. Bryant, Assistant Director of the National Park Service, came out to the coast. He made a trip to the Channel Islands accompanied by an assistant regional director.

Bryant actually visited only Santa Cruz Island. Then he examined several of the other islands from the boat with field glasses. None of the government-owned islands, he reported, appeared qualified or desirable for national park status. From the vegetation standpoint some of the values might warrant protection from grazing, and national monument status would give this. He listed plant species, some of them rare. He found none of the plants spectacular, but of value only because of the limited range that they occupy in the world. The small government-owned islands he saw through the field glasses, if at all, were, he wrote, “barren of these rare species, and covered only with grass, annuals or coast live oak.”⁴⁸

In contrast to this guarded recommendation for monument status was the enthusiasm poured into the investigation by Professor Theodore D. A. Cockerell of the University of Colorado. This biologist had been collecting specimens on the islands for some years and gathering data from other scientists. In 1937 he visited Santa Barbara, Anacapa and San Miguel Islands, wrote an article, planned a book, and tried to get his publications into the hands of people to explain why the islands were considered of unusual interest. He was impressed with the extraordinary importance of the islands for natural history studies and urged the park service to accept a land transfer. He particularly opposed transferring them to the Navy. He wrote to the NPS’s Bryant and sent him his article. Cockerell may well have tipped the balance of opinion towards park service takeover, for in 1938 the National Park Service made the decision to take the excess lighthouse property and ask for National Monument status.

On April 26, 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a Proclamation setting apart Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands as the Channel Islands National Monument. The Bureau of Lighthouses reserved part of the islands for lighthouse purposes: approximately 57 acres on Santa Barbara Island and 161.78 acres in four parcels on Anacapa. The first words of the opening paragraph of the Proclamation explained why the land warranted preservation, and read,

WHEREAS certain public islands lying off the coast of Southern California contain fossils of Pleistocene elephants and ancient trees, and furnish noteworthy examples of ancient volcanism, deposition, and active sea erosion, and have situated thereon various other objects of geological and scientific interest . . .

President Roosevelt believed that gradual recovery of the islands’ natural characteristics could only be effected by a good management plan, one the National Park Service was obliged to carry out in accordance

⁴⁸ Director H. M. Albright to William Colby, California Conservation Commission, October 15, 1932, RG 79, 202301; Rhodes to Commissioner, July 19, 1937 and A. E. Demaray to Commissioner, May 21, 1937, Lighthouse Correspondence, 1614; Cook to Director, NPS, October 20, 1937; Cockerell to Bryant, October 28, 1937, RG 79, 202302, NA(SB).

with its traditional duties to preserve resources in their natural condition. Geology received special mention in the Proclamation.

Officials of the Department of the Interior on the east coast were impressed with the fact that these land fragments represented peaks of mountain masses submerged beneath the sea, and that the submergence had taken place so long ago that much of the animal and plant life originally common to the entire area had survived and had time to evolve differently. Birds, plants and mammals were unique. In early 1939 the National Park Service sent out a biologist to make a report on the condition of these rare species. Lowell Sumner, Regional Wildlife Technician from the park service's western regional office, produced the first resources survey and evaluation of the new islands monument. The Washington office placed the new Channel Islands National Monument under Superintendent E. T. Scoyen at Sequoia National Park.⁴⁹

Scoyen made his first official inspection of the islands in May 1940. In his preliminary report to the Director in Washington, he admitted that until the trip he did not have a very high opinion of the new Channel Islands National Monument. But his personal contact completely reversed this attitude. From his many years in the service, he wrote that he had never spent such an interesting day from the wildlife standpoint. Summing up, he declared, "Boy! We've got something out there in the Channel Islands."⁵⁰

During 1941 progress at the Monument was held up by the fact that it had no appropriation and no representative located on site. The Sequoia staff made two inspection trips aboard Coast Guard boats along with members of the NPS Regional Office and the Soil Conservation Service. Poaching and other destructive influences continued to deplete the unique plants and animals that had furnished the original justification for establishing the Monument. Fishing parties and poachers landed at will, and high power rifle shells were found strewn on the cliffs at Santa Barbara Island above the rookeries where sea lions bred and where it was hoped the elephant seal and sea otter would return. The islands were posted against hunting, but without an actual patrol during breeding season, the slaughter continued. Biologist Sumner put forth a modest estimate of \$605 for a minimum patrol for the years 1942 and 1943, but the budget bureau rejected the proposal.

In August 1941 Scoyen was transferred to Kings Canyon National Park, and some thought that the administration of Channel Islands National Monument should go with him. However, the Monument remained with Sequoia under the administration of new superintendent John R. White. Scoyen resumed his duties at the islands again when Sequoia and Kings Canyon were placed under one administrator.

⁴⁹Dr. E. Lowell Sumner, who was involved in Channel Islands issues for up to two decades, worked for the National Park Service as early as 1931, when he was employed as a wildlife technician. By 1941 he had advanced to the position of Regional Biologist in the San Francisco office, a position he held until at least 1958. Eivind T. Scoyen, born at Old Fort Yellowstone in 1896, rose through the ranks of the National Park Service. His stint in charge of Channel Islands National Monument fell in mid-career. During the 1930s, Scoyen was Superintendent at Glacier National Park and moved to Sequoia National Park in 1939 and Kings Canyon NP in 1941. The two parks were merged in 1943, and from 1947 to 1956 Scoyen was superintendent for the merged parks and still in charge of CINM until 1955. In 1956 Scoyen was appointed assistant Director of the NPS under Conrad Wirth. He was the chairman of the Mission 66 Committee, which oversaw a ten-year improvement program in the national parks. Scoyen retired in 1962 and spent the last years of his life as a ranger near his birthplace, Yellowstone National Park.

⁵⁰ Scoyen to Director, May 20, 1940, NPS 202302, NA(SB).

Superintendent White visited the islands in September 1941. The main wildlife attraction for him was not in the monument but at the west end of San Miguel Island where he saw literally thousands of sea lions and elephant seals and even touched the latter. White sent general foreman Hugh Parkes and assistant superintendent Tobin to the Monument in September. The administration found that, above all, they wanted protection in the waters adjoining the Monument islands where seals and sea lions were a nuisance to fishermen and thus in the most danger. The Monument boundary was at the high water mark, which made protection very difficult.⁵¹

During World War II no one from Sequoia National Park apparently visited the Channel Islands. When the war was over, the Navy declared many of their boats excess and the Regional office suggested to Superintendent White that he take one for the Monument. White replied he could hardly use a boat when he had no permanent custodian or a place to house the boat. In 1945 three Los Angeles men asked for a permit to operate a sightseeing boat service to Santa Barbara Island, install wharves, piers, eating facilities, and arrange for biking trips. When told that there was no public need for opening up the islands and that fossils and other features had to be protected, the three men said they had never seen or heard of any on this island they apparently knew quite well. Again, the lack of funds had to be put forth as the reason for almost everyone's ignorance of the island's resources. With funds the Park Service could study and report on these matters. Lowell Sumner, now in the position of Park Planner, at this time would have accepted the plan for facilities if it could have been under the close supervision of a resident ranger.⁵²

Enlarging The Monument

Thomas Vint, Chief Landscape Architect for NPS, came out from Chicago in April of 1946 to evaluate the islands for park development. He found the islands bleak in general aspect and felt they would never be known for outstanding scenic beauty. The ocean life was spectacular and the underwater world the big show. His prime recommendation was that the reservation should extend offshore to protect the underwater life. Superintendent Scoyen had brought up the question of extension of his authority over waters adjacent to the islands in 1940, and the regional office discussed it even earlier, but Vint's concern led to action. In June 1948, the matter finally reached the desk of President Harry S. Truman. A proclamation was drawn up for him to sign, introduced by a letter from the Secretary of the Interior. The Proclamation of 1938, it argued, had not included several small islets and rocks, the control of which was essential to the proper protection of objects of geological and scientific interest, including marine life, for the preservation of which the monument was established. The new proclamation would place under administrative control of NPS the area within a distance of one nautical mile from the shoreline of Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands. Similar protection had been given to islands off Key West, Florida, and further, no additional funds would be involved for the protection of the area. The Proclamation, No. 2825, was signed February 9, 1949, and added 17,635 acres to the park. The proclamation stipulated addition of "the area within one (1) nautical mile of the shoreline of Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands

⁵¹ See correspondence in NPS 202302.

⁵² Memo, O. A. Tomlinson, Regional Director, Oct. 9 and 24, 1945, 202302, NA(SB).

...” At Anacapa this Proclamation was interpreted to mean all areas within one nautical mile of the shoreline of Cat Rock. The California Fish and Game Commission reacted to the extension by advising they would not give permits for any explosives within the park waters. Neither could the Division of Fish and Game issue permits to oil exploration interests in the zone. Thus, explosive seismic operations within CHIS areas would not be permitted.⁵³

The enlargement also brought under park jurisdiction the offshore kelp beds. The Park Service had been interested in kelp beds around the islands even before they administered the Monument. In 1933 Thomas Vint had written Dr. W. A. Setchell, Professor of Botany, University of California at Berkeley, asking for information. Setchell replied that the giant kelps of the Pacific coast had no counterparts elsewhere in the Northern Hemisphere and that they had been mapped. Anacapa had thin beds, San Miguel had very heavy beds grading down to thin. Certain area, he advised, should be set aside, converted into a National Monument, and preserved. In 1933 Philip R. Park, Inc. of San Pedro had a lease from the Division of Fish and Game to harvest kelp in an area of 2.70 square miles around Santa Barbara Island. Regulated kelp farming had been approved for the open bed kelp area off Anacapa Island in June of 1941.⁵⁴

With proper harvesting methods, the tops of adult plants, which would die and rot eventually, were removed allowing sunlight to penetrate to depths of up to ninety feet, thus stimulating continuous growth. Growth was extremely rapid. Trimming or harvesting was done at the water surface, seldom more than four feet down so that only surface floating fronds were cut, and plant stems were not pulled loose from the rocks by the harvester. Many varieties of seaweed lived in the waters, but kelp on the other hand, grew outside the breaker area and in water 40 to 90 feet deep. It required strong currents and would grow on the ocean side of the coastal islands or where there are heavy seas, but not in calm waters. It thrived in areas such as the west end of San Miguel where strong currents brought in a constantly renewed supply of the nutrients necessary to sustain the giant plant. The industry sold kelp for its potash, iodine, acetone and in particular the algin, but the Division of Fish and Game kept tight control over the beds so as not to deplete the submarine groves.

In 1950, Dr. Sumner stated his views on the subject and they guided NPS Policy for the Monument when it was set forth to the California Division of Fish and Game by Regional Director Tomlinson.

Kelp beds are very important in quieting the breakers and rough sea surges around the islands. They are a vital shelter for the sea otter and other marine mammals against bad weather and natural enemies, making quiet water along the shoreline where the animals can gather and sun themselves. Marine migratory birds also forage in these kelp beds. In view of the importance of kelp to wildlife, we would be unable to permit its harvesting, but we feel the prohibited area is so small that the effect on the kelp industry will be negligible.⁵⁵

⁵³Memo to T. C. Vint, April 10, 1946, 202302, NA(SB).

⁵⁴Setchell to Vint, Feb. 9, 1933, 20332, NA(SB).

⁵⁵Tomlinson to Fish & Game, August 17, 1950, 202302, NA(SB).

On the question of commercial fishing within the Monument area, deep-sea fishing would be permitted. The California Department of Fish and Game would license such operations, but they would be subject to exclusion from Monument waters at the request of the Regional Director. The Monument would not permit gathering of abalones or any other seashore and tide pool life.⁵⁶

The one-mile area around the Monument islands enhanced protection but did not solve it. In order to determine the protection problems, an investigation was started in February 1953. Groups who would possibly use the islands or who would be concerned with NPS regulations at the islands were contacted, such as the United State Coast Guard, the Inglewood Rod and Gun Club, the Ocean Fishing Protection Association, the Council of Skin Diving Clubs and industry groups including representatives of the kelp industry. The California Department of Fish and Game expressed concerns about size of boats, kelp farming and traps and harpoons used within the Monument boundary. The park service learned that all fishing boats for sharks and seals carried firearms and that their own regulations on shooting seals might have to be modified. Fish and Game claimed:

Seals and sea lions are shot by all groups of users and probably by lighthouse personnel adjacent to [sic] Anacapa. These mammals move with the fish so that local reduction in numbers has no lasting effect. They are felt to be plentiful, a nuisance, and nowhere in danger of extermination. It will be almost physically impossible to stop shooting of seals and sea lions.⁵⁷

As a result of the study, NPS decided that protection would be difficult at best. It was recommended that the low tide line be set as the limit of control over marine life on both islands. Outside that line, fishing could be continued under the present conditions. Recommendations were made on boats and hoist for Santa Barbara. The Coast Guard would be encouraged to remove its car from Santa Barbara and all buildings, telephone lines, and other structures, except the lookout tower. In closing, it was noted that even with the latest speedboats and radar, the Marine Patrol could only stop the wholesale violations. When patrols were gone, sportsmen did as they pleased. Public relations would go further in obtaining NPS goals. Finally, the study recommended that the Superintendent of Channel Islands National Monument be stationed at Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego and the two areas administered together. The staff should include in addition to the Superintendent a ranger and a seasonal ranger for the islands.

In 1971 regulations to protect shipwrecks and to eventually phase out abalone and lobster fishing in the Monument waters were adopted. A special use permit would be required of all commercial fishermen and passenger-carrying vessels operating within the Monument. Commercial fishermen had complained about the closure of the north side of Anacapa Island and west side of Santa Barbara Island for the taking of lobster and abalone. Commercial fishermen and sport fishermen are still at issue over the question of which use is doing the most damage to the marine environment.

⁵⁶“Official Map—Kelp Beds, Pt. Arguello to U. S. A. Mexico Boundary,” Oct. 28, 1931, Division of Fish and Game, State of California, 60 A512, 201; Dixon, NPS to Scofield, “Summary of Kelp Harvesting,” August 2, 1949, 202302, NA(SB).

⁵⁷“Protection and Operation Study Channel Islands National Monument,” March 31, 1953, p. 6, 202302, NA(SB). The data above is drawn from the same source.

The San Diego Years

When Superintendent E. T. Scoyen, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, received a recommendation for a headquarters at San Diego for the combined Cabrillo and Channel Islands National Monuments, he reacted positively. In discussing this with the Regional Office, they were inclined to approve it as well. The following year the Regional Director outlined a policy to get control out to the areas involved and for their administrators to work directly under the Regional Office. Appropriations were discussed, and July 1, 1957, Channel Islands National Monument headquarters was moved from Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to Superintendent of the combined monuments at San Diego. January 15, 1958, Donald A. Robinson, a ranger who had worked at Cabrillo since shortly after World War II, became Superintendent.

The National Park Service had exercised little administrative control or supervision of Channel Islands National Monument in the period following World War II. The islands tended towards neglect. Contact remained occasional except during the summer season when a ranger was in partial attendance on Anacapa Island and quarterly inspections were conducted from a Coast Guard aircraft. Santa Barbara Island was rarely discussed in the monthly reports, except for a 1959 fire, a visitor injury, and various acts of vandalism. It is evident from the reports that the islands, especially Santa Barbara Island, were not adequately patrolled and monitored, and that Channel Islands National Monument suffered from lack of attention and funding from the National Park Service. The lack of a permanent presence on the islands meant that damage might very well continue or even accelerate, given the visitation trends, until the area could be brought under firmer administrative control. While the transfer of management to the closer San Diego office no doubt improved matters somewhat, problems persisted into the 1970s.⁵⁸

Research and publication on the Monument and San Miguel Island showed an upsurge in the 1960s. Francis Holland had been recruited from Morristown National Park, the first historian to be assigned to Cabrillo. In 1961 he produced a history of San Miguel Island that stirred interest, and in 1964 he developed a narrated film on Channel Islands National Monument. Numerous scientific studies were begun on the islands during the years the Monument was administered from San Diego. The Monthly Reports coming out of San Diego in the 1960s devoted some 80% of their space to Cabrillo National Monument and Headquarters affairs, the remainder to Channel Islands National Monument. However, in the early 1960s, Francis R. Holland in collaboration with several of the park rangers produced a Mission 66 Master Plan for the Channel Islands which summarized activity on the islands to that date, and informed park officials on the East Coast about the Monument, and created a design for the future.⁵⁹

The National Park Service initiated Mission 66 in 1956; former Superintendent Scoyen, now Assistant Director of the NPS in Washington, acted as chairman of the national Mission 66 Committee. Some fifteen years of national emergencies had held back improvements of roads and visitor facilities in the national parks. At the same time visitors had doubled and staff fallen behind. Magazine articles such as Bernard De

⁵⁸Memo, J. G. Lewis to Regional Operations, June 7, 1965, 302786, NARA-SB; interview with Richard Main, March 13, 1978 by Lois Roberts; oral history interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston.

⁵⁹Monthly Reports, NPS Records, NA(SB).

Voto's "Let's Close the National Parks" in *Harpers* alarmed the public. Out of the uproar of complaint came this NPS 10-year development and conservation program. Laws handed down by Congress pertaining to the parks were brought out and re-examined, and Channel Islands National Monument developed a book-length manuscript defining how the Mission 66 program would be implemented at the Monument. The program goals included a system of trails, visitor accommodations, interpretive service, water and sanitation systems, and permanent personnel. Importantly, the manuscript set down the geological, biological, and historical values of the monument for NPS planners to see. It drew attention to the little-known Monument, and as we can see today many of the goals were met.⁶⁰

In September 1963, Superintendent Robinson was transferred to Crater Lake National Park, and Thomas R. Tucker became Superintendent at Cabrillo National Monument and thus Superintendent of CHIS. In May 1967, the Channel Islands National Monument headquarters moved from San Diego to Oxnard and Donald Robinson was called upon to be the Superintendent where he served until April 1974. About a year after Robinson took his post, Island Packers Company began to offer public transportation to the monument. John Cook acted briefly as Interim Superintendent until the arrival of Superintendent William H. Ehorn, June 23, 1974. Ehorn would guide the park through the planning and creation of Channel Islands National Park, and establish the foundation of the new park during its first ten years in existence.

Ehorn, a California native with experience at larger national parks in the state, found the Monument in need of physical cleanup and improved public relations. The park office was located in a three-bedroom house in Ventura, with only six full-time employees and a budget of \$174,000. The two islands under Ehorn's jurisdiction were neglected, with few public amenities and a backlog of maintenance needs. Ehorn set to work in building his staff, cleaning up the islands in an attempt to make them "more park like," establishing resource management programs, and exploring expansion of the Monument. Ehorn also made important agreements with the Navy to manage San Miguel Island.⁶¹

⁶⁰Letters, Conrad Wirth, Director, NPS, to Secretary of the Interior, March 10, 1961 and Udall to Wirth, March 20, 1961 in Manuscripts 73/72c, Bancroft Library, UCB; Francis R. Holland, "Master Plan for Channel Islands National Monument Mission 66 Edition," June 1963, 429512, NPS Records, NA(SB).

⁶¹Oral History interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston.

Channel Islands National Park

Further emphasis came for Monument development and expansion from another source, and more than ten years before Ehorn's arrival. In February 1961 President Kennedy sent a special message to Congress about natural resources. He observed that "America's health, morale and culture have long benefited from our national parks and forests [but they are] not now adequate to meet the needs of a fast-growing and more mobile population." He urged Congress to "enact legislation leading to the establishment of seashore and shoreline areas" and urged the Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall to conduct a survey to determine where additional seashore parks should be proposed. The *Santa Barbara News Press* printed the President's remarks and among other backers recommended the Channel Islands for a National Park. Editor Thomas Storke urged California Senators Thomas Kuchel and Clair Engle to lead the way and opened correspondence with an old friend of his, James K. Carr, Undersecretary of the Interior. Included in the park would be Santa Barbara, Anacapa, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and San Miguel islands. The problems were Navy authority over San Miguel and private ownership at Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz. Carr put forth a "Days of the Dons" idea that would make the proposed park a living museum. No automobiles, no motorcycles but only cattle and sheep would roam the island hills. In the coves would be replicas of the galleons and caravels of Cabrillo's day. Tourist accommodations would be authentic reproductions of the *posadas*: adobe walls, red tile roofs, and patio gardens. Park personnel would dress as Dons and carry guitars. The idea even appealed to Edwin Stanton, owner of Santa Cruz, who at one time had responded to a park idea with, "I don't want all the bums running wild on my island and a park would mean just that." Conrad Wirth, Director of the National Park Service, made plans to come out to Santa Barbara in May. Storke dined with the Chandlers of the *Los Angeles Times* to educate them, and he reminded his old friend Chief Justice Earl Warren of a hunt they had made together on Santa Rosa. Both Stanton and Ed Vail, the latter a part owner of Santa Rosa, favored the sale of their lands to NPS in May 1961, and as Storke explained to James Carr, the project should move quickly since property values moved upward so rapidly that in five years NPS might not be able to come up with the money. The plan did not move quickly. California already had one bill pending on a Point Reyes National Seashore proposal and the possibility of getting two bills in one session was remote. Finding the right time to move in Washington combined with the difficulty of finding an agreement with the owners of the two islands put off submission of the bill till 1963 when Engle backed a bill for a Channel Islands National Seashore—Seashore rather than Park, since in this way the government would not need to acquire all of the private property. No action was taken. Then Carr retired and Engle died. In 1966 five bills came before the House on the matter; in 1970 two came before the Senate. Momentum slowed as the debate moved into the decade of the 1970s.⁶²

Meanwhile, Ehorn continued work to improve conditions on the islands, and worked in the community in publicizing the potential of the Monument. He met and befriended the owners of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa islands, and brought the Director of the National Park Service, Gary Everhart, to lunch at

⁶²Santa Barbara *News Press*, March 26, 1961; Storke to Carr, March 27, 1961; Engle to Edwin Stanton, April 10, 1961; Engle to Storke, June 1, 1961; Storke to Carr, May 26, 1961, 73/72c, Bancroft, UCB.

Carey Stanton's house on Santa Cruz Island; the Vail brothers also attended.⁶³ In 1977, Senator Alan Cranston and Congressman Anthony Beilenson introduced bills in the Senate and House, respectively, which would authorize a Channel Islands and Santa Monica Mountains National Park. Neither passed, and so on March 14, 1979, Congressman Robert J. Lagomarsino introduced a bill creating a Channel Islands Marine National Park. With the help of Cranston and Congressman Phillip Burton of San Francisco, the bill passed the House that summer and the Senate approved it in October. President Jimmy Carter signed the legislation, Public Law 96-199, on March 5, 1980. The new national park would include Santa Barbara and Anacapa Islands (the former Channel Islands National Monument), and add Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz and San Miguel Islands, the latter to remain under the ownership of the U. S. Navy but managed by the superintendent of the new national park. Additional information on the purchase and management of these islands can be found in the sections pertaining to those islands following.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The five islands located within Channel Islands National Park are related to a number of historical themes, including prehistory, ranching, hunting, fishing, national defense, maritime commerce and safety, conservation and the sciences. Each of these portrays a significant interpretive theme that ties the islands together in a unified framework, although each island has its own distinct history. The major purpose of this report is to determine which of these themes are historically significant and where features can be identified that possess adequate historic significance and integrity to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The dominating historical theme which contributes to potential nominations to the National Register, is that of ranching on the islands. The sheep and cattle ranches, ranging from large to small operations, contributed to the agricultural development and commerce of California and the local counties, during a period when California grew to be a major force in the national economy. The associated architecture and cultural landscapes are major features contributing to their significance. However, on only two of the islands do the extant resources reflecting this theme possess the seven components that define integrity for eligibility to the National Register: Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island. Others may be found to be eligible as archeological resources.

Archeological resources on the island, while not a subject of this study, are the other significant National Register-eligible properties in the subject area. All five islands are represented in this theme and all possess significance and integrity for National Register listing; in fact, all but Santa Rosa Island and the

⁶³According to Ehorn, Carey Stanton had a poor opinion of the National Park Service but came around after seeing Ehorn's improvements in the Monument. At the luncheon Everhart suggested, perhaps jokingly, that Stanton give the island to the park service, thereby renewing Stanton's animosity towards NPS after two years of Ehorn's fence-mending.

⁶⁴Ehorn, who moved on to Redwood National Park in July 1989, was followed by Charles M. (Mack) Shaver in November 1989 (Chief Ranger Tim Setnicka acted as temporary superintendent for four months). Shaver was succeeded in 1994 by Setnicka. Russell Galipeau replaced Setnicka in 2003.

east end of Santa Cruz Island are already listed as archeological districts. Inclusion of historic archeological resources is necessary to complete the National Register listings.

Another theme that is represented with extant features retaining integrity is maritime commerce, reflected in the numerous shipwrecks and two lighthouses, specifically the Anacapa Island Light Station and Santa Rosa Island's South Point Light. National defense is represented in the World War II radar station on Santa Rosa Island and the Navy Base on Santa Cruz Island, although the latter is not owned by the National Park Service and therefore not a subject of this evaluation.

Other themes, such as hunting, fishing and scientific study are reflected in the ruins of various camps. These may fall into the category of archeology, and as such, may or may not possess integrity.

As the reader will find in the following narratives, Channel Islands National Park contains properties with interesting and, sometimes, important histories that reflect the development of the region, state and nation as a whole. This introduction sets the stage for a fuller understanding of the islands' historic significance.



Channel Islands National Park headquarters, Ventura, California. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston, 1999*

Section 2

SAN MIGUEL ISLAND



The sand began to drift and in about a week . . . that whole canyon filled up; the house, stream and everything disappeared. That's why they built this house up on this windswept mesa because the sand would blow right by.

Hancock Banning, Jr., 1970



Physical Description

San Miguel Island lies 26 miles off Point Conception at one of the foggiest locations on the California coast. Northwesterly winds coming off the point make for a rough sea and a reputation as the graveyard of ships. The onslaught of the winds once turned the westerly end of the island into a giant sand dune with sand rivers blowing into the sea on the opposite shore. A horse drawn sled, in fact, was for years employed as the most practical means of transportation in climbing with goods and baggage from Cuyler Harbor on the northwest side of the island. Including Prince Island, which lies at the entrance of the harbor, the island is 9,365 acres of land and is approximately four miles wide and eight miles long. Travelers in the 19th century who approached the island without proper warning complained that for days it was impossible to land at Cuyler Harbor due to the heavy swells caused by winds from the northwest; yet Cabrillo anchored at San Miguel thankful to have found a refuge from the seas pounding on the mainland just north of it.

Unlike its neighbors Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz, San Miguel Island has no high peaks or dramatic valleys; in many ways the surface of the land is drab to the lazy eye (unless seen when the wildflowers are in bloom). Looking more closely, the island has a rich cover of vegetation that has struggled back against the winds and advancing dunes on much of the island. The original plant cover was almost entirely stripped by sheep in the dry years of the early 1860s and at other times during its grazing history. Elimination of non-native animals has aided a dramatic comeback for the lupine, coreopsis and other native shrubs and perennial grasses. Much of the vegetative cover is alien annual grasses, though native plants, including a number endemic to the northern Channel Islands, are recovering rapidly. There are springs on the island.

The fauna of the island are few but of special interest. The Island fox (*Urocyon littoralis littoralis*) is currently recovering from a severe population decline in the 2000s. Other terrestrial residents include the native deer mouse, *Peromyscus maniculatus streatoris*, and the non-native black rat (*Rattus rattus*), which probably arrived on ships. One species of amphibian (*Batrachoseps pacificus pacificus*) and two of lizards (*Elegaria multicolorinatus* and *Sceloporus occidentalis*) can be found on San Miguel Island. Marine mammals are plentiful and form one of the most significant attractions of the island. San Miguel Island is considered to support more species of pinnipeds than anywhere on the Pacific Coast. Six species of seals and sea lions thrive on the island. These include the Northern elephant seal, California sea lion and Northern fur seal. San Miguel Island is rich in marine and shore birds and, with the recovery of the native vegetation, land birds. Of the latter, the red-tailed hawk, horned lark, orange-crowned sparrow and western meadowlark are among those seen, and peregrine falcons have been reintroduced. Bald eagles have been reintroduced to the islands and the golden eagles that preyed on the island foxes have vacated the island. On the beaches and rocky shoreline, one can observe numerous species of cormorants and petrels, the snowy plover, Xantus' murrelet and the ever-present western gull.

Place names have largely been derived from names of the people who occupied, visited, mapped or studied the island. Cuyler Harbor, named for an early surveyor; Nidever Canyon for a pioneer resident; Hoffmann Point for botanist Ralph H. Hoffmann, a well-respected scientific leader who died in a fall there; Lester Point for one of the most memorable of the island residents. Other names are descriptive, like Green Mountain and Black Point. For such a wild and often bleak place on earth, the human interaction with San Miguel Island has been surprisingly dynamic.

History of San Miguel Island¹

Following by centuries a key moment in California history with the landfall of Cabrillo, San Miguel Island became established as an isolated sheep ranching outpost. The island, being the farthest to the west and featuring the harshest climate of the Channel Islands, had few permanent residents at any historic time period and these made their livings raising sheep and, to a lesser extent, cattle. The island saw its vegetation stripped by decades of sheep grazing to the point of being referred to as a huge sand dune. Its occupants did not intend such consequences, but following tradition and the need for a livelihood continued in business until the world situation of the 1940s and the country's need for strategic defenses during the Cold War ended the family ranching era. San Miguel Island's historic significance lies in its prehistoric resources, its role in coastal exploration (notably the visits by Cabrillo), its occupation by ranchers living under unusually harsh conditions, and in its part played in national defense.

Prehistory

Historical records have proven that Chumash people made permanent settlements on San Miguel Island, although archeological remains of a village have not been found. One chronicler of the Cabrillo expedition wrote that local natives called the island *Ciquimuymu*, with two villages named *Cico* and *Nimollollo*. Accepted Chumash knowledge notes the island being called *Tuqan*, with the same name applied to its largest town that was probably located at Cuyler Harbor. A smaller settlement named *Niwoyonmi* has not been located. The occupants of this island would have experienced harsher climatic conditions than their neighbors on Santa Rosa or Santa Cruz islands; there were few locations that afforded good shelter, although water was available. Glassow considered that the more intense conditions on the island likely spurred the San Miguel Chumash into extensive trade, especially with people on the mainland east of Goleta. San Miguel's occupants also had strong ties with those of Santa Rosa Island.²

Humans settled San Miguel Island at a very early date, as evidenced by evaluation of archeological materials found at Daisy Cave and other sites along the coastline. Preliminary results from excavations at Daisy Cave indicate a society reliant on the sea for sustenance, and one that had adapted through the development of technologies considered to be the earliest examples known in the New World, including the use of fishhooks and line. Fish bones from Daisy Cave have been dated as up to 11,500 years old, suggesting that the island was occupied as early as its neighbor, Santa Rosa Island; together (the four

¹This section is a revised version of text concerning San Miguel Island by Roberts, 1979.

²John R. Johnson, *An Ethnohistoric Study of the Island Chumash*, Thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, December 1982, p. 13; Michael A. Glassow, *An Archaeological Overview of the Northern Channel Islands Including Santa Barbara Island* (Tucson: Western Archaeological Center, National Park Service, 1977), pp. 235-236; Sally McLendon and John R. Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis for Cultural Affiliation in the Areas Formerly Controlled by Chumash Peoples and Presently Under National Park Service Stewardship* (National Park Service, Hunter College at CUNY, and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1996), pp. 42, 96.

northern islands were one large island during this early period) these would represent perhaps the oldest known settlement in the region.³

The exact date when the last Chumash occupants of San Miguel Island were removed or left is not known. Fernando Librado, J. P. Harrington's Chumash informant, claimed that many people were killed in a fierce storm at the time of removal from the island, but the story has not been substantiated.⁴

The Chumash presence on San Miguel Island is today represented in the archeological record. Many important discoveries have been made indicating early habitation and technological innovation. Further investigations will lead to a better understanding of the social structure, subsistence and technology of the island residents and their relationships with mainlanders and other islanders.

Contact and Exploration

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, called the discoverer of Alta California, claimed possession of San Miguel Island in 1542, naming it La Posesión. His death the following year has been for years placed by historians at San Miguel Island, but recent research has questioned the claim. Cabrillo's successors in exploration had little contact with the island, and very little is known of any occupation or use during the Mexican era other than its use as a temporary outpost for otter hunters and squatters.

The Spanish Era (1542-1821)

The earliest descriptions of the island Chumash culture and the first historical documentation of contact activities are found in the accounts of the various explorers who traveled in the region between 1542 and 1603. Cabrillo's chronicler Juan Paez de Castro wrote about San Miguel Island: "Wednesday, the 25th [October 1542], they left these islands, that is, the one farthest to windward, which has a very good port inside which no bad effects will be felt in any kind of sea weather. They named it Posesión. That day they only sailed a little because there was no wind . . ." Then, on "Thursday, the 23d [November 1542] they arrived on their return at the Islas de San Lucas, at the one named Posesión." Paez de Castro wrote that "they named this island the 'Isla de Juan Rodriguez'" and mentioned the Chumash names for the island which they had apparently learned from the friendly occupants. Antonio de Herrera wrote in 1615, "In the eight days they were at this port they were well treated by the Indians, who go naked and have their faces painted in a checkerboard fashion."⁵

Returning to San Miguel Island after exploring northward on the coast, Cabrillo's party hauled out their *frigata San Miguel* at Cuyler Harbor to recaulk and repair planking. Either here or on another island the fleet wintered; debate continues whether the long-accepted location of San Miguel Island is accurate.

³ Torben C. Rick, Jon M. Erlandson and René L. Vellanoweth, "Paleocoastal Marine Fishing on the Pacific Coast of the Americas: Perspectives from Daisy Cave, California" in *American Antiquity*, 66(4), 2001, pp. 595-613; Erlandson, *Early Shell Middens*, p. 1; "Comments on Draft Historic Resource Study" by Don Morris, CHIS.

⁴ McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, p. 96.

⁵ Johnson, *Island Chumash*, pp. 11, 13.

Nevertheless, the Chumash were not as welcoming this time. Francisco de Vargas recalled in 1560: “With the natives of this island he had some great fights as they came out in a warlike manner. During all the time the fleet was at the Island Capitana the Indians never stopped fighting.” It was at this winter location, possibly San Miguel but also likely Santa Cruz or Santa Catalina, that Cabrillo sustained his mortal injury and died. The fleet returned to San Miguel Island again on March 5 but “did not dare enter the port,” according to Paez de Castro, “on account of the storm which was blowing, which made the sea break in fifteen fathoms at the entrance. It was a north-northwest wind and the entrance is narrow.”⁶

Direct contacts with the island were few after Cabrillo’s fateful voyage. In 1565 the crew of the *San Pedro* called San Miguel Island “La Deseada” (that which is desired or looked for), and also noted Richardson’s Rock. Cermeño in 1595 recorded “a small island” northwest of Santa Rosa Island but did not land there. Vizcaíno had contact with island Chumash in 1602, as his chronicler wrote:

At dawn the captain’s ship was near an island [San Miguel] in the shelter of which it was calm. A canoe came out with two Indians and a small boy, their eyes being painted with antimony. They asked us to go to their land; however, there was such a heavy sea and the island presented so many shoals that we did not dare to go to it, but veered out to sea . . .⁷

As with the occupants of the other Channel Islands, the combination of pressures from the mainland missions, disruption of their trade and subsistence activities and invasions by European hunters eventually caused the Chumash to vacate the island, reportedly as early as 1816, leaving it to a succession of squatters.⁸

Mexican Era (1821-1848)

In spite of the island’s potential for supporting life and archaeological evidence that island natives had lived there in good numbers, no Mexican citizen applied for a land grant, and the island passed from the hands of the Mexican government to that of the United States as public domain in 1848. Squatters evidently used the island during the Mexican period but nothing is known of them.

Early nineteenth century history of San Miguel is sparse. Dufлот de Mofras traveled along the coast prior to 1844 and reported that Boston ships came to salt down their hides on the northwest side of San Miguel. T. J. Farnham, sailing along its coast in 1839-1840, called it barren and dry, marked here and there by a fire, and yet with fruitful spots and streams of water.⁹

⁶Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986), p. 157; Johnson, *Island Chumash*, pp. 12, 14.

⁷Johnson, *Island Chumash*, pp. 16, 18, 28.

⁸Lois J. Roberts, *San Miguel Island: Santa Barbara’s Fourth Island West* (Carmel, California: Cal Rim Books, 1991), p. 45.

⁹Dufлот de Mofras, *Travels on the Pacific Coast*, p. 191; Thomas Jefferson Farnham, *Travels in California* (Oakland: Biobooks, 1947), p. 193.



Stehman Forney's topographic map of San Miguel Island, made in 1871. *National Archives*

United States Coast Survey

Soon after California became a state in 1850, the United States Coast Survey began mapping the Channel Islands in order to provide denizens of maritime commerce with safe charts and advice on water supplies and harbors. San Miguel Island, strategically located off Point Conception and posing a risk to ships, especially in storms, received the early attentions of mapmakers. The Survey established triangulation stations on San Miguel Island in the 1850s, and mapped the island in 1871. William Greenwell of the Survey visited the island in 1858 and placed seven stations after establishing a base line comprised of two stations near the east end. In addition to the North and South Base Lines, Greenwell established stations Brockway near the west end, Green Mountain, San Miguel and Black Point near the center of the island, Cactus and Cape stations on the east end and Harbor on the point overlooking the west end of Cuyler Harbor. He placed a tenth station on what he labeled “N. W. Rock” which by 1871 became known as Wilson Rock.

The observations of these surveyors supplied early descriptions of conditions on the island. Lt. Commander James Alden, a Navy captain who transported surveyors and performed charting chores himself, did not mention blowing sand or erosion, and George Davidson and William Greenwell, both of whom visited San Miguel Island in 1858, described the island as being covered in grass and “low sage bushes and cactus.”¹⁰

Stehman Forney of the U. S. Coast Survey spent eight months on San Miguel Island in 1871, establishing additional triangulation stations and surveying the island. Forney created a detailed topographical map of the island. Forney’s annual report to his superior in Washington told of his frustrating stay on the island, working only 42 days and spending more than 150 days waiting out “the constant strong gales day and night from the N. W. so violent that my tents could scarcely be secured, making it hopeless to attempt any fieldwork.” Forney recorded that the island “is entirely destitute of wood, not a tree upon it, there are several brackish streams and springs on it, but not fit for drinking or cooking purposes.” He noted safe anchorages, hazards to mariners, weather patterns and a limestone deposit that “no doubt at some future day will be found a valuable article of commerce.” Forney completed the survey of San Miguel Island around December 1, 1871. The following spring he commenced the mapping of Santa Rosa Island.¹¹

In 1876 Coast Survey employee O. H. Tittman placed a new survey signal on Green Mountain, which he named “New San Miguel.” What appear to be remains of this signal were found in the fall of 1999. Tittman described the signal:

The station is marked by a rectangular brick pier whose foundation is laid about 2-1/2 feet in the ground. Set into the foundation is a smooth stone, about 8 x 8 x 8 inches in size, taken from the beach, having in its center a leaden bolt & copper tack to mark the station points. To render this point visible, two arches, the tops of which are 8 inches above the

¹⁰Donald L. Johnson, “Landscape Evolution on San Miguel Island, California,” Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kansas, 1972, pp. 274-275.

¹¹Letters, Stehman Forney to Superintendent Benjamin Pierce, Nov. 30, 1871, and Forney to Pierce, October 31, 1872, Assistants 1866-75, E-F, RG 23, NA(CP).

ground intersect each other in the center of the pier. A hollow about 10 inches square extends from the mark to the top of the pier.

Tittman made triangulation observations from the station using a heliotrope with two-inch mirrors mounted at the primary stations Arguello, Gaviota and Santa Cruz West. He also renamed San Miguel Station as “San Miguel 2.”¹²

These early activities of the U. S. Coast Survey and its successors established the importance of the island as both a maritime resource and hazard. The government pursued the coast surveys as a way to further open up trade along the coastlines and to reduce maritime losses. The records of the surveys have since provided historians and scientists with descriptive data helpful in compiling historical and natural resources chronologies.

Settlement and Early Industry

Sheep ranchers occupied San Miguel Island for almost 100 years. Little is known about the first, a person named Bruce, but the succession of settlers to follow included George Nidever, a prominent California pioneer, William G. Waters, an eccentric entrepreneur, and the well-publicized family of Herbert Lester, whose isolated existence was made charming by Lester’s personality and the perseverance of his wife and young daughters. Lester’s life on the island ended tragically, but his family’s story is one of the more interesting in the history of the California coast.

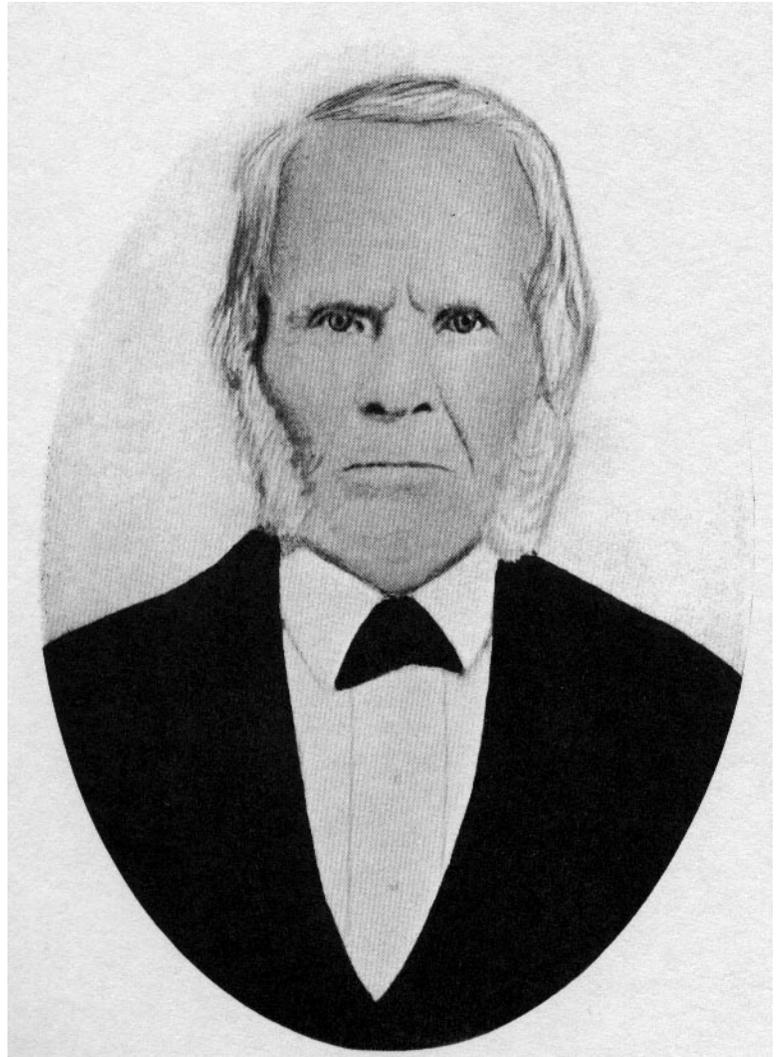
George Nidever’s Sheep Ranch, 1850-1870

It is not known when sheep first grazed on the island but reports indicate a date prior to 1850. The only source of information regarding mid-century grazing is the narrative dictated at 76 years of age by California pioneer George Nidever, the mountain man and trapper who settled on San Miguel Island in 1850. Nidever had joined Captain Joseph R. Walker’s famed California-bound party in 1833, arriving in the San Joaquin Valley in 1834. After accompanying Walker and others in otter and beaver hunting forays in various places of the state, including San Francisco Bay, Monterey and the San Joaquin Valley, he came to the Santa Barbara area where he trapped otter and spent much of the rest of his life.¹³

Nidever said he met Lt. Commander James Alden of the U. S. Coast Survey and worked for him as a pilot on the *Quickstep* for about two weeks in 1850. Nidever and his sons, Mark and George E., operated a

¹²RG 23, Scientific Records, Descriptions of Stations (GA Series), Box 147, File 941 GA 1872-C GA-1162, California No. 1 Compiled, pp. 70-72, NA(CP).

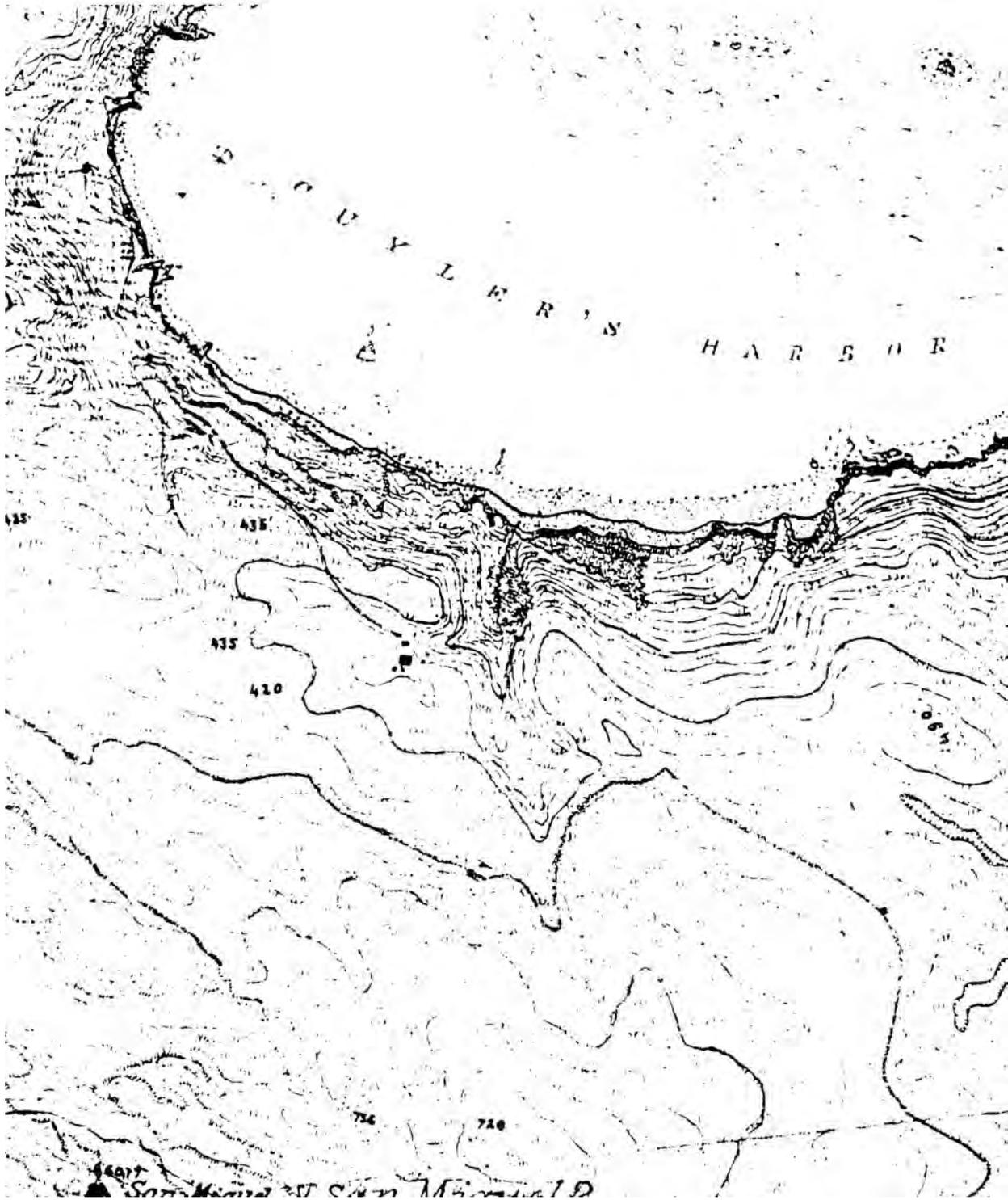
¹³William Henry Ellison, Ed., *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever [1802-1883]* (Santa Barbara and Tucson: McNally & Loftin, Publishers and Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1984 [reprint of edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937]), pp. 32, 43. See the Santa Rosa Island section for more information about Nidever.



George Nidever as he appeared later in life.
(from *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever*)

sheep ranch on San Miguel for 17 years before selling out to what would be a succession of sheep ranchers lasting almost a century.

Nidever bought a schooner in San Francisco in early 1850 and soon “bought out the interest of a man by the name of Bruce” who had been grazing sheep there. Nidever imported 45 head of sheep, 17 head of cattle, two hogs and seven horses and by 1862 the stock had increased to 6,000 sheep, 200 head of cattle, 100 hogs and 32 horses. During the severe drought in 1863 and 1864 Nidever lost most of his livestock (“5,000 sheep, 180 cattle, a few hogs, and 30 horses”). A short time after the drought, a Mr. Chaffee of Ventura proposed to buy the island for \$10,000 but the transaction fell through. At his sons’ urging (“they had become tired of living there,” he recalled), he sold the island interest in 1870 to the Mills Brothers for \$10,000.



Detail of Forney's 1871 map showing the location of George Nidever's house at Cuyler Harbor. *National Archives*

The later Nidever period on the island marked the beginning of the destruction of the rich native flora on the island, as Nidever's sheep denuded much of the island, leaving just sand dunes and drifts. Only eight years after leaving the island, Nidever related that he had been told that the island "is almost covered with sand."¹⁴

While Nidever spoke of selling the island, in reality he sold only his interest in the ranching operation, as the federal government owned the island. Nidever and his sons occupied an adobe house located in an arroyo up from Cuyler Harbor in the west tributary of what has been called Nidever Canyon. A building and outbuildings appeared on Stehman Forney's detailed 1871 U. S. Coast Survey map of the island, as well as two roads or trails leading to the harbor.¹⁵

Subsequent island residents referred to Nidever's house as the old adobe. Nidever was primarily a hunter, and with his friend Carl Dittmann whom Nidever always referred to as Charley Brown, he hunted the otter. Nidever also hunted for sea gull eggs during the San Francisco egg boom of the fifties. He took his schooner over to San Nicolas for this purpose in April of 1852 and discovered the footprints of an old Indian woman who had been left on the island when the rest of the Indians were removed. In July of 1853 he returned there with Dittmann and they "rescued" the woman. Nidever took the "lost woman" of San Nicolas to his Santa Barbara home where his wife cared for her until she soon died. From the above we learn that Nidever lived at least part of the time on San Miguel Island until 1870; he lived for the rest of his years in Santa Barbara where he was interviewed by one of Hubert H. Bancroft's employees in 1878. He died in 1883 at the age of 81. Carl Dittmann also narrated his life story for the Bancroft Library. He made brief mention of Nidever's activity in stocking San Miguel Island and of his going there for the winter work while he, Dittmann, went to Santa Barbara.¹⁶

The Heyday of Sheep Ranching

The mysterious Bruce and then the Nidever family established sheep ranching on the island, but it was their successors who transformed it into an industry, albeit on a small scale. Although minor in scope, sheep ranching brought the first Euro-American settlers to the island and was the most significant and long-lasting historical use. The subsequent destruction of the island's vegetation by sheep would have far-reaching ramifications, not only in limiting the success of ranching but in paving the way for preservation and restoration by government agencies of the 20th century.

Following Nidever and his sons, the Mills brothers and their Pacific Wool Growing Company grazed their sheep on the island's grasses and packed wool for sale to mainland markets for 17 years. William G. Waters and his sheep then occupied the island for almost 30 years, during which the federal government affirmed its ownership of San Miguel Island. Robert Brooks held a government lease for another 30 years

¹⁴Ellison, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 76-77. The original manuscript is at the Bancroft Library.

¹⁵Johnson, "Landscape Evolution," p. 274; "Topography of San Miguel Island, Santa Barbara Channel, Coast of California," U. S. Coast Survey, Register No. 1242, 1871.

¹⁶Carl Dittmann, "Narrative of a Seafaring Life on the Coast of California," Santa Barbara, California, 1878. The story of the rescue on San Nicolas is available elsewhere. Dr. Charles Rozaire of the Los Angeles County Museum, made a floor plan of the adobe in 1963.

but did not reside there; he installed Herbert Lester, an intelligent and colorful man who raised a family on the isolated island and garnered a great deal of national publicity in the process. Lester's occupation ended in tragedy, and soon sheep ranching gave way to occupation by the United States Navy and a new era in island history. Sheep ranching dominated the history of San Miguel Island and, while not a major contributor to the state's agricultural economy, is made significant more by its protagonists, the Nidevers, Mills', Waters' and Lesters, whose stories are told below.

Mills Brothers Ranch, 1870-1887

The Mills brothers, Hiram and Warren, operated a sheep ranch on San Miguel Island for the same number of years as Nidever had, and continued to contribute to the destruction of the island's flora. They and their partners formed a business called Pacific Wool Growing Company and built an undetermined number of wood frame buildings in the canyon above Cuyler Harbor. Theirs was the first organized business enterprise on the island.

Hiram Mills purchased an undivided half of the island on May 8, 1869 from the Nidevers for \$5,000, and then bought the rest on April 26 of the following year for \$10,000, including the livestock, personal property and improvements.¹⁷ Mills immediately sold a $\frac{3}{4}$ interest to P. F. Mohrhardt, J. M. Leuzarder and his brother Warren H. Mills. Thus began a dizzying string of sales and divisions, as Hiram Mills sold his share, and Elmer Terry, Edward H. Kittridge, John W. Herrington and David Fitzgibbons bought into the island enterprise at different times between 1872 and 1887. The partners called their enterprise Pacific Wool Growing Company and had an office in San Francisco. Hiram Mills has been credited with building a two-story frame house in the canyon east of Nidever's adobe but apparently visited the island only occasionally. After surviving the collapse of the wool market in 1876 the Pacific Wool Growing Company continued in business, likely with caretakers on the island living in the house, although a later occupant wrote of finding "Mrs. Mills' dresses" in a closet. Other activities, including otter and seal hunting and abalone harvesting, were pursued on the island during those years; a newspaper article mentioned the return of a Larco schooner with a cargo of the above items aboard.¹⁸

Visitors to the island in the 1870s described a sheep operation out of control as the animals grazed the vegetation down to the sand. In 1874 William Dall of the Coast Survey visited the island and wrote, ". . . there are no young trees . . . as the omnipresent sheep crop every green thing within their reach to the ground." Coast Survey employee and archeologist Paul Schumacher spent four days on the island

¹⁷This information, derived from deeds and other accounts, differs from Nidever's, who claimed to have sold the island to the Mills' for \$10,000.

¹⁸Roberts, *San Miguel Island*, p. 92; Santa Barbara *Weekly Press*, March 17, 1883, SCIF. For a concise account of the complicated transactions occurring between 1869 and 1897, see the timeline compiled by the Santa Cruz Island Foundation. The following deeds can be found at the Santa Barbara County Records Office: Deeds Book H pp. 137-138 and 635-636; Book I pp. 41-43; Book J pp. 31, 277-278, 355-357, 416, 600-601, 642-643; Book L pp. 358-359; Book 19 pp. 633-634; Book 22 pp. 258-262; Book 26 pp. 187-190, 571-573; Book 32 pp. 324-328; Book 33 pp. 67-69; Book 57 pp. 332-337; Book 59 pp. 231-234.

excavating burials and later wrote of starving sheep, calling the island “a barren lump of sand.” Wheeler noted drifting sand in 1879 as he described the island as barren and extremely desolate.¹⁹

Conflicting reports on the condition of the island emerged in 1886 and 1887, during the last year of ownership by the Pacific Wool Growing Company. C. P. Streator visited the island in June and July of 1886, finding a Mr. and Mrs. Crawford as “resident occupants.” Streator wrote, “by following a steep trail to the mesa we observe a fine pasture almost as far as the eye extends, but on reaching other parts of the island I found it barren, and half of the area drifting sand. It . . . is stocked with the finest horses, cattle and sheep.” The following year botanist E. L. Greene spent time on the island. He might not have seen the areas Streator had described, as he reported finding that the island had “good grazing land, the year round, and is abundantly supplied with nutritious native grasses” Greene continued,

I judge that remarkably good and truly perennial pasturage [covers] the eastern third of the island These many acres have been the pride of the owner of San Miguel, whose horses, cows and sheep fare better on this cold, bleak and desolate marine table land and much better secured against the perils of starvation than are the flocks on any of the larger and more fertile members of the archipelago”²⁰

After a complicated series of partnerships and ownership divisions, Warren Mills claimed in November 1887 that he owned 100% of the island and then sold ½ of his interest to William G. Waters. Three days later the Pacific Wool Growing Company sold 100% of the business to David Fitzgibbons, who quickly sold his interest to Mills (who had already sold half of his interest to Waters), thereby settling the title, at least for a time.

William G. Waters at San Miguel Island, 1887-1916²¹

In November of 1887 Captain William G. Waters bought a half interest in the island and the livestock that were on it for \$10,000 from Warren Mills, and thus for about three months Waters and Mills were partners while Mills, telling Waters he was tired of the island, searched for another buyer. As of January 1888 the ranch supported 4,000 sheep, 30 head of cows and horses, an undisclosed number of pigs, turkeys, chickens, one dog and two cats. Waters would be the longest-lived resident of the island, spending almost thirty years there. Waters continued the day-to-day business of sheep ranching, but added flavor to the island lore with stories of his eccentricities and fondness for publicity.

¹⁹Quoted in Johnson, “Landscape Evolution,” pp. 277-278.

²⁰C. P. Streator, “The Water Birds of San Miguel Island” in *Santa Barbara Society of Natural History Bulletin*, Volume I, No. 1, 1887, pp. 21-23; E. L. Greene, “A Botanical Excursion to the Island of San Miguel” in *Pittonia*, Vol. I, 1887, pp. 74-93, both quoted in Johnson, “Landscape Evolution,” pp. 278-279.

²¹Unless otherwise noted, the following is based on Mrs. Wm. G. Waters, Diary, 1888, R. S. Brooks Collection, published in full in Minnie Waters, “Mrs. Waters’ Diary of Her Life on San Miguel Island, January 1-June 27, 1888 in *A Step Back in Time: Unpublished Channel Islands Diaries*, Marla Daily, Ed. (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1990), pp. 4-51; and in Stella Haverland Rouse, “The Waters Family of San Miguel”, *Noticias*, XXIII, 3 (Fall, 1977), republished in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology* (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989), pp. 113-129.



William Waters, leaseholder and "owner" of San Miguel Island, 1905. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*



William Waters' ranch complex was located in the drainage west of the current NPS building and east of the adobe ruins occupied by George Nidever. The Waters ranch was covered by sand in the years following the date this photograph was taken, 1903. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

William G. Waters was born in Maine in 1838 and worked as a clerk and apprentice machinist in Massachusetts until the Civil War broke out. He enlisted in Company C, Fifteenth Massachusetts, eventually attaining the rank of first lieutenant. After participating in a number of important battles he became disabled and was discharged in 1863, but when the war ended he was elected captain of the regiment and commissioned by the governor of Massachusetts. After the war, Waters worked as a master mechanic in factories before becoming specialized in printing press work at major newspapers, including his brother's *Boston Daily Advertiser* and then the *San Francisco Morning Call* after coming west sometime before 1877. While living in San Francisco in 1880, he married Minnie Richardson Scott, a supposedly well-fixed widow with a young adopted daughter, Edith. The new Mrs. Waters had health problems that a move to the healthy climate of Santa Barbara in 1887 was intended to correct. Perhaps because of her husband's newfound interest in San Miguel Island, that end was not attained. After purchasing an interest in the island, reportedly with Minnie's money, Waters moved his new family to the cold, damp, wind-swept isle.

The Waters family lived on San Miguel from January to June 1888, and Mrs. Waters' carefully kept diary described the island as a productive farm. For example, in January 1888, the men commenced to harrow at least two fields and in February planted 47 acres in barley. In the winter during which she wrote, rain was plentiful, filling the rain barrels and evidently bringing forth good crops all around, as she wrote of following her husband to the grain fields in the spring and of the two of them cutting and stacking the hay, at one point in a pile 30 feet high. During the winter and spring Waters bought a mowing machine and a reaper for the barley hay. Waters had a barn for grain at "the top of the hill" and built a tool house in January. They grew their own vegetables, had a fenced potato patch in the sand above the house, built a grape arbor, and churned butter. Dairy products, poultry, eggs and pigs were abundant although they did depend upon the supply boat for flour and fruit. One day they went down to the old adobe house formerly belonging to George Nidever to look at boards.

William Waters and his hired hands worked hard six days a week. They spent almost a month building a wire fence on the south side of the island. Through March and April the men built a road from the beach at the harbor to the top of the island, blasting rocks and making a fine but narrow grade for hauling supplies up and products down. The road remains as a hiking trail today, and some of the men's rockwork is evident.

On February 17 a group of shearers arrived on the schooner *Ocean King*, along with Waters' partner Mr. Mills and W. I. Nichols, to whom Mills was selling his half share. The schooner also brought mail, oranges, apples, lemons and candy for Edith. The shearers stayed and worked for nine days, rounding up the sheep in bands and shearing them in the shed. An ill Mrs. Waters made the effort to walk up on the hill to watch sheep come into the corrals. In April a schooner arrived to pick up the wool shipment, which took more than a day to load. Mrs. Waters wrote of the trouble they had with "greasers," or sheep poachers. They dipped the sheep in turpentine and put them out in the east end of the island in May. A herder named Brown arrived in late May; Mrs. Waters complained that he had use of only one arm and "looks unfit for the position." The island also supported a small number of cows, which they would move around the island for appropriate feed. There was a boathouse at Cuyler Harbor and the men regularly salvaged lumber off the island's beaches. In May the men worked at getting railroad ties off the west end (almost certainly from



Ranch house above Cuyler Harbor, 1895. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*



The 1888 road into Cuyler Harbor, 1903. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*

the *G W Prescott* wreck of 1879), which were then towed on a lighter by the *Ocean King* to Cuyler Harbor. The ranch was equipped with a forge, as Mrs. Waters wrote of Jimmie making irons for the cart. The family traveled to the west end for good water, considering the water in the canyon to be unpalatable. Mrs. Waters mentioned a flagstaff, probably located on the hill in sight of the harbor, and a stone walk to the front door of the house.

When the Waters family sat down to dinner, the household included Edith, age fifteen; a young male farm hand named Jimmie; another farm hand, Adolph; 27-year-old Ida, Mrs. Waters' "servant and woman of all work;" and Mr. and Mrs. Waters. After dinner they played card games such as whist, pedro and euchre, she sang, and they talked and read till their bedtime about nine; sometimes they held séances. Mrs. Waters was frequently ill and many days stayed in bed until evening. Her diary is a page out of nineteenth century women's history as she was a classic invalid and dutiful wife: shy, frustrated and occupied with such tasks as making a scrap book out of clippings from *Harpers Magazine*. The family always recognized Sunday with an outing: abalone hunting, or a ride on mule back or by sled to some point on the island for a picnic. On one excursion, Adolph killed a bald eagle with a reported wingspan of 7.5 feet tip to tip. Another time the group went to the Indian cave at Eagle's Cliff (no doubt what is now referred to as Daisy Cave), returning home with a skull and bones. Afterwards, the family and workers came home for the turkey dinner. The house had an upstairs and there in bed Mrs. Waters dealt with pain, depression and hemorrhages. She changed the room and closet around a bit from the way it had been while Mrs. Mills lived there. The *Coast Pilot* dated 1889 noted that vessels landing at Cuylers Harbor would see houses on the shore, and that "water may be obtained at the small house on the hillside," no doubt the home of Mr. and Mrs. Waters.²²

During the time Waters and his family stayed on the island, in February 1888, Warren Mills sold his half interest to W. I. Nichols from Siskiyou County. Nichols first visited the island with Mills on February 16, and on that visit Nichols and Waters agreed to hire a ranch manager. On May 29 the new manager Mr. Read arrived, to be followed later by his wife and six children. Read would receive one third of the stock increase per year for his labors. William and Minnie Waters and Edith left San Miguel Island on June 2 and headed for San Francisco; Mrs. Waters died in January of 1890. After his wife's death, Waters returned to the island for a period of four years, bringing Edith along, reportedly so he could keep an eye on her. Edith later made it clear that she hated life on the island, having left behind a genteel life of art and poetry in San Francisco for one of worn, outdated clothes, hard work, dirty surroundings and no company to her liking. She stated that she had been kept "virtually a prisoner" for the four years by Waters, living in "a roughly builded [sic] house in which railroad ties form a part of the construction." She described the "bunk house for the men, and corrals for the sheep, hogs and cattle, where the wind blows a gale all the time." Edith escaped at about age 21 by convincing a guano gatherer to sail her to the mainland where she caught a stage to Santa Barbara.

Meanwhile, Nichols had sold his half share in the island on December 19, 1889 to William Schilling of Long Beach for \$10,000. Waters signed a promissory note to Schilling in December 1890 for \$7,000, putting up his personal property and half share in the island as security. Schilling transferred the note in

²²George Davidson, *The United States and Geodetic Survey Coast Pilot of California, Oregon and Washington*, Fourth Edition (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), p. 96.



Visitors set up an impromptu kitchen on the beach at Cuyler Harbor in this 1904 scene. The wreck of the *Kate and Anna* is seen in the background. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

1892 to Ventura financier Elias Beckman. Within a month, on February 1, 1892, Waters bought the entire island and settled the debt, but that day also a number of transactions, unexplained, occurred: Waters immediately sold the island interests back to Beckman, who sold to E. W. Gray, who turned it over to the Santa Barbara County National Bank as payment of a debt. Somehow, Waters ended up with 100% ownership after this confusing flurry of transfers and sales.²³

By 1889 Waters had been cultivating parts of the island. Documents showed that he owned hay farming implements that year, and the following year, when Waters took sole possession, the island supported 3,000 sheep, 150 cattle, ten horses and mules, as well as hogs, goats and poultry. Waters owned wagons, carts, plows, harrows and mowing machines. A map of the island made by C. D. Voy around 1893 depicted cultivated fields on the mesa lands above Cuyler Harbor. As of March, 1895 a Mr. and Mrs. Harland lived on the island as Waters' employees; the following June, a housekeeper, Mrs. Devine, and her sons Will and Francis resided on the island, as did otter hunters Jake Nidever and Antonio Caballero. Waters apparently did not reside there full time.²⁴

During Waters' term on the island a geological event changed the topography of the island and its surrounding waters. Observers noted that sand beaches were increasing in size and number in the 1890s, and the Coast Survey reported great sand dunes spilling into Cuyler Harbor from the west, causing the destruction of the large kelp bed in the harbor noted by Forney in 1871. Then in March of 1895, a huge landslide occurred, as reported by Waters in the *San Francisco Examiner* shortly after the event:

²³Roberts, *San Miguel Island*, pp. 95-97.

²⁴Johnson, "Landscape Evolution," p. 281, 289, 291.

There has been quite a commotion over here. The land that formed those high bluffs back of the boathouse has sunk more than sixty feet perpendicularly and forced itself into the harbor, raising the beach and rocks which have lain at the water's edge for thirty years some thirty feet above. This upheaval extends up and down the beach more than 1,000 feet. The boathouse is in a depression, and the sand and stones in front of it are over thirty feet high. This must have happened Saturday, March 8th. I felt a shock, but as the wind was blowing strong thought nothing of it. It must have come very suddenly, as lots of fish and small crabs were caught in the upheaval and left high and dry out of the water.

The extent of this upheaval covers over twenty acres, and as it is continually on the move I cannot tell what the next change will be. Whether this extends far under the water in the harbor I do not know. It will leave huge stones on the west side of the harbor and change the landing. My boats and those of Captain Ellis are all right. The land was raised in the boathouse, while the posts remained as they were.

It is a strange and peculiar upheaval. Some scientific man should see it. I give it up. I shall be obliged to remove my corral to the other side of the spring and rocks. The boathouse is now about 300 feet inland. Captain Dally will tell you all about it. I went all over it, but as it was on the move I thought I had better return to solid land and await events.²⁵

The landslide received much attention from the press in San Francisco and Los Angeles as at least nine articles appeared during the month of activities. Waters related another version of the events to the *Los Angeles Times* a month later:

On the morning of the 10th of March I went up to the flagstaff to ascertain if my boat, the *Liberty*, which had gone over to the mainland with a load of sheep, under command of Captain Dally, on Wednesday, the 6th of March, was in sight. There was no sail to be seen, and after I had swept the sea I turned the glass on the harbor, 500 feet below. By the nearest chance, as I was about to put up the glass, I turned it on the shore in the vicinity of the boathouse, which has always stood on the brink of a sloping bank about eight feet above the harbor at high water.

Heaven! What's the matter with the boathouse? I said to myself.

Waters found the boathouse pointing north/northeast instead of east, with a bluff between it and the water about 100 yards wide and 60 to 70 feet high. He continued:

This was the beginning of the strange disturbances which are making Cuyler Harbor famous. The ground is still in motion. Every day sees new changes along the shore, and rocks are constantly rising from beneath the water along the harbor's southwest shore, where they have never been seen before.

The land continued to move through April in shocks, including an earthquake recorded on April 17; an otter hunter told a newspaper that Castle Rock, referred to by him as Flea Island, had changed significantly in form over the course of two days in June. The movement at Cuyler Harbor, considered by modern geologists as a large rotational slump-landslide, obliterated the many tide-level caves in the southwest harbor and caused the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey to re-survey Cuyler Harbor that

²⁵*San Francisco Examiner*, March 17, 1895, p. 29, in Johnson, "Landscape Evolution," pp. 279, 287-288.

November and produce a new chart of the harbor reflecting the significant changes in the harbor bottom and the land topography.²⁶

The following year, 1896, brought conflict between Waters and government surveyors. Newspapers had earlier reported that, since San Miguel Island had not been mentioned in the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, it was not a United States possession and thus could be used by England as a coaling station. The government determined to investigate and assembled a party of surveyors to map the island. Considering the island to be his, Waters would have none of it and threatened to shoot the invaders. U. S. Marshal Nicholas A. Covarrubias then put together a party of 22 men, composed of the surveyors and a contingent of armed men, and armed himself with orders from President Grover Cleveland to admit the survey party. Covarrubias and his contingent left Santa Barbara on July 7, 1896. According to a newspaper account, Waters met the marshal on the beach, protested the entry, but did not resist the order when shown it. He stipulated that the party could not kill his sheep, but that Waters himself would provide meat for the party and transport of their equipment and provisions. In an interview made more than 25 years later, Covarrubias had a different view of the events. He said that he had

set about recruiting an army, chartered a vessel and rounded up a formidable bunch of deputies, armed them to the teeth, and set sail for the island. When Waters saw them in the offing, he decided that the Army was much too strong, and he surrendered at discretion. He was invited aboard and proved his friendship by eating prodigiously of the good things which had been secured for the Army.

Whatever the true story of the landing, apparently all went smoothly with the survey, and the party returned to the mainland days later without incident. Waters did, however, file a protest that was placed on file at the Surveyor General's Office in Washington.²⁷

That year of 1896 Waters sold an undivided 1/3 of his island interest to Jeremiah F. Conroy for \$2,500. The following year, on February 4, 1897, Waters, Conroy and several Los Angeles men formed the San Miguel Island Company and filed to incorporate with a capital stock of \$50,000 divided into 5,000 shares. A newspaper reported that the venture would “engage in the business of farming and raising stock on San Miguel Island . . . [and] to construct, build, equip and operate one or more vessels for transportation of persons and property to and from the island” The directors named were Waters, Fred K. Rule, William E. Roberts, Ferd [or Fred] A. Hines and Henry Y. Stanley. Then, two rather misleading deeds were filed in the Santa Barbara County Recorder's office. On March 9, 1897, *The Morning Press* reported that the island supported 3,000 sheep and lambs, 18 horses and mules, six boats including an otter boat, a farm wagon and a cart, plows, a harrow, tack, blacksmith and other tools, household furniture and utensils and various buildings, sheds, and structures.²⁸

Unfortunately for the partners, the island had not been a Mexican land grant, had never cleared title through the Land Claims Commission in the 1850s and so had no patent of ownership. Waters' investor

²⁶Quote from the *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1895, and other data in Johnson, pp. 286, 288-291; *The [Santa Barbara] Daily Independent*, July 13, 1895, SCIF. Other landslides above the harbor occurred before 1895, a “monster slide” after 1940 and a number of small slump slides west of Nidever Canyon in 1969.

²⁷*The [Santa Barbara] Daily News*, July 8 and 13, 1896, SCIF.

²⁸*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, March 9, 1897.

Elias Beckman must have noticed the transfer of title and so filed in court to block the transaction in order to ascertain whether he owned an interest in a business or a business and an island, as he had believed. The case spent years in the courts.

Meanwhile, Waters kept his name in the newspapers, whether in matters serious or trivial. He employed the schooner *Restless* in 1896 to transport sheep to Santa Barbara. A report in March of 1904 had him returning to the mainland, after a month on the island tending his livestock, with a sack of mushrooms measuring up to ten inches across the top. Another report noted that, after losing three sailboats and a man in crossing the channel over the years, he had purchased a gasoline launch in 1916. Waters often traveled to and from Gaviota rather than Santa Barbara because the distance was substantially shorter. He hired sheep shearers on the mainland every spring, who worked in the shearing sheds and bunked in the ranch house. In a traditional practice, a shearer would be given a *ficha*, a punched, metal token marked “San Miguel Island” and on the other side “W. G. Waters / one sheep” for each sheep shorn which he would trade in for payment at the end of the day or shearing period. According to later reports, a ewe brought a nickel and a ram a dime.²⁹

By 1903 Waters had constructed a rather large barn and sheep shed on the flats above and to the east of his house. This may have been the barn mentioned by Mrs. Waters in her 1888 diary, although in a 1903 photograph the barn and shed appear to be relatively new. That year Waters hired a couple, Dick and Arklee Rawlins, to take care of the ranch. Mrs. Rawlins wrote a journal of her family’s stay on the island. She brought her two young children, Frannie and Richard, to the home of Captain Waters in Santa Barbara to ask for the job on the island; she described Waters as “a very large gentleman, over 200 pounds.” After meeting Dick Rawlins, Waters gave them the job. The Rawlins’ traveled to San Miguel Island July 5, 1903 on Captain Colís Vasquez’ schooner, *Peerless*:

We were all day making the trip, [arriving at] almost sundown, and we wondered if we would hit the right trail. Captain Vasquez showed us the way to head. It must have been a mile and a 1/2, and with two tired children! But we finally struck the road, not wide enough to pass a wagon if one had been on the road, but roads over there were expensive to make.³⁰

The family met a young man who claimed to be “so lonesome he said [he was] about to die.” The man left as soon as possible: “He was so glad to get away—and only there 10 days.” The Rawlins family moved into the house which had four bedrooms upstairs and one downstairs. Mrs. Rawlins wrote of the responsibilities on the island:

²⁹Rouse, “The Waters Family,” p. 113; Elizabeth Lester, *Legendary King of San Miguel, Island Life in the Santa Barbara Channel, The Lesters at Rancho Rambouillet* (Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftin, Publishers, n.d. [reprint of original edition published by W. T. Genns, 1974]), p. 23.

³⁰Quote and overall account of the Rawlins at San Miguel Island from Arklee Gillian Rawlins, “Life on San Miguel Island In the Year 1903” in *A Step Back in Time*, pp. 52-59.



Shearing shed and barn on San Miguel Island, 1903. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*

My husband's work was to milk the cows and keep the water holes clear of sand, as we had sand storms which blew and filled them. You could walk over them if you didn't know where they were to keep them open. [In] spring the sheep would have perished for water.

She wrote of a visit made by Waters when he brought provisions; he was such a large man that he had to ride to the house, apparently unable to walk the road he had built with his own hands fifteen years earlier. Another visit brought Waters, seven shearers and a cook on the *Pride*, which stayed until the shearing was done to haul the shearers and wool back to the mainland. Rawlins referred to "our own dear Captain Waters, a very lovable man when you became acquainted." Mrs. Rawlins picked mushrooms as large as a dinner plate, as Waters had bragged about to the papers years earlier.

It is not known how long the Rawlins' worked and lived on the island. The photographs they took on the island are among the earliest and best of the pre-Lester years on the island. Captain Waters' ranch house, built by the Mills brothers, is shown as a two-story, white board-and-batten house with a shingle roof. The house had been remodeled with an added shed extension from the original tall and narrow structure; later the roofline was lifted and extended southward to enlarge the upstairs. Other shed additions, one with a shake roof, are seen. A number of sheds are seen around the house, and at least two Monterey cypress trees stood in the yard west of the house, surrounded by a fence. Another photograph depicts the relatively new looking shearing shed complex on the flats above, consisting of a two-story barn and a long, open shed with horizontal board corrals surrounding the complex. The latter buildings survived until 1967. Other photographs show the road to Cuyler Harbor appearing in good condition, the substantial boathouse on the beach, and the wreck of the *Kate and Anna* as it appeared a year after the incident.

The New Ranch House

Sand drifts reportedly covered Waters' old ranch house in the upper canyon around 1906. Around that year Mr. and Mrs. John Russell became resident managers for Waters. Russell has been credited in a number of sources with building the new ranch house, shearing shed and ranch buildings although Waters claimed to have built it in correspondence to the government. It is likely that, under Waters' guidance, Russell, as the laborer on the island, performed much of the work. The facts of who built what may never be known. Nevertheless, the new house emerged out of salvaged wood from shipwrecks and cargoes of lumber schooners that had come to grief on San Miguel Island. For example, the *J M Colman* had gone aground in 1905 just inside Point Bennett; Russell hauled the redwood lumber it carried up from the ship to the ranch house site with Mexican burros. Flour in twill bags washed ashore during the wreck of the *Anubis* so Russell piled the bags of flour on top of the lumber before hauling it up the hill. The wet sacks sealed the flour tight, and he used the flour for years. Its builders made the house double-walled to withstand the winds that blew almost perpetually and reached velocities up to 100 miles an hour. The house was 125 feet long and 16 feet wide. Later another leaseholder, Robert Brooks, and Russell built a fence erected at an angle to the westerly wind to shield the house from wind and sand. As lumber drifted ashore from shipwrecks (for instance, the *Comet*), the house was rebuilt, fences and outbuildings repaired. Waters and Russell also constructed a blacksmith shop/harness room and a tool shed, and a new well, cistern and root cellar.³¹

Waters and Russell used tongue-in-groove hardwood for the interior finish of the house and designed the north side so that it could resist the northwest winds, although portholes afforded a view of the mainland. One historian surmised that the men built the house one room at a time as materials became available. The house had an interesting roofline, being a long shed with a gabled room on the east end and a hipped-roof room addition on the other. A long porch ran the length of the interior courtyard and numerous windows and doors opened on this courtyard. Two dormer windows on the roof slope faced the Channel and mainland. The house contained eleven rooms, with another added at an unknown time. From east to west the rooms were: a bathroom; a bedroom with anteroom and small closet; a dining room;³² three small bedrooms, reportedly used at times for shearers during the season; a serving room; a kitchen with a chimney, pantry and closet; a storage room; a small room with a closet; a laundry room with a meat cooler; and an added hallway or entranceway with a revolving door.³³

A Santa Barbara newspaper noted the improvements:

Recently Mr. Waters has erected a fine eight-room house on the island. The building has running water in every room and compares favorably with any city dwelling in the number

³¹*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, September 6, 1905; Lester, *The Legendary King*, p. 2; [Daniel Bienvenu,] *Historic Structures Report, Part I, Old Ranch House, San Miguel Island, California*, Cabrillo National Monument, November, 1965, p. 5; Roberta S. Greenwood, *Archeological Survey and Investigation, Channel Islands National Monument California, Vol. 1* (Pacific Palisades: Greenwood and Associates, September 1978), pp. 286-287.

³²According to Betsy Lester Roberti, this dining room was later used by the Herbert Lester family as a living room; their dining room was the first room east of the kitchen.

³³*Historic Structures Report*, pp. 6-7; "Interview with Brooks," *Santa Barbara News-Press* July 1, 1962.

and quantity of its modern conveniences. There is also a fine sheep shearing shed on the island.³⁴

Last Years of Captain Waters on San Miguel Island

On November 18, 1908, a clipping from the *San Francisco Call*, date-line Santa Barbara, related that title to the whole of San Miguel Island was at stake in a suit coming up the following day in Los Angeles. The case, it read, had been pending for four years. The island, it claimed, was transferred from Elias Beckman to W. G. Waters in 1892. Beckman now argued that the transfer was made only by a deed of trust, so he took the matter to court and sued so as to prevent a transfer of the land to the San Miguel Island Company. Waters and the Company argued that it was a complete transfer. In the last line the article included the information that the state also had a claim on the property. The General Land Office was called upon for guidance, and in its correspondence it mentioned no leases and recited that the island was not covered by any land claim. The court ordered the company dissolved and the assets distributed among the stockholders. Apparently this was done, and Waters ended up in sole possession of the business once again.

Probably spurred by Department of Commerce bureaucrats who had learned of San Miguel Island during the previous litigation, President Taft ordered San Miguel Island to be reserved as a lighthouse reservation in 1909. On February 9, 1911, Waters wrote to Taft asking that he revoke the Executive Order and instead allow him to stay on the island. He argued that he had come to California in 1877, bought an interest in San Miguel in 1887, and lived there ever since. He had made many improvements and had been a volunteer weather observer; and, since he was an old soldier having served at the front in the Civil War, it would be an undue hardship at his age to remove his buildings and leave. He had been informed that a lighthouse would be built on this island that he said was only good for sheep. A lighthouse, if any, he wrote, should be constructed on Richardson's Rock seven miles west of San Miguel. He then referred to his bout with the survey team, which had tried to land on the island during President Cleveland's administration. Then he argued anew that he had consulted his attorney and had been advised that no mention was made of the island in the treaty between Spain and Mexico.³⁵

A second letter from Waters in June described the improvements he had made on the island since 1888:

I have thereon quite a band of sheep, mules, cows, chickens, ducks, etc. I have built a very comfortable house 16 ft. wide by 120 ft. long, with water and set bowls in all the sleeping rooms, also bath room and toilet. There are five sleeping rooms, two dining rooms, one of which is for the shearers, a large kitchen, wash room, and meat room. The main building runs east and west. I also have an "L" running north and south, which is 14 ft. wide and about 90 ft. long. In this building I have a store room, carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, harness room, cow barn and storage room for wagons and tools. I also have a separate house for the chickens and ducks. I have a wool house where I do my shearing, which is 16 x 60 ft., with sheep shed 18 x 90 ft. On the beach I have a warehouse, although not in

³⁴*The [Santa Barbara] Daily News and the Independent*, September 25, 1916, Brooks Papers, SCIF.

³⁵*Ibid.*; Lighthouse correspondence, 1901-1910.

good condition at the present time, owing to the weight of sand that came upon it. I have three barges, two of which are 7 x 16 ft., asphaltumed and water tight. I also have one barge 12 x 16 ft. which needs repairing.

I have built a nice road from the beach up to the high lands, which is the only place available for a road. I have good well water 16 ft. deep and a windmill with force pump to force the water up to the house 125 ft. on higher land. I have several fields fenced in to be used during shearing time. All these improvements, besides several others such as filling in canyons with stone to prevent their being washed out deeply have been made after I had entered my protest against the government when they during President Cleveland's administration wished to survey the Island.³⁶

A formal brief supplied by attorneys for the Department of Commerce found Water's claim without any foundation whatever. Still, it pointed out, the Department was not under legal obligation to lease the island to the highest bidder or to solicit competitive bids, and a satisfactory disposition of the matter might be to issue Waters a revocable license to use the island for five years. On the other hand, the Department could dispossess Waters and lease the island to another party. Over the protests of other would-be lessees, Waters was awarded a five-year lease on November 1, 1911, at \$5 a year. In signing the lease, Waters acknowledged ownership by the U.S. Government. In 1912 Lighthouse personnel came to inspect the water supply and to judge whether its rate of flow could furnish power for a future lighthouse. Waters took them around the island, graciously showing them springs, although the herders could not catch donkeys for them to use as transportation.³⁷

The fact that the island was overgrazed was so well known that a rancher in Montana wrote the Department in 1913 asking that he be permitted to take off the sheep and not restock it for two years, but spend \$500 annually in planting grasses and hardy trees. The National Association of Audubon Societies asked that the sheep be removed from several Channel Islands including San Miguel, and the islands be turned into a bird refuge. The Lighthouse Inspector reported that the idea would serve no good purpose but to the contrary an injury would be suffered by the ranchers and by the community at large which derived certain benefits from the grazing industry. The Audubon Society, he advised, could have Prince Island. Some parties floated an idea in 1911 of establishing a goat quarantine station on the island, noting the rising prominence of thoroughbred European goats for milk production. Needless to say, nothing came of the proposition.³⁸

In 1916 Waters spoke to a reporter who then described sheep raising and farming conditions on the island:

Captain Waters does not know how many sheep he has. They wander freely over the island in large bands and are rounded up for shearing and killing but the roundups are never complete and it would be almost impossible to find out the full number of the combined flocks. Several attempts have been made to grow crops on San Miguel but the heavy winds for which the island is famous always knock down the crop before it is mature or bury it

³⁶Waters to 18th Lighthouse District, June 17, 1911.

³⁷Lighthouse File 252, 1911, RG 26, NA(SB).

³⁸Lighthouse File 1614, 1914; *The Morning Press*, January 27, 1911, SCIF.

with sand. Sand drifts worse than snow on many parts of the island and often changes the entire appearance of the landscape over night.³⁹

Captain Waters kept busy on the mainland with a rich social life. He was a founder of the Santa Barbara Club, a member of the Knights Templar, the Masonic Lodge and the Jonathan Clubs of San Francisco and Los Angeles, and had served a term as commander of the California and Nevada Department of the G. A. R. (Grand Army of the Republic). He traveled to the island, stayed a month at a time, and took a shearing team over each spring. In 1916, Water renewed his lease, claiming in the local newspaper that, had he been younger he could have won the rights of ownership: “The fact that I have lived on the island for twenty-five years without anyone questioning my right and that I built a home and other buildings there would, I think be accepted in the federal courts as proof of my title to the property.” But perhaps because of advancing age (he was almost 80 years old), he entered into a contract with Robert L. Brooks and J. R. Moore on January 9, 1917. Waters’ lease contained no clause that specifically prevented a sublease such as this. For \$30,000, at one-third down, Brooks and Moore received his livestock including some 2,500 sheep and some cattle, improvements including the house and barns, and his lease that was valid until November of 1921.

William G. Waters died following a stroke on April 26, 1917, after thirty years of “owning” San Miguel Island. Waters’ death brought to light the unfortunate relationship that had developed between father and adopted daughter Edith after the mother’s death. In his will he left Edith only one dollar of his sizable estate, while leaving \$75,000 to his wealthy, 93-year-old brother who resided in Boston. Edith asked that the will be set aside and eventually succeeded. The trials that followed brought up questions about money Edith’s mother had supplied in starting operations at San Miguel. According to Mrs. Waters’ diary, she had supplied the money. Captain Waters’ brother had later been a financial partner in the sheep business. A newspaper stated that “when the mother died [Edith’s] education in music, art and drama was brought to a close.” The four years Edith had spent on the island following her mother’s death were miserable for her, and she described herself as a prisoner in a “rudely-built ranch house” built partially from railroad ties and on an island swept by perpetual gales. According to Edith, she finally fled on the boat of a man named Bob Ord who gathered guano on the island for sale on the mainland (another account stated that he was an otter hunter). Edith reportedly appeared at Ord’s camp in the night “with the wild request for aid in escape, he was so struck with her pathetic attitude that he volunteered.” Waters’ 18-year-old son also had come to the island but soon left, parting ways with his long-estranged father. Edith’s account of hard work on the island and description of the house and of a bunk house for the ranch hands adds something to what we know of San Miguel in the early 1890s.⁴⁰

³⁹*The [Santa Barbara] Daily News and the Independent*, September 25, 1916, Brooks Papers, SCIF.

⁴⁰Rouse, “The Waters Family,” pp. 45-51; Lighthouse, File 252, 1917; unidentified article, probably *Los Angeles Times*, in SMI ranger files.

Robert L. Brooks Lease

The entry of Robert Brooks into the San Miguel Island lease opened a new era in the island's history that would last 30 years. Brooks loved the island and the work there, although he lived comfortably on the mainland. He hired men to tend the island sheep ranch, and his employment of Herbert Lester would provide one of the most interesting and well-documented periods in Channel Islands history. The Lester occupation ended suddenly in 1942 and six years later, the sheep ranching period on San Miguel Island came to a close.

After the first year of Brooks and Moore's lease, the business statement listed an inventory which included the lease, three buildings, a ten-ton barge, work mules and a saddle mule, four cows, one bull, fencing valued at \$1,000, and 2,356 sheep. The sheep, including 140 rams, 1,263 ewes, 570 lambs and 383 wethers, were valued at over \$18,000. The partners sold 15,370 pounds of wool that year for \$6,148 and sold no mutton. Expenses, including labor, boat rental, shearing, groceries and taxes, came to \$2,499.11 for a net profit of \$3,648.89 for the first year. The men saw their profit triple within five years.⁴¹

The Lighthouse Bureau objected to the Waters-Brooks-Moore contract and threatened to advertise for bids, but Brooks argued that he was spending money on the island so they let him keep it, but at \$200 a year. In 1918 the ranch sheared 2,391 sheep of 20,000 pounds of wool; that year Moore took over the note on Waters' estate leaving a \$12,000 liability which was slowly paid off. Both Brooks and Moore had served in the Army during World War I, and in their absence arranged for the Vail Company of Los Angeles and Santa Rosa Island to take over their island operation. Moore was in Camp Zachary Taylor and Brooks overseas for 21 months, but upon discharge they turned their attention to the island. Holding that maximum production and island regeneration could only be accomplished with a long-term lease, they had a bill drawn up to place before Congress which would assign the Brooks and Moore partnership a twenty-five year lease at \$400 a year. In return, they would invest \$10,000 in improvements outlined in the Bill. Brooks argued that it set no precedent since the Howland brothers already had such a lease on San Clemente Island. He claimed he had purchased 1,700 sheep from Waters before his death, all Spanish Merino type, since mainland sheep would not live on the island. He described measures to control the 5,000-acre sand pit, which ran across the island and the methods they would employ to replant grasses and save up to 2,000 acres. Under the five-year lease, they were required to remove all buildings and even the four miles of fencing they owned upon termination of the lease. The Bill would allow them to retain these and add a windmill, reservoirs, and a dock. The \$400 per annum rental translated into heads of sheep would mean an annual cost of \$.20 per sheep, more than average pay for public grazing land on the mainland.

Superintendent Rhodes, who had been asked to endorse the Bill, turned down Brooks' progressive policy. Rhodes claimed grazing cost \$.01 a day per head on the mainland and the rent was too low, but he did assign the lease to the two men without giving outsiders a chance to bid. Their attempt to obtain an extension having failed, Brooks and Moore requested a new five-year lease at \$200 a year beginning April

⁴¹Business statements on file at SCIF.

1, 1920, and received it. The award of the lease bothered other ranchers who wanted the island, and seven letters of protest came into the Bureau. John Russell continued to manage the ranch.⁴²

Robert L. Brooks was a mainland rancher and probably knew grazing costs as well as anyone. He was a handsome and colorful man who had first come to California as a result of an enforced year away from his studies at Yale University. During Easter vacation, 1911, he and some classmates had appropriated a sailboat, sailed down the river from New Haven, docked, had a good many beers, and decided they would never make it back in time for classes. One of the boys wired his Professor a flippant message to the effect that he should not hold up the class for his return, and all of the vacationers were dismissed for a year. During this year, Brooks came out to work on the ranch of an older brother, Philip, in the Imperial Valley. While he was there he somehow heard of San Miguel Island and the system of leases, so after he finished at Yale he obtained the lease.⁴³

In 1918, Brooks returned from service in World War I, had an office in the Van Nuys Building in Los Angeles, and began to invest in rural real estate and crops such as sugar beets and lima beans. Although he had an inheritance that could have helped him get a start, this money was placed in the trust of another person during the war and was lost. Brooks seemed like the kind of man whose optimism and general good sense could take him anywhere he wanted to go. He probably borrowed money to get started, but before long he married and lived on Camden Drive in Beverly Hills. He did not spend any significant amount of time indoors and instead worked around Oxnard and in Ventura County. He bought a ranch in Camarillo in 1931, went into other deals with partners, and gradually developed two ranches on the mainland. In 1942, he brought his family to Hilltop Ranch in Carpinteria.

Brooks thrived on hard outdoor work where he rubbed elbows with the ranch hands. At the end of the day he loved to drink and talk and spin tales with them, and he kept pictures of himself and these friends. San Miguel Island contributed perhaps half of his annual income, but the island was far more important than income to Brooks. It supplied the romance he needed, a place to talk about, and a place to go and work at shearing time. Shearing time was a huge event, and the whole family got up in the middle of the night to see him off. His shearing hands consisted of several professional shearers and unskilled workers, the latter he referred to as “the bums of Santa Barbara.” He cleared the county jail of convicts each year and claimed the city fathers loved him for it. Then he took them out on Joe Castagnola’s boat or one of Vail’s, and dragged along a barge. The ranch had well-constructed shearing pens, a wool house, and a blacksmith shop. But each year the old wharf had to be torn out and replaced because the waves damaged it badly. New chutes had to be built to bring the sheep down to the wharf where they were loaded on to the barge, 55 at a time, and taken to Port Hueneme, unloaded and transferred to Brooks’ ranch at Camarillo. Sheep grazing on San Miguel went well. There were no predators on the island, lambing was considered 100%, and the tax records at Santa Barbara County indicate that none of the unsecured property on San Miguel was ever taxed. Only in 1923 did San Miguel suffer a drought. Brooks took all the sheep to San Nicolas where he got permission from E. N. Vail to run them in 1923 and 1924.⁴⁴

⁴²This material is drawn from Lighthouse correspondence, File 1614, RG 26, NA(DC).

⁴³Interview with Robert Moore Brooks, March 1, 1978 by Lois Roberts, Hilltop Ranch, Carpinteria. Much of the following is drawn from the interview, from photographs and papers seen at the ranch, and an interview with Cris de Alba, former ranch foreman, March 1, 1978 by Roberts.

⁴⁴Search with Mr. Kapp, Santa Barbara County Office; Letter, Rhodes to Vail, August 18, 1928; Brooks Papers.

At some date during Brooks' lease, evidently in the early 1920s, Hancock Banning, Jr. visited the island in search of Indian artifacts. Banning, a member of the family that owned Santa Catalina Island, later recorded an oral history in which he describes San Miguel Island as a "huge sand dune" with a "crystal-clear" salt-water lake. He related a fascinating encounter he and his friends had with the unnamed caretakers on the island, evidently the Russells:

When we were there the first time, we were met on the beach by a collie dog and a young man with both forearms missing. Congenital deformities. He was not all there mentally. This collie dog was very wonderful and looked out for him. He motioned us to follow him, which we did. We went up to a house on a windswept mesa. It had a rather long tunnel built out of wood from a vessel that had been wrecked on the south coast of the island. The entrance to this tunnel was a revolving door. He took us in there and we met the "King" and "Queen" of San Miguel. They had dedicated their life to looking out for their crippled son, and this was one place where he wouldn't be laughed at or made fun of. He loved the island and they did. They told us a story of a windstorm that came up. They lived in a canyon with a running stream. The sand began to drift and in about a week, as I remember, that whole canyon filled up; the house, stream and everything disappeared. That's why they built this house up on this windswept mesa because the sand would blow right by.

Because of the movement of the sand, hunting for Indian relics was comparatively easy. We got a great many. A stone flute and any number of ollas, arrowheads, and abalone with wampum inside. They took two abalone shells and put them together with all the relics of the chief inside. Then they used tar around the outside and through the vent holes of the abalones to seal them up and then buried them. Often you wouldn't have to dig very much. The wind blew the sand around

Well, we met the "King" and "Queen" of San Miguel. Charming, charming old people. They said we had to stay to lunch. Well, God help us. They had mutton soup. I think the tallow was about a half inch thick on top of the soup. To get through that to where the soup was . . . the odor of mutton and wool to me is not very appetizing . . . but we didn't want to turn those people down and high-hat their soup, so we valiantly went through with it. We were great friends from then on. They told us where to dig. He had a wonderful collection [of Indian relics].

They had nothing to do. I think they had a tender that would come over about three times a year and bring supplies to them and sheep shearers. I don't remember how many sheep they had over there. It couldn't have been very many because this island wouldn't take it. Maybe 2,000 or 3,000. But it was a wonderful place, so interesting

Then they took us down to the wreck It was not a very large vessel and it was all wood. It'd broken up and they'd built this new house on the windswept mesa mostly out of the wreckage of this boat. But the thing that interested me was this revolving door. They warned us. They said, "Now, you better look out. You hard-boil an egg and you might find sand in that egg when you open it up, it's so bad." This revolving door was just to keep sand out of the house They had ventilation. All the ventilation had come through the cracks in the windows and that sort of thing. They had a thing up in the roof with an opening downwind so there was a vacuum up there. That island was one of the worst sandstorms I've ever been in. This was a norther, I think, that filled up their little valley, right up to the stream. They showed us pictures of it, so it wasn't any dream.

Banning and his unnamed cohorts had brought shovels, picks, hardware cloth strainers and sifters to aid in their treasure hunting, all of which they gave to the "King," in addition to an apple pie and a box of

candy which was much appreciated. Banning recalled that during this visit they had dug up “a great many Indian relics” and said that most of them were given to the Southwest Museum.⁴⁵

The head count of sheep increased during Brooks’ first ten years on the island. By 1921 the island supported more than 4,000 sheep. He sold mutton to the San Antonio Packing Company, R. L. Bliss Packing Company and Hauser Packing Company, and wool to the Standard Felt Company. Around 1922 he bought out partner Moore. Not all went well for Brooks. He lost an entire shipment of 50 Shropshire bucks that he had brought to the island. The drought in 1924 caused Brooks to remove all but 500 head from the island, and the following year, in attempting to restock, lost half of the sheep he had imported from Santa Cruz Island to locoweed and lupine. He claimed in a letter to Captain Rhodes of the Lighthouse Bureau that only the native sheep of the island were “enured [sic] to avoid the loco and lupin” and so he had to keep the native ewe lambs to increase the herd rather than selling them. Brooks spent a “considerable” amount of money on Australian Salt Bush seed, which he successfully planted on about 1,500 acres of the island. He wrote that “it started growing in every section of the island where it was sown . . . [it] will grow on the very worst part of the island.” Brooks also fenced part of the south side for pasture control, dug a new well and installed a new windmill and piping, and asked for permission to build a new dock. The expenses mounted up, and by 1928, the operation was no longer profitable.⁴⁶

In March 1925, Robert Brooks, bidding alone, made the highest offer to the Lighthouse Service. It was \$3,000 for a five-year period. Lewis Penwell bid next at \$2,550. In 1927 Brooks tried to buy the island. His letter described its drawbacks: tons of sand blown by the prevailing westerly winds onto the north shore and a poisonous weed that killed the sheep. In August 1928, the government extended his lease, which would have expired in 1930 to March 21, 1935. Brooks sent Lighthouse Superintendent Rhodes a lamb now and then in these years for which Rhodes was most appreciative (“most delicious,” wrote Rhodes. “I regret that the market will not now properly compensate you for such a fine product.”). Resident Manager Russell left San Miguel in the 1920s, another caretaker may have followed, but in 1929 Brooks needed long-term help. He called on a friend he had made in the Army and convalesced with at Walter Reed Hospital, Herbert Steever Lester. Lester, an educated and traveled man, suffered from shell shock following the war. Although he was in most ways recovered, he wanted relief from the incessant demands of civilization, and he found ranching on San Miguel completely satisfying.⁴⁷

⁴⁵“The Banning Family in Southern California,” [interview with] Hancock Banning, Jr., February 19, 1970, Oral History Program, UCLA, Tape II, Side 1, transcript pp. 54, 60-66. Although the existence of a disabled son has not been recorded elsewhere, the couple appears to be Mr. and Mrs. John Russell because of the reference to their having lived in the canyon through the sandstorm, and then been involved in the construction of the new house on the mesa. Banning did not remember the family’s name and did not state the date of his visit, although the other stories he told about the islands in the oral history dated in the ‘teens and early 1920s.

⁴⁶Business statements for 1917-1923; Brooks to Captain H. W. Rhodes, June 7, 1928, SCIF.

⁴⁷Letters, Rhodes to Brooks, December 30, 1931, January 7 and February 4, 1932, Brooks Papers, SCIF; Lester, *The Legendary King*, p. XVI.

The Lester Years on San Miguel Island, 1929-1942

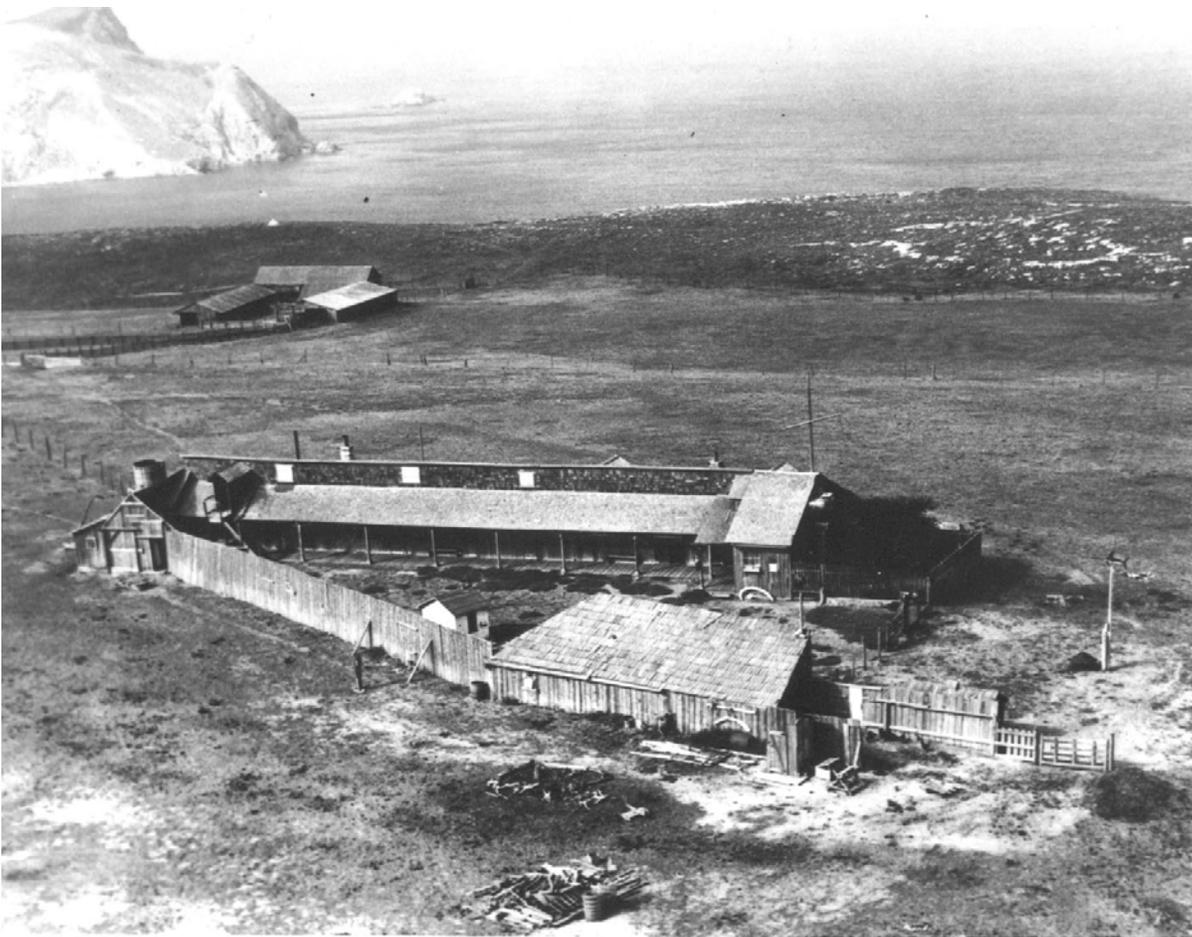
Herbert Lester moved to the island in 1929 and soon made it his goal to acquire the island lease for himself. He came to an arrangement with Brooks through which he would draw a small salary but accumulate capital at the same time toward payment on the island holdings, although the Depression arrived and the plans were dashed. In 1930 Lester brought his bride Elizabeth, a librarian from New York, to the island and their legendary lifestyle persisted until his death in 1942. Lester was commissioned as a deputy sheriff and dubbed himself King of San Miguel, occasionally wearing makeshift insignias to carry out the role. Mrs. Lester recorded these years in a book, *The Legendary King of San Miguel*. Her writing provided a vivid picture of isolation on the island with their two children, made livable through attention to things civilized: building and repair; food preparation for themselves, guests and the shearers; educating the girls; and entertaining the famous and the plain people who came because it was San Miguel Island and because the Lesters themselves attracted them.

Herbert and the new Mrs. Lester arrived on the island in late March 1930, aboard Ed Vail's *Vaquero* that deposited the newlyweds and their things (including her library of 500 books) on the beach. Mrs. Lester soon met the island's Indian shepherders, Clemente Watchina and Buster, who brought the belongings up to the ranch on a sled while the couple walked. Finding the ranch house outfitted for men (its decorations mainly consisted of arrowheads, fossils and guns), she noted its lack of hot water and determined to make it into a comfortable home. Her addition of books, curtains, pictures helped, and Lester built a fireplace (using bricks from the old ranch house) and installed hot water heaters. The Lesters named it Rancho Rambouillet after the sheep on the island and a favorite place of Herbert's in France.

Mrs. Lester described the house as a "wooden caterpillar," part of a "stockade" closed in by a high fence and a row of utilitarian buildings: a harness room; a blacksmith shop; and an empty structure that Lester eventually remodeled into his famous "Killer Whale Bar" in which he entertained visitors and workers alike. Rain barrels provided part of the water supply. Fleas were rampant. She wrote:

On my first day as an island housewife, I lost no time in getting acquainted with the eccentricities of this historical and fascinating lodge from the notorious trap-door which led from the master bedroom into the gloomy attic which ran the entire length of the house—a matter of one hundred and twenty feet—to the porthole windows—windows which could bear the brunt of the winds. Then the romantic and sheltered cloistered corridor—"monks walk" as John Russell called it, which extended the length of the house on the outside and to which all rooms opened. The front door, which no one ever seemed to use, was a revolving door—one which could survive banks of sand suddenly gusting against it. The quaint dutch door leading from our bedroom, sheltered by a garden, was a romantic thought inspired by a woman, I am sure; a woman who tired of bracing herself every time she opened a window to freshen the air on the opposite side of the house.

The garden consisted of a "stragglng arrangement of hardy vines and two fig trees . . . a small sheltered square of wind-free rustic pursuit with some rough, hand-wrought benches and chairs for its furnishings." An attempt at vegetable gardening ended with island birds wreaking havoc. But Mrs. Lester reveled in the island with its "meadows of waist-high grass" and beautiful wildflowers.



The Lester ranch house on San Miguel Island, with shearing shed and barn visible in the background, Note the tiny schoolhouse within the fence. *Channel Islands National Park*



The Lester family in front of the ranch house, November 22, 1939. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

A ruling held that two people should always be on the island, never one alone. When Herbert Lester required a month's hospitalization, a young man named Johannes Barthol came to stay on the island. Barthol wrote about San Miguel in these years, and his description of the physical features of the island recall long rides around the island and offer vivid detail of what he saw. At first, the Lesters had been frustrated at the young man's propensity to wander off to explore the island, but when they realized his calling as an island naturalist and historian, they gained a respect for him.⁴⁸

Shearing time twice a year brought colorful crews of sheep shearers from the mainland. San Miguel Island was the last stop for the itinerant shearers, who slept and ate in the ranch house and worked hard during their stay. The shearers continued to be issued a ficha for every sheep, although by the Lester era a sheep brought ten cents and a ram twenty-five. Lester partook in the shearing activities, castrating lambs, weighing wool and sewing closed the huge sacks, and cleaning up after all had left. He dumped the debris left from shearing in a ravine west of the ranch house. The sheep were put on a small barge from the impromptu pier and shuttled to the Vail & Vickers cattle boat *Vaquero* for shipment to the mainland. One seasonal employee, Arno Ducazau, decided to stay and remained with the Lesters until the family left the island.

His days for arduous labor were over, but he chose remote San Miguel and us to a mainland existence for his declining years. This quiet but mirthful old man became my right hand and revered friend in more than one crisis. After our two children came, he was their warden and companion, along with his other responsibilities—all volunteered.

Mrs. Lester traveled to the mainland to give birth to two girls: Marianne Miguel Lester and Elizabeth Edith Lester. She returned after each birth and raised the two on the island. When Marianne reached school age, Mrs. Lester arranged with a teacher friend and the Santa Barbara County schools to teach them on the island, in a tiny schoolhouse made from a playhouse the Vails of Santa Rosa Island had given them. The girls took regular lessons and excelled at their studies. The family exchanged learning opportunities with schools on the mainland, whose pupils would learn about the island and life there and help the girls with their studies about the mainland. Marianne had a talent for writing while Betsy enjoyed tagging along with her father on various island adventures.

Herbert Lester held a passionate interest in the island's natural and cultural history, being distressed at the ravages of pothunters and protective of the island's unique mice. In the spring of 1932 Lester discovered the tusks of a Columbian mammoth and reported the find to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The Lesters made researchers welcome on the island, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm. Dr. Ralph Hoffman of the Santa Barbara Museum came to the island to study its botany, only to lose his life falling from a cliff east of Cuyler Harbor. Lester erected a wooden cross in Hoffman's honor at what is now referred to as Hoffman Point. Lester happily toured visitors about and made people feel welcome; his wife called him a "one-man Chamber of Commerce."

The Lesters relied on Vail & Vickers' *Vaquero* and Coast Guard boats, such as the *Hermes* under Commander Thomas, for transportation but the unreliability of Coast Guard schedules left them sometimes

⁴⁸*The Western Explorer*, III, 3 (April, 1965), 3-24; interview with Mrs. Lester by Lois Roberts, January 12, 1978.



Arno Ducazau, 1942. *Channel Islands National Park*



George Hammond's Waco-Cabin plane, March 20, 1935. Hammond made this flight from Santa Barbara to San Miguel Island in 27 minutes. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

stranded (he would not allow his wife and children to be transported on fishing boats for safety reasons). In 1932 Charles M. Potter landed an airplane in the sheep corral, the first to do so. He told his friend, George Fisk Hammond, about the island and its colorful occupants. Hammond, a young man who loved to fly and could afford the luxury, made more trips to San Miguel than any of the other visitors. He made his first

landing in the sheep corral near the ranch house on July 22, 1934. Taking off from his family estate, Bonnymede, along the beach south of Santa Barbara, he could reach the island in less than half an hour. On Hammond's first visit Lester, who he described as "an astonishingly likable man," greeted him. He shortly began to make regular trips to San Miguel taking groceries, supplies, mail in a special mail pouch and just plain treats the Lesters had been doing without. New friends Hammond and "Herbie" developed a 918-foot landing field east of the ranch complex where they laid out boundary markers, a wind sock and a sign; when the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey team came over on December 9, they added it to the official map. Hammond Field appeared on Aeronautical charts until 1965 when its disuse and poor condition prompted the Navy to have it removed from the charts. Lester kept a danger flag ready to fly on the ranch flagstaff if landing conditions were poor. An alternate landing field was found on a 1,500-foot-long dry lake near the west end but it was only available during dry months. Hammond claimed to have landed on many field sites on the island, and once landed on the beach. Between 1934 and the end of 1941, Hammond estimated that he had flown to the island more than 200 times, sometimes more than twice a week.⁴⁹

Despite the luxury of having an impromptu personal pilot, the Lesters still had to be largely self-sufficient. They scoured the beaches for building materials and made do with few extravagances. A two-way radio provided contact with the mainland, over which the Lesters sent official weather reports to Santa Barbara and Los Angeles for the Weather Bureau. The Lesters entertained hundreds of people in the house as their fame grew. Lester kept a guest book in which every visitor signed and left a comment. The family, especially the girls, received letters and gifts from all over the country, and when visiting the mainland would often have news reporters following them.

Lester carried on volumes of correspondence with friends and associates. The Brooks family has preserved his letters to Robert Brooks. In one he tells of receiving a new generator that would provide steady power for the radio and electric lights, but asks for a radiotelephone with which to deal with emergencies (Brooks provided one later in the year). He also asked for a dozen hens for laying and discussed breeds that would do well on the island. In the same letter, dated August 22, 1938, Lester wrote:

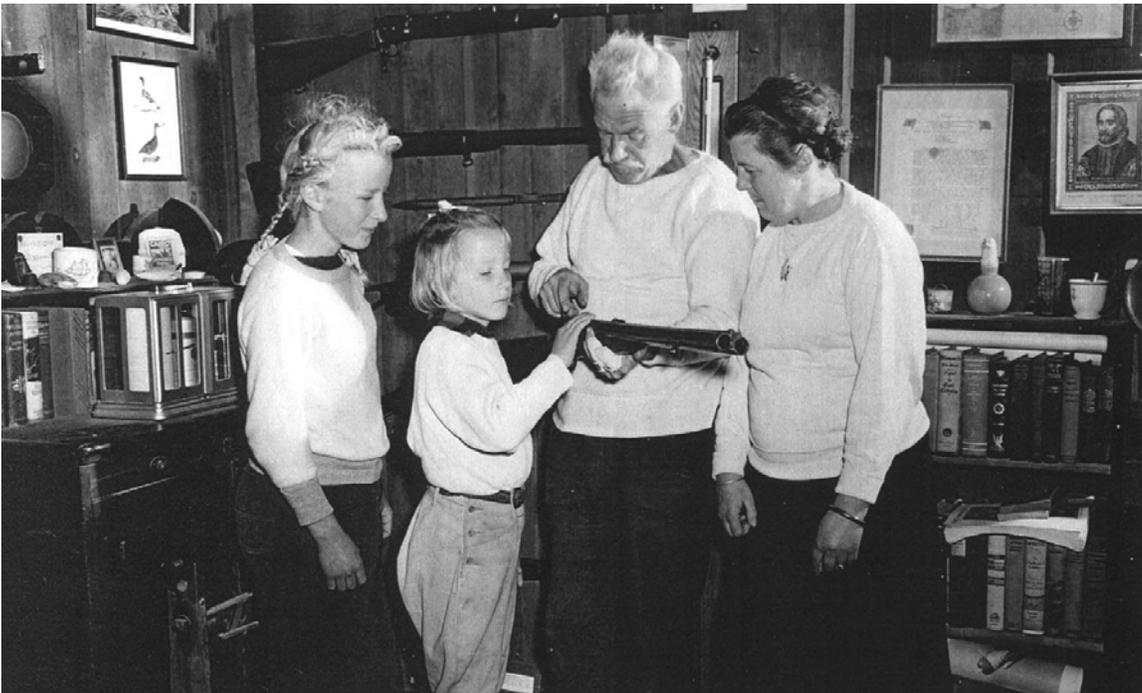
We do not like the thought of ever leaving this little Kingdom that has kept us so happy and in excellent health for so many years—yet I suppose we will have to leave on account of the children—in another year or two. So please keep looking for a little ranch up in that beautiful country around Lompoc, & let me know if you find anything where you think "Herbie" can take care of Elise & the kids & enable them to have bacon & eggs & bread & butter & milk each day—& a couple of glasses of beer for Herbie when he finishes his toil of the soil each day.

A few days later Lester wrote that the pier had been put in good shape for the season but that the new generator had blown up, sending pieces through the roof of the attic and narrowly missing Lester and his friend Dewey. He insisted on getting a reliable Delco generator instead. The new radiotelephone worked well, as Lester communicated with Santa Rosa Island, the mainland and points as far as Arizona. Lester reported installing a new windmill and water tank in 1940. In general, "Herbie" Lester communicated with

⁴⁹Interview with George Hammond by Lois Roberts, January 12, 1978; oral history interview with Hammond and Elizabeth Lester, September 9, 1979 by Walt Douglas, SBMNH #2285; Lester, *The Legendary King*, pp. xi-xiii.



Herbert Lester shows his family an old World War I mine shell in 1941. Left to right: Betsy, Elise, Marianne, Herbert. *Santa Barbara Publicity Bureau, Betsy Lester Roberti Collection, courtesy of Santa Cruz Island Foundation*



Herbert Lester shows Betsy his elephant gun in the ranch house living room in May 1942. Marianne is at left, Elise at right. The photo was taken a month before Herbert Lester's death. *Photo by Wilkes, Betsy Lester Roberti Collection, courtesy of Santa Cruz Island Foundation*

his friend Brooks (calling him “Old Man”) about the day-to-day needs and events on the island, and reported such things as the year’s wool clip (14,665 pounds in 1939, 9,910 pounds in 1940), weather and his political outlook (he disliked Roosevelt). Lester’s letters reveal a fear that the Navy would evict them, and pleasure in the publicity the family was getting around the country.⁵⁰

The national press made much of the Lester years, and stories of San Miguel Island were often printed on the front page. *Life* magazine called them a “Swiss Family Robinson.” On June 23, 1937, the *Santa Barbara News-Press* carried an article headlined, “Man’s Life Saved by Island King.” Los Angeles papers followed along with the headline, “Millionaire’s Life Saved by Crude Surgery on Island.” Robert Brooks was the man and he would have hated the latter headline, since he thought of millionaires as men in black suits who conducted their lives in plush surroundings. He knew life as a working man, was land poor, and liked to feel that his everyday contact with the hardest aspects of ranch life identified him. He had, in fact, gone to the Island for the annual shearing, and two weeks prior to the news story had been tearing out the landing from which the lambs were loaded for market, preparatory to erecting a new one for the year’s shipment. He stood on a slippery rock as he worked, lost his footing, and fell. A rusted bolt extending from one of the piles caught his thigh and tore into his flesh. The wound had to be sterilized and closed or Brooks could have bled to death. Lester had no medical training, but he had army experience and knew the thread he would use had to be strong. Using a curved needle and fish line cleansed in boiling water and Lysol, he stitched the wound closed. There was no anesthetic to ease Brooks’ pain, so he simply bore it. Then came the problem of getting Brooks off the island, and since there was no radio, they hoisted the flag upside down to attract a passing ship. None saw the signal. The *Vaquero* approached two weeks later, four days ahead of its regular schedule. Thanks to Lester’s medical care, no infection developed, and when Brooks finally visited a mainland doctor, there was little additional treatment needed. In fact, Brooks told his family that the doctor refused to take any pay as Lester had completed all the treatment necessary.

While the Lesters were in residence on the island, President Franklin D. Roosevelt transferred the control and jurisdiction of San Miguel Island and Prince Island to the Secretary of the Navy for naval purposes on November 7, 1934. The following year Robert Brooks signed a lease with the Navy at \$600 a year. The Navy, under pressure for the overgrazing on the island, placed a limit on the number of sheep to be grazed: in 1938, it was 1,200, but it was later reduced to 1,000.

The events surrounding the United States’ entry into World War II brought the Lester reign on San Miguel Island to an end, and in a tragic way. Shortly after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hammond’s flights were outlawed, shortages of supplies loomed, and on January 10 the Navy assigned three young enlisted men to act as coastal lookouts. Having no facilities of their own, the men were, in Lester’s words, “dumped in our home.” The bored young men became a burden on the Lesters, showing no interest in the unique island life and causing small amounts of trouble to the family. Lester became more frustrated with the situation, and one day accidentally chopped off two fingers while cutting wood in anger. Treatments for the wound caused worrisome side effects and Lester became depressed. On June 18, 1942, a day when the *Vaquero* would bring Robert Brooks to the island with supplies and mail, Lester wrote a note and left the ranch house. After failing to return Brooks and others searched the island for him. Mrs. Lester found the

⁵⁰Letters in the Brooks papers, SCIF.



Sheep in the pen, no date. *Channel Islands National Park*



Hauling wool to the landing in Cuyler Harbor, April 18, 1939. *Channel Islands National Park*

note, which told her of his intention to commit suicide and where to find his body. The family's twelve enjoyable and fulfilling years on San Miguel Island came to an abrupt close. The two girls were taken off the island that day, and Herbert Lester was buried in his favorite spot at Harris Point according to his wishes. A newspaper reporter wrote, "What led him to end his life is as mysterious as the force that impelled him to go to the island originally."⁵¹ Mrs. Lester remained for two weeks packing up their belongings and saying goodbye to her once-happy home. On July 4, 1942, a Coast Guard boat took her to the mainland where she found a job and a house. She did not visit the island again, but her daughter Betsy has made a habit of visiting and sharing her memories of growing up on the island; Betsy, along with Marianne's grown daughters Jennifer and Barbara Stafford, brought her mother's ashes to the island to lay them next to Herbert Lester in 1981. Mrs. Lester closed her book with this thought about Herbert:

He created a life and a world for himself, and for us on San Miguel. It is all buried, as he is buried, out there, but not alone. Now that I am an old woman, I am glad I had the privilege of sharing it all—for in his imagination we dwelt on our island paradise, the King, the Queen and the two little Princesses. We are still there in spirit, for those who seek us—those who have the skill to dream of what it must have been.

Final Ranching Lease

Brooks hired an old sailor from Norway and his wife, Ulmar and Rae Englund, to manage the sheep ranch after Lester's death. When the Englunds left, Al and Rosie Baglin came to live and work at San Miguel, staying until ranching ended in 1948. The last couple had an Army surplus jeep and was serviced by a twin-engine supply plane. Brooks arrived regularly with the shearing team. In 1947 he brought along several college boys, and in 1948 and 1950 Donald Butler, Brooks' son-in-law, went along to build the dock and help with the roundup.⁵²

In 1948 the Navy revoked its lease and ordered Brooks to remove his sheep and other property off the island so that guided missile and bomb targets could be placed on San Miguel. Brooks had 72 hours to accomplish this. He hauled in camping supplies by plane and set up camp for a party of men who covered the island by foot or by horseback looking for sheep in the rugged barrancas. The men drove the sheep down to the Cuyler Harbor dock and into the barge. Some furniture was moved out of the ranch house, but the time was too short. Brooks had to leave over 500 sheep and four horses behind. He later sued the government for his losses, but the good years had run out. His lawyer died before the suit went to court. In June 1950, he got permission to return and remove his stock. The *Los Angeles Times* joked that "mutton and munitions don't mix," as their reporter described how four men and four horses were working against a deadline to herd "the unshorn critters through the rugged barrancas of the mist-muddied terrain into corrals and onto barges headed for the mainland." The herders were former island caretaker Ulmar Englund, Hal Hoag, John Evans and Don Butler. Their first task involved herding the four now-wild horses to participate in the roundup; this took three days. The four herded about 100 sheep at a time, the animals moving slowly

⁵¹*Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 1942.

⁵²Letter, Donald Butler (Brooks' son-in-law) to Dr. Weinman, April 3, 1978; *Santa Barbara News Press*, October [11?], 1948, Brooks Papers, SCIF.

because of their heavy coats of wool. Every other day they had enough sheep collected to ship them off by barge, destined for Stearns Wharf at Santa Barbara and markets at Oxnard. But again in the time allotted, every sheep could not be rounded up and the renegades would graze the island unattended for another eighteen years.⁵³

While the sheep ranching industries on San Miguel Island held no local or state economic significance, its legacy was in the lives of the families that pursued them under great hardship. While little detail is known of Nidever's activities on the island, the fact that he chose such an endeavor while enjoying the life of a prominent pioneer in the comfort of Santa Barbara is of interest. The Waters era on the island makes for some good stories, and yet its significance is not great; Waters and his companions were typical of settlers throughout the west, yet with an island-bound twist that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. Herbert Lester personified the rugged individualism made so popular in the pages of *Life* magazine, and contributed to the culture of the west in his exploits, which could be called heroic in that he chose to bring a family into the harsh realities, and so the dangers, of survival on a weather-beaten and most isolated island. While few physical resources remain from the ranching period, the life stories of the occupants provide historic significance to San Miguel Island.

Filming of Mutiny on the Bounty

In 1935 producer Irving Thalberg put his talent to work on one of the greatest sea stories ever filmed: *Mutiny On the Bounty*. To film it, he used several locations. A camera crew went to Tahiti twice for the crowd shots and scenic background. The major scenes were shot in Catalina, and for rough seas he used the waters off San Miguel Island. He sent out an old 200 foot three-master with the outside reworked to match the period and shot footage for a storm sequence, but the pitch and toss of the angry ocean was not convincing. Then someone suggested that they build a smaller model of the *Bounty* so that the contrast with the large waves would produce more drama. The result was the *Baby Bounty*, an 18-foot exact replica, just big enough to hold two men to steer it. It was towed to sea by the mother ship, and all the crew was sworn to secrecy so that the public would never know the difference. Finding heavy seas off San Miguel was no problem, and they began to shoot; but the rough seas soon separated *Baby* from the larger *Bounty* and the small ship could not even be found. Afraid to call the Coast Guard because it would get into the newspapers, Thalberg hired several private ships to comb the waters. Two nights later the *Baby Bounty* and its two occupants were rescued.

Thalberg was particularly alarmed by this event because he had already lost an assistant cameraman while they were shooting a scene on a barge. The barge, *W T Co #3*, was a good-sized affair with a replica of the aft end of the *Bounty* built on one end of it. By taking on ballast at the other end, they could cause the partial replica to tip up and down as if it was about to sink. The cameraman, Glen Strong, was working with his camera on a tripod when the barge was suddenly swamped by a wave that washed his equipment and some valuable footage overboard. In attempting to save the equipment, Strong was drowned. Mrs. Lester recalls some Tahitian scenes being shot on the island, but this was not part of the original production

⁵³Interview, Brooks; *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 1950; *Santa Barbara News-Press*, July 9, 1950.

schedule. Using San Miguel's waters for the rough-water shots helped add realism in the production of a memorable sea film that won the Academy Award for 1935's Best Picture of the Year.⁵⁴

Lighthouse Reservation and Aids to Navigation

The U. S. government designated San Miguel Island as a potential location for lighthouses, but only minor development of that type was ever pursued. Richardson's Rock is the only permanent development and is not within the boundaries of Channel Islands National Park. The island was reserved for lighthouse purposes by Executive Order No. 1066 on April 23, 1909, and described as an area of 10,378 acres about seven and a half miles long and two and a half miles wide. Prince Island at the entrance to Cuyler Harbor was reserved in its entirety for lighthouse purposes by Executive Order No. 2750 dated November 5, 1917. Richardson's Rock, described as an unsurveyed island westerly of San Miguel Island in approximate latitude 34°06'00" north, longitude 120°31'06" west, was reserved for lighthouse purposes by Executive Order January 30, 1911.

In 1911 the Navy sent out a circular letter asking for opinions from shippers and marine underwriters as to where the Service should spend money first: Anacapa Island or Richardson's Rock. The latter was deemed more important because:

. . . the strong northwest coast winds are liable to set vessels past Point Conception in foggy weather, when they would be likely to run into the dangerous water near Richardson's Rock.

That year the Lighthouse Service decided to construct light towers on both Anacapa and Richardson's Rock. The Service proposed a flashing acetylene beacon and a powerful fog signal costing \$140,000. Richardson's Rock light, built in 1912, was constructed on a 50-foot skeleton tower painted black (later painted red). The 530 candlepower light stood 120 feet above the water, giving it a range of 12 miles in clear conditions. In addition, Richardson's Rock was equipped with a lighted whistle buoy anchored in 270 feet of water northwest of the rock projecting 16 feet above water. This was rebuilt in 1948 some 1100 yards from the rock.

In 1911 a bell buoy was established in 120 feet of water off the southwest end of San Miguel Island, but it was frequently found fouled and capsized by the enormous quantities of kelp reported by the visiting Coast Guard tender. Ships passing outside the island on their north or south course along the coast claimed they never heard or saw it. Since it was virtually useless, it was discontinued in 1918.

Traffic between Central and South America and San Francisco invariably passed outside of San Miguel Island because it saved them 25 to 30 miles over the inside course. They took the inside course only in heavy weather because it offered shelter from wind and swells. In 1923, while pursuing the shorter outside course, the *Cuba* wrecked on San Miguel while rounding Point Bennett, on the westerly side. This

⁵⁴Bob Thomas, *Thalberg, Life and Legend*. (New York: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 278-279; Interview, Wm. S. Clark, Com. (ret.) USCG, Feb. 13, 1978, by Roberts; Clipping file, Academy of Motion Picture Sciences Library; Lester, *The Legendary King*, p. 62.

generated a flurry of inquiries—especially from the Pacific Mail and Steamship Company—in regard to a lighthouse on the westerly side of the island, and a demand for the immediate placement of a gas and whistling buoy at Point Bennett.

New hydrographic readings were made outside the kelp beds there and the buoy was approved for establishment in 18 fathoms of water about one-sixteenth mile from the southwest tip of the island in November 1924. In 1942 this was replaced with a first class nun buoy.⁵⁵

The lights on Richardson’s Rock and on Point Bennett went out in 1942, but the whistle on Richardson’s Rock was only inoperative for six days. On July 20, 1943, an unwatched light (#102) was established on San Miguel Island of 640 candlepower on the south side of the island at Crook Point. The light was fixed in a white skeletal tower and flashed 75 times a minute. It could be seen for 26 miles. The light was discontinued on March 13, 1953, and the tower removed.

Military Uses

The United States’ military forces saw potential defensive capabilities in San Miguel Island in the 1930s that led to its exclusive use as a U. S. Navy training zone. While signaling the end of 100 years of sheep ranching, this fact is particularly significant as the Navy retains legal possession of the island and may in perpetuity. Until agreements were made in 1976, NPS had little management oversight; today the park service controls visitor access and, for the most part, resource protection and preservation.

The island was used for a short time as a radio communications outpost during the 1930s, as a coastal lookout post during World War II, a bombing range and, most significantly, as a key training and testing area for the Navy’s Pacific Missile Range, a key component in the nation’s Cold War defense system. The military uses of San Miguel Island resulted in an unmeasured amount of resource damage, ranging from road building to the effects of bombing and target practice, and little remains that would provide adequate historical integrity for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

U. S. Marines Temporary Radio Outpost, 1933

Tensions in the Pacific led the U. S. Marines to establish a radio outpost on San Miguel Island in 1933. The post would mount a continuous watch for the enemy and maintain radio communications with the commander of the base force. Authorities assigned the San Miguel Island outpost to the battleship *Tennessee* in Los Angeles harbor. One of the men, Wallace M. Greene, recounted his experiences on the island in the *Marine Corps Gazette* more than 50 years later, on which this account is based.

On February 6, 1933 eight Marines and two “blue jackets” (civilians) under command of a second lieutenant boarded the tug *Algorma* for the night trip to San Miguel Island. The men off loaded into a

⁵⁵Rhodes to Commissioner, Oct. 26, 1912, Feb. 19, 1924, Feb. 21, 1924, Sept. 22, 1923; W. A. Moffett, Com. USN to Commissioner, Sept. 26, 1911; H. M. Gleason, Pacific Mail SS Co. to Rhodes, Feb. 25, 1924; “Recommendation for Aid”, Nov. 14, 1924, in File 252, RG 26, NA(SB). Fog signals and lighthouses were contemplated for both Richardson’s Rock and the Island, to be operated by water power obtained from the island.

whale boat at Tyler's Bight and unloaded their gear on the beach: "tents, heavy radio parts, food, bedding, firewood and 60 tons of fresh water had to be passed by hand up a 40-foot sand bank to the top of the bluff and from there packed up the hill to the camp," recalled Greene. They constructed a camp site "on a well-drained grassy slope in the lee of a steep ridge about 300 yards from the beach," over a mile from the site of the radio station to be erected on the western point. After digging a latrine trench and a garbage hold, and setting up a field range composed of a three-foot-square boiler plate with a fire pit beneath, the men christened their new home on San Miguel Island, "Camp Tyler."

Having settled in, the men then packed the radio equipment to the site at Point Bennett. Consisting of a Navy field radio set including transmitting and receiving units, the radio station also required a gasoline motor, generator, hand generator, calibrator, antenna poles, spare parts, gasoline, oil, water, two tents and other equipment. It took ten hours to set up the station and contact the base ship some 100 miles away. The men christened the radio outpost "Camp Hardpan" in honor of the frustrating conditions encountered while driving stakes for the antenna and tents.

The camp commander put two sentries on 24-hour watch, requiring five watches of one eight-hour and four four-hour stints. The radioman on watch listened to an assigned frequency for 15 minutes each hour. In off-hours the men explored the island and collected abalone. Greene wrote that "one Marine was indefatigable in his search for Indian relics," finding the skeleton of a pregnant woman decorated with beads and implements. They explored the wreck of the *Cuba* and found an occupied eagle's nest taller than a man, built of sticks the size of a man's finger "closely knit together into an upright, solid, cylindrical structure with a shallow depression in which rested two white eggs. The vicinity of the nest was littered with sheep bones."

Six of the Marines visited the Lester ranch for food and conversation. Greene wrote of the two ram skulls marking the entrance gate. He was impressed with Herbert Lester, noting that "Lester "had made a study of the island and its ancient people. He had opened many of their graves and had dug in their kitchen middens . . ." Greene described the island water supply as "a few miserable trickles of unpalatable alkali water. There is an alkali well at the sheep rancho but its water is only used for drinking in absolute necessity." Greene recalled the barrenness of the island, the soil erosion and "short grass," considering that "the island like its people slowly but surely died." He estimated the presence of about 4,000 sheep.

The men put up with blowing sand which covered their camp fires (one sandstorm lasted three days), and wind that threatened the tents which had been double-guyed and staked: "their sides bulged like sails, but they held." Sand continually clogged the carburetor of the gasoline engine, which required cleaning "at all times."

The Marine outpost on San Miguel Island was short-lived. An emergency—reportedly an enemy aircraft carrier spotted in the Santa Barbara Channel, later considered to be a phantom or spurious sighting—caused a rapid abandonment of the camp on February 18, when the men were picked up by the *Tennessee*. Camp Hardpan existed for less than two weeks.⁵⁶

⁵⁶General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., "Outpost on San Miguel Island" in *Marine Corps Gazette*, November 1985, pp. 78-84.

Transfer to U. S. Navy Administration

As mentioned previously, President Roosevelt transferred the control and jurisdiction of San Miguel Island and Prince Island from the Secretary of Commerce to the Secretary of the Navy for naval purposes on November 7, 1934. The Order reserved for use by Commerce sites to be selected for aids to navigation and for incidental facilities.

On January 5, 1939, Newton B. Drury, Director, National Park Service, Washington, requested a study of San Miguel. The resultant report summarized the overgrazing in these words:

. . . The present number of sheep (1,100) would undoubtedly represent a conservative stocking under normal conditions, nature now is forcing man to pay the penalty for gross malpractice committed many years ago. For this reason, 1,100 sheep now are destructive of the remnant of the island's resources, although originally such a number might have been pastured there indefinitely with little or no harm.⁵⁷

As a result of the report, recommendations to transfer the island to the National Park Service and stop the grazing were submitted in 1939, but the Washington NPS office took no action until November 5, 1941. On December 7 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. Action finally came in response to a request for information by NPS Regional Director John C. Merriam. The NPS Director in Washington stated that San Miguel was considered worthy of monument status but that the Navy declared it already protected, and that secondly any transfer in status at that time was extremely doubtful, in fact foolish, even to discuss. In January 1942, the NPS summarized the report recommendations of 1939 and sent them to the Navy Department. They included removal of all livestock, all cats, and a well thought out program of replanting; however, grazing continued for twenty-five more years.

World War II Coastal Lookout Stations

The Coastal Lookout Stations, Offshore Patrol and Inshore Patrol, which made up the Local Defense Force, communicated through an operational battle circuit. Each Station was allotted one portable radio, a transmitter to be placed on a roof or tower, and one receiver. By December 30, 1941, the Inshore Patrol had twelve vessels and the Offshore Patrol three. Among the latter was the *Hermes*, which had long patrolled the islands and served as free transportation for island dwellers. During the war it was credited with sinking a submarine outside San Pedro Harbor.⁵⁸

In January 1942, Coast Guard Inshore Patrol Boat 411 carried Commander H. O. Hill, Officer in Charge, Coastal Lookout Stations, on a tour of the Channel Islands to reconnoiter and to plan development of the Stations. Of the several islands he visited, San Nicolas and San Miguel gave the most trouble in

⁵⁷R. M. Bond and Lowell Sumner, "An Investigation of Santa Barbara, Anacapa and San Miguel Island, California", December 28, 1939.

⁵⁸Memo, W. H. Lassing, District Operations to District Communications, Dec. 30, 1941, A6-3 Codes & Signals, 1941-44, Operations, 11th Dist., NA(LN); interview, Com. (Ret.) W. S. Clark, USCG, Feb. 14, 1978 by Roberts; Memo, Jan. 1, 1945, 11th CG, L&P.

landing their 17-foot surfboat. This experience convinced him that all provisioning would have to be done in summer months. At this time San Miguel had no pier and Hill envisioned that building equipment, provisions and men would be landed through the surf at Cuyler Harbor. Hill wrote that the “island had a passable airplane landing field [Hammond Field] about 1800 long. It is well marked and has the standard wind sock.” The field was smooth, he reported, and because of the forceful winds, airplanes of a fairly large size could land. Hill chose 830-foot San Miguel Peak, the highest point on the island, as the new site for the Lookout Station, which at the time of his visit was temporarily situated in the Ranch House. He recommended that a road be built from the Ranch House to the planned site and described it as a simple matter. Hill also wanted a road leading from Cuyler Harbor to the top of the mesa resurfaced as the Lester’s sled road would not do to transport supplies and equipment of any great weight. A request for permanent structures at the Lookout Stations was turned down in February 1942, so locally manufactured prefabricated buildings were used throughout the war. San Miguel received a two-room barracks building with glass windows, which was set up near the Ranch House on the east side. Photos showed a shack beside the observation tower.⁵⁹

When Hill visited San Miguel, the Lesters were billeting Navy men at the Ranch House. They climbed to the roof to stand their watches and had a 25-watt radio transmitter and a receiver. Hill mentioned that it was possible to reach the planned new site by automobile even without the road. He had perhaps ridden in the Lester’s old Ford given to them by a newspaper publisher. Hill was impressed with Lester, a man he described as “distinctly of a high type of intelligence.”⁶⁰

Eventually the Navy bulldozed a road from the ranch to the wooden lookout tower and on to Point Bennett; service men called it the Road to Mandalay. Telephone lines completed the basic improvements of the San Miguel Lookout Station.

On May 27, 1942, a state of emergency was declared throughout the Western Sea Frontier, and a special line of patrol boats was established well to seaward to guard against surprise attacks. By this time, lookouts were located at nine island stations: Anacapa Island; Santa Barbara Island; Pyramid Head, San Clemente Island; Wilson Cove, San Clemente Island; San Miguel Island; San Nicolas Island; Santa Catalina Island; Santa Cruz Island; and Santa Rosa Island.

Anacapa’s radio telegraph call sign was NSK1, San Miguel’s NPK4. San Miguel by then had a 100-watt transmitter. All lookout stations were supplied with sidearms and/or rifles and binoculars, and their personnel were trained for night lookout and for recognition. San Miguel and the other islands had no gun emplacements, a fact noted by a map in the Fort MacArthur Library published by their Engineer’s Office. It showed batteries and searchlights up and down the coast, but the Channel Islands were not even drawn on the map. After the Battle of Midway in June of 1942, military leaders were convinced that the west coast was out of danger. This thinking is reflected in the lookout stations: development up to that date but none after.⁶¹

⁵⁹Report, Hill to Commander, San Pedro Section, A4-3, Marine Orders, Operations, 1941-44, Box 196664, NA(LN).

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, Report, Hill; Letter, M. R. Pierce to Commanding Officer, Fleet Training Base, San Clemente Island, Feb. 23, 1942, A6-3, Codes & Signals, Operations, 11th Dist., NA(LN); Lester, *The Legendary King*, p. 6; Lester, interview January 12, 1978 by Roberts; interview, Clark by Roberts.

⁶¹Map seen at Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, Office of the Historian; Western Sea Frontier Command, War Diary, March 1942-November 1942, Center for Naval History, Washington DC; Memo, T. S. Hare,

Patrol boat reports throughout the war recorded the logistical support they provided for the stations: relief of personnel, medical aid, and deliveries of supplies. No station activity beyond the routine disturbed life on the islands according to the messages sent to the Section Base in San Pedro. While some of the Coastal Lookout Stations extended their activities to Army flash reports and San Clemente transmitted vessel reports, neither Anacapa, San Miguel, nor Santa Barbara Islands were assigned these duties.⁶²

The Navy abolished the Coastal Lookout System on July 1, 1945. Then on July 17, the Commandant of the 11th Naval District at San Diego took thirteen lookout stations out of service. These stations included seven island stations, among them San Miguel, Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands. The order asked for deletion of radio call signs and transfer of radio equipment to San Diego. San Miguel, however, received a new call sign for official weather reporting. Coast Guard Cutters including the *Hermes*, which had so long served the islands, resumed regular peacetime activities. Most of the poles and wire of the communication line installation at San Miguel were removed from the island, but the tower and temporary buildings near the ranch house remained on the island after the war.⁶³

B-24 Crash, 1943

A military aircraft accident brought tragedy to San Miguel Island during World War II. On July 5, 1943, a B-24 bomber crashed on the north side of Green Mountain, killing all 12 men aboard. The “Liberator” was part of a fleet of new bombers that eventually numbered 18,000. The air armed forces used dozens of Liberators for training, using mostly young and inexperienced crews, which led to numerous crashes. “It had a long, thin, high lift wing which made it suitable for long distance bombing missions . . . generally it was not regarded as the safest aircraft in the sky,” wrote crash historian R. W. Koch. “Yet, it played a major role in helping to win the war in Europe and Asia.” The 56,000-pound planes were equipped with four 1,200 horsepower engines, had a maximum speed of 303 mph and a range of 3,200 miles. The B-24-E Liberator in question was built by the Ford Motor Company in Michigan and was new; its personnel was assigned to the 2nd Air Force, 34th Bomb Group, 7th Bomb Squadron at Salinas Army Air Base in Salinas.

The plane, with a crew of 12 aboard, had been searching for ten crew members of another B-24 that had crashed near Santa Barbara the day before after the crew had bailed out somewhere near the coast. The search plane left Bakersfield towards Santa Barbara, and was to continue to Point Conception and Salinas, but disappeared after reporting over Santa Barbara at 8:00 a.m. Evidently, the B-24 flew too low in foggy conditions while approaching Point Conception; the ceiling that day was 300 to 500 feet and the plane had no radar. The bomber struck the side of 831-foot Green Mountain and practically disintegrated, spreading

Patrol Facilities, August 12, 1942; Pierce, Inshore to Com. 11th, Feb. 16, 1942; Lassing to Com. 11th, Sept. 10, 1942; Bureau of Ships to Bureau of Supplies, N.D., 11th Dist., NA(LN).

⁶²Western Sea Frontier, War Diary, 1942-45, Center for Naval History; interview, Clark; J. G. Moskovics to Lt. Com. Hare, July 21, 1942, A6-3, 11th Dist., NA(LN).

⁶³W. H. Lassing, Operations to District Coast Guard Officer, July 2, 1945, CGR-304, ET 14, Box 196685, 11th Dist.; Lassing to Commander, Western Sea Frontier, July 17, 1945, ET-14, 11th Dist., NA(LN); *San Diego Union*, September 14, 1945.

wreckage over an area of up to ten acres. Although the crash site was only a short distance from the Coastal Lookout Station, it was at least two miles from the barracks and no one heard the impact and no one saw the wreckage. The following men died:

Vernon C. Stevens, pilot
Douglas Thornburg, command pilot
Floyd P. Hart, co-pilot
Justin M. Marshall, bombardier instructor
Bose Gorman, navigator
Noah H. Yost, bombardier
Bernard Littman, engineer
Ralph S. Masterson, assistant engineer
Lyle L. Frost, radioman
Walter O. Eisenbarth, gunner
Lee E. Salver, gunner
Henry L. Blair, assistant radioman

Robert Brooks came on the wreckage some time later when he was gathering sheep near Green Mountain, although government records state that sailors based at the island's radio/weather station found it on March 19, 1944. Whatever the date, the late discovery reflected on the diligence and state of readiness at this lookout station at the time of the crash. Stan Sokolis and Robert McKee, stationed on the island radio unit, reportedly assisted in the task of removing the bodies and salvaging important plane parts, although much of the scattered wreck was left on the site.⁶⁴

In 1954 some hikers found the wreckage and human bones. Authorities were notified who could not find a record of the wreck; they dispatched an investigation team on a Coast Guard cutter in the night. Unfortunately, the cutter collided in the darkness with the yacht *Aloha* off Point Mugu, killing two aboard. After rescuing three survivors the cutter returned to Los Angeles, then again commenced its mission to San Miguel Island. There they found the wreckage but soon received a radio message stating that records of the wreck had been located and that the investigation was off.⁶⁵

Post World War II: Bombing Range Established

Pacific Coast facilities and personnel took a major role in national defense efforts during World War II (1941-1945). The military used the Channel Islands and adjacent mainland areas to a limited extent for armed defenses but mainly as supply depots for the Pacific war effort and for surveillance and detection of incoming enemy ships and aircraft. Continued activities after war's end saw the southern California area become one of the nation's leading locations for testing and innovations in new war technology.

⁶⁴R. W. Koch, *U. S. Army Air Corps B-24 "Liberator" Bomber Crash on San Miguel Island - July 5, 1943* (Long Beach: Research, n.d.), pp. 1-4; Roberts, "Revising the History of San Miguel Island," pp. 608-609; interview, Hammond; Barthol. Johannes, "A Western Explorers Guide to San Miguel Island" in *The Western Explorer* 3(3), Cabrillo Historical Association, 1965, p. 20; Supt. Robinson to B. W. Orrias, May 14, 1973, CHIS; Robert M. Brooks photographs; field studies, L. J. Weinman, March 24, 1978 and Dewey Livingston, October 11, 1999; letter, Donald Butler, rancher participant to L. J. Weinman, April 3, 1978; *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1954.

⁶⁵Koch, *Bomber Crash*, pp. 9-10.

In 1948 the Commandant of the 11th Naval District, based in San Diego, administered San Miguel Island. Robert L. Brooks held a revocable grazing lease on San Miguel Island, the one he had held continuously for 33 years. In July 1948, the Navy exercised its right to revoke and gave Brooks 72 hours to remove his sheep and other property from the island. He was told the Navy would begin immediately to use the island as a bombing range. On December 22, 1948, Secretary of the Navy W. John Kenny wrote the Secretary of the Interior that Navy had granted the Air Force permission to use San Miguel Island “for military purposes of a confidential nature.” The letter explained that for this reason sheep grazing permits had been terminated. March Field served as headquarters for the 12th Air Force at the time, and it was using San Clemente Island jointly with the Navy for bombardment exercises. The need for a second island bombing range was obvious. Lt. Colonel Albert P. Halloran, USAF, Intelligence Division, 22nd Bombardment Wing, March Air Force Base described an Air Force Radar Bombing Range and the effect it would have had on San Miguel Island.⁶⁶

Gun laying radar was developed from an aircraft tracking radar. The visual sighting used prior to this was ineffective in that the ground operator had to measure the speed of the enemy aircraft, measure how high he was, and compute that with how fast his own shell would travel, all in about ten seconds. The gun-laying radar measured the aircraft’s altitude, its speed, computed a point of intercept for the gun, and then moved the gun to the proper firing angle. This gun-laying radar was converted to a Radar Bomb Scoring Range device by reversing the whole procedure. The pilot received a twenty second warning and released his bomb. The Radar Bomb Scoring Range could be used at night or in any kind of weather. The aircraft released a tone at the second it would normally release a bomb. The radar on the ground picked up the tone break of the aircraft and converted it to a marking pen on an electronically controlled plotting board where the down time of the simulated bomb, minus the trail distance, was plotted. This simulated point of impact was then measured against the proposed target to derive the miss distance. The target itself required no installation, and of course, received no impact. An island such as San Miguel could have five or six designated targets (e.g., A, B, C, etc.). The Radar Bomb Scoring device could be in a trailer twenty or thirty miles away; for example, it could have been on Santa Rosa Island which had a full Air Force Defense Command installation at the time. It recorded the accuracy of the pilot of tonal messages. If this radar-tracking site was used on San Miguel Island, it probably did not serve as a target for large strategic bombers, but for the B-25 used by the 22nd Wing. Attack aircraft or fighter-bombers would have found it useful for their exercises.

Fighter groups training with the Strategic Air Command, 22nd Wing probably used San Miguel Island for impact. The 22nd Bombardment Wing moved to March Air Force Base in September 1949. At the same time, the 27th and 94th Fighter Squadrons using Sabre jets, the 1st Fighter Group, and the 2nd, 19th, 22nd and 33rd Bombardment Squadrons were all tenants at March Air Force Base. They commonly dropped an inert bomb called the Blue Whistler, a 100-pound bomb with a fin at the back that made a whistling sound. The round blue casing was filled with sand and measured about three feet long and 12 inches in diameter. It had a five-pound powder charge, which made a puff and a mark when it impacted. If

⁶⁶Box 202302, NPS Records, NA(SB); interview, January 24, 1978, March Field; letter, Halloran to Weinman, 17 April 1978.

the powder charge did not go off on impact, it could be dangerous. At its terminal speed, the bomb invariably imbeds itself at least partially into the earth, regardless of soil hardness.⁶⁷

Joint Use: Navy and Air Force

The San Miguel Island Bombing Range Danger Area appeared in the Coast Guard Notice to Mariners December 17, 1948, and in the following year was subject to joint use by both Air Force and Navy. Pressure on it was so heavy that scheduling had to be made on a weekly basis even though squadrons were asking for use on an indefinite basis. Moffett Field found it most satisfactory for its squadrons that required the use of a high altitude target. Castle Air Force Base at Merced wrote that the practice bombing they conducted at San Miguel included dropping of 4,000 pound light case bombs at altitudes up to and including 30,000 feet. The 11th Naval District records contained numerous reports of unauthorized surface craft “fouling the waters surrounding San Miguel Island” and interfering with the bombing missions. For example, in October 1949 private boats around San Miguel were so frequent that the commanding officer of the 93rd Bombardment Wing stationed at Castle Air Force Base complained they almost prevented use of the bombing range. Fishing craft ignored attempts of the pilots to signal them out of the area and the planes would return to base, at great cost in dollars to the American public. To solve this the Coast Guard was asked to include San Miguel in its patrol pattern but it had no forces available for such patrols on a regular basis.⁶⁸

Squadrons had to resort to red flares for range clearance or to dropping message blocks close aboard the surface craft. The Bombing Range users were particularly annoyed because range time came on a priority basis, and once lost had to be rescheduled. Fleet squadrons used live bombs. Acting Commander Harper of Composite Squadron Five, Naval Air Station, Moffett Field wrote that even when they attempted to warn boats away by low passes with bomb bays open the signal was not understood by boats. Composite Squadron Six at Moffett Field, practicing high altitude bombing, used Prince Island as an aiming point for radar bombing and dropped 100-pound General Purpose type bombs. The commanding officer observed that most violators were in Cuyler Harbor. Four of his planes had to circle the area for over an hour before they were able to clear the area of pleasure craft and begin to carry out their mission. In April 1950 the San Miguel Island bombing range was included in the Permanent Danger Area by the Coast Guard in its “Notices to Mariners” which was issued in addition to the weekly Notice. Further, warning signs were posted on the island.⁶⁹

San Miguel Island Bombing Range was closed June 16, 1950 to July 9, 1950 so that Robert L. Brooks could come out to the island and remove his livestock. The curator of geology and anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Phil C. Orr, his assistant Richard Finley, and Mr. David Gray volunteered to herd sheep in order to study the natural history of the island. Don Butler and the Brooks

⁶⁷ Former park archeologist Don Morris reported finding Blue Whistlers into the late 1980s.

⁶⁸Letter, Com. 11th Coast Guard to Com. 11th Naval Dist., 20 April, 1949; other correspondence in QT “Bombing Targets”, 196693, 11th Naval Dist. Records, NARA(LN).

⁶⁹QT “Bombing Targets” 196694, NARA(LN).

ranch hands combed the hills and ravines on horseback driving the sheep into corrals and to the loading pier. On June 25, 1950, and while the range was closed, the Korean War broke out thus giving cause for greater impact on scheduling time for the island bombing range. Carrier based squadrons such as those stationed at North Island were prime users.⁷⁰

Condition of San Miguel Island in 1961

Bombing continued through the 1950s, and when scientists came on the island in the early sixties they reported finding shrapnel and bomb casings all over the island. E. R. Blakely, who was there in April 1961, said they landed their plane on the airstrip near the Ranch House. During World War II, the army had graded the strip and used it for big planes, but in 1961 it had large trenches across it, one especially large and dangerous. The observation tower on San Miguel Peak still stood, and the wreckage of the B-24 bomber that had crashed in 1943 lay on the northeast slope of Green Mountain. Both burros and sheep roamed the island, but they were being run down and shot whenever possible by Navy personnel.

Blakely met an enterprising flyer from Santa Paula who flew people in to pot hunt in the island's numerous archeological sites. When Blakely encountered the group, they claimed they were looking for Cabrillo's grave. The Navy heard of the incident and ejected the group. Blakely found leaks in the Ranch House roof, but vandals had not really gotten to it as books and china were in place and people lived in it now and then. The wall next to the house had fallen down. Blakely found the walls papered with newspapers interesting to read. The barn was partially standing and the pre-fabricated Navy barracks of two rooms was good enough to stay in.⁷¹



The weather-beaten San Miguel Island ranch house as it appeared in 1963. *National Park Service*

⁷⁰Telex, Com. 11th to Castle A. F. Base, 29 May 1950, QT. 196694; P. Orr, "On San Miguel Island", *Museum Talk*, XXV, 2 (Summer, 1950), pp. 13-18.

⁷¹Interview, E. R. Blakely, January 10, 1978, Santa Barbara.

Pacific Missile Range Administration and Use

In 1961 the Navy refused to give up San Miguel Island to a National Park plan then being drafted for several of the Channel Islands. A letter in 1962 from Kenneth E. Be Lieu, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, to Secretary of the Interior Steward Udall clarifies why they would not release it in the foreseeable future:

One of the most important aspects of the operations conducted from the facilities of the Pacific Missile Range is the launching of missiles into polar orbit. Flight paths go directly over and adjacent to San Miguel Island. The easterly impact limit of the azimuths required for these launches passes just west of Santa Rosa Island. All the area west of this line is subject to impact by missile pieces as a result of destructive action during missile launching operations. The Pacific Missile Range safety policy requires that all civilian and non-operating personnel be evacuated from within this danger area during southerly launchings. The current number of launchings already makes joint use impracticable and their number is increasing rapidly.⁷²

In 1963 the Department of the Navy transferred all the plant account and security responsibility for San Miguel Island from the Eleventh Naval District to the Commander, Pacific Missile Range. This was the same year that Navy and Interior signed an agreement to jointly protect natural values and historic and scientific objects on San Miguel and Prince Islands. Both agreements recognized priority of military uses.

The U. S. Navy uses of San Miguel Island evolved out of the country's early efforts in defense and surveillance, and saw its heyday during the Cold War era as the United States found itself at odds with the Soviet Union and China. After witnessing the destructive power of German buzz bombs on European cities and the United States' nuclear attacks on Japan, governments and military leaders came to realize that technological advance would define future warfare. The Navy, breaking with its own tradition of fiscal prudence and minimal research and development of new technology, began after the war to expand research into new defense technology. The Navy more than quintupled its expenditures for research and development in ten years' time which also brought a huge increase in lucrative contracts to defense industries. Missile technology, largely developed by the German military, came to the forefront of national defense, as control of the seas and air space became the focus of military strategies. The Pacific Ocean provided an ideal testing ground and the various Channel Islands fell into play as integral units to the successful testing and maintenance of the nation's guided missile defense systems.⁷³

The U. S. Navy established a field test site for the Special Weapons Tactical Test and Evaluation Unit in 1943 at Point Mugu, a former swamp located south of Ventura and Port Hueneme; the location provided "an overwater space through which missiles can be launched while data on their performance are being obtained in such a manner that correct evaluations of their performance can be made." Headquarters for the

⁷²Letter, 26 March 1962, 428947, NPS Records, NA(SB).

⁷³Stephen R. Wee and David S. Byrd, *The Navy's Pacific Guided Missile Sea Range, 1946-1991: Historic Context for Cold War-era Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California* (Draft, February 1997), pp. 11, 16. A guided missile is defined as an unmanned, expendable, self-propelled flying vehicle equipped with some sort of guidance, which allows it to be steered towards, rather than aimed at, the target.

unit were located at Traverse City, Michigan. The use of airborne weapons had advanced during World War II to the point that military leaders realized the importance of such modern systems in global warfare and defense. On the urging of Navy Commander Grayson Merrill, the Navy created its Pilotless Aircraft Unit Detachment at Point Mugu in 1945 where engineers tested guided missiles such as the Loon using the expanse of ocean, which it called the Instrumented Sea Range, as a proving ground. The offshore islands provided locations for monitoring missile paths and, in some cases, acting as targets, dummy ships at sea as it were. According to Navy historian Maxwell White, the islands were a major consideration in the selection of Point Mugu as the location of the United States' first over-water missile testing range.⁷⁴

During the 1940s the Navy tested a number of guided missile systems such as the Gargoyle, Gorgon, Lark, Little Joe and the Loon which figured in the ship-to-shore bombardment of Japan late in the war; systems tested in the 1950s and accelerated by the Korean conflict included the Regulus I, a submarine-to-shore missile; Regulus II, an early supersonic missile; and various versions of the Sparrow, launched from a plane for airborne targets.⁷⁵ The government owned and controlled three of the Channel Islands. (San Miguel, San Nicolas and San Clemente) and made use of their entire landmasses for testing, targeting and facilities. The Navy also placed facilities on privately owned Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands.⁷⁶

The U. S. Naval Air Missile Test Center (NAMTC), as the Pilotless Aircraft Unit had been renamed in 1946, made plans in 1948 for major facilities at Point Mugu and the Channel Islands. With the major installations to be constructed at Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island, plans included a radio communication center on Santa Rosa Island and a fully staffed "observation site" on Santa Cruz. Development of missile defenses expanded rapidly in the 1950s. The Bullpup air-to-surface bomb, the first "smart" missile which could attach itself to a target, was put into testing in 1953 and remained, in its many stages of development, an important weapon into the 1970s when it was supplanted by the Walleye that used television for homing in on its targets. By 1956 the NAMTC employed 4,800 people and operated out of a \$50 million plant; it was, along with Navy's China Lake facility in the Mojave Desert, the military's most important missile testing facility.

In 1957 President Eisenhower called for the national testing ranges to be available to all of the armed services. On June 16, 1958 the Navy joined with the Air Force's Atlantic Missile Range at Cape Canaveral and the Army's White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to create the Pacific Missile Range (PMR), which became known as the Cold War's "Keeper of the Pacific." The following year the Naval Missile Center was created exclusively to test and evaluate Navy missile systems, in effect splitting the mission of the old NAMTC. By the early 1960s the PMR owned or held interest in properties at Pt. Mugu, Pt. Arguello and six other mainland coastal sites, San Nicolas, Santa Cruz and San Miguel islands, two inland sites in Nevada and Utah and sites on Hawaii, Midway and Wake Islands. In 1963 the Air Force took over

⁷⁴*Design Criteria and Schematics for U. S. Naval Air Missile Center at Point Mugu, California and San Nicolas Island and Santa Barbara Channel Islands*, October 1948, p. 7; JRP Historical Consulting Services, *Draft Inventory and Evaluation of National Register of Historic Places Eligibility For Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California* (Contract No. DACA05-97-D-0013, June 1998), pp. 7-11; Maxwell White, *Datelines: A History of Navy Missile Testing at Point Mugu, California* (Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, 1992), p. 1.

⁷⁵White, *Datelines*, pp. 3, 16-17; JRP, *Draft Inventory*, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁶Capt. R. Fowler to Vail Company, 19 February 1946; A. B. Scoles to Vail-Vickers Company, 24 September 1946, SBMNH #0887.

the facilities at Pt. Arguello and most Pacific range sites, but the Navy continued to control the PMR with its facilities at Point Mugu, San Nicolas Island and Santa Cruz Island. Following these developments, the PMR in 1963 took over San Miguel Island from the 11th Naval District.⁷⁷

The following year, 1964, the Pacific Missile Range began some Land Mass Background studies and employed San Miguel Island. The first was to test radar guidance systems. They were testing surface-to-air and surface-to-surface weapons. The missile would be on a boat in the channel and launched southerly over the island into the defined range area to see how the radar guidance would react to land clutter. PMR made two launches of the Talos missile with this in mind in 1964. One missile used an active radar seeker in its final guidance phase. The problem lay in its being confused by a landmass. For example, the Russian Komar submarine would run in near an island and the radar on Talos would lose the Komar and try to hit the island; thus PMR was trying to improve the radar guidance so it would not leave its target when it made the test launches over San Miguel Island. Since the tests, the instrumentation has been improved. The radar locks onto a moving target and the landmass in the background will not cause it to break lock. PMR only ran two operations of this type but probably several rehearsals. The fact remained, however, that the requirement might arise for upcoming weapons and San Miguel had a unique location for such launches. Secondly, it could easily be cleared of people by the National Park Service.

A second use for San Miguel by PMR was that of testing landfall when a ship target was anchored in front of it. Exercises were carried out to see if a missile could distinguish between the land (San Miguel Island) and the target. If the background confused the missile then it was not useful. Thirdly, the island served to test airborne systems. Radar has different characteristics over land than it has over water. PMR wanted to know if San Miguel's land mass would confuse the missile electronic systems and the radar of a plane that was pursuing another aircraft over ocean and then over land.⁷⁸

February and March 1965, San Miguel, San Nicolas and San Clemente Islands were used in a major fleet exercise involving eighty ships and 70,000 Navy-Marine Corps personnel. By this time the Navy had installed a series of range poles near the west end to guide aircraft in sighting.

On May 3, 1965, Channel 13, KCOP-TV carried a program called "The Secret of San Miguel" which by its nature encouraged people to go out to the island and search for buried treasure. This alerted PMR to the fact that no public announcement had ever been made to the public that there was a danger of unexploded ordnance on San Miguel. Captain H. S. Bergman suggested that the Navy would be in a better position to deal with such TV programming if it made a sweep for bombs, made a public announcement, and then wrote to the TV programmers. PMR proceeded rapidly with plans to sweep bombs from San Miguel, and during the period of May 17 to May 21, 1965, ordnance decontamination was conducted. The search was reported as a 100% surface coverage, but due to the continuous high winds and shifting sand it was believed additional items of ordnance might be revealed. The island was considered safe for personnel occupancy, but personnel should be advised of the hazards associated with unexploded ordnance.⁷⁹

⁷⁷White, *Datelines*, pp. 18-22; JRP, *Draft Inventory*, pp. 14-15; Pacific Missile Test Center, *Days of Challenge, Years of Change, A Technical History of the Pacific Missile Test Center* (1989), p. 69; *Design Criteria*, pp. 22-23, 203-211, 289.

⁷⁸Interviews, Paul Foster and Harold Wilson, and Les Maland, Pacific Missile Range, December 5, 1977 by Roberts.

⁷⁹PMR News Release, 11 June 1965, Public Affairs Files, PMR. Material that follows is from same file, related correspondence.

During the week of June 17, 1965, Bullpup missile operations started on the island. Initial Bullpup firings were aimed at a barge anchored in Cuyler Harbor 700 yards southwest of Bat Rock. Range officials reported that the island's "varied terrain permitted targets to be concealed and protected as they would be in actual combat." Use of the tactical firing area on San Miguel was intended to provide Navy and Marine Corps pilots with experience in the use of the Bullpup missiles against combat type targets. PMR recited that in selecting sites for the land targets they had avoided areas of any archaeological and zoological interest. Before each mission, the island would be cleared of people and warning area notices would be issued to mariners and airmen. The first press releases mentioned five hundred pound live ordnance, but either due to public pressure or tactical changes, this terminology was deleted from releases on June 16, the day before the firings began. As a tactical target area for fleet training, San Miguel was perfect. Planes could approach the target area from any direction at 0-20,000 feet using various attack modes. A launch aircraft with a chase plane made the attack and called the hit based on visual observation. A helicopter or other aircraft performed surveillance and took photographs of the missile impact. Both practice and live warheads were approved.⁸⁰

The Navy was anxious in 1965 to find the locations of archeological sites so that they could avoid destroying them when they set up targets for tactical bombing missions. A Navy helicopter flew Charles Rozaire and George Kritzman out to San Miguel August 19-27, 1965 to map archeological sites, and it was obvious from Rozaire's report that the Navy had habitually taken care of his transportation and made the photo lab at PMR available to him. Rozaire kept the Navy informed about the conditions of buildings and presence of vandals on the island. In that trip he found the Navy barracks or shack much deteriorated, the no trespassing signs torn down, and the roof of the Ranch House down. In 1963 Rozaire had measured and made diagrams of the Ranch House and the Nidever Adobe. In September 1965, while out on the island recording sites, he measured two rooms of the Ranch House he had not had time to complete in 1963, and took pictures of the inside. The Navy barracks had been shot up with a 22-caliber gun since his August trip and a tally kept on the door of "Foxes Killed." The tally accounted for nine deaths. Judging from photographs in the Robert M. Brooks collection of other outbuildings, all improvements were in very poor condition by this time. The playhouse given to the Lester girls by the Edward Vails and used as a school had disappeared.⁸¹

Danger Zone, 1965

The Navy eventually got tired of small boat owners who would not heed notices to stay out of San Miguel waters during tactical exercises and of vandals who came on the island and tore down metals signs bolted to steel posts, shot up the buildings, and used the seals for target practice. It was not the general public, but as one official put it, a small cantankerous group. August 12, 1965, the Navy applied to the U.S.

⁸⁰Letter, B. S. Smith, EOD Officer, NAVAIR, North Island to Commander PMR, 27 May, 1965 and memo signed Philip C. Russell, May 4, 1965; Program Description and Approval", San Miguel Fleet Weapons Firing, signed Edward G. Rhoades, PMR, Public Affairs, PMR.

⁸¹"San Miguel Island Survey" August 19-27 and September 22-30, 1965 by Charles Rozaire, NPS Western Regional Library, San Francisco.

Army Corps of Engineers, which regulated navigable offshore waters, for a designated danger zone around San Miguel Island. Accordingly, October 11, 1965, Major Robert T. Ojendyk, Corps of Engineers, established a zone at the east end or half of the island plus a three-mile offshore area on all sides involved. According to the regulations, the danger zone was to be open to fishing and general navigation except during firing. Anchoring or loitering of vessels was prohibited within the zone. Landing or going ashore was prohibited without prior permission of the Commander, PMR. Firing information was made available and paid public notices were inserted in local newspapers (see map, “San Miguel Danger Zone”). Letters opposing the establishment of a danger zone flooded the desk of Major Ojendyk: fishermen, abalone hunters, boaters, zoologists, archaeologists, Western Oil and Gas Association, the Sierra Club, and Department of Fish and Game, Yacht Clubs, and State Senator Alvin C. Weingard (D) of Santa Barbara. Only the City of Santa Barbara, it seemed, had no objection. The Sierra Club and the Santa Barbara Yacht Club wanted a radical solution: take San Miguel out of the Navy’s control. Gas and oil interests desired drilling sites uninterrupted by hazardous operations. Conservationists wanted the public wholly excluded. Fishermen desired unlimited fishing. Yachtsmen wanted to anchor and go ashore. Thus, a solution for one group would offend another. PMR answered each group, emphasized that the zone was closed only during times of actual firing, and retained the zone.⁸²

In 1966 PMR utilized San Miguel Island for fleet pilot training and for proficiency training in the Bullpup, FFAR (folding fin aircraft rocket), bombs, the Zuni Missile, and 20mm cannon weapons. Island use during fiscal year 1956 was as follows:

Bombs	22 complete operations	250 + bombs
FFAR, Zuni	11 complete operations	numerous
Bullpup	21 completed operations	80 + missiles
20mm	2 completed operations	24,000 rds.

All missiles used were inert.⁸³

In September 1966, PMR was preparing a training area on San Miguel for the Walleye, Condor, and other systems. It had a Nike target and inflatable Bullpup targets on shore. Simulated truck convoys, SAM sites, tanks, and revetted aircraft targets were being installed on the southeastern portion of the island between the escarpment and the beach. The latter was primarily for the aircraft squadrons of the First Fleet. Additional targets such as bridges and RF radiating equipment were planned for the near future. PMR reported to Naval Air Systems Command in Washington that installation of land targets would create increased use of the island by Fleet squadrons, also U.S. Marine Corps squadrons, who preferred the land targets to the barge targets. In 1966, Fleet missile firing ships were requesting shore targets for surface-to-surface missile testing and pilot spotting training. PMR correspondence argued that there were no practicable alternatives to the use of San Miguel Island. Com. R. N. Sharp, PMR, wrote on September 9, 1966:

⁸²See Danger Zone Correspondence, Public Affairs, PMR, *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 1965, *Lompoc Record*, September 22, 1965, and *Ventura Star Free Press, National Observer*, February 21, 1966. The Danger Zone (204-203) is on C&GS charts 5116, 5066, 5202, and 5101.

⁸³Letter, R. N. Sharp, Commander, PMR to Commander, Naval Air Systems Command, Washington, DC, 9 September 1966, QT, Com. 11 Records, NA(LN). Also see penciled draft notes by Bergman at Public Affairs, PMR.

Areas such as San Nicolas Island, San Clemente, Chocolate Mountain, El Centro, Yuma, Twenty-Nine Palms, Mojave B. and the Naval Ordnance Training Station, China Lake are either already overly scheduled, contain populations which must be evacuated, lack adequate instrumentation or area, permit no offset firing, restrict approaches to one or two prescribed headings at fixed altitudes, or require ground control of aircraft at all times. While these areas are quite adequate for the purposes for which they were designed, they are unsuitable to the purposes now required for missile testing and practice firing. Among other things, the circumstances of firing are so artificial as to lack the realism necessary for much needed pilot training. San Miguel, on the other hand, is both unique and ideal. Situated as it is at the westerly end of an island chain, wholly unimproved and unpopulated, it presents a minimum safety hazard, while offering maximum security. With targets available onshore, just offshore, and 10 to 15 miles offshore, it provides realistic practice in a well-balanced instrumented area. No other target areas in the United States allow for attack by two or more aircraft at once, or permit pilots to determine their own altitude, range, angle, and release position. Logistics problems are non-existent, at least from El Toro, Alameda, Lemoore, also the Fleet. The area is accessible without the need to overfly populated areas. In final substance, it is the last such area left.⁸⁴

As Captain H. S. Bergman pointed out in preparing the draft for the above, squadrons were coming to PMR from Norfolk and from Cherry Point only so that they could use San Miguel. Many young pilots preparing for a tour of duty in Vietnam were firing for the first or second time and needed realistic practice with the variability of approaches only San Miguel could offer them. The money spent by the American public on missile testing and on tactical missions was so great that to give up or curtail the use of San Miguel in the program seemed irresponsible.

The End of Sheep Grazing, 1966

The 1960s finally brought an end to sheep grazing on San Miguel Island. Grazing had been much restricted since 1948 when Brooks removed most of his flock, but the restrictions were too late. Once the sheep had removed the protective ground cover, San Miguel suffered severe wind and water erosion. The verdure, trees, and brush hinted at by Cabrillo's log on the islands were gone, but by 1967 some recovery had taken place, a result of the 1948 and 1950 sheep removals. However, a breeding nucleus remained. In June 1966 the Director of the National Park Service sent the Navy Department "A Suggested Plan for the Management and Protection of Values of San Miguel Island." The report stated that the most pressing need was total elimination of the sheep. The Navy responded with an all out effort from July 17-20 to do away with all of the sheep. Research Biologist James K. Baker of Joshua Tree National Monument flew over the island with a ranger and Navy personnel who hunted down the sheep. By the last day 148 sheep had been sighted through aerial search at near ground level up and down canyons and by criss-crossing the Island

⁸⁴Ibid., Sharp.

from one end to the other. All were disposed of bringing to an end 117 years or more of continuous sheep grazing on San Miguel Island.⁸⁵

In November of 1967, the Lester ranch house burned. Reportedly a Navy aircraft dropped a flare to warn off unauthorized visitors during hazardous naval operations and inadvertently set off the fire. Island ranger Reed McCluskey reported on a conversation with Robert Fromfield and a Mr. Moore in 1983 where the men claimed that they had been regularly trespassing in their planes during the 1960s and 1970s (eventually being convicted for trespass). According to the men, they had landed on the island only to be ordered to leave by a Navy plane that dropped a wooden box, which hissed and emitted smoke. The flare started a fire, which the men on the ground put out. They moved to another part of the island, near the ranch house, where the Navy dropped another warning flare. This also started a fire that the trespassers were unable to extinguish. They fled in their plane as the ranch house, barns and grassland burned.⁸⁶

Pacific Missile Range in the 1970s

A second major reorganization occurred on July 1, 1975 merging the Naval Missile Test Center and the Pacific Missile Range into a single body, the Pacific Missile Test Center (PMTTC). The following year the Departments of the Navy and Interior agreement regarding San Miguel Islands was amended to allow the National Park Service greater administrative latitude, including authorization to expend NPS funds for study and management of the island resources. San Miguel Island lay in a strategic portion of the PMR's Sea Test Range, within that area designated W-289N. On land, targets were no longer listed, and in 1976 the only Pacific Missile Testing Center asset on the island was an automatic weather station, powered by a twenty-five watt generator. This small device was protected by sturdy fencing from the ever-present threat of vandals on the island. A non-instrumented target barge was anchored approximately one mile south of the island's eastern tip. During tactical exercises, all boats and people were warned to stay out of the surface danger zone which surrounded the eastern half of San Miguel, but they were allowed to remain on the west end of the island.⁸⁷

The number of air to surface exercises decreased during the 1970s and 1980s. Both the Point Mugu area and San Nicolas Island were heavily instrumented, thus defining the southwesterly geographic quadrant extending seaward from Point Mugu as essential to the Navy mission. Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior leased the oil industry about 33 square miles of the sea area southeast of Santa Rosa Island. At the time it was considered that if Navy squadrons were deprived use of the San Miguel Island area, 100 enroute miles would be added to 80% of all training sorties originally planning to use the San Miguel target. Squadrons originated from Miramar, North Island, Lemoore, Moffett Field, and other bases. Further, and of greater importance, it would place the training squadrons in direct competition with

⁸⁵Report, Baker to Natural Science Studies; WASO, 26 July 1967, 443875, NPS Records, NA(SB). Feral burros remained on the island until being eradicated by monument superintendent Bill Ehorn in 1977.

⁸⁶Gordon Chappell, "Historic Structures", 30 Oct. 1975, Draft MS; Santa Barbara Island Ranger [McCluskey] to Chief, Interpretation, CHIS, 6 October 1983, in files, SMI Ranger Station.

⁸⁷"San Miguel Island", Public Affairs Files, PMR.

vital research and training programs for use of that mission-essential area previously described, thus derogating both efforts.⁸⁸

In 1977 an Operations Officer at Lemoore stated that Attack Squadron 122 was scheduling operations at the Pacific Missile Test Center. The plane they used was the A-7, a single-engine jet, land or carrier based. Lemoore opened in 1961 at which time all training squadrons used the A04, a single-engine jet. In either case, students needed the type of training the San Miguel Island tactical mission provided to fulfill their syllabus work. Their training manual recited that live ordnance could be used only on San Clemente Island, so Naval air strikes at San Miguel were with inert ordnance called Blue Whistlers: a watersand filled thin shell twenty-five pound blue bomb with a spotting charge. The blue indicated its inert composition.⁸⁹

The Navy considered that San Miguel Island could be defined as a strategic site for the installation of a tracking radar or a radar for tracking test missiles launched from PMR, and for a telemetry station to receive radio signals from a missile in flight to measure certain parameters such as acceleration, control angles, pressures and temperatures. However, changes in the needs of the Navy and the establishment of Channel Islands National Park in 1980 placed San Miguel Island under the management, although not ownership, of the National Park Service.⁹⁰

Squatters and Judgments Relative to Title

Although squatters such as Captain George Nidever have occupied San Miguel on and off since the time it came into the possession of the United States, only on two occasions has the government chosen to assert its rights, only once through the courts. The last pertained to Defendants Joe Dean Rozar, et al. In December, 1964, John H. Kimberly, Joe D. Rozar, and Russell Vreeland entered the island, established a camp, posted a sign reading “San Miguel Land and Cattle Company” and stated their intention to remain on the theory that the island was open territory belonging to no country. Harold Gold, Counsel for the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Department of the Navy requested that the United States Attorney take appropriate action to evict the three men from the island. Meanwhile, the men filed grant deeds to the property in Santa Barbara County. A complaint was lodged by the United States of America against the three men in the U.S. District Court, which found that San Miguel Island was public and not available to land claims or squatters.⁹¹

⁸⁸Interview with Foster, Wilson and Maland, December 5, 1977, by Roberts.

⁸⁹Interviews Operations (names withheld) December 13, 1977 and January 9, 1978, Lemoore Naval Air Station by Roberts.

⁹⁰Interview, Foster by Roberts.

⁹¹Roberts, *Historic Resource Study*, p. 156.

Cooperation with National Park Service

The idea of including San Miguel Island in the Channel Islands National Monument had circulated for decades. Activities in this direction increased in the early 1960s as President Kennedy pressed for parklands and NPS historian Ross Holland produced a history of the island in 1961. The Navy, however, continued to deny transfer of San Miguel to the NPS. It needed the island to test guided weapons systems, for fleet squadron practice, and for on-land instrumentation. Creation of a park would have an adverse effect on the required readiness training of fleet aviation units. A park would attract the general public into the nearby hazard area, which had to be kept free to assure maximum range scheduling. In short, the position of the Commander, Pacific Missile Range was that there was no objection to the proposed park provided San Miguel Island was excluded until it was no longer desired for Navy purposes. The Navy also wanted unrestricted access to and use of existing improvements on privately owned Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island.⁹²

In 1948 biologist Lowell Sumner had made an air inspection of the northern Channel Islands after which he recommended nominal transfer of San Miguel Island from Navy to NPS. If that could not be done, he urged that the Navy should stop the destructive sheep grazing.

In July of 1957 Sumner conferred with regional specialists on seashore survey at the subject island and then wrote the Regional Director that he was still of the same opinion he had in 1939: the scientific features of San Miguel Island were so outstanding that it warranted every effort of preservation. It was approximately 14 times as large as Santa Barbara Island and had a correspondingly greater wealth of unique biological features. He noted that the federal government had, through its continuance of sheep grazing, permitted destruction on San Miguel; thus it should be up to the government to restore the land. A few days later the Regional Director wrote to the Director of NPS in Washington asking that San Miguel Island be added to Channel Islands National Monument. He wrote that no NPS representative concerned with biological and other natural resources had been on the island since 1939. The only activity on the island or around it in 1957 was commercial and military.

The Navy could not give up San Miguel, yet preservation experience lay with the National Park Service. During 1962 the Western Regional Office, NPS, and the Navy drew up a series of interim agreements and put forth plans for the future management of San Miguel Island. NPS pointed out that they had been criticized for the lack of protection they offered on the islands they already controlled, but that lack of funds, transport, and personnel was the reason. The Navy was concerned about a need for launching missiles and the need to close down the island temporarily to continue the launches. The Navy discussed using San Miguel and San Nicolas for a naval petroleum reserve, and this was fought by local conservation groups who urged national monument status for San Miguel instead. Letters went to President Kennedy urging his support for conservation.⁹³

⁹²Com. Pacific Missile Range to Commander, Naval Air Systems Command, Sept. 9, 1966, Com. Correspondence, 11th Dist., NA(LN).

⁹³Sumner to Regional Director, July 26, 1957; Regional to Director, July 30, 1957 and other correspondence in 428947, NPS Records, NA(SB).

Recognizing that San Miguel and Prince Islands contained rich and unique natural and cultural resources, the Department of the Navy and Department of the Interior entered a Memorandum of Agreement on May 7, 1963 for “protection of natural values and historic and scientific objects” on the two islands. The agreement authorized the Department of the Interior to take action regarding resources inventory and protection. Interior agreed to evaluate natural and cultural resources, to promote recovery or reintroduction of rare and locally extinct plants and animals, and to cooperate with the Navy in its rules and management of the islands. It was understood that the Navy had paramount use of the islands as a missile test range and that in the future it could even be a Naval Petroleum Reserve. Both parties recognized the priority of military uses. As a result, both departments would share responsibility for preservation and management. San Miguel and Prince Islands would not be open for public recreational purposes, and the Navy owned the island. These facts made it unlawful for the NPS to spend its funds there.⁹⁴

NPS personnel began to study the island after the agreement was signed. Historian Daniel Bienvenu of the National Park Service prepared a Historic Structures Report for the Lester ranch house in November of 1965. Bienvenu found the old house abandoned for almost 20 years and quite dilapidated. He noted that while many fixtures had been taken away, numerous artifacts had been left, such as a table, beds, and sinks and toilets. Bienvenu recommended that the house, “a hand-made oddity, with no recognizable architecture,” be retained on the site “until destroyed by the elements.” Two years later, the ranch house burned to the ground along with the outbuildings and shearing shed.⁹⁵

In cooperation with the Navy, the National Park Service produced a management plan for the island in the late 1960s. The document’s authors recommended a wide range of activities on the island, concluding, “San Miguel and Prince Islands possess both unique and irreplaceable scientific and natural values.” Included in the recommendations were exotic plant identification and removal, enhancement of native plants, removal of feral burros, and studies of fire ecology, marine mammals population and ecology, faunal species, seabird and landbird ecology, underwater features, and history, prehistory and archeology. The study noted that Atlantic-Richfield, Standard Oil of California and Humble Oil and Refining Company had made field studies on San Miguel Island in June and October of 1968 “to acquire knowledge of the geology of the island which would expedite evaluation of oil and gas leases held on federal acreage immediately north of San Miguel Island by the three companies.” The document also noted that the Lester’s schoolhouse had disappeared and that “amateur archeologists” had damaged the Nidever adobe. In a later study by Robert DeLong of the National Marine Fisheries Service, the damage to prehistoric sites by feral burros was noted.⁹⁶

Two major agreements were negotiated and signed in regard to San Miguel Island after Park Superintendent Bill Ehorn took office in 1974. The first, signed in 1976 was an amendment to the agreement between the Department of the Interior and the Department of the Navy that related to

⁹⁴Memorandum of Agreement Between the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Interior Relating to Protection of Natural Values and Historic and Scientific Objects on San Miguel and Prince Islands, California, May 7, 1963.

⁹⁵*Historic Structures Report*, pp. 1, 6-7.

⁹⁶U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Channel Islands National Monument, *Resources of San Miguel and Prince Islands with Recommendations for Future Protection and Management*, no date, pp. 7-8, 18, 32-35; Robert DeLong, *San Miguel Island Management Plan* (Washington: Marine Mammal Commission, 8 February 1975).

protection of natural values on San Miguel. The amendment further recognized that the National Park Service could expend appropriated funds on the island to enforce NPS regulations and to develop a tightly controlled visitor program. Public access was to be confined to daylight hours and importantly tied to spending of funds at the island. As a result of this, a tent was set up in Nidever Canyon adjacent to the old windmill to serve as temporary Park headquarters; beginning in 1978 visitors could contact the ranger as they walked up the canyon to the island. Ehorn assigned Mike Hill as ranger at the post. Hill accompanied all visitors to the island who wanted to take the trail that follows the road bulldozed during World War II. Ehorn convened an advisory group that included A. Starker Leopold, Carey Stanton, Ralph Philbrick and Bob DeLong. In 1977, a Statement for Management was drawn up for San Miguel and Prince Islands by the Park Service as well as an agreement between the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Park Service for management and protection of the pinnipeds on San Miguel Island. A decision by the United States Supreme Court gave the State of California control over tidal lands, not the National Park Service, although designation of Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary in 1980 offered federal protection of those waters. On land, meanwhile, Monument staff in 1977 killed the last of the feral burros that had been roaming the island for decades, finally bringing to a close the era of domestic livestock grazing on San Miguel Island.⁹⁷

After creation of Channel Islands National Park in 1980 the National Park Service took on additional management of San Miguel and Prince Islands, although the Navy retained ownership until a transfer would be authorized by the Navy. A General Management Plan (GMP) was quickly adopted that spelled out development and protection of the island. The GMP designated the entire island as a historic zone overlapping the natural zone, which extended into the waters surrounding the island. Of the natural zone, 2,800 acres would be a protected area in which development and visitor access would be restricted. Only one acre, in two half-acre parcels, would be used for developments: the NMFS research station at Point Bennett and a proposed visitor contact station at the Lester Ranch site. A route could be developed which would traverse Simonton Cove and loop around the caliche forest, although it would not be constructed as a standard trail in order to avoid impacts on habitat. Camping would be prohibited and visitors were restricted to day use only and by permit.⁹⁸

The NPS adopted amendments to the 1980 GMP in 1984, which included minor changes in plans for San Miguel Island. Noting the dearth of visitors due to extreme conditions, park-imposed restrictions and distances from the mainland, the GMP proposed one or two small primitive campgrounds, one at the Lester Ranch site and another at the dry lake bed (the latter location was dropped within a year). The plan also extended the range of ranger-led walks, although it still limited trail construction. In light of these potential developments, the development zone was increased to 1.5 acres.⁹⁹

A small amount of development occurred in the 1980s. The tent in the canyon was replaced by a conex box. NPS crews eventually constructed a campground in a former sheep corral near the Lester ranch

⁹⁷Oral History interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston. Ehorn personally shot the last remaining burro.

⁹⁸U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Channel Islands National Park, *General Management Plan [for] Anacapa, Santa Barbara, San Miguel Islands*, Volume 1, 1980, pp. 31, 56, 75-76, 80-82.

⁹⁹U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Channel Islands National Park, *Draft General Management Plan Supplement, Environmental Assessment*, April 1984, pp. 43-44.

house ruins. Trail development remained low-key in the interest of habitat restoration, with visitors being restricted to ranger-led walks if venturing beyond the area of Nidever Canyon and the old ranch site. The trail to Point Bennett was used for such walks and by staff and volunteers of the field station. A trail to Lester and Harris points was developed but like the Point Bennett trail, was restricted to supervised hikes. The proposed trail to Simonton Cove never materialized.

Park resources staff focused on archeological site survey and excavation, with the work at Daisy Cave and shipwreck survey predominating in cultural resources. George Kritzman and Charles Rozaire produced a survey in the 1960s for the Navy, laying the groundwork for archeological sites management and allowing park staff to focus on specific projects. The natural resources division focused on Island fox monitoring, pinniped research and habitat restoration. In 1997 the NPS constructed a modern building up on the mesa to replace the temporary ranger station in the canyon. Designed to echo the lines of the Lester ranch house, the one-story structure combined a ranger contact station, ranger residence and bunkhouse for visiting researchers. The building is powered by solar energy and receives water from a modern well in Nidever Canyon. The airstrip's west end conveniently abuts the entrance to the ranger station.

Shipwrecks

San Miguel Island is the farthest west of the Channel Islands and experiences the harshest seas, wind and fog. The island and Point Conception provided landmarks to mariners traveling south marking the entrance to the Santa Barbara Channel. George Davidson wrote that San Miguel “receives the full force of the northwest winds and swell, and in summer, fogs envelop it more than half the time.” He wrote, “There are more dangers around San Miguel than around any of the islands of the Santa Barbara group,” because of its numerous offshore rocks and shoals. For instance, Morris and Lima wrote of Simonton Cove as “a gigantic catcher’s mitt for those who misnavigate” as they attempt to use it as a lee shore. Other hazards include Westcott Shoal, Castle Rock, Wilson Rock and the ever-changing shoal and sand spit at Cardwell Point at the eastern end of the island. Only Cuyler Harbor has provided a suitable anchorage although even it has hidden dangers in the form of submerged rocks. San Miguel Island hosts the greatest density of shipwrecks in the park, as can be seen in these accounts derived from Morris and Lima’s work:¹⁰⁰

Manila Galleon (rumored, no date). Tales of the remains of a Manila galleon off San Miguel Island spurred a failed attempt by a salvage company to investigate and recover any artifacts in 1974. Reportedly located in approximately 50 feet of water off the northwest side of San Miguel Island, no physical or documentary evidence has been uncovered to substantiate the rumors.

Leader (1876). The *Leader* was a small (36 feet) sealing schooner which, when at anchor on the northwest side of the island on June 17, 1876, was pushed ashore by a heavy swell. The crew, under

¹⁰⁰Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56 (Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996), pp. 6, 8, 10, 12; Davidson, *Coast Pilot*, p. 94.

Captain Charles Lutgens, recovered about half of the empty casks and continued their sealing operations for about a month until rowing for help at Santa Rosa Island. Wreckage has not been found and is probably scattered over a wide portion of the coast.¹⁰¹

G W Prescott (1879). The five-year-old coastal lumber schooner, loaded with railroad ties evidently destined for the Southern Pacific Railroad at Los Angeles, stranded at an unknown location at the west end of San Miguel Island on August 15, 1879. Little else is known of the incident. Island residents apparently made use of any salvaged lumber, as accounts note the use of railroad ties in island construction projects following that date.¹⁰²

Surprise (1881). The small sealing schooner, owned by the Rogers Brothers of Santa Barbara, wrecked on March 13, 1881, when winds parted the anchor cables. Captain Charles Brown, crew John Haskell and Ramon Mesa, and a Mr. Muller who had chartered the vessel, were unhurt. She was reported to be high and dry and possibly a total loss, but in May the schooner *Conway* towed her to Santa Barbara for repairs that would “place the *Surprise* in as fine trim as ever.”¹⁰³

Isabella (1885). This 35.4-foot sealing and fishing sloop lost anchor in a storm and wrecked at Cuyler Harbor in December of 1885. Her remains have not been located.¹⁰⁴

Liberty (1895). The *Liberty* supplied William Waters’ sheep operation on San Miguel Island and transported sheep and wool to Santa Barbara. Built in 1876, she was a small (34.6 feet) sloop of less than 14 tons burden. On March 28 or 29, 1895 the *Liberty* sank in Cuyler Harbor, at the time reported to be the result of a wave generated by a massive landslide which pulled the sloop from its anchor. The crew, under Captain Dally, located the wreck some three-quarters of a mile from its anchorage. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that

A careful inspection revealed the curious fact that her bow had been stove in as if the boat had received a sharp blow from beneath the water and her mainmast lay amidships among her deck pointing sternwards. The anchor chains were wound around her keel as if the sloop had been rolled over and over and the anchors were but fifteen feet away, half buried in sand.

Morris and Lima speculated that the landslide story “may have been concocted to cover a bad job of anchoring” and they appear to be correct: while a massive landslide was documented in the harbor that year, it occurred almost three weeks previous to the wreck, and Waters himself had written that the *Liberty* had been elsewhere during the event.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, p. 111; Santa Barbara *Weekly Press*, March 26 and May 7, 1881, SCIF.

¹⁰⁴Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, p. 112-113.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 151-153; Johnson, “Landscape Evolution,” pp. 287-288.

N B (1897). This small schooner, built in 1853 in San Francisco, had been a Rogers Brothers vessel engaged in sealing, otter hunting and fishing. She had recently been sold to Ledbetter and Jackman when a storm forced her ashore, possibly on the northeast side of the island and likely at Cuyler Harbor. Little else is known and wreckage has not been located.¹⁰⁶

Santa Rosa (1899). The 61-foot schooner *Santa Rosa* belonged to the owners of Santa Rosa Island, being their island transport for the sheep operation there. The boat may have been in Cuyler Harbor to load sheep or bring supplies as the San Miguel boat had wrecked four years before. The *Santa Rosa* stranded in Cuyler Harbor after encountering high seas, despite the crew's efforts to lay anchor.¹⁰⁷

Kate and Anna (1902). Another small sealing schooner met its doom while at anchor in Cuyler Harbor as a northwester parted the anchor chain and drove her ashore. All was lost but the crew of six escaped through the breakers. Captain Charles Lutgens may have been the same as the captain of the *Leader*, which wrecked on the island in 1876.¹⁰⁸

J M Colman (1905). This 105-foot coastal lumber schooner was en route to San Pedro from Washington State with up to 800,000 board feet of lumber when, after 36 hours of dead reckoning in a dense fog, she went ashore on the northwest part of Point Bennett on September 4, 1905. The Captain and half the crew waited on the island as Mate Patterson and four sailors rowed for help. The men in the rowboat had a hard struggle until they reached a point about 16 miles off the coast where they were picked up by the *Mandalay*. The schooner *Chehalis* hurried to the rescue bringing officers of the J. A. Hooper Company, owners of the *J M Colman*, to the scene. On September 10, the fog was still so thick that other vessels were also endangered. The *Comet* narrowly missed drifting up onto the rocks next to the *J M Colman* as she was already inside Richardson Reef. The large square-rigged vessel, loaded with lumber herself, was saved when a timely breeze cleared the fog. On the 14th, the *J M Colman's* hull was wedged between the two rocks with the prow to the sea. The bottom was gone; other vessels could not come near to help save the rigging or transfer the lumber. Finally, on September 26, crews transferred 60,000 feet of lumber. Seamen remained with the wreck for three weeks longer hoping to tow her out, but she lay deep in the ocean filled with water.¹⁰⁹

The ship was a total loss and salvagers worked for over a year removing the load of lumber in the hold. Some of this lumber reportedly provided William Waters and John Russell with the materials to build their large ranch house on the island. National Park Service and other archeologists have surveyed wreck scatter, presumed to be that of the *J M Colman*.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 110-111.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 156.

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

¹⁰⁹*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, September 7, 10, 14, 26, 1905; *Disaster Log*, San Francisco Marine Exchange, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

¹¹⁰Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 71-77.

Anubis (1908). The German steel-hulled cargo steamer stranded at a kelp-laced location between Castle Rock and the island on July 20, 1908, reportedly due to a defective compass. The 382-foot *Anubis* carried a cargo of lumber, tallow, and wheat as well as 67 passengers and crew. After it struck, *Anubis* settled on the rocks when in-rushing water extinguished the fires under the boilers and caused the vessel to list. The crew set to work heaving part of the deck load overboard. Captain Von Salzen sent his First and Third Mates and seven seamen in a lifeboat to Point Conception where the lighthouse keeper telegraphed for aid.

The vessel had gone through a half mile of densely woven kelp before she struck, so she lay surrounded by kelp and deep water. On the 23rd, nine persons went to the mainland in a lifeboat. Meanwhile all abandoned ship for Flea Island except for the captain and crew. Captain Frank Nidever and a group of seal hunters arrived at the wreck on the power schooner *Ynez*. They had been camped on San Miguel Island when the *Anubis* struck the ledge, but the fog was so heavy that, even though they sailed out within 200 yards of the ship, they missed her. When the fog cleared, they saw her and Nidever took his schooner out to be of aid. Rescuers jettisoned more of the cargo in an attempt to refloat the ship. The *Santa Barbara Morning Press* headline on July 23 read: "Swelling Grain May Burst Ship Asunder." Wide cracks had appeared in the decks, and the ship was considered lost. The ship laid easily, crew on board, since rocks protected it from the heavy seas. On the 27th, divers went down and reported a number of small holes and a good many sheared rivets in the bottom, but prospects were good for floating the ship and replacing the broken steel plates. The steamer *Fulton* took 450 tons of cargo and the steamer *Dee Westport* also took cargo to San Francisco. Part of the cargo, sacks of flour, was salvaged by those on the island and others, including Ira Eaton who reportedly removed 1,800 tons of cargo over a period of three weeks. On July 30, the crew pumped out the forward and after holds, lifted out the freight, and hauled her off the sunken ledge with anchor cables attached to the tug *Goliath*. The ship still had ten watertight compartments fore and aft, the water being mostly amidships. In Cuyler Harbor, she was patched up and then towed to San Francisco. The *Anubis* was the first ship to have been pulled off the islands and also the largest to be wrecked there.¹¹¹

Comet (1911). A wood-hulled coastal lumber schooner of 429 tons burden, the *Comet* was built in 1886 by the Hall Brothers of Washington, builders of the *J M Colman*. The ship was carrying 500,000 feet of lumber from Aberdeen, Washington to San Pedro when, on the foggy evening of August 30, 1911, she struck Wilson Rock and then stranded at Simonton Cove. Later inquiry blamed a faulty chronometer. While the captain, his wife and crew boarded a lifeboat for Santa Rosa Island (where they were transported to Santa Barbara to report the wreck), one man was left behind and drowned as he tried to swim to the wreck. Severe conditions hindered salvage and the schooner broke up on the beach. The owners of Santa Rosa Island contracted for the salvage, but were succeeded by San Miguel Island resident William Waters who paid \$1,000 for the rights. Various parts of the ship are exposed when the beach sand has been

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 41-42; *Santa Barbara Morning Press*, July 22, 23, 24, 30 and August 2, 11, 1908; *Disaster Log*.

depleted by storms, for instance in 1977, 1984 and 1999, when archeologists made a concerted effort to document parts of the schooner.¹¹²

Pectan (1914). A 471-foot Union Oil Company oil tanker heading north under in ballast to Port San Luis, *Pectan* ran ashore on the sandy beach at Adams Cove near Point Bennett on the evening of January 21, 1914. With no apparent damage to her hull, she rested on the beach with her crew of 49 aboard, while several vessels attempted to pull her off; a tug brought fresh food and water for the crew. The captain decided to wait for a high tide on February 10, and on that date the ship could be freed without assistance.¹¹³

Watson A West (1923). This sleek, four-masted coastal lumber schooner was built in 1901 and delivered lumber to California and ports around the world. Laden with 800,000 board feet of lumber she wrecked on February 24, 1923 near Point Bennett and immediately broke apart: “She struck so hard the men in their berths were thrown out and instantly she broke and began to fill with water,” reported a Santa Barbara newspaper. The crew rowed to Santa Barbara, a journey of 18 hours, without food or water. They arrived at the foot of State Street in Santa Barbara exhausted, hungry and half-clad. Captain Sorenson had been with the ship since its launching 22 years before. The owners failed to salvage the lumber aboard, and at least some of it contributed to the fencing and outbuildings of the ranch on San Miguel Island. Remains of the *Watson A West* have not been located.¹¹⁴

Cuba (1923). This 307-foot cargo-passenger liner, built by Blohm and Voss in Germany in 1897, was seized by the United States during World War I. The Pacific Mail Steamship Company purchased the steel-hulled ship from the government in 1920 and christened her the *Cuba*. Equipped with the latest electrical and radio equipment, the *Cuba* steamed between South America and San Francisco with ports in between. On her ill-fated last voyage she carried about 40 passengers, a cargo of coffee and a valuable load of silver bullion. Practically lost in the fog for three days and with an inoperative radio, the *Cuba* struck rocks near Point Bennett in the early hours of September 8, 1923. The Second Officer had failed to follow orders of Captain J. C. Holland, who had requested that he be awakened at 3:00 a.m. or earlier if visibility decreased. Finally awoken in distress at 4:00 a.m., the Captain was too late to avoid the disaster. Lifeboats removed all passengers, most to the beach at Point Bennett, except for one which voyaged along the south shore and eventually encountered a ship, and two others which mistakenly headed west only to sight a Navy destroyer in the thick fog. The destroyer rescued the passengers from the beach; it has been alleged that the busy wireless traffic surrounding the *Cuba* wreck may have contributed to the disastrous wreck of a flotilla of Navy destroyers at Point Arguello shortly after the *Cuba* went aground.

The Captain and six crewmembers stayed with the ship for about a week, camping in a fisherman’s hut at Point Bennett. Two guards were posted after the officers left, but their effectiveness was

¹¹²Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 86-93; Matthew A. Russell, “An Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Three Beached Shipwreck Scatters at Channel Islands National Park” (Thesis, Eastern Carolina University, 1996), pp. 115-119.

¹¹³Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 42-43.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 93-95; *Santa Barbara Morning Press*, February 25, 1923; *Disaster Log*.

questionable. Numerous parties, including Ira Eaton of Santa Cruz Island, plundered the ship. At one point an armed showdown occurred between two rival salvage bands. One group, probably Eaton's, removed a reported \$400,000 worth of items from the ship, including furniture, a piano, nautical instruments, radio equipment, fine doors and wood panels, glassware, linen and cargo. The ranch house at San Miguel Island received at least a number of corner sinks and the safe from the ship.

The *Cuba's* wreckage has been considered the most compact and organized of all the major wrecks in the park. Park marine archeologists surveyed her in October of 1989 and found the wreckage to be somewhat vandalized by brass salvagers but intact. As Morris and Lima wrote, "Its historical and archeological potential is far greater than the brass artifacts that have lured vandals here in the past."¹¹⁵

W. T. Co. No. 3 (1935). A movie company hired a barge to assist in filming parts of *Mutiny on the Bounty* off Point Bennett. After finishing work for the day, the barge was being towed to its anchorage at Adams Cove with about 75 people aboard when a "blast of wind" caused the barge to founder. All aboard were swept into the seas and one man, assistant cameraman Glenn Strong, drowned while attempting to rescue a camera.¹¹⁶

Ruth K (1960), *Josie Lena* (1962), *Warrior* and *Legend* (1967), *Frederick Q* (1974). The small fishing boat *Ruth K* parted anchor and stranded in Cuyler Harbor on the night of December 13, 1960. Almost two years later, on August 5, 1962, the 47-foot fishing boat *Josie Lena* met the same fate in the same location. Two boats wrecked in 1967. The *Warrior* struck a reef at an unidentified location off the island and sank on October 13, and the TransPac-winning racing yacht *Legend* stranded on the island after several days lost in the fog. The 46-foot fishing vessel *Frederick Q* from San Francisco foundered at an unidentified location off the island on November 29, 1974.¹¹⁷

Scientific Study

San Miguel Island has elicited interest from scientists since the mid-1800s. Of particular interest have been the dramatic changes in the island landscape and vegetation as the island made transitions through the ranching era and beyond. Botanists and archeologists alike were somewhat challenged by the advance of erosion and shifting sands, and have reveled in the recovery of the island flora.

In 1875 Paul Schumacher of the U. S. Coast Survey, under the sponsorship of the Smithsonian Institution, excavated a burial ground that yielded about 250 skeletons. Schumacher left after four days because of inhospitable weather. William Dall, also with the Coast Survey, worked on San Miguel in 1873 and 1874. He collected some artifacts, wrote enthusiastically of his archaeological finds, and cited

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 52-61.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 139, 140, 142, 145, 176.

overgrazing and the lack of trees. A botanist, E. L. Greene, sailed to San Miguel in 1886 on “a very small sloop, bearing a cargo of fence boards;” the voyage took nine days.¹¹⁸

An expedition sponsored by the Heye Foundation from the Museum of the American Indian in New York and led by Ralph Glidden spent six months on the island in 1919 in which they excavated 343 burials and collected thousands of artifacts including beads, ornaments and tools. The party may have been the first “professional” group to excavate at Daisy Cave.

Botanist Ralph Hoffmann of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History lost his life falling from the steep Eagle Cliffs on San Miguel while collecting data in 1932; the location is now known as Hoffmann Point in his memory.¹¹⁹

Geologist Carl St. John Bremner authored a pamphlet on the geology of San Miguel Island in 1933 for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, which included a geologic map.¹²⁰

Professor T. D. A. Cockerell of the University of Colorado at Boulder studied San Miguel Island in 1937 and published some results that year and the next. He identified the endemic gray-green, bladder-pod *Astragalus miguelensis*, noting that it acted like a “loco-weed” with the sheep who avoided it. He observed “white-headed” eagles, noting that they attacked sheep while the ravens preyed on newborn lambs. Curiously, Cockerell recommended planting an exotic tree, eucalyptus, on the island. He referred to Prince Island as Princess, repeating a legend of an Indian princess who had been banished to the small island.¹²¹

The Los Angeles Museum’s Channel Islands Biological Survey visited San Miguel Island as part of its Fourth Expedition in July-August 1939, with entomologist Don C. Meadows as field executive. The museum obtained permission to visit the island from the commandant of the 11th Naval District by telegram. Arriving on the Fish & Game boat *Bluefin* on July 28, the party was met on the beach at Cuyler Harbor by Herbert Lester with whom the scientists had been in radio contact. With Lester was James Murray and Arno Ducazau, Lester’s ranch hand. Ducazau had built a cabin on the beach, “between two springs on a small bench of land above Gull Rock,” for the expedition members as a kitchen and dining room. The expedition members set up tents to sleep in. Lester provided his sled and horse for transport of supplies up the beach. Throughout the week, Lester’s “friendship and enthusiastic co-operation was greatly enjoyed” by the men, who had dinner at the ranch house on the Sunday of their week. Meadows wrote that Lester “visits the camp quite often and has kept us supplied with fresh meat.” George Hammond flew in once and took letters home from the crew. Members of this expedition appear to be the first to call the approach from Cuyler Harbor to the highland “Nidever Canyon.”

The expedition spread out over the island investigating the botanical, entomological, archeological and other attractions, covering the entire island except a small portion on the south side. The expedition report noted that

¹¹⁸Freddie Curtis, “An Archeologist on San Miguel Island” in *Los Angeles County Museum Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Spring 1995, p. 5; William Dall, “The Lords of the Islands” in *Overland Monthly*, XII (June, 1874), pp. 522-526; T. D. A. Cockerell, “San Miguel, California” in *Scientific Monthly*, February 1938, p. 182.

¹¹⁹Erlandson et al, “An Archaeological and Paleontological Chronology for Daisy Cave (CA-SMI-261), San Miguel Island, California” in *Radiocarbon*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 1996, p. 359; Curtis, “An Archeologist,” pp. 5-6.

¹²⁰Carl St. J. Bremner, *Geology of San Miguel Island, Santa Barbara County, California* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1933).

¹²¹Cockerell, “San Miguel Island,” pp. 183-184, 186-187.

Excessive grazing, continuous cold, strong winds, and the soft easily-eroded terrain made collecting of scientific material somewhat difficult. Once fairly large groves of trees and shrubs were on the island, but only a few indications of their former extent now exist. Considerable vegetation is found on protected cliffs and slopes that are inaccessible to sheep.

At the time they noted that “All of the west end is sand covered. There are many springs on the island, but all the water is highly charged with mineral matter.” Meadows wrote in a letter to museum director Dr. John Comstock “San Miguel Island is foggy, cold & windswept, but not lacking in interesting Biota.” The expedition collected more than 800 biological specimens including “a new race of white-footed mouse.” Fossil mollusks and “a Miocene elephant” were recorded, and members searched for the burial place of Cabrillo. Although “several” middens were located, only one contained artifacts of “unusual interest.” The archeologist Arthur Woodward discovered and photographed the remains of George Nidever’s adobe, noting that “only one wall was visible, the rest being completely hidden by drifted silt.”

By the time the expedition had left the island, members had collected 4,850 entomological specimens, 1,100 botanical, 1,962 invertebrates and 151 vertebrates. Of the vertebrates, Jack Von Bloeker searched for bats but found none, although Lester had reported seen bats only occasionally in ten years. He collected five San Miguel Island foxes, and found skeletal fragments of three Southern Sea Otters, sea lions and seals, two “Indian Dogs” and the skull of a feral house cat, all in kitchen middens. Von Bloeker took various birds, 18 lizards, 43 amphibians and 57 mice back with him. Entomologist Lloyd Martin deplored the condition of the island, with heavy grazing and erosion coupled with high summer winds making collection and study of insects difficult. Botanist M. B. Dunkle collected 61 species while covering the island between Hoffmann Point, Cuyler Harbor, the northwest shore and much of the interior. The expedition was the first attempt to study the complete biota of the island.¹²²

The Channel Islands Biological Survey planned another trip to San Miguel Island for April 5, 1941. Dr. Comstock wrote to Herbert Lester and Robert Brooks for permission, hoping that the survey visit would not conflict with the spring shearing. Lester wrote to the crew, “be assured that Mrs. Lester and I will be only too glad to welcome your party” and that they could stay in the shearing shed if accommodations were not available at the ranch house. Lester noted that a storm had washed out parts of the road up Nidever Canyon and so the sled would not be offered for use. It is unclear whether this expedition occurred, although a museum memo noted that an expedition had occurred in April of 1941.¹²³

Dr. Charles Rozaire, curator of archeology at the Los Angeles County Museum, led an expedition to San Miguel Island in 1964 under the sponsorship of the Museum Associates of that museum under contract to the National Park Service. The contract stipulated that Rozaire make a thorough survey of the island and produce a map in preparation for future excavation. Rozaire hired Freddie Curtis to direct the field

¹²²*Progress Report of Los Angeles Museum Channel Islands Biological Survey, Fourth Expedition, July 21-August 19, 1939*, pp. 11-15, 24-35; Don M[eadows]. to Doc[tor John Comstock], July 30 and August 3, 1939, LACMNH. Although called “Los Angeles Museum” on printed matter documenting the expeditions, the full name of the museum at the time was the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art. It is now the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

¹²³Herbert S. Lester to John Adams Comstock, February 15, 1941; John A. Comstock to Robert Brooks, March 18, 1941; “Report of Meeting of Science Division, September 23, 1941,” LACMNH.

laboratory on the island; up to 30 others, mostly university students from around the country, participated at times. A surveyor, a cartographer, two photographers and two cooks rounded out the crew. The Navy and Marine Corps provided air transportation. The crew stayed in the old Lester ranch house, as described by Curtis:

The living quarters! Picture the old Lester home now: dilapidated, windows broken, screens completely rusted, boards warped, doors off their hinges, shingles playing their cacophonies in the never-ceasing wind. Here, the hardy crew cleaned, swept, mended, boarded windows, hung doors, carried out many years' accumulations of squatters' trash, and made sleeping quarters in the long-abandoned, sadly sagging edifice with its scampering, nocturnal, almost omnivorous white-footed mice. No running water, no gas or electricity, no modern sanitary facilities—only bed-rolls, lanterns, and the “outhouse.”

The crew used the abandoned Navy barracks as a kitchen and laboratory. They recorded over 100 debris sites and several potential village and campsites. The collection was deposited in the Los Angeles County Museum for further study. Rozaire returned to the island a number of times, including an excavation of Daisy Cave in 1967 and 1968.¹²⁴

A work used by island researchers is Donald L. Johnson's “Landscape Evolution on San Miguel Island, California,” written as Johnson's Ph.D. thesis in 1972. Johnson details the geological and floral evolution of the island, including in depth information on the historic period. His research on the landslide of 1895 has proven of interest in geological and historical studies.¹²⁵

Botanist Clifton F. Smith published an article on the natural history of San Miguel Island in 1977. He had been studying the botany of the Channel Islands since about 1946 and was especially enthusiastic about the island's recovery since the removal of grazing animals. He expressed hope that the National Park Service would protect the island as a scientific reserve, “with limited access to those who appreciate the natural environment of this gem in the western sea.” To some extent, Smith's wish has been followed, as travel by visitors is limited on the island in order to protect sensitive habitat.¹²⁶

Robert DeLong of the National Marine Fisheries Service has been studying pinniped populations on San Miguel Island for more than 30 years. He and various associates have published numerous articles on elephant seals, sea lions and marine life around San Miguel Island and its neighbors. The National Park Service and other institutions also remain busy on the island with inventory, monitoring and restoration of the island's flora and fauna.¹²⁷

Roberta S. Greenwood performed an archeological survey of San Miguel Island in 1977 and 1978 under contract with the National Park Service. Her work covered not only prehistoric sites but also historic sites as well. At one point she discovered a missile warhead on the island, bringing to light the dangers of survey at that time; since then, naval ordnance has been removed. The timing of Greenwood's report was fortuitous as it documented conditions at the time the National Park Service would take management

¹²⁴Curtis, “An Archeologist” pp. 4-9; Erlandson et al, “Chronology for Daisy Cave,” p. 359.

¹²⁵ Johnson, “Landscape Evolution.”

¹²⁶Clifton F. Smith, “Random Notes on the Natural History of San Miguel Island” in *Noticias*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Fall 1977, reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, pp. 109-112.

¹²⁷See Robert L. DeLong and Sharon R. Melin, “Thirty Years of Pinniped Research at San Miguel Island” in *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.

control of the island resources. Her recommendation that the proposed ranger station replicate the style of the Lester ranch house was honored, whether inadvertently or not. Dr. Greenwood prepared, with help from NPS staff, a National Register of Historic Places nomination for a San Miguel Island Archeological District comprising the entire island.¹²⁸

The most intensive cultural resources research in the last three decades has focused on areas of potential paleo-coastal occupation, the south coast, island shipwrecks and Daisy Cave (SMI-261). At least 35 sites dating between 7,500 and 12,000 years before present have been recorded. The large number and spatial variability of these early sites suggest that San Miguel Island was a major focus of paleo-coastal settlement; there is important technological evidence of a paleo-coastal maritime hunting tradition. Continuing investigations by Jon Erlandson, Torben Rick and Todd Braje support the theory of coastal migration during the late Pleistocene from Beringia along the west coast of the Americas.¹²⁹

Morris, with researcher James Lima, researched and published a definitive study of the submerged cultural resources in the park and on San Miguel Island, as referenced above in Shipwrecks.

¹²⁸Greenwood, *Archeological Survey*.

¹²⁹Erlandson et al, "Chronology for Daisy Cave," pp. 355-373; Erlandson, *Early Shell Middens*, p. 1., Glassow, Archeological Overview and Assessment,



An undated U.S. Navy aerial view of San Miguel Island. Ford Point is in the foreground, Cuyler Harbor at right. *National Park Service*

Historic Resources

Historic resources at San Miguel Island were surveyed by the author and island ranger Ian Williams over a period of five days in October 1999, and during a brief visit accompanied by Park Cultural Resources Manager Ann Huston and Park Archeologist Don Morris in November 1998.

The Landscape

No adequate descriptions of a pre-sheep San Miguel Island have been found, but researchers believe that the island “had plentiful arborescent representatives” as evidenced by the caliche deposits, which are the remains of a former forest. Immediately before settlement by ranchers, the island was likely blanketed with shrubs and some grasses. As late as 1929 people reportedly lived who remembered “lush vegetation” covering the island during the mid-19th century. Sheep grazing, which removed much of the shrub cover, and the introduction of new grasses resulted in a combination of grasslands, shrub cover and entirely barren areas subject to severe wind erosion. Historical photographs depict close-cropped grasslands, usually with a bare sand dune somewhere in the distance. Aerial photographs from 1929, 1940 and 1954 show the extent of the wind-blown dunes, lying like stripes across the island. The removal of grazing animals has resulted in a remarkable recovery of the island’s plant life, where much of the exposed dunes have been vegetated and open grassland is becoming rare. The historic landscape representing circa 1850 to 1950 possesses no integrity as far as vegetation; only the remains of fence lines, roads and buildings could contribute to a remnant cultural landscape. No recommendations will be made in regards to vegetation management, save for a suggestion of monitoring important cultural sites for damage and/or protection offered by returning plant cover.

Buildings

No historic buildings remain intact on San Miguel Island. Ruins remain and are discussed below. The National Park Service constructed a ranger station in a design intended to be reminiscent of the Lester ranch house. The building, located at the west end of the landing strip, features an apartment for the island ranger, an office/ranger station, and a bunkhouse for visiting researchers. On the far west end of the island at Point Bennett, the National Marine Fisheries Service research station has kept a lonely watch on the bustling pinniped colonies and vast ocean since 1969 (see below).



View to southwest of the ranger station on San Miguel Island, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The only visible portion of the Nidever adobe ruin, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Structures and Features

Nidever Adobe (SMI-546)

Channel region otter hunter George Nidever may have constructed a small house in the upper part of the western tributary of Nidever Canyon; the possibility exists that the house had been constructed previous to Nidever's arrival by the "man named Bruce" or others. The dwelling was built of local adobe and sturdy timbers; no account exists that describes the physical aspects or appearance of the house. The Mills brothers may have used the house, or its materials for constructing a new house nearby. William Waters scavenged materials from the old adobe in the late 1880s.

The Nidever adobe rests in a gulch that has experienced, and continues to suffer from, severe erosion. The building was placed between two drainages that have eroded to undermine and mostly destroy the remains; the combination of erosion, drifting sand and dense vegetation has rendered the ruin site difficult to survey and threatened with total destruction. This researcher was not able to investigate the ruin except from a distance, noting a number of timbers protruding from a brushy bank. Historic archeological investigations of the ruins led by archeologist Julia Costello in 2009 revealed that the building measured 26 x 23 feet on the exterior, with stone foundations, adobe brick walls and a redwood floor—surprisingly substantial for an early island dwelling. The adobe bricks measure 11 x 22 inches, which is consistent with the Spanish and Mexican eras and suggests that Mission-trained Native American workers may have been used to construct the house.¹³⁰

The Nidever adobe is one of the most important historic sites on the island. Its association with George Nidever, an important figure in the history of the Santa Barbara Channel and a California pioneer with a colorful career, its place as the first documented post-Chumash settlement on the island, and its association with pioneering sheep ranching on the island provides significance. The challenge is the preservation of the ruin, a seemingly impossible task without altering the drainage of the seasonal watercourse and stabilizing the landforms around the site. To expose the adobe wall by vegetation removal would threaten the stability of the remaining structure. The ruin has been surveyed by archeologists a number of times and changes in condition and threats have been noted. The potential as an interpretive site is great, coupled with Nidever's cave on Santa Rosa Island.

Mills/Waters House Site (SMI-582)

The exact site of William Waters' house was documented on a government map dated 1895 of Cuyler Harbor. The wood frame house, reportedly built by the Mills brothers after their purchase from Nidever in 1870, stood in the upper part of Nidever Canyon (called Schilling Wash on an archeological site record). Accounts of sand drifts covering the house may well be true: few remains of the house, or even a practical site for it, have been found, as if the topography of the gulch has changed. The entire house may remain

¹³⁰ Costello, Julia and Linda Thorpe, "Study of Selected Historic-Period Archaeological Resources on San Miguel Island" (Channel Islands National Park, March 2010).

under sand. To date, investigators have uncovered scant but intriguing remains of what would be parts of the house and/or cistern, including fieldstones and pipe. The 1895 map also depicted a wind vane directly southwest of the house, a wool house almost halfway down the canyon, and a flagstaff at the location of a later flagstaff maintained by Herbert Lester in the 1930s. The site of the wool house appears to be a leveled area a short distance above the trail junction in the canyon. The map also names a survey point on the beach in western Cuyler Harbor “corral,” which leads one to believe that a corral was constructed at the site that was adjacent to the landing.

Ron Morgan reported finding “many fence posts and the remains of a fruit tree” at the site in the late 1970s, and wrote that the “resident ranger, Mike Hill, discovered a cistern, some glass and several terra cotta pipes. Our expedition has located two exquisitely carved hardwood timbers, which were possibly door jambs or window sills.” The cistern, referred to as the Mills Brothers Cistern, was recorded as SMI-582 in a 1981 survey.¹³¹

Russell/Lester Ranch House Ruin (SMI-543)

The unique ranch house built early in the century reportedly by Waters and possibly Russell burned to the ground in a 1967 fire. For a number of years a chimney stood but now all that remains are piles of rubble, hardware and metal pieces, and two cement-lined excavations considered to be a cistern and a root cellar. The ranch house was 125 feet long and most of the remains are found along the line of the north wall. From west to east, they include: a concrete foundation and remains of a water tank that stood atop the east end of the ranch house for use in the bathroom; a concrete-and-stone cistern with a corbelled arch interior which is intact; a collapsed chimney; an underground concrete structure with vertical walls that may have been for cold storage, like a root cellar; another, larger, collapsed chimney and fireplace; a sheet metal water tank and plumbing for the bathroom; and remains of the fig tree. A pile of rocks marks the corner of the Killer Whale Bar on the south wing of the complex. Scattered around the building site are bricks, burned wood, crockery, household items, metal, pipes, stove parts, sinks (at least one of which was salvaged from the *Cuba*) and broken glass. East of the Lester house are scant remains of the Navy complex, including plumbing, concrete and other debris and a pit. Navy debris reportedly overlays remains from the Lester era.

Shearing Shed Site

The shearing shed complex was located northwest of the ranch house at a lower elevation. It consisted of three buildings adjoined, forming a sheltered “courtyard” opening to the south. The major building was the shearing shed, basically a medium-sized barn (exact size unknown) with gable roof and extended shed on the south wall. Attached to the west side of the shearing shed was a low, gable-roofed structure. Opposite it, on the east side of the complex, was a shed-roofed building built later. The buildings were used for shearing and treating sheep, shelter for lambs when needed, a blacksmith shop and tool room, harness room and storage for equipment. Board fences were used in the vicinity of the shearing shed.

¹³¹Ron Morgan, *Channel Islands Photographic Survey*, pp. 26, 30; inventory record at CHIS.

Little remains at the site of the shearing shed/barn complex except for parts of the Model A Ford owned by Herbert Lester. The site can be determined by this debris (the trail to the ranger station passes the site) and a vague trace of minimal grading.

Fencing Systems

During the sheep ranching period a system of fencing held sheep in the vicinity of the shearing shed for shearing and processing. The acreage north of the ranch house, being relatively level, acted as a holding area for sheep and was divided into a number of large pens. The largest enclosure was a long, fenced area east of the shearing sheds and north of the ranch house, encompassing a wide swale.

A long wing fence, or double row of fence acting as an alley, led from the shearing corrals towards the landing pier in Cuyler Harbor. The wing ran in a west-northwest direction down into the canyon near the windmill, and then over towards the Nidever adobe site, up out of the canyon and along the bluffs above the harbor for a distance, then plunged down the steep bluffs to the beach. Much of the wing is followed by the current trail to the northwest tip of the island. Many of the fence posts and a quantity of wire remain of this wing, allowing one to trace the route of the once-busy corridor to the landing. It is recommended that the fence posts and wire remain in place to deteriorate while providing an illustration of the previous culture of the island. Wire should be removed from the trail tread near the Nidever adobe site for safety.

Remains of another fence on the west end of the island were noted in the fall of 1999 by this researcher and the island ranger, Ian Williams. The remains indicated that a fence once enclosed a portion of the south shore at Green Canyon. This may be the fence being built on the west end described by Mrs. Waters in her 1888 journal. Only about two dozen fence posts remain standing and should be left as some of the few cultural artifacts on the island.



This portion of the remaining wing fence overlooking Cuyler Harbor is located west of Nidever Canyon on the trail to Harris Point, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Remains of the Brooks-era windmill, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



View looking north of the old road to Cuyler Harbor, now a hiking trail, 1999. Compare with the historical photo reproduced on page 58. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Drainage and Water Development Structures

The only developed water source on the island was located in Nidever Canyon, near where the early settlements of Nidever and Waters were located. The source remains in use by the National Park Service although the taste requires some getting used to. A fallen metal Aermotor windmill remains from the Lester era and should remain in place as a cultural discovery site. A small wood frame shed, extant in the mid-1950s, has disappeared.

Roads

The oldest known road on the island is the one constructed by William G. Waters and his employees in 1888. The road led from the beach at Cuyler Harbor up to the Waters ranch house in upper Nidever Canyon. The road also reached the later ranch house last occupied by the Lesters. The road remains in use as a foot trail, although the cuts reveal the original width of the road, and some retaining wall rockwork remains. The Waters road is historically significant as a pioneer effort in taming the harsh island conditions and as one of the oldest historic structures remaining on the island. It possesses historical integrity although it is only in fair condition. The road should continue in use as a hiking trail and steps to preserve the original roadbed and retaining walls should be considered.

Dr. Greenwood claimed that originally the road ascended the western side of the canyon and was washed out by a slide, to be replaced on the east side by John Russell. This is highly unlikely, as a survey of the west side shows no trace of a road or landslide of the size that would take out an entire length of roadway. A 1903 photograph of the road and canyon also shows no trace of a western road.

The U. S. Navy bulldozed a few roads on the island during World War II. All were crude tracks with little cut and fill or engineering; in general, the routes followed the path of least resistance and the bulldozer only pushed aside vegetation and topsoil. One, which leads from near Harris Point to the top of San Miguel Hill is mostly obliterated by time. Another left the Navy Barracks/Lester Ranch area in a tangent east/southeast to Cardwell Point. Still another military road, connecting the old Waters road to the Navy barracks at the Lester ranch, remains intact but somewhat overgrown. The longest military road remains in use as a hiking trail and the access to the field station at Point Bennett. It leaves the landing strip in a southerly direction before turning west, cresting San Miguel Hill and a shoulder of Green Mountain as it leads to the extreme western end of the island. In many places the road's origin as a crude bulldozer track is evident, with small berms lining the edges as the soil was pushed aside. Erosion has occurred in many places but the road is generally in fair condition. The roads built by the Navy are not historically significant as the other Navy works no longer remain and the roads in themselves do not possess particular importance.

Trails

As access around the island is limited, San Miguel Island has few hiking trails. The longest follows the Navy road described above; the most-used is the former Waters road, which funnels visitors from the

beach landing to the campground and ranger station. Another, called the Lester Point Trail, leads from the top of the old Waters road to Harris Point but access is limited to ranger-led walks. The trails have no historic significance with the exception of the Waters road, discussed above. Two trails depicted on Forney's 1871 topographic survey, one of which led from Nidever's adobe to the landing, could not be found, but the trail described is roughly followed by the Lester Point Trail today.

Pier and Landing Strips

The palm trees adjacent to the later pier site have elicited conversation for years. The popular notion has been that the trees remain from the filming of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, but this story appears to be a myth. Photographs and testimony provided by islands historian Marla Daily (located in the SMI ranger station) claim that the Washingtonian palms were planted by Ben Hughey and his friends in 1964, with others planted in 1970. The trees stand out as a landmark on the scenic beach at Cuyler Harbor.

At least three landing strips have existed on the island and two continue in use. George Hammond, the Montecito aviator who delivered mail and supplies to the Lesters in the 1930s and early 1940s, developed the first landing site that became known as Hammond Field. It measured 918 feet long and 574 feet wide and was located east-southeast of the current landing strip at the top of a drainage that exits near Bay Point. The site has been largely covered with vegetation.

The currently used main airstrip is located south of the ranch site and northeast of the ranger station. The airstrip is a graded dirt and grass area with a windsock and informative sign, which alerts pilots that the strip is closed to all planes except with National Park Service permission.

A third airstrip remains in use to supply the National Marine Fisheries outpost on the west end. The strip is located in a dry lakebed about two miles from the research station at Point Bennett. It is maintained only by seasonal mowing. A windsock and informational sign are located there, and the trail to Point Bennett passes the airstrip.

Survey Monuments

Numerous government surveyors worked on San Miguel Island between 1850 and 1950. Over two dozen survey benchmarks might be found, all of which appear on the 1943 U. S. G. S. quadrangle maps of the island. Of particular interest are the historical monuments left on the island in the 19th century. U. S. Coast Survey topographers Stehman Forney and O. H. Tittman erected survey stations in the 1870s, while William Greenwell left markers in the late 1850s.

At the summit of Green Mountain this researcher and island ranger Ian Williams found remains of an 1870s survey signal, including an intricately notched redwood board (probably part of the signal tower) and numerous bricks. Nearby is a galvanized metal post surrounded by a pile of rocks.

Navy Range Poles

Two sets of twin tall wooden poles with triangular signs mounted near the top are located on the island. The poles are range markers, reportedly installed in the early 1960s, which allowed pilots to guide their aircraft in sighting by lining up the two or four poles. They are not historically significant.

World War II Lookout Site

The Navy erected a Coastal Lookout Station on the summit of San Miguel Hill in 1942. The station consisted of a wooden observation tower and radio communication facilities. A barracks for the staff was built adjacent to the Lester Ranch. Only a small amount of wreckage remains from the tower site, including hardware, broken glass, wire and pieces of wood. A modern remote-controlled weather station operated by the Navy (Point Mugu) stands adjacent to the tower site; concrete foundation pads from an earlier, nuclear powered weather station should not be confused with the World War II lookout. On the trail to the lookout on the east slope of San Miguel Hill are two utility poles likely dating from World War II for telephone communications between the barracks and lookout tower. One has fallen and the other remains standing. The poles have an angle cut off the top where a hole provides evidence of hardware for holding the wire.

Lighthouse Site

The site of the lighthouse at Crook Point (1943-1953) was not visited by the author due to time constraints. Few if any remains reportedly exist at the site.

B-24 Wreckage

On July 5, 1943 a B-24 Liberator bomber crashed on the slope of Green Mountain, killing twelve men. Wreckage is scattered throughout an area of about one acre or more. Pieces of metal, hardware and instruments can be found, but the area is off limits to visitors. Island ranger Glenn Conant identified and counted 181 pieces of the plane in 1993. It is recommended to leave the wreckage in place in memory of the crew members whose names are listed earlier in the text.

Rock Retaining Wall on North Shore

Around a point on the eastern extremity of Cuyler Harbor and west of Hoffmann Point, is found a well-built rock retaining wall that may have been the site of a fishing shack. Shell scatter suggests this as the site of a Chinese abalone camp. The wall is three to five feet high and more than 20 feet long, with its base practically on the beach. The stones are large, average one foot in diameter, and round conglomerate boulders placed without mortar in a rocky outcrop. The wall was backfilled with sand, and ice plant is



Debris from the bomber crash near Green Mountain, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Rock wall on the north shore, possibly ruins of an abalone camp, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

growing around the area. While the history of this structure is undetermined, it should be preserved pending additional information. Archeological work in the vicinity could unearth clues as to the origins of the wall.

Ruin on South Shore

Remains of what may be a pre-World War II U. S. Marines outpost are found on the south shore of the island, east of Crook Point on a grassy terrace facing the ocean. Remains of a road lead to the site from the east. The ruins consist of a wooden floor and wreckage of walls and roof, with barrels, wire, insulators, hardware and broken glass scattered around the site. The floor measures 10 feet by 12 feet and is constructed of 1-inch by 6-inch planks. The walls were 1-inch by 10-inch vertical boards, possibly board and batten or sheathed in tarpaper. The history of this structure has not been determined; Ron Morgan reported in the late 1970s that Mrs. Lester showed him a photograph of the building with Marines and labeled “Marine Base—West End” (the site is actually on the south side). Marines did occupy a site near Point Bennett for a short time in 1933 but the camp contained no wood frame structures. It is even possible that the structure dates from 1966 when the Pacific Missile Range performed tests on the south side of the island. The ruins at this time possess no significance for lack of information.

Cabrillo Monument (SMI-544)

IDLCS 009054

The Cabrillo Civic Clubs erected a monument in the form of a pile of stones and prehistoric stone artifacts topped by an inscribed granite cross on a knoll near the old shearing sheds in 1937. The monument reads:

JOAO / RODRIGUES / CABRILHO
PORTUGUESE NAVIGATOR
DISCOVERER OF CALIFORNIA 1542
ISLE OF BURIAL 1543
CABRILLO CIVIC CLUBS

The granite cross was realigned to face a different direction during or before rehabilitation work in 1972. Archeologist Roberta Greenwood noted in a survey that the stone pile supporting the cross was composed of native rocks and, “at the very minimum, one mortar, one millingstone, two cobble hammerstones, and worked chalcedony.”

The Cabrillo monument has historical interest but the inconclusiveness of data about Cabrillo and his final resting place leaves this monument out of date and possibly misleading. In addition, Cabrillo is now considered to be Spanish rather than Portuguese. Nonetheless, the monument was placed by a civic organization with pride, based on the evidence available at the time, and acts as an interpretive point of



Cabrillo Monument, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Graves of Herbert and Elizabeth Sherman Lester near Harris Point, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

interest to island visitors. It is recommended to keep the monument maintained and in place, with an interpretive display placed elsewhere to clarify the issues and avoid distraction from the original monument.

Lester Graves (SMI-545)

Herbert Lester's suicide near Harris Point dramatically affected events on the island. His family immediately moved to the mainland and another operator took over, as the Navy controlled the island. Lester's life ended in a favorite area of his, the dramatic six peaks of Harris Point; one was named Lester Point later in honor of the "King of San Miguel." The family buried Herbert Lester on the point; the American Legion provided a headstone. The marble headstone, about 2.5 feet high by 1.5 feet wide and five inches thick, faces Lester Point and Harris Point and reads, "Herbert / Steever / Lester / New York / 1 Lieut. Ord. Corps / June 18, 1942." His widow, Elizabeth Sherman Lester was buried next to him after her death. Her headstone matches that of her husband. The Lester's daughter Betsy Roberti arranged with the park service to transport family members and a ranger to the site by helicopter on December 4, 1981, along with concrete, a shovel, water, buckets, flowers, the marble headstone and the cremated remains of Mrs. Lester. A short ceremony included a reading of Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar" by Mrs. Roberti.¹³²

The Lester graves are isolated and hard to find. They are in good condition. It is recommended that their location continue to be unadvertised unless members of the Lester family so desire. The graves should be maintained as historic resources although they would not be in themselves eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. A small drainage passes the gravesite and should be monitored.

Lester Ranch Flagstaff

Twenty-four feet northwest of the Cabrillo monument is a pipe protruding from the ground. This is apparently the remains of the flagstaff on which Herbert Lester flew the American flag. The flag appears clearly in photographs. The artifact is interesting in that it marks the site of the flag, but whether it is indeed the flagstaff base is unknown.

National Marine Fisheries Service Research Station

Near the very tip of Point Bennett but at an elevation sufficient to be unobtrusive to marine mammals sits the tiny outpost research station developed beginning in 1969 by the National Marine Fisheries Service under the leadership of marine biologist Robert L. DeLong of the Seattle, Washington, office. DeLong's association with the station is such that the site is sometimes referred to as "DeLong's House." DeLong created the San Miguel Island management plan, published by the Marine Mammal Commission in 1975. The station originally comprised three small modular buildings or Conex boxes (brought in by helicopter) set in a C shape to form a protected "patio."

¹³²Memorandum, SMI Ranger [Reed McCluskey] to Files, June 29, 1982, in files at SMI ranger station.



National Marine Fisheries facility at Point Bennett, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Ruins of a military-related building on the south shore, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

A new frame station was constructed in the same orientation and configuration in 2004 immediately adjacent to old structure, which was then removed. An outhouse stands above and to the rear, connected by a well-worn path. The research station is reached by the former Navy road, now a trail, from the ranger station via San Miguel Hill. The lakebed landing strip is closer to the station and is the usual site for researchers to be dropped off. The station is of interest regarding recent scientific research on the island, but has no historic significance.

Submerged Cultural Resources

Don Morris and James Lima produced a thorough report on shipwrecks in the park and marine sanctuary in 1996 that covers shipwrecks on San Miguel Island. Maritime resources tend to best be dealt with on a park-wide basis in relation to National Register of Historic Places nominations. The 1978 archeological district nomination contains a paragraph on underwater archeology but research and investigations since then have produced additional information. Island rangers have been vigilant in notifying park cultural resource staff when maritime artifacts surface, as was the case when the *Comet* surfaced again in early 1999.

Shipwreck remains located by archeologists on San Miguel Island include the *J M Colman* (1905, tentative), the *Comet* (1911) and the *Cuba* (1923). Further investigation could yield remains of other island shipwrecks.

Recommendations

San Miguel Island is rapidly revegetating as its few historic resources deteriorate or disappear. Archeological sites, including two historic ones, have been identified and placed on the National Register of Historic Places as an archeological district. The vegetative cover can add protection to archeological sites but tends to cover historic features. The current National Register district, as San Miguel Island Archeological District, should be updated to meet current National Register documentation requirements and amended to include additional historic features related to pioneer settlement and agriculture: the remaining fence materials at the ranch site, sheep wing to Cuyler Harbor and remains on the south side, largely consisting of wood fence posts; the 1888 road to Cuyler Harbor; the site of the Waters ranch house; and the original Hammond Field. These features have integrity only as ruins, and restoration is not practical or recommended. Any new discoveries regarding shipwrecks, documented in detail by Morris and Lima in 1996, or archeological finds since 1978 would also be included in the proposed amendment or in a separate shipwreck district nomination. Research, investigations and excavations should continue as regards prehistoric and historic sites and maritime archeology. Other resources noted above, such as the ruin on the south side and the rock wall on the north shore, require more research before inclusion in the nomination, and others, such as the Navy roads and lookout site, do not possess sufficient significance or integrity for National Register listing.

The following sites, structures and features are considered to possess historic significance related to settlement, development, ranching operations and maritime commerce on San Miguel Island:

Historical archeological sites that contribute to National Register district

Nidever adobe, ca. 1850-1870

Waters house site, ca. 1870-1905

Lester ranch house ruins, ca. 1905-1967

Structures/features that may contribute

Road to Cuyler Harbor, 1888

Fence line ruins: corrals, wings, fences, ca. 1920-1950

Windmill ruin, ca. 1920-1950s

Pier sites and remains, ca 1880-1950

Hammond Field, 1930

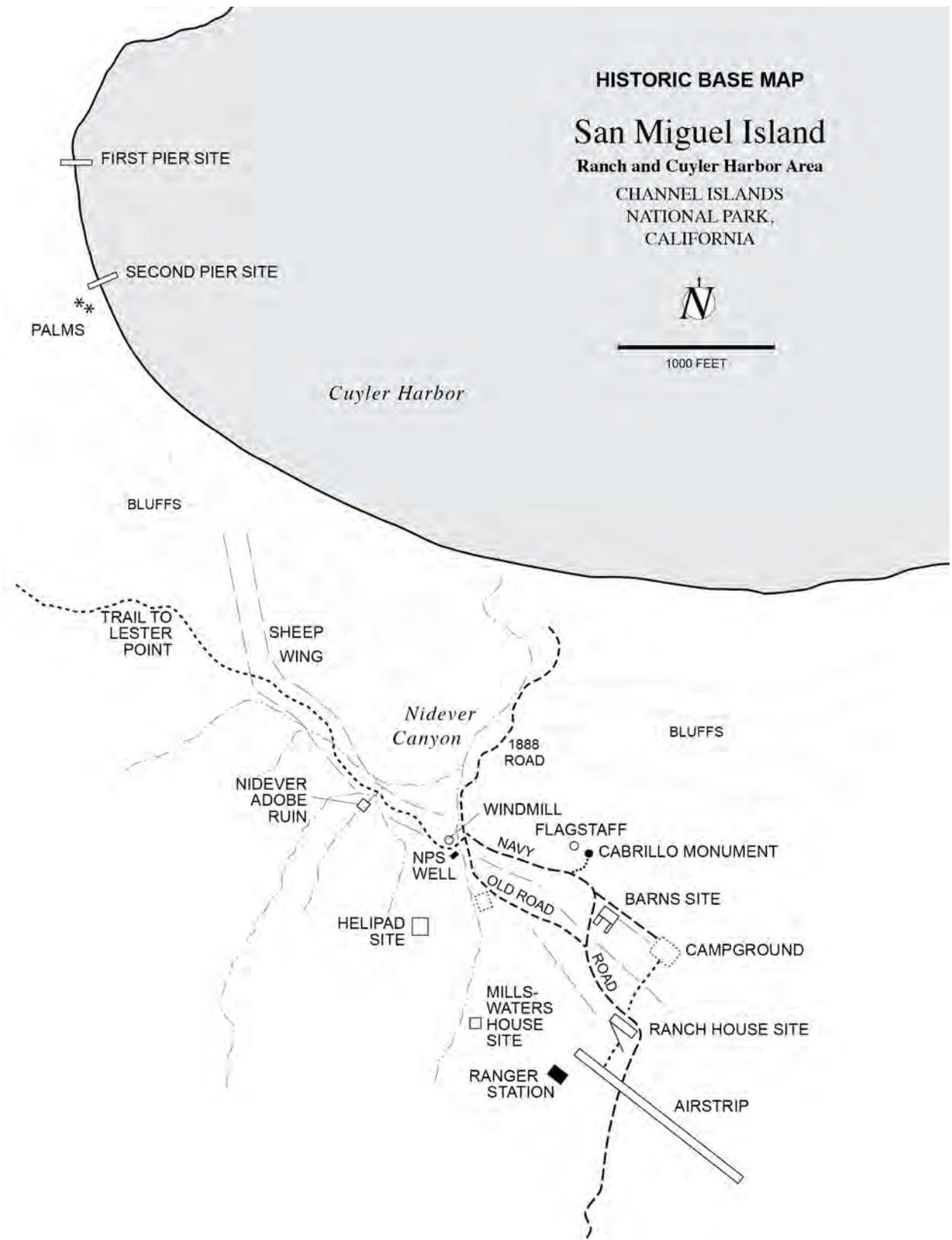
Shipwrecks (parkwide; additions to be determined by NPS staff)

It is recommended that the above features and sites be documented and preserved to the extent possible. The Nidever, Waters and Lester sites deserve formal study towards a management plan for the sites. The road is now maintained as a foot trail. Certain features, such as the bank cuts and few rock wall remains, should be preserved, and maintenance that adds to deterioration of the original 8-foot (approximate) wide roadbed should be discouraged. The remnant fences, windmill and survey monuments should be documented, left untouched, and allowed to continue to slowly deteriorate. Other sites deserve protection as cultural resources but may not meet the criteria for National Register status:

Herbert and Elizabeth Lester graves, 1942 and 1981

Wreckage of B-24 bomber, 1943

Cabrillo Monument



[blank page]

Section 3

SANTA ROSA ISLAND



Here are great storing-barns and shearing-rooms, stables, pens, sheds, dining-rooms and houses for the Indian and Mexican shearers, all not far from a little stream which flows down from the Santa Rosa Mountains to the sea, passing a big sandstone cave, once the home of the ancients, now the sleeping apartment of the shearers.

Charles Holder, 1910



Physical Description

Santa Rosa Island is located roughly 50 miles from Ventura and 35 miles from Santa Barbara. It sits in line between San Miguel and Santa Cruz islands, being the third to the west of the four northern Channel Islands. At about 53,364 acres or 84 square miles, it has often been described as the shape of a stingray, a parallelogram or an irregular rectangle. Looked upon as a parallelogram, its corners roughly face the points of the compass: to the north, Carrington Point; east, East Point; south, South Point; and west, Sandy Point. Other, smaller points are named between these, and a number of narrow bays indent the edges of the island. Bechers Bay, which faces to the northeast, is the only good anchorage, although Johnsons Lee and the cove at Rancho Viejo have been used. The shoreline has numerous beaches, the largest of which includes Water Canyon Beach at Bechers Bay and beaches northwest of Cluster Point, but is generally very rugged with high cliffs and dangerous surf.¹

The island is mountainous but much of the landscape consists of gentle, rolling hills and plateaus or terraces. The south side of the island is the steeper, with deep gulches and high spines of ridges, all draining to the Pacific Ocean. The highest point is an altered 1,589-foot peak near the center of the island, with nearby Soledad Mountain (1,574 feet) and Black Mountain (1,298 feet) forming a high ridge that divides the island southwest to northeast. Evidence of earthquake activity can be seen on the landscape, as the dramatic Santa Rosa Fault cuts an almost perfect east-west line across the northern sector, shown most vividly on topographic maps by offset watercourses. At least nine streams on the island are perennial water sources, and a few springs and wells have been developed.²

The vegetation of Santa Rosa Island is largely alien annual grasses, reflecting 150 years of grazing. Large patches of wiry chaparral, especially on Black Mountain, contrast with the gentle grasslands. Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and bishop pine (*Pinus muricata*) trees can be found on the island, and willow (*Salix*) trees grow in some of the riparian areas and are appearing in several canyons since grazing ended. Rare stands of Island Oak (*Quercus tomentella*) are found here, and the well-known and unique Torrey Pine (*Pinus torreyana insularis*) forest is a major attraction to visitors. With the historic ranching operation and cattle grazing ended in 1998, the grasslands are giving way to plant communities dominated by native shrub, chaparral and trees. The park has a program in place to limit the introduction and spread of invasive non-native plant species.³

Fauna on the island include the Island Fox (*Urocyon littoralis santarosae*), unique to the Channel Islands, island skunk, gopher snake, Pacific tree frog, the Santa Rosa Island deer mouse and others. Birds are found in all areas of the island, with many species of seabirds seen along the extensive coastline. The island is rich in cultural features including numerous sites of archeological and paleontological interest. The most readily evident historic features on Santa Rosa Island date from the ranching era after 1844:

¹Reports of the size of the island vary in literature; most 19th century maps placed the acreage was at around 62,000 acres, based on the erroneous plat map of the land grant. The bay's name is often spelled Beechers, including on the U.S.G.S. edition; Al Vail stated that he had always heard it pronounced as Bechers with a soft E (oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 18, SCIF).

² The highest point on Santa Rosa Island was called Vail Peak on a map published in 1998 by the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, but the name is not recognized by the USGS.

³The only other known Torrey Pine forest, similar but of a different subspecies, is located at Torrey Pines State Reserve in San Diego County.

fences and corrals, roads and trails, water systems, government survey monuments, an airstrip, buildings and ruins. The island is divided by fencing into three large pastures and six smaller ones, in addition to three “traps” for herding cattle. Maintained dirt roads encircle the island, while jeep roads, trails and abandoned roads cross between the main routes. The major building complex is located at Bechers Bay and consists of ten ranch buildings with outbuildings, a pier, and a National Park Service maintenance facility. On the hill above and to the west is a park service housing complex. A modernized water and communications system serves residents of the island. The only other buildings on the island are two ranch line camp cabins and a large utility building at Johnson’s Lee.

Access to Santa Rosa Island is limited by its physical characteristics and jurisdictional issues. Few harbors are available for landing on shore; NPS and park visitors may access the island via the pier at Bechers Bay. Visitors also arrive on small commercial concession aircraft for organized tours and camping. An NPS campground is located about two miles from the ranch in Water Canyon and offers sheltered campsites, fresh water, and restrooms. NPS law enforcement rangers, resource specialists and interpretive and maintenance personnel occupy government housing. A research and education station operated by California State University, Channel Islands, currently occupies two of the ranch buildings. Public access is available to the entire island, however long distances keep hikers relatively close to the Bechers Bay area.

History of Santa Rosa Island

Island Chumash occupied Santa Rosa Island in numerous permanent settlements and the archeological resources on the island are particularly important in the search for knowledge about early coastal settlement and the Chumash culture. Cabrillo and his successors in exploring the coast of California visited the island and commented on its inhabitants and characteristics. The island's first owners in the 1840s were members of a prominent Alta California family, the Carrillos of Santa Barbara, who left operation of the island enterprises to in-laws, a duo of local profiteers. Beginning in 1844, the island was stocked with cattle, sheep, horses and pigs. After its inclusion in the state of California in 1850, the island gained regional importance as a livestock ranch. The More family's massive sheep business lasted from the late 1860s until 1901 and the cattle operation of Vail & Vickers continued for almost a century after that, retaining an old California tradition of stock raising; both enterprises were large in scope and contributed to California's agricultural economy. Santa Rosa Island also played a role in national defense, with U. S. Army, Air Force and Navy installations protecting the coast beginning in 1943. Archeological sites and an intact 19th/20th century ranching landscape are the prominent remaining cultural resources.

Prehistory, Contact and Exploration

Santa Rosa Island proved large enough and with adequate resources to support a large number of prehistoric occupants. The island has a remarkable archeological record, with one of the longest coastal archeological sequences in the Americas. Human remains discovered by Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History archeologist Phil Orr in 1959 were recently dated to more than 13,000 years of age, the earliest yet known human presence on the island. Numerous archeological sites on Santa Rosa and San Miguel islands are dated between 9,000 and 13,000 years of age. The island's archeological record provides significant data about the development of maritime adaptations over the long period of cultural development.⁴

At the time of European contact, Santa Rosa Island was second only to Santa Cruz Island in native population. Cabrillo was informed by local sources in 1542 that the island was called *Nicalque* and that three villages existed there: *Nichocho* (or *Nicocho*), *Coycoy* (*Coycoc*) and *Estocoloco* (*Coloco*). Juan Paez de Castro wrote that on January 29, 1543, after Cabrillo's death, the fleet went to "Isla de San Lucas, which is in the middle of the others, in order to get some anchors which, unable to raise, they had left there during a storm. These they secured and also took some water. They left this Island San Lucas Monday, February 12, not being able to do so sooner on account of the vile weather of wind and snow. It is inhabited and the people are like those of the other island."⁵

Speculation arose when in 1901 a piece of stone marked with what appeared to be a man's figure and the initials JR was found by archeologist Philip Mills Jones on Santa Rosa Island near Rancho Viejo.

⁴ Glassow et al, Channel Islands National Park Archaeological Overview and Assessment, p. 7.1.

⁵John R. Johnson, *An Ethnohistoric Study of the Island Chumash*, Thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, December 1982, pp. 13-14.

Later, some considered the artifact to be the gravestone of Cabrillo and led them to consider that the fatal events of 1542 occurred on Santa Rosa Island. As the stone could not be positively identified as a grave marker, and given the amount of trade between the islanders of interesting objects, the artifact remains a curious and interesting piece that does not solve the Cabrillo puzzle.⁶

Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño, in his southward journey aboard a small launch crowded with his shipwrecked crew, arrived on the southeast side of Santa Rosa Island on December 13, 1595,

and there came alongside a small boat like a canoe, with two Indians in it rowing. And having arrived at the launch, they brought some eighteen fish and a seal and gave them to us, for which we gave them some pieces of taffeta and cotton cloth in order that they should bring more. They went on shore and returned in the same boat with three Indians and brought nothing. At this island we went fishing with lines and caught some thirty fish like cabrillas [sea bass], which we soon ate on account of our great hunger On both [Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island] the land is bare and sterile, although inhabited by Indians; there are no ports or coves in them in which to take shelter.⁷

Vizcaíno's ships passed between Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands in early December of 1602; the map from the voyage named Santa Rosa Island "San Ambrosio" (December 7 was celebrated as the day of Saint Ambrosio) but his ships did not land there.⁸

Captain George Vancouver entered the "canal of Santa Barbara" and noted the islands upon which he fixed names based on Spanish charts. Having a choice from the many names given the islands in the past, Vancouver wrote of choosing the name Santa Rosa over San Miguel, the latter that he had affixed to the westernmost island.⁹

At the time of the mission presence across the Channel, Santa Rosa Island was called *Wimal* or *Huima* and supported a reported seven or eight towns: *Nimkilkil*, *Niaqla*, *Silimihi*, *Hichimin*, *Nawani*, *Nilal'uy*, *Helewashkui* and *Qshiwqshiw*. The latter town was the largest (with a population of 120 in 1804) and was probably located at the future site of Rancho Viejo; *Hichimin*, the second largest, was located at Windmill Canyon, site of the present ranch at Bechers Bay. The island's Chumash had abandoned the island for the mainland by about 1825, leaving Santa Rosa Island unoccupied for about 20 years. Little is known about that period except for the otter trade, which altered the marine life offshore of the island.¹⁰

⁶Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986), pp. 3, 183.

⁷Quoted in Henry R. Wagner, "The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595" in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 1, April, 1924, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁸Henry R. Wagner, "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century" in *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. VII, No. 4, December 1928, p. 389.

⁹George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World*, Vol. II (London: G. G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798), no pp.

¹⁰Sally McLendon and John R. Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis for Cultural Affiliation in the Areas Formerly Controlled by Chumash Peoples and Presently Under National Park Service Stewardship* (National Park Service, Hunter College at CUNY, and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1996), pp. 42, 91-92; [Father Estevan Tapis to Governor Jose Joaquin de Arrillaga, 1805], SCIF.

The Otter Trade at and Around Santa Rosa Island

The desire for fine fur products in Europe and China provided incentive for British and Russian businessmen to follow upon Captain Cook's discoveries and commence a hunting industry on the Pacific Coast that changed the face of this part of the world: it would bring hundreds of ambitious men and their employees to an otherwise ignored region, leading to destruction of cultures and certain natural resources, and replacement of those with a new exploitive culture that continues to this day. Recording of an incident at Santa Rosa Island in 1836 provided a view of otter hunting during that era and an account of an armed skirmish between Americans and Aleutian hunters, possibly the only incident of its kind in the region.

By the late 1700s hunters in trading vessels of British and Russian origin plied the waters of California slaughtering marine mammals, the otter being the prime victim. The Chinese especially paid a high price for the fine pelt of the sea otter found in great numbers along the coast and at the Channel Islands. English ships financed by wealthy businessmen and the Crown followed Captain Vancouver's new charts as well as older Spanish ones. The Russian presence on the Alaska coast moved southward to Fort Ross, a permanent coastal encampment north of San Francisco Bay. The Russians owned vessels suitable for the hunt but also contracted with American ship captains; these Russians, Americans and Englishmen usually employed Aleut hunters who had highly desired skills in using small kayak-like boats called *baidarkas* from which they could surround otters and kill them with spears and, later, guns. Other hunters hired *Kanaka* or Hawaiian boatmen with similar skills; common practice with Kanakas would be to shoot otter from shore and then swim out to retrieve the dead animal. But the Aleuts gained notoriety for their often-cruel exploits:

Along the California Coast the Aleuts soon carved out a reputation for viciousness, ferocity, and cantankerousness. Not only did they attack the primitive Canalino, but also they reportedly landed on the mainland occasionally and killed horses, cattle, and, sometimes, inhabitants. Often they clashed with other hunters, running them off and appropriating their supplies and furs.¹¹

George Nidever made a name for himself around Santa Barbara and the islands as an otter hunter and maritime tradesman (see biography in previous section, San Miguel Island). Upon arrival in Santa Barbara in 1835 Nidever met an old acquaintance named Daniel Sill. "We agreed to hunt together on the Islands," recalled Nidever. As outsiders could not legally hunt the California waters, the pair made licensing arrangements with William G. Dana, a prominent Santa Barbaran and reported by Nidever to be captain of Santa Barbara's port. Dana had sent hunters to Santa Rosa previously. He would outfit the party with provisions and pay for one helper per hunter, and in turn received 40% of the furs; Nidever operated under this arrangement with Dana for more than a year. In 1835 a sea otter pelt fetched \$30, a land otter \$2 and beaver about \$4. Nidever made at least two extensive hunting trips to Santa Rosa Island. He told a historian:

¹¹Francis R. Holland, Jr. "Santa Rosa Island: An Archeological and Historical Study" (*Journal of the West*, Vol. I, No. 1, July 1962), p. 53. According to H. W. Henshaw, Aleuts accompanied the last island Chumash to the mainland missions.

. . . 8 or 10 days after I arrived here Sills [sic] and I went to Santa Rosa Island. We had no boats so were obliged to hunt from land. We went over about May of 1835. Two weeks later Sills was taken sick and returned to Santa Barbara. I remained about six weeks longer and killed in all 8 or 10 otters; Sills having got none. I had with me a Kanaka Indian, employed to swim out for the otter killed; at \$16 a month.¹²

Sill went on to other pursuits. Nidever met an African American otter hunter named Allen Light but known as Black Steward. Nidever described him as “quite intelligent, well behaved and mannerly, and a good hunter.” Isaac Sparks, an otter hunter working in local waters since 1832 (and known for the original removal of Indians from San Nicolas Island), joined the two in another island expedition. Nidever, Black Steward and Sparks in 1835 went to hunt Santa Rosa Island on *Peor es Nada*. “We remained all winter on the Islands, making our headquarters at Santa Rosa, although hunting on San Miguel and Santa Cruz, as there were very few otters on Santa Rosa. We got altogether on this hunt 60 skins.” The group made an interesting arrangement for shelter:

On the N. E. side of the island and close to the present [1878] wharf there is a large cave. Its entrance is hardly larger than an ordinary doorway, but [the cave is] so large inside that a hundred persons could occupy it with ease. Here we kept our provisions and other supplies.

At one point twelve men made up Nidever’s party: Sparks and Black Steward; John O’Brien, Irish; — Matthews, American; Harry Plummer, English; Manuel —, Portuguese; a cook and five kanaka hunters. An incident that would prove to be a turning point in coastal otter hunting history occurred during that tour:

About the first of January [1836] Sparks and some of our men saw a brig . . . and remarked casually that they were perhaps N. W. Indians [Aleuts]. Coasting or trading vessels being frequently seen in the Channel and the N. W. Indians not having visited these parts for some time, we all took it for granted that the craft seemed to be a trading vessel. This appearance of the N. W. Indians would not have surprised us, as we knew they were likely to come at any time, and having talked the matter over long before, we had agreed to fight them at least as long as we could; to this the Portuguese also agreed. Sparks and Black Steward, while hunting together before, had been driven up into the island by these Indians and their supplies captured; but we determined to defend ours as long as it could be done.

One morning a few days after sighting the brig, we were hunting off the head of the Santa Rosa [Island]. It was very foggy, and at about 7 o’clock we started an otter and began running it towards the head of the island.

Black Steward was about 1/4 mile from shore, I was nearly opposite him and distant about 300 or 400 yds. farther out, while Sparks was between us and a little to the rear. Just as we were rounding the point the Black Steward called out, “Here come the N. W. Indians.” Sure enough, just ahead of us coming out of the fog were 5 or 6 canoes pulling with might and main to cut us off from the shore. Each canoe had two Indians and some of them a third. When Black Steward called to us, the foremost canoe was but a few hundred yards away and the other only a short distance in the rear.

¹²William Henry Ellison, Ed., *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever [1802-1883]* (Santa Barbara and Tucson: McNally & Loftin, Publishers and Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1984 [reprint of edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937]), p. 36; Holland, “Santa Rosa Island,” p. 54.

The fog had prevented us from discovering them, while our shooting had indicated to them our exact position. At the first alarm we made a straight line for the shore and our men needed no urging to exert themselves. We all made for a small cove or bay just below the point and lined with thick bushes. Black Steward was the first to reach the beach. Jumping out as soon as his boat grounded, he turned and fired on the foremost canoe, but the powder having partly escaped from his gun the ball fell short. A moment later Sparks reached shore and almost at the same time I jumped out on the beach beside him, amidst a shower of buckshot, the Indians having already opened fire. At that moment the first canoe was not over a hundred yards away and the others close behind. Sparks fired at the foremost canoe, wounding one of the Indians, who fell, but raised again just in time to receive my shot, which settled him. This was a reception they little expected and they turned back until a safe distance from us, exchanging shots with us in the meanwhile.

Nidever and his companions continued to shoot at the attackers from the cover of the bushes, killing three and wounding up to five. He stated that thirteen canoes made the attack, and that the Indians' muskets had an "incredible" range of up to a mile. The Indians retreated to the brig, now visible through the lifting fog. The three men buried their supplies and canoes in the sand and waited in hiding for any sign of invaders. Their companions on the island had hidden in the hills as they heard the noise of the attack. The group had agreed to avoid the cave so as to not give its location away.

The following morning the Indians returned in their canoes, apparently pretending to hunt along the shore near the cave.

They gradually approached the cave, passed by it, and repassed it as if without any intention of landing; finally they proceeded to a point 300 or 400 yds. below and there stopped to fish in the kelp just opposite it. Loth to lose this chance, we instructed Black Steward and O'Brien to remain and keep a lookout while we crept down to the point to get a shot at them if possible.

We reached the point unseen and were about to fire, when the men at the cave raised the cry that the Indians were landing. We ran back just in time. Just before we reached the cave Black Steward and O'Brien both fired at the two Indians in the first canoe but missed them. Our shots brought down one of them, whereupon [they] turned and put off, firing as they went. They again went off to the brig. The two days following, the brig lay becalmed, without any further attempt of the Indians to return. On the third day they sailed away and we never saw them again.

Manuel and his kanakas had taken to the hills and, thinking that his companions had been destroyed, wandered the island for days without food until returning to find his friends victorious. Nidever later found that the attacking ship had been an unlicensed British otter-hunting vessel, either the *Llama* or *Convoy* under command of "contrabandisto" Captain John Bancroft. Nidever felt that the incident "was a severe blow to the N. W. Indians who had for several years been the terror of the coast. This was the first reverse they had met with." However, Bancroft appeared undeterred and continued his illicit trade, but met an unfortunate fate almost three years later off Santa Rosa Island when, in November of 1838, his crew of

“fierce” Kaigani hunters revolted, killing him and mortally wounding his wife. The mutineers then forced the vessel to their northern homeland where they stole much of the cargo and then released the ship.¹³

Through government actions to stem illegal hunting and the reaction of Hawaiian merchants to the later Bancroft incident, the otter trade declined but not until the valued animals were virtually extinct on the California coast. The presence of Kaigani hunters ended and cattle raising replaced the maritime hunting as the main economic pursuit of the southern California coast. While Nidever did not tell of any return to Santa Rosa Island to hunt, he continued hunting in the area with his own license and later settled for a while on San Miguel Island. He is best known for his part in finding the lone woman of San Nicolas Island in 1853 and bringing her to the mainland. Nidever lived out his long life in Santa Barbara; he related his life story, quoted above, to a historian five years before his death in 1883. His son and grandson continued the family’s maritime tradition around the islands, piloting schooners and working for island owners. The cave used by Nidever’s party remains overlooking Windmill Canyon. It possesses great potential for information extraction through excavation, but is in need of repair and stabilization. Until initial post-Chumash settlement in the early 1840s, Santa Rosa Island reportedly lay empty, with no permanent human habitation and no livestock of any kind.¹⁴

Early Ranching on Santa Rosa Island

Almost exclusively, sheep and cattle ranching provided livelihood to the residents and owners of Santa Rosa Island. After initial stocking in 1844, the island livestock business grew and thrived, eventually becoming significant contributors to the wool (1870s-1901) and beef cattle (1902-1998) industries in California. The bulk of the remaining historic resources on the island are related to these endeavors.

The potential depredations of the sea otter and the profits their pelts brought inspired action in Mexico City as the government moved to protect for itself the fragile bounty of the coast and offshore islands. In the Mexican government’s attempt to “prevent numerous foreign adventurers from appropriating to themselves important portions of them, whereby they can do much injury to our fisheries, commerce, and interests . . .” it ordered in 1838 that Alta California’s governor

proceed with promptness and prudence to grant and distribute lands in the said islands to citizens who desire them, his excellency recommending that (immediately) a preference be extended to citizens [Jose] Antonio and Carlos Barrelo [Carrillo], for their important and patriotic services; and that such one of the said islands as they may select be granted to them.¹⁵

¹³Ellison, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 39-44, 107-110; Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1941), pp. 128-129. Kaigani hunters were from southeast Alaska, where they had contact with Russian settlements in that area.

¹⁴Testimony of Estevan Ortega, October 10, 1854, U. S. District Court, Case No. 117, SCIF.

¹⁵William Carey Jones, *Report on the Subject of Land Titles in California* as quoted in Adelaide LeMert Doran, *Pieces of Eight/Channel Islands: A Bibliographical Guide and Source Book* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1980), p. 192.

In following the order precisely, the Mexican government authorized an island grant to the Carrillos in January 1839 but four years would elapse before the brothers could take possession. Political turmoil had wracked Alta California since the end of Spanish rule and, especially, after the death of popular governor Jose Figueroa in 1835; disagreements between southern and northern California politicians and families added to the instability. Unfortunately, bad blood existed between the Carrillos and governor Juan Bautista Alvarado although they had once been allies in the promotion of independence from Mexican rule. The Carrillo brothers had competed with Alvarado over political control of Alta California during the previous years and the latter had prevailed. Reportedly Alvarado had also authorized the grant, but the brothers delayed filing a petition for the island, likely waiting until Alvarado would be out of power. When they did file in September 1841, Alvarado denied the petition and instead granted it to his friend and supporter (and the Carrillos' brother-in-law), Jose Castro on November 1. Castro had served Alvarado's command as a military chief and was a long-time supporter. Castro apparently made some attempts to settle on the island but the nature of these activities apparently was not recorded.

The emergence of Manuel Micheltorena as governor in 1842 boded well for the Carrillos. They re-entered their petition in 1843, explaining the intent of the original grant and the political problems with Alvarado that they felt had denied them their rightful ownership. Micheltorena heard the Carrillo petition and also accepted a protest from Castro, who on paper held legal rights to the island grant. In fact, Mexican law set a limit on the size of land grants (eleven leagues or 48,824.16 acres) awarded to one individual, and Santa Rosa Island exceeded this limit. After some deliberation, Micheltorena decided that, while Alvarado had officially granted Castro the island in 1841, the true and legal intent of the government had been to give Santa Rosa Island to the Carrillo Brothers. The parties agreed to reverse the Alvarado action, with the Carrillos paying Castro \$2,000 indemnification for his efforts in settling the island. On receipt of the payment on October 3, 1843, Castro ceded ownership in Rancho Isla de Santa Rosa and the next day Micheltorena granted Santa Rosa Island, for services rendered to the Mexican government, to Jose Antonio Carrillo and Carlos Carrillo.¹⁶

The Carrillo Family

Carlos Antonio and Jose Antonio Carrillo were two of the sons of Jose Raymundo Carrillo who arrived in Alta California as a soldier with Father Junipero Serra's first expedition in 1769. While serving in San Diego during the subsequent years, he was married by Father Serra to Tomasa Ignacia Lugo. Around 1783 Carrillo transferred to Santa Barbara where he served as a sergeant for 12 years. He eventually became *Comandante* at Monterey, then Santa Barbara, and finally returned to San Diego as Captain before his death in 1809. His children were: Maria Antonia, who married Jose de la Guerra y Noriega; Carlos Antonio, born in 1783; Jose Antonio, Anastasio and Domingo.

¹⁶Holland, "Santa Rosa Island," p. 55; Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, *History of California: Special Articles*. Volume 5 (New York: The Century History Company, [no date]), p. 145; Robert Glass Cleland, *From Wilderness to Empire, A History of California, 1542-1900* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 119; Andrew F. Rolle, *California: A History*. Second Edition. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969), p. 151.

Eldest son Carlos Carrillo followed his father in career and location, serving first from age 14 in Monterey where he became a *soldado distinguido*. In Santa Barbara he was a sergeant for 14 years from 1811 to 1825; there he gained note for protecting the area during the 1818 invasion of coastal settlements by Hippolyte de Bouchard (Carrillo's men reportedly lassoed three of Bouchard's invaders and held them as protection for Santa Barbara) and from an attack by rebel Indians in 1824. Carrillo entered political service in 1827 and was elected to Congress 1830-1832. According to a family history, he "was a member of the deputation in 1834 and 1835 [and was] *comisionado* of the Secularization of San Buenaventura Mission in 1836." At the urging of his brother Jose Antonio and in defiance of the leadership of Alvarado, authorities in Mexico City appointed Carlos Carrillo governor of Alta California in 1837; he took the radical step of moving the capital from Monterey to Los Angeles but Alvarado marched south and regained his governorship. Alvarado's military commandant Jose Castro deported the Carrillo brothers to Santa Barbara. In respect of Carrillo's place in California culture and politics, Alvarado offered protection and authorized the Santa Rosa Island grant. Carrillo was a member of the Junta in 1843 to 1845, and of the Santa Barbara *ayuntamiento* in 1849. Previous to Santa Rosa Island, he had been granted the Sespe Rancho in 1833.¹⁷

Carlos Carrillo and his wife Maria Castro had ten children: Jose, Pedro, Jose Jesus, Maria Josefa, Encarnacion, Francisca (who married Alpheus Thompson), Manuela (who married John C. Jones), Maria Antonio, and two daughters who died very young.¹⁸

"Don Carlos," according to Bancroft, "was an enthusiastic admirer of his native province, with great ideas of its destiny under proper management." However Carrillo, "an easy-going, kind-hearted man, was all at sea in matters of political management." Bancroft noted Carrillo's "treachery" in the Alvarado affair, and considered that Carrillo "deserved no sympathy [for losing the governorship], and he got none, even from his own town of Santa Barbara, until long years had caused the facts to be forgotten." He died in 1852.¹⁹

Jose Antonio Carrillo, called "the stormy petrel of Alta California politics," took a passionate interest in Mexican and California affairs during the 1830s. Carrillo had attracted the disfavor of governor Victoria in 1831 and had been exiled to Mexico. He soon sneaked back into California and gathered a revolutionary force that marched north to successfully challenge Victoria's rule. He made alliances and political deals, at one point manipulating the Mexican government to appoint his brother Carlos as governor as noted above. Carrillo found himself again exiled to Mexico after a failed attempt to unseat governor Pio Pico in 1845.²⁰

Jose and Carlos Carrillo owned Santa Rosa Island for less than a month. They received an opinion from "competent persons" on the value of the island and on November 2, 1843 sold it to Carlos' married daughters Francisca and Manuela for \$3,300, "one half in silver money of good quality and the other half

¹⁷Alonzo P. Dana, *The Dana, Carrillo, Boronda, Deleissigues and Muñoz Families in California* (privately published manuscript, 1966), p. 33; John Walton Caughey, *History of the Pacific Coast of North America*. (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1938), pp. 161-162; Robert G. Cleland, *The Place Called Sespe, The History of a California Ranch* (Privately printed: 1940), pp. 19-21, 29, 31-32, 35; Cleland, *From Wilderness to Empire*, pp. 118-119; Rolle, *California: A History*, pp. 162-163.

¹⁸Dana, *Families in California*, p. 34.

¹⁹Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California III* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1884-1890), pp. 215, 536, 543.

²⁰Cleland, *From Wilderness to Empire*, pp. 118-119, 124; Rolle, *California: A History*, pp. 151-153, 160.

in goods.” Written histories have differed on the reasons for the sale; some say that the island was a dowry to the daughters, or that the Carrillo brothers could not comply with the terms of the colonization act. Francisca’s husband later wrote that the grant was made to the Carrillos

provided they should occupy the [island] in one year as per the Colonization Act, built a House thereon, corals [sic], plant fruit trees, and place thereon cattle, horses, etc. under the pain of losing the same if not strictly complied [sic] with etc. The said two brothers were not able to comply with the terms of the Grant and sold the same to me, by making a Deed of Gift to my Wife, Daughter of [Carlos] Carrillo as the island could not be transferred out of the family; but it was found that the Colonization Act only allowed Eleven Leagues to any one Individual, and it was agreed that the Deed of Gift should be made out to my Wife and to her Sister . . . the Governor of California Don Manuel Micheltorena made the transfer together with the original Deeds from the Supreme Government of Mexico.²¹

Whatever the intent of the sale, the deed records the cash transaction. The Carrillos made a fine profit and Carlos’ sons-in-law, veteran Pacific entrepreneurs Alpheus B. Thompson and John C. Jones, received a windfall in land.²²

Jones and Thompson

In the assessment of one California historian, Alpheus B. Thompson and John C. Jones “came to Santa Barbara in the early thirties and made themselves solid with the old residents by marrying into the Carrillo family and securing a goodly slice of real estate thereby.” Indeed they and their families prospered to some extent from their connection to the Carrillos, but their co-ownership of the island would also lead to the destruction of their friendship and an unfortunate conflict in court.²³

Alpheus Basil Thompson arrived from New England in the mid-1820s and became involved in the sea trade on the Pacific Coast and Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands, largely in ships and illegal otter hunting. He married Francisca Carrillo in 1834. William Henry Dana described the couple in *Two Years Before the Mast*: “[He] had been many years a trader on the coast, and had married a . . . delicate, dark-complexioned young woman, and of one of the best families in California.” Thompson’s brother Francis was reportedly the Captain of the *Alert*, which carried Dana on his famous voyage.

John Coffin Jones came to Honolulu from Boston in the late 1820s. From about 1829 to 1839 he acted as the United States Consul for the Sandwich Islands, and ran an active trade between those islands and the mainland:

With a large inheritance from his father, Jones . . . entered the maritime trade on his own account in 1830. As captain or supercargo of his own vessels, he made many voyages to

²¹Alpheus Thompson to Timothy Wolcott, Esq., June 12, 1857, typescript in Santa Barbara Historical Society.

²²Owen H. O’Neill, Editor-in Chief, *History of Santa Barbara County, State of California: The People and Its Resources* (Santa Barbara: Harold McLean Meier, 1939), p. 366.

²³C. M. Gidney, Benjamin Brooks and Edwin M. Sheridan, *History of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties California*, Volume I (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1917), p. 66.

California during the next decade, developing an extensive but not always lucrative trade on the American Coast.²⁴

Jones owned some eight vessels for Pacific trade, during which many controversies arose around smuggling and business ventures gone bad. He apparently felt the need to get away from Honolulu. Leaving two wives and a number of children in Hawaii, Jones sailed with his belongings to Santa Barbara in 1837. After being baptized into the Catholic faith, he married eighteen-year-old Manuela Carrillo at Mission Santa Barbara on June 4, 1838; Alpheus and Francisca Thompson acted as witnesses. The couple, which had met some years earlier, returned to Hawaii for almost two years, then settled down in Santa Barbara. Jones, however, traveled widely and was rarely at home.²⁵

Jones and Thompson had a long partnership in both legal and illicit activities during the 1830s and early 1840s. They purchased the *Convoy* in 1831, which they used for many years hunting otter along the coast and at the Channel Islands. In 1832 the two and their cohorts sailed the *Crusader* on a successful otter hunting expedition with Kaigani hunters from Norfolk Sound, delivering pelts to Honolulu. The *Convoy* may have been the ship whose occupants attacked George Nidever on Santa Rosa Island in 1836.

There is little doubt that Thompson and Jones had an interest in the island rather than their wives. Their influence may have spurred the transfer from father and uncle to Francisca and Manuela. Soon after the transfer, Thompson invited a party of influential associates to the island for the purpose of attaining formal possession. Captain James Stevens told of the trip to the island, which occurred on December 2, 1843:

I was Captain of Thompson's brig *Bolivar Liberator* . . . I went to the island of Santa Rosa in the said brig in the latter part of November 1843 or the first of December. I went to the island to take possessions to the island for Mr. Thompson. I took the Alcalde of Santa Barbara, Don Tomas Robbins, Thomas Park, Mr. Covarrubias, Mr. Robbins and Mr. Stevens as passengers. I took over material for building a house on the island for Mr. Thompson . . . Possession was given by the Alcalde to Thompson through Captain Robbins.²⁶

Almost a year later, Jones brought 270 head of cattle, 51 ewes, two rams and nine horses to Santa Rosa Island, apparently purchased from his father-in-law and his wife's uncle, Carlos and Anastacio Carrillo; one vaquero later testified that the cattle bore Carrillo's brand and ear marks. Thompson and hired man Estevan Ortega transported them from Nicholas Den's wharf at Dos Pueblos rancho to Santa Rosa Island on the partners' schooner *Bolivar* during a number of trips in September of 1844. This would be the first livestock placed on the island unless Castro had done so previously, which is doubtful. To fulfill the terms of the grant, Thompson had Ortega and the crew of the *Bolivar* build a house and corral or two the following month. Thompson located the house in a protected cove between Skunk Point and East Point, a

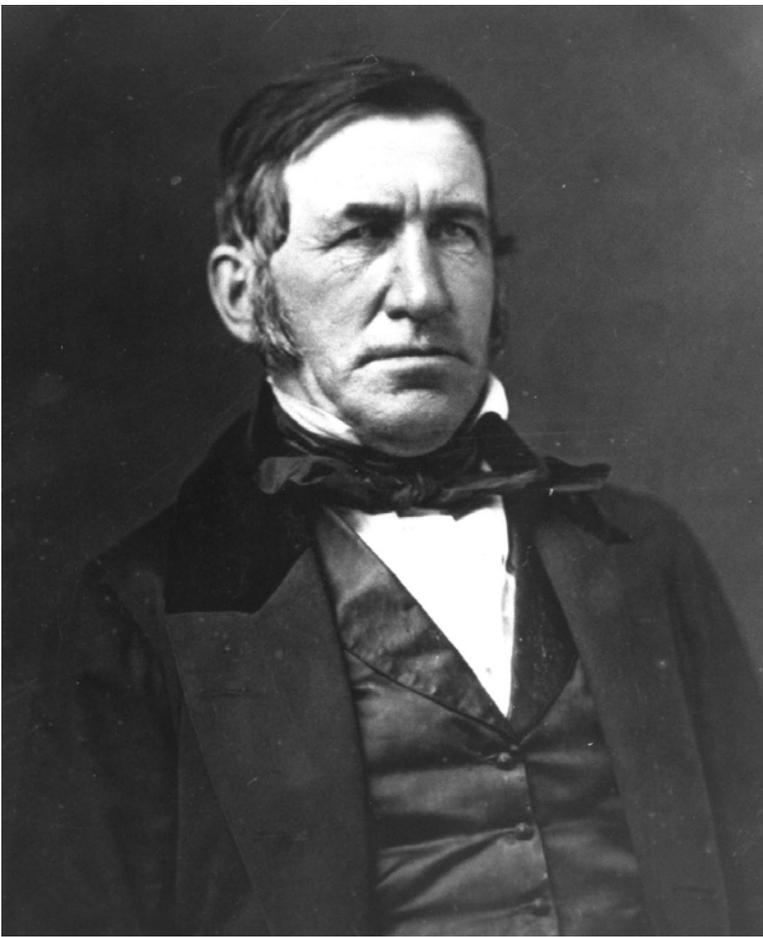
²⁴Ross H. Gast, *Contentious Consul: A Biography of John Coffin Jones* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1976), p. 8.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 159, 167-171.

²⁶Deposition of James Stevens, October 10, 1854, U. S. District Court, Case No. 117, SCIF. The date of this journey is revealed in "Petition of Manuela Carrillo de Jones et al," Halleck, Peachy & Billings Collection, Box 2, HM 42993, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.



John C. Jones, business partner of Alpheus Thompson. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



Alpheus Thompson, the first rancher on Santa Rosa Island.
Santa Barbara Historical Society

location known since as Rancho Viejo or Old Ranch. Ortega later testified that the wood plank house measured 24 feet by 15 and was nine feet high, with a shingle roof and a single glass window. In November 1844 Captain Stevens took James Powell and four kanakas to the island “for the purpose of looking after Mr. Thompson’s cattle that were on the island.” At that time he reported an unoccupied house and a corral, with livestock seen in the surrounding hills.²⁷

Alpheus Thompson spent the next ten years overseeing the island ranch, although how often he visited the island or to what extent he managed it has not been documented. John C. Jones appeared to have other things on his mind. California life, one of Mexican culture and dry weather, had never satisfied Jones: at one point he wrote, “Had I not a wife to keep me comfortable in this desolate quarter of the globe . . . I would be strongly tempted to hasten my departure from this land of sorrows by force, wither by pistol or brandy;” another time he complained, “I would to God that I was in America [New England] with my family.” Business with Thompson produced little profit, as the otter trade waned through depredation and Santa Barbara declined as a port of any importance; and Jones apparently had no interest in the Santa Rosa Island ranch. So, in January of 1846 Jones and his family sailed to Boston, leaving Alfred Robinson as his agent for his business affairs in California.²⁸

Thompson’s ranch operation employed a handful of men. After the kanaka cowboys left around 1845 or 1846, he hired Ignacio Valenzuela and two Indian vaqueros. Valenzuela only stayed a year, and a succession of laborers apparently staffed the island.

Francisca Carrillo de Thompson died without a will on February 26, 1851, leaving her husband and six children. On August 29 and 30, 1853, Thompson “caused to be marked with the brand and earmark of my aforesaid children on the Island of Santa Rosa one hundred and twenty six cows or vaquellas between the age of one and three years,” effectively deeding an interest in his island livestock to them. Less than five years later Thompson gave responsibility for the four minor children to guardian Charles E. Huse.²⁹

On May 17, 1853, Thompson’s nephew Dixey W. Thompson started working as island “Mayor Domo” or superintendent for \$100 per month. He had reportedly taken 3,000 sheep off the island the previous year aboard Thompson’s schooner *Sophia*, and spent six months operating the boat transporting livestock to and from the island between March and October 1852. In May of 1853 Dixey Thompson loaned his uncle \$3,000 to purchase a schooner, *Prince de Joinville*, to serve the island ranch. Thompson wrote to his uncle on November 26, 1853, reporting conditions on Santa Rosa Island and requesting supplies:

The lame cattle are all together, they are turned out early in the morning to plenty of grass, water’d twice a day and put in the corral after the sun goes down; all but some of the older ones keep rather poor preferring to travel about rather than stay in one place and fill themselves as the smaller ones do: so full they can hardly walk.

The corral is enlarged two fifths and is much better than before, when the cattle were crowded and driving one another about to get more room. Now they enter and remain still.

²⁷Alpheus Thompson to Timothy Wolcott, Esq., June 12, 1857, typescript in Santa Barbara Historical Society; testimony of Estevan Ortega and Salvador Garcia, and Deposition of James Stevens, October 10, 1854, U. S. District Court, Case No. 117, SCIF; Gast, *Contentious Consul*, p. 189.

²⁸Gast, *Contentious Consul*, pp. 169, 179-183, 185.

²⁹Deeds Book A, p. 267, SBCRO.

A greate many of the wilde cattle are down on the mesa and about the olde house; some come in sight from here.

. . . I have heard you speak of having a corral built at the Canyiada Verde, by what I have observed it would be greatly to your interest for many reasons all of which you are aware. Firstly, it would be about three miles nearer the anchorage than the olde one, the horses would be handy and in the best grass & have much more time to feed, less distance to travel, save more than two hours of the men's time a day and be much nearer the place of work. But what I was going to say was perhaps it might be forwarding things a little if I could have a few men and get a corral underweigh there this winter. The bank of the hill will answer well for one side, there may be wood not far off for the others. The men who were here last summer will know about that or there could be boards dragged out from here being but two steep hills to go up and then may be made tolerably easy an ascent.³⁰

Dixey Thompson noted that Mr. Kimball was there on a hunting trip and would take mail and some fresh beef when he leaves; if the boat didn't come he suggested putting Kimball to work. Louis or Luis Garcia, someone known as "Pan de Dulce" and an "Indean" lived on the islands with Thompson at the time of the letter. The shopping list included food and coffee, soap, matches, paper, clothing including "Unions," shoes and needle and thread. Two weeks later Thompson added, "the cattle are looking well, better than could be expected, considering the distance they have to be drove to graze and water these days. There has been a few days of very thick fog, in such weather I am rather short handed requiring all of us to keep the cattle together and not to lock up the horses!"

Dixey Thompson's letter seems to indicate that the corral out on the island was located at what was later called Arlington Canyon. In the early days that location was called Cañada Corral. Thompson mentions the "olde house" which leads one to believe that a second house had been built on the island. By 1855 Thompson had built a house farther north on the east side of the island, near the location of the current ranch buildings.³¹

Thompson worked for his uncle as island superintendent for almost two years, from May 1853 to April 1855. A biography of the man noted that he spent those years "hunting and shipping stock. The cattle had grown to be nearly as wild as buffalo, and were far more dangerous. The males were caught, castrated, and disarmed, that is, their horns chopped off, so as to render them harmless." Dixey Thompson left the island to pursue farming on land he owned near Ventura. His uncle owed him all his wages and the \$3,000 Dixey had loaned to him, a situation that would later complicate island matters.³²

Details of the nature of the Santa Rosa Island livestock operation during the 1840s and 1850s are few. The 1840s cattle trade was almost exclusively in hides and tallow with very little meat production except

³⁰D. W. Thompson to Alpheus Thompson, November 26, 1853, collection of Santa Barbara Historical Society, reprinted in Kerry Blankenship Allen, Editor, *Island of the Cowboys: Santa Rosa Island*, Occasional Paper Number 7 (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Santa Rosa Island Chapter, 1996), pp. 17-18. While Dixey Thompson's name has been popularly spelled Dixie, this author uses the spelling found in contemporary court documents, including Thompson's signature found in the Stearns Collection, Huntington Library.

³¹Kerry Blankenship Allen, "Isla de los Vaqueros: The Ranching History of Santa Rosa Island 1843-Present." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*. Vol. 40, Number 2, 1995, p. 7; survey by William Greenwell in 1860, RG 23, Description of Stations, Box 148, Book 25047, NA(CP). The survey sketches show a house and corral at the mouth of Water Canyon and a corral at the current ranch site, and Greenwell describes the existence of a small house in addition to the corral at the current ranch site.

³²Abel Stearns Collection, Box 87, Folder 12, Huntington Library; Thompson and West, *History*, no pp.

for domestic use. Mexican cattle stock, called “black cattle” by many, tended to be small-bodied and long-legged, with horns “sharp and surprisingly wide-spread.” Typical cattle of early California ran wild until needed for slaughter. Thompson, being a seasoned coastal trader, likely produced at least hides, as well as wool and mutton, but no records of this activity have been found. Dairy products had almost no market in Mexican California. After the discovery of gold in 1848 and the subsequent gold rush lasting well into the 1850s, beef, cheese and butter came into demand in San Francisco and the gold fields. Again, no records show whether this affected the Santa Rosa Island ranch business. Apparently sales of livestock off the island were few, and the time under Thompson was largely spent increasing the herds.³³

When California attained statehood in 1850 the U. S. government found it necessary to legalize by American law the land titles passing from the Mexican government. The Secretary of State had commissioned William Carey Jones to investigate the status of Mexican land grants in California the previous year. He returned to Washington and produced a report that found that most titles in the state were legal under the laws of Mexico. Congress passed a bill in March of 1851 creating a commission to which claimants of Mexican grants would present evidence of the existence of the particular grant and their compliance with the legal terms involved; the landowners had two years to prepare and present their case. Through the prominent San Francisco law firm Halleck, Peachy and Billings, specialists in land grant law, Manuela Carrillo de Jones and the heirs of Francisca Carrillo de Thompson filed a claim for the island on March 22, 1852. The petition stated that the owners possessed and occupied the island, “having on it a large stock of sheep, cattle and horses, that they have on it houses and other valuable improvements, cultivating portions of it for the support of themselves, their herdsmen and servants.” The petitioners filed copies of the original grant from Micheltorena, the deed conveying the island to the daughters, and the form of juridical possession given to Manuela and Francisca “by proper authority.”³⁴

The Commission rejected their claim on November 15, 1853, finding that the claimants had failed to prove that the grant was valid. Pacificus Ord, the United States Attorney for the Southern District, based in Monterey, wrote a list of twenty reasons for which in his opinion the petition should be denied, including that the grant would have been in violation of the 4th Article of the Colonization Laws of Mexico (in that the land was within ten leagues of the seacoast, and that it had not been proven that the government had authorization to grant islands), lack of proof and a map (*diseño*), various technicalities, and some erroneous accusations towards the grantees and their family. Ord asked for denial of the claim, and to “decree costs against [the petitioners] and general relief.”³⁵

Lawyers for the Jones and Thompson families collected witnesses to testify on behalf of the claimants, and appealed to the U. S. District Court with a filing on April 30, 1854. That October a number of witnesses testified or submitted depositions, all stating that Alpheus Thompson had indeed built a house and stocked the island with cattle and other livestock. Estevan Ortega told of sailing with Thompson to the

³³Robert Glass Cleland, *History of California: The American Period* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926), pp. 38-39.

³⁴Eldredge, *History of California*, pp. 149-150; Holland, “Santa Rosa Island,” pp. 56-57; Case Number 117, 56, S. D., 313. in Ogden Hoffman, District Judge, *Report of Land Cases Determined in the United States District Court for the District of California. June Term, 1853 to June Term, 1858, Inclusive. Volume I* (San Francisco: Numa Hubert, 1862), Appendix p. 17.

³⁵“An Answer of Appellee [in California Land Claims Case 117 (S. D. 56)]” in Halleck, Peachy and Billings Collection, Box 2, HM 42992, Huntington Library.

island in September 1844 with 270 head of cattle, and of building a house the following month. He claimed to have visited the island a couple of other times with Thompson, and how “vaqueros used to go over to the island annually for the purpose of marking and ironing [branding] the cattle.” Salvador Garcia testified that he had witnessed the transport of cattle to the island from Nicholas Den’s rancho, and that he had been employed for three months in 1852 or 1853 as a vaquero for Thompson. And James Stevens made a deposition stating that he took Thompson and others to the island to take possession of the island in 1843, bringing building materials for a house. The following year Stevens delivered the four *Kanaka* vaqueros and saw the house, corral and livestock.³⁶

Swayed by the testimony presented, the District Court confirmed the title on January 18, 1856. An appeal by the Land Commission was dismissed February 5, 1857, providing clear title to Santa Rosa Island for Jones and Thompson. It took many years for a plat map of the grant to be filed. U. S. Deputy Surveyor H. B. Edwards surveyed the island and produced the map in April of 1862, miscalculating the size of the island as 62,696.49 acres. The plat was approved by the General Land Office in 1871 and filed July 20, 1874. The map shows only the boundary, or coastline of the island, but notes “salt ponds” at the old ranch site and calls Bechers Bay “Harbor of the Corral Grande.”³⁷

Meanwhile, Jones experienced both financial and health problems in Boston. He had successfully received some of his wife’s inheritance with the help of Robinson, and beginning in 1855 sought to claim some income from the Santa Rosa Island operation, one in which he had apparently taken little or no part. He had Robinson investigate the island business, noting that partner Thompson had never furnished any capital towards the operation and had rarely accounted for the state of the livestock business there. Robinson found that Thompson had sold “a large number” of livestock without forwarding any of the proceeds to Jones. Jones sued Thompson in 1855 for an accounting of the island’s assets, retaining attorney Charles Fernald in Santa Barbara and W. A. Washburn in Boston to act as liaison.³⁸

Santa Barbarans took sides in the dispute, perhaps tipping the scales in Thompson’s favor. Fernald petitioned the court for a change of venue. A judge transferred the suit to the Third District Court in Monterey, where a preliminary hearing was set for the summer session of 1856. Fernald and Robinson gathered and interviewed numerous people and carefully selected witnesses that could help their case. They solicited Carlos Carrillo, his brother Anastacio and rancher Nicholas Den to testify that Jones paid for the livestock, and found evidence that Jones paid for their transport as well. Fernald collected depositions stating that Thompson sold a large quantity of livestock in 1851. Jones wrote to Fernald in April 1856 warning, “Mr. Thompson is capable of doing deeds of the blackest dye to effect his purpose . . . his honor he has long since lost.” Jones accused Thompson of having “villainous designs of plundering me and my family . . .”³⁹

³⁶Case Number 117, 56, S. D., 313, Bancroft Library.

³⁷“Plat of the Island of Santa Rosa Finally Confirmed to M. C. de Jones et al,” copy at SCIF.

³⁸Gast, *Contentious Consul*, p. 9, 187.

³⁹Gast, *Contentious Consul*, pp. 188-189; letter, John C. Jones to Hon. Charles Fernald, April 19, 1856 quoted in C. Rogers, Editor, *A County Judge in Arcady: Selected Private Papers of Charles Fernald, Pioneer California Jurist* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1954), pp. 106, 108.

Jones later wrote to Fernald about pursuing the use of second-hand information against Thompson, and revealed what may have been paranoia about his former partner's intentions: "I have no doubt myself now that A.B.T. has for years—even before I left California myself—been laying his plans and concocting his designs to place me at his mercy. God forbid that his nefarious purposes may be successful!"⁴⁰

For his part Thompson reportedly collected witnesses and felt confident that the suit would fail. But he wrote despairingly to an attorney in 1857, claiming that he alone developed the island with no help from Jones:

In the year 1844 I stocked the said Island with Cattle, Sheep & Horses, built one House & two corals. Since which time I have built another House, and a number of corals in various parts of the Island, placed a large number of Brood mares thereon together with a fine American stallion, a lot of hogs, rabbits [sic] etc. Have employed a vessel every year to transport my people to and from the Island with implements and provisions; Having paid the men high wages each year⁴¹

Thompson complained of the expenses incurred in defending the island title, having "paid heavy amounts to my lawyers, as also to my Witnesses which for their time, passages on steam boats, stages, Hotel Bills, for Board, together with my time & expenses has cost me a large sum of money." Thompson claimed to have then sold some cattle and sheep to pay some of the expenses, which he felt was justified. "This same Jones nor his wife never expended one dollar on the Island nor on any thing thereon, neither have they given one hour's time in any way or manner" He later did not deny that Jones had paid for the livestock but considered that Jones had an obligation in their care, which he failed to meet. He also claimed to have received, as part of the inheritance from his parents-in-law the Carrillos and thence his late wife, 126 cows which he had placed on the island and which increased to about 600 head at the time of the injunction. After being ordered by the court to sell 200 cows to provide for his children, and arriving on the island with seven vaqueros to collect them, he was halted by the Jones injunction and forced to leave the island empty-handed.⁴²

The court sided with Jones, awarding him \$7,370.80 from Thompson's assets. In the summer of 1857 the judge appointed W. G. Graves as referee, and a receiver, Abel Stearns. Graves, after investigating the matter further,

reported to the Court that Thompson had marketed livestock having a value of \$23,300, but that his management costs had been \$40,000. He also found that there remained on the island, undisposed of, 8,000 cattle having a value of \$98,000, 2,300 sheep having a value of \$10,000 and 235 horses worth \$6,000, a total of \$114,000.⁴³

Meanwhile, the interests of Thompson's children came forward again as their guardian Huse petitioned the court for money for the children's "maintenance and education" claiming that the children "are deeply in debt . . . [their] father is unable to maintain them out of his own estate." The court ordered

⁴⁰John C. Jones to Hon. Charles Fernald, August 4, 1856 quoted in *A County Judge in Arcady*, p. 111.

⁴¹Alpheus Thompson to Timothy Wolcott, Esq., June 12, 1857, typescript in Santa Barbara Historical Society.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Gast, *Contentious Consul*, p. 190.

that the guardian sell livestock on the island to satisfy the claim and on June 15, 1858, Santa Barbara rancher T. Wallace More purchased an undisclosed quantity of livestock for \$8,756, which would be the beginning of a transfer of property, and eventually the entire island, to members of the More family.⁴⁴

The year 1858 saw many such activities as Thompson's and Jones' interests in the island livestock were liquidated. Receiver Abel Stearns hired Los Angeles cattle rancher Jacob Metzger at ten dollars a day to travel to Santa Rosa Island, make an inventory and take possession of the livestock for the court. Stearns placed ads in four California newspapers, in English and Spanish, soliciting proposals for the sale of Santa Rosa Island livestock. The inventory found, as of mid-June of 1858, the following: about 8,000 bullock, large and small, of which 1,600 to 1,800 were termed "ganado rodeaus" or semi-wild cattle suitable for rodeo; about 1,600 to 1,800 castrated cattle; 6,000 to 7,000 sheep "all in a very wild state"; 250-300 horses, 25 of which were saddle horses, 25 broken mares, 50 to 60 colts, the remainder mares and small colts. None of the stock had been castrated since about 1855, indicating that the ranch had been neglected for some years. The pasture conditions were found to be poor on the south side of the island where most of the cattle were:

Regarding the pasturage on the Island, there is very little grass on the south side of the island where the cattle were then grazing, not enough for their support. On the northwest and west sides of the Island the pasturage is more abundant and if driven thither the cattle would find sufficient pasturage.

The water is abundant for all purposes, there is only one corral and that in a very indifferent condition, and there is no timber on the Island with which to repair it.⁴⁵

Stearns estimated that it would take up to 30 vaqueros and 150 horses to gather and properly divide the livestock over a period of a year, and the activity would require corrals to be built, one on the east end, one on the northwest and two on the south side. He advised against moving cattle at the time, "as to run them over the island would be to incur a risk of losing a great many animals . . . the stock is already over-abundant for the present condition of the island."

Alfred Robinson negotiated another sale of Santa Rosa Island livestock to T. W. More for \$35,000 on July 3, 1858, being an interest in "all the horned cattle, sheep, horses and mares, or livestock of what class soever there may be" and rights to enter the island "for all necessary and lawful purposes" connected with the cattle operation for which he would pay \$250 annually. The payment schedule for the livestock provided for a \$12,000 down payment with smaller payments over the course of a year. Stearns sold More an additional lot of stock on July 13 for \$8,020: 500 steers at \$10 each, 200 cows with calves for the same price, and 170 heifers at \$6 each; these were to be removed from the island. Stearns had branded the outgoing cattle with his own brand as receiver, registered in Santa Barbara as part of his duties in the court case.

⁴⁴"In the Matter of the Guardianship of the Minor Children of Francisca Carrillo de Thompson, Deceased" in Stearns Collection, Box 87, Folder 12, Huntington Library.

⁴⁵[Abel Stearns] to The Hon. C. P. Hester, District Judge, August 9, 1858, in Stearns Collection, Box 87, Folder 12, Huntington Library. The following narrative of the dissolution of Thompson's estate is derived from papers in this collection. The newspapers in which advertisements appeared were the *Southern Vineyard* and *Clamor Publica* in Los Angeles, the *Santa Barbara Gazette*, and the *San Francisco Herald*.

Stearns ran into a number of roadblocks while trying to carry out his job in July and August 1858. He received an injunction in the name of Dixey Thompson, which halted the transport of livestock from the island; Dixey claimed his past debt with Alpheus Thompson. And former Thompson associates Lewis Burton and Harvey Blake (incidentally, friends of Dixey Thompson's) made claims of their own against Thompson, further delaying the procedures. At one point Stearns alleged that Blake "hindered and delayed" the transport of Metzger to the island by hiring all the available boats in Santa Barbara to stymie his passage; after a few days a boat came into harbor that Metzger could hire before Blake got there. In frustration Stearns resigned, but then changed his mind. Metzger made another trip to the island with ten vaqueros (who were paid \$2.00 per day) and carpenters who constructed corrals. A delay in obtaining transportation back to the mainland provided seven days for the hired hands to castrate 625 bulls and 42 horses. Two vaqueros remained on the island for three months to watch the livestock.

Blake and Burton's claim had been filed four years earlier, on November 20, 1855, to recover the sum of \$9,268 from Alpheus Thompson. They obtained a writ of attachment that levied all stock on the island and so Sheriff Joaquin de la Guerra prepared a livestock sale to pay the debt. These activities moved slowly, however, and the case of Jones vs. Thompson interfered, showing the claimants that the livestock actually belonged to both Thompson and Jones. Blake and Burton petitioned for resolution of the matter, as Stearns was about to sell livestock that should have been in the possession of de la Guerra to satisfy Blake and Burton's claim. They charged the sheriff with "disregarding and neglecting his office" in participating in a sale to More. The Third District Court threw out Blake and Burton's claim, dissolving their writ on August 14, 1858.

Dixey Thompson's injunction had more success than his fellow claimants. On July 13, 1858 he filed a complaint against John C. Jones, Alpheus Thompson and his heirs, their guardian Charles Huse, T. Wallace More and Abel Stearns. Thompson claimed that an 1855 judgment in his favor on a \$9,374.14 debt from Alpheus Thompson was still valid and applied to all having financial interests in the island operation, and that the parties currently dividing up Jones' and Thompson's assets were therefore working illegally. On September 21 he obtained a Writ of Execution from the district court in Santa Barbara, which placed a levy on 7,000 head of cattle, 5,000 sheep, 259 horses and mares and 200 hogs on the island. The sheriff ordered Stearns to sell "all interests of Alpheus Thompson" to satisfy the suit. Metzger and Sheriff de la Guerra traveled to the island to make the inventory. A sale would occur "at the house on the said Island near to the embarcadero," and probably did not involve the entire number of livestock on the island. After a couple of delays, the sale occurred on January 18, 1859. The buyer: T. W. More for \$14,000.

More had received the last of his initial purchase of Jones/Thompson livestock by the end of September. He asked Stearns to allow him to remove the stock from the island but the poor condition of the cattle and range would not allow it. Stearns sent fifteen vaqueros to the island in early November to join the two already there, to break horses, a difficult task because they were found to be "in rather poor condition for want of feed." The dry conditions reported in August had persisted on the island:

No rain had fallen during this month and the feed was very short and scanty and the cattle in a dangerous condition, their insular position rendering removal to better pasture impossible. A part of the men were also employed in enclosing a projecting point of land containing about 1000 acres by a ditch of about a mile in length to serve as an enclosure for wild cattle.

Another month of dry weather forced Stearns to discharge the vaqueros in December, but he retained “one Spaniard and 10 Indians” to tame 65 mares and colts. He recommended that sheep could be removed from the island as the owners waited for adequate rain to return the cattle herd to health. Of this he showed great concern:

The Receiver would respectfully urge the necessity of reducing the number of cattle on the island as soon as practicable, as in his opinion, it is very considerably and seriously overstocked, and much loss must ensue if the whole number is suffered to remain another season. There will also be serious loss now unless abundant rain should soon fall.

Stearns again submitted his resignation in December of 1858 and again changed his mind. By this time the whole case was coming to an end. In June 1859 Stearns had a wharf constructed, presumably at Bechers Bay near or at the present site of the pier. George R. Barclay, captain of the steamer *Goliah*, constructed the wharf for a fee of \$500 plus almost \$1,500 in materials. Stearns, now represented by his agent, none other than Dixey Thompson, eventually transported much of the livestock (almost 6,500 head of cattle, 300 horses and 2,300 sheep) off the island on the *Goliah* into More’s hands, who drove them from Gaviota to Rancho San Julian near Lompoc. Many of them, “owing to the exhausted and worn out condition of the animals,” died after removal, and more died in a severe storm that hit the mainland in December, a storm that also hampered removal efforts and resulted in a loss of livestock from the boat. Almost 2,000 cattle, 1,400 sheep and 19 horses remained on the island as of the end of the year, but half of them died, and the wharf was destroyed in the storm. More ended up owning all of the island livestock, and meanwhile had purchased a share of the island itself. Burton and Blake again sued Stearns and others involved in the settlement, but again failed. Finally, at the end of 1860, the beleaguered Abel Stearns was discharged and paid for his services.⁴⁶

During the lawsuit Jones became seriously ill, and spent about five years “physically incapacitated.” He died on December 24, 1861, leaving his share in the island and the proceeds of the litigation to his heirs: one-half share to his widow and one-half to his children. Manuela Carrillo de Jones remarried and died in France in 1900.⁴⁷

The sale of cattle to T. W. More sparked events that would result in the transfer of the entire island property to More and members of his family, and the transition from a cattle-dominated ranch to a sheep ranch. But Thompson’s troubles weren’t limited to losing his livestock. He had mortgaged his one-quarter interest in the island to Stephen Reynolds and, upon the latter’s death, the administrator of Reynolds’ estate sued for settlement of the debt. The court ruled in favor of the estate, issued a Writ of Execution that seized Thompson’s share in the island property; Sheriff de la Guerra auctioned that share on October 5, 1858 from the steps of the courthouse. The buyer: T. Wallace More, who submitted the high bid of \$3,000. More

⁴⁶Documents in Stearns Collection; Gast, *Contentious Consul*, pp. 190-192; Cleland, *Sespe*, p. 88. The *New York Times* reported that the transport of livestock from the island would require four or five months (July 21, 1859). Stearns’ list of materials for the wharf construction contains, amusingly interspersed amongst lumber, spikes etc., 23 gallons of brandy, five of whiskey and two demijohns of gin. Abel Stearns is remembered in Santa Barbara largely for the landmark Stearns Wharf at the foot of State Street.

⁴⁷Gast, *Contentious Consul*, pp. 9, 197; Deeds Book D, pp. 581-584, SBCRO.

took possession in 1859, after a six-month period had lapsed “without any redemption of the said premises having been made.”⁴⁸

According to assessment records, in 1860 T. W. More’s one-fourth interest in Santa Rosa Island was valued at \$3,125, and on the island he had stocked 1,000 head of cattle (valued at \$3,000), 2,000 sheep (\$1,500) and 100 horses (\$500). Prominent Santa Barbara resident and ranch owner Col. W. W. Hollister wrote to his associate Albert Dibblee the following year proposing to buy Santa Rosa Island from More for \$20,000, as well as the other interests for a similar amount. Hollister wrote that “. . . it is as a sheep ranch the best in the county . . . free from wild animals, already fenced, —plenty of water, good climate, —no burrs . . .” He offered to provide 8,000 sheep to the venture, and proposed to “Buy a little steamer, let her do coasting trade enough to pay her way among neighboring nations and set up a little Confederacy upon the Pacific of our own.” Hollister and Dibblee did not act on the idea; they had enough property of their own in the Lompoc and Santa Barbara vicinities to keep them busy.⁴⁹

More Family Ownership

Next to sell to a member of the More family would be Manuela Carrillo de Jones and her children, following the death of John C. Jones. Through the administrator of Jones’ estate, R. P. Washburn, the family sold their half share in Santa Rosa Island to A. P. More for \$18,000 on February 15, 1865. A. P. More was the younger brother of T. W. More, who was married to another of Carlos Carrillo’s daughters. Now the Mores owned three-fourths undivided interest in the island. The Carrillo family had other ties, perhaps not happy ones, with the Mores. Joaquin and Jose Antonio Carrillo had mortgaged their 38,335-acre Rancho Lompoc to Henry and T. Wallace More in 1855; the Mores took possession of the ranch in 1862 after the Carrillos defaulted on the mortgage, and T. W. More bought Carrillo’s Rancho Sespe in the Santa Clara Valley near Ventura at a probate sale.⁵⁰

There followed a number of transactions amongst the Thompson heirs concerning their one-quarter share. With the island now owned in majority by the Mores, the Thompson sons and daughters no doubt felt some pressure to divest themselves of the property. In November of 1868 Mary Isabel Thompson transferred her interest to her brother Francis for one dollar. Alpheus Thompson died in Los Angeles in 1869, and most of his family’s interest in the island was sold that year. On the 26th of August Charles A. Thompson sold his share, for one thousand dollars, to A. P. More, and less than a week later his brother Albert sold his to A. P. for the same price. Albert had written to his brother-in-law and business partner John F. Dana on July 1, 1869, obviously frustrated about the More takeover and the general state of the island:

⁴⁸Deeds Book C, pages 288-290, SBCRO.

⁴⁹Assessment quotes in Robert Glass Cleland, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1951), pp. 120-121; Col. W. W. Hollister to A. Dibblee Esq., February 8, 1861, Santa Barbara Historical Society.

⁵⁰Deeds Book D, pp. 581-584, SBCRO; A. Dibblee Poett, *Rancho San Julian: The Story of a California Ranch and its People* (Santa Barbara: Fithian Press/Santa Barbara Historical Society, 1991, p. 58; Cleland, *Sespe*, pp. 29, 84.

I have this day sold to Alexander P. More, my right, title and interest to the Santa Rosa Island, for the sum of \$1,000.00. I think that Charles will also sell for the same price very soon. If you want to dispose of your interest in the Island I can negotiate it for you with Mr. More. I think that I was lucky in getting that amount for the same.

The Island has never yielded us anything, could not sell to nobody but More, could not sustain an action, and if More did not want to purchase it he could enjoy the possession of the same for a lifetime without interruption.

The letter seemed to indicate that the Thompsons maintained no physical presence on the island whereas the Mores did. Come May of 1870 Francis, his sister Helen Tyng and her husband sold their interest to More for three thousand dollars gold coin on the first, and Caroline Dana and her husband John followed suit for one thousand dollars on the 26th. Thus, for \$6,000 the heirs of Alpheus Thompson had passed one quarter of the island to A. P. More; for another half he paid \$18,000. Almost three years previously, as a result of dissatisfaction among the brothers leading to the dissolution of their joint holdings, brother T. W. had transferred his interest to A. P. for one dollar; A. P. More's investment in the entire property of Santa Rosa Island amounted to \$24,001.⁵¹

A. P. More's full ownership lasted less than half a month, for on June 15, 1870 he sold one undivided half interest in the island to his brother Henry H. More, for \$100. The More brothers then operated the island jointly for the next eleven years.⁵²

Thomas Wallace More and his brother, Alexander P. More, came from near Akron, Ohio to California in 1849 to work the mines; their brother Henry joined them the following year. According to popular histories, the brothers labored for wages of \$16 a day until purchasing a stake in a mine at Mokelumne Hill. They put their profits into cattle ranches on the southern coast and in Mexico and drove beef cattle to the mines, making a great deal of money in the undertaking. The Mores purchased extensive land holdings on the southern California coast, including the La Purisima and Mission Viejo, Sespe, and the Santa Paula and Saticoy ranchos. Santa Rosa Island would be the family's fourth large land purchase in the region in less than a decade. Their brother John F. More had purchased a ranch rich in asphaltum and of rich pasturage at Goleta north of Santa Barbara; More's Landing there would figure prominently in the operations of Santa Rosa Island.⁵³

The More ranch developed into a sheep operation, reportedly because of a shortage of labor. The 1860s had been rough for southern California ranching, as a drought early in the decade had doomed cattle and sheep ranches across the state. How Santa Rosa Island fared at that time has not been determined, but T. W. More apparently had the island lightly stocked and the drought may not have had much effect. The Mores abandoned the old Thompson ranch near East Point, instead developing their headquarters at the location of Thompson's second building at Bechers Bay. More descendant Charles Storke surmised that

⁵¹Deeds Books F, pp. 356-357 and 724-725; Book G, pp. 670-671 and 710-711; Book H, pp. 684-686; Book I, pp. 61-62, SBCRO; Albert F. Thompson to John F. Dana, Esq., June 1, 1869, courtesy of Santa Barbara Historical Society; Ellison, *Life and Adventures*, footnote 88, p. 106; Cleland, *Sespe*, p. 89. Albert Thompson states in the letter that Charles had not yet sold, although the deed for Charles' sale is dated a week before Albert's.

⁵²Deeds Book I, pp. 87-88. SBCRO; oral history interview with Charles Storke, January 8, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF. T. W. More lived on his Sespe Ranch until being murdered there by squatters while attempting to save his burning barn.

⁵³Gidney et al, *Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties*, pp. 487-488.

the cove at the old ranch did not have favorable wind for schooner traffic, leading owners, perhaps as early as Thompson, to build at the Northwest Anchorage.⁵⁴

Under A. P. and H. H. More, the island saw its most ambitious development to date. The Mores shipped thousands of sheep to the island and by the early 1870s had a sheep operation of formidable size. An 1873 newspaper reported that the Mores were building a wharf of more than 500 feet in length, a new house, and a water system to transport water by pipeline from a spring two miles away. “They are shearing 40,000 sheep at the rate of 1,400 a day” The reporter attended

a first class entertainment given at the barn by Mr. More’s employees. Don’t shrug your shoulders; you have paid a dollar to attend poorer converts than this. There was a Comanche war whoop and dance, which under the light of a lantern was weird and thrilling enough to make one involuntarily put up his hand to see if his scalp was in place. Next were several graceful dances and a mock parade; then a guitar was heard, soft whispers in the air, and a flute joined in with bewildering harmony, and a tenor voice singing words pleading and mournful in the Spanish tongue, and then a chorus of voices⁵⁵

The new house mentioned in the report was likely what is now known as the Upper House, which remains in use on the island (see building descriptions for more information).

U. S. Coast Survey at Santa Rosa Island, 1860-1873

U. S. Coast Survey Sub-Assistant Stehman Forney walked the entire island and produced a topographic map of Santa Rosa Island in 1872-73, but the Survey never published the map. The inked draft by Forney showed a fine amount of detail in depicting the physical aspects of the island at that time.

Previous government survey expeditions had set foot on Santa Rosa Island. In the 1850s George Davidson traveled amongst the islands in beginning the process of triangulation, which was essential to placing the location and relationships between points. In May of 1860 William Greenwell explored Santa Rosa Island and established seventeen survey signals that acted as preliminary control points for a detailed survey of the island. Typically, the monument consisted of a twelve-foot pole with three or four diagonal braces, or four redwood stubs sunk into the ground with composition nails driven in the tops. The tall poles could be seen from other locations for triangulation purposes.

Among interesting notes left by Greenwell were sketches showing corrals on the island in 1860, no doubt the ones built in 1859 by Abel Stearns’ crews. Greenwell named a “Wharf Point” at what appeared to be the later site of the island pier and noted an “old corral and Wharf” (his sketch showed no wharf,

⁵⁴Oral history interview with Charles Storke, January 8, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF. T. Wallace More went on to other pursuits and was murdered on March 24, 1877 on his Rancho Sespe in Ventura County. He had been attempting to purchase the remainder of that rancho which led to litigation with a number of squatters on the lands in question. Before the case could be settled, seven masked men set fire to More’s barn at night and ambushed him as he attempted to rescue his horses. More was buried in Santa Barbara. See Gidney et al, *Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties*, pp. 325-326, 487.

⁵⁵Articles from the *Index* published in March and April of 1873, edited and reprinted in “The Way It Was,” *Santa Barbara News Press*, February 10, 1991. The Rev. Stephen Bowers noted the wharf in 1877.

however) near today's site of the foreman's residence. The "wharf" was doubtless the one Abel Stearns built in 1859. Another corral, and a building, appeared at a landing at the mouth of Cañada Agua (Water Canyon). Greenwell also sketched an "old corral which bears about S[outh] from the station & distant about 600 metres;" this later became known as Water Canyon roundup.⁵⁶

Greenwell initially established a base line, marked by two signals placed about 4,000 feet apart, in the hills west of the main anchorage, southwest of Carrington Point at what became Bechers Bay. In his description Greenwell noted the old corral and "a small wooden house" at the anchorage. He wrote, "the locality of the base line is the 'Rodea ground' a level spot where large bands of cattle have been collected for the purpose of gentling and selecting out." This area was later known as the Lobo Pasture.⁵⁷

In September of the following year (1861) Greenwell traveled to Santa Cruz Island where he established a signal, designated Santa Cruz West, important to the triangulation between the islands and the mainland.⁵⁸

Not until 1872 did another team from the Coast Survey work on Santa Rosa Island. Sub-Assistant Stehman Forney, a topographer, spent almost a year camping on the island with a small crew. They performed triangulation measurements between the neighboring islands and executed a careful plane-table survey of the island while establishing additional monuments. Forney's resulting two-sheet topographic map provided a wealth of historical information for this study.

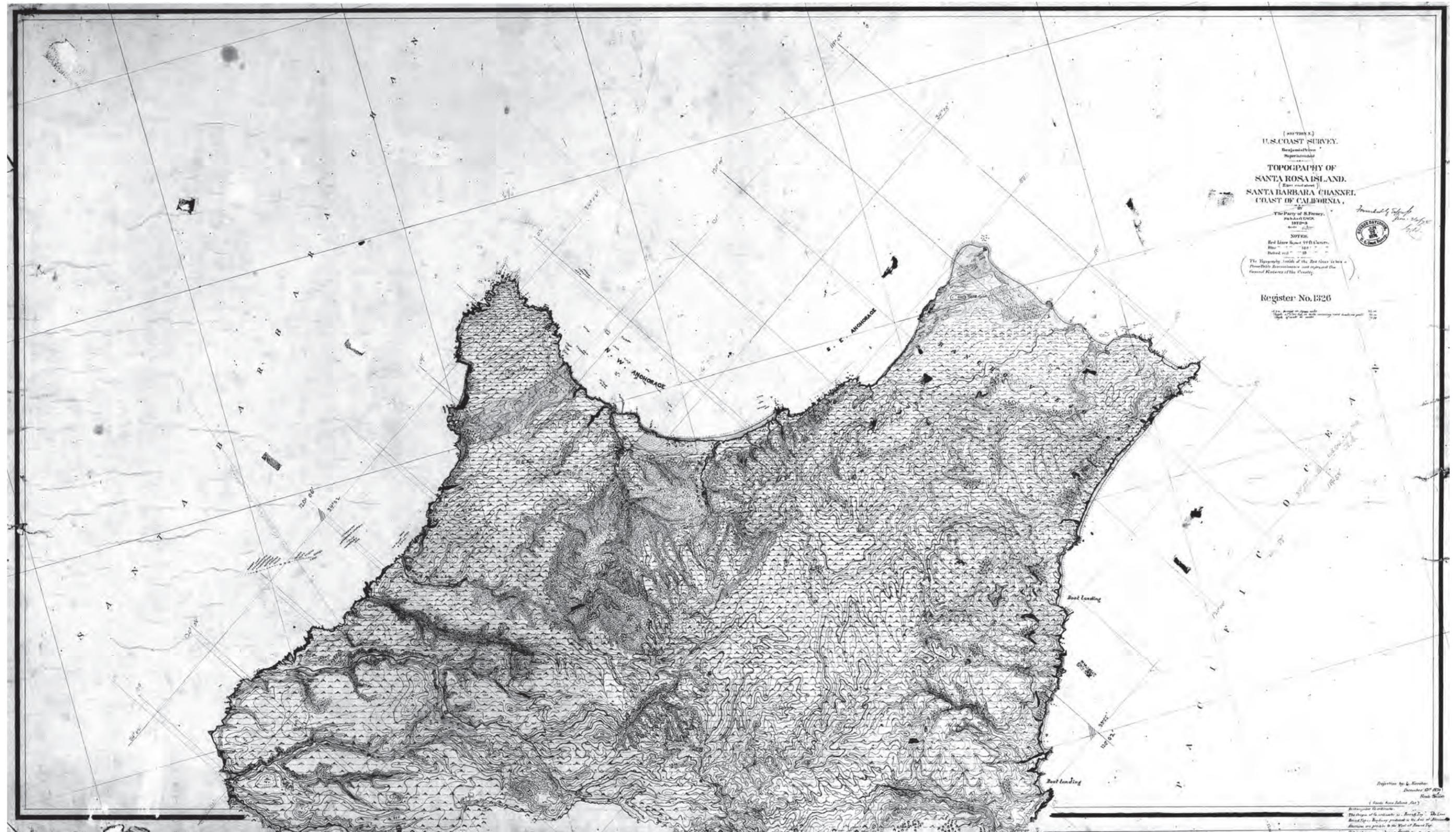
Forney had spent the previous season mapping San Miguel Island, all the time battling terrible weather. After wintering in an office in Santa Barbara where he completed the map of San Miguel, Forney organized a survey party on April 1, 1872. The U. S. government did not have a schooner for the coast survey, instead relying on Navy vessels when available or private boats. This ongoing problem of transportation caused a delay in the Santa Rosa Island survey, as Forney "was obliged to wait eighteen days at S[anta] B[arbara] before I could get a schooner to transport my party to Santa Rosa Island, where we arrived on the 20th of April."

Forney successfully located all of Greenwell's triangulation points, noting "the reference stubs about them being as sound as they were when first put into the ground." His visit was hampered by fog: "The atmosphere has been so filled with fog and haze that I have not yet had an opportunity to observe the lines that come in the triangulation connecting the islands." Nevertheless, by the time of his first official report to Washington, he had found Greenwell's monuments and erected signals on the south side of the island for connecting Greenwell's points, measured the shoreline ("about 48 miles"), written descriptions of the island, and made progress on the topographic survey.

⁵⁶RG 23, Box 144, Book 25048, NA(CP). See appendix for the list of Greenwell's monuments.

⁵⁷RG 23, Descriptions of Stations (GA Series), Box 147, File 941 GA 1872-C GA-1162, NA(CP). A discrepancy is noted between Greenwell's sketches and descriptions: he describes a house and corral at the northwest anchorage but sketches one at Water Canyon.

⁵⁸RG 23, Box 148, Book 25047, pp. 33-53, NA(CP).



The northeast portion of Forney's 1872 survey of Santa Rosa Island. Bechers Bay is at center.

Forney's reports, sent from "U. S. Coast Survey Camp, Santa Rosa Island, Santa Barbara Channel Cal," provided a number of observations of the island as of 1872. He noted an anchorage in view of the ranch house and good boat landings every five or six miles apart along the shores of the island, but no harbors around the "steep and broken" shores. Forney described the topography and the many "never failing streams of clear pure water . . . [and] the wild grasses and coarse bushes." Forney determined that 10,000 head of sheep could be sustained on the island, noting that at the time of his visit the island was "well stocked with these animals." Perhaps most noteworthy, Forney described another aspect of the landscape: "Many of the peaks on the south side of the island are covered with fossil shells, Indian mounds, covered with mortars, pestles, arrow heads and other ancient curiosities, are scattered over the island, from the vast number of these mounds, grave yards and human skeletons, that are to be found here, no doubt the island at some time was thickly inhabited by Indians." This information on archeological potential, transmitted to Washington, D.C., soon brought parties interested in them, resulting in the disorganized looting of the island's ancient sites.⁵⁹

Forney continued work on the island until March 1873, submitting monthly journals to Washington and unsuccessfully attempting to complete the triangulation between the islands. This task was continually hampered by poor visibility and lack of transportation between the islands. By the end of the season, the inter-island triangulation had not been completed (triangulation on the island had); it would be finished during the survey seasons at Santa Cruz Island, 1873-1875. Forney was forced to lay off his crew about a month before the work was done because his funding allowance "will not carry me any further." His superiors ordered Forney to continue working eastward, and by late 1873, he was performing topographic surveys on Santa Cruz Island.⁶⁰

Among the cultural features Forney noted were a "rodea ground" at Cañada Corral (Arlington) and a house near La Mesa station: "to the southward of the station in sight of it on the slope of the hill and about 1500 metres distant is a large corral. West of this corral and close by, in Cañada Solidad, stands an old house. This is the only house and corral on the west end of the island." Forney also noted that the Black Mountain station signal "is in plain view of the ranch house at the landing on the east end of the island;" this would be the house at Bechers Bay. No mention of a house at the old ranch site was made, but his sketch and final map showed a road, a corral and a dot that may have been a building. Forney occasionally commented on natural features, for instance noting that "the north slope of [Black] mountain is covered with stunted pine and oak trees."⁶¹

Forney's sketches, which he submitted with his Description of Stations, revealed other cultural features. Forney documented the 1872 existence of a fence enclosing crops at Water Canyon field, and the road from the old ranch to the new, and numerous trails. The sketches depicted stands of trees and grassland, and watercourses and sandy areas.

⁵⁹Stehman Forney, Sub Assistant, U.S.C.S. to Prof. Benjamin Peirce, Superintendent, U.S.C.S., October 31st 1872, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP). It is interesting to note Forney's figure of 10,000 sheep, while a contemporary newspaper article claimed that four times that many pastured on the island.

⁶⁰Letters, Stehman Forney to Benjamin Peirce, February 5 and March 20, 1873, and "Memo of General Instructions" from Peirce to Forney, February 25, 1873, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP).

⁶¹RG 23, Description of Stations (GA Series), Box 143, Book G-13078, Part 3, pp. 22, 27, 53, 65, NA(CP).

The 1870s

H. H. More invited journalist J. Ross Browne to visit Santa Rosa Island and Browne did so, producing an early (1874) extensive description of the island and the activities there. After a slow voyage on the schooner *Star of Freedom*, Browne set foot at “More’s harbor” and toured the island. He described the valleys “filled with an almost impenetrable growth of alfileria, wild oats, bur-clover, native grasses, weeds, and various nutritional herbs, suitable for pasturage No part of the island is unavailable for grazing purposes with the exception of a few narrow belts of sand-drifts near the beach.” Browne noted the fields of barley, the roads “for wagons and carriages” that crossed the island, and spoke of the advantages to sheep raising, an attribute that the Mores were exploiting to their benefit. The fine grasses, mild climate and lack of predators and disease produced mutton and wool of high quality: “The wool being less subject to dust and burs . . . brings a good price.” The isolation of island ranching had financial benefits: “Less fencing is required than on the main; the sheep can range at will and feed day and night, without care or the expense of supervision.”

Browne described the improvements on the island as he found them in 1874, and offered insight on the travel requirements and profitability:

Every convenience exists for gathering up the stock, shearing, steeping, and shipping. Large and commodious store-houses, barns and boarding-houses for the employés are situated near the place of shipment. A wharf, constructed at a cost of \$15,000, extends well out into the harbor, where vessels of large capacity can receive and deliver freight. The products of the island, whether wool, sheep, or grain, can be shipped direct to San Francisco, Santa Barbara, or any part of the world. The usual time to San Francisco is thirty-six hours, though a steamer of fair speed can make the trip in less than thirty hours. This is a great convenience in the transportation of mutton, which can be put in market direct from the pastures in the best possible condition. Freight on wool costs less than from some of the interior ranches on the main to the sea-board—an important item in the account of profit.

Browne recorded 60,000 sheep “of the ordinary California breeds” on the island and proposed that the island could support 100,000 of a higher quality. The superintendent informed him that it cost about \$10,000 annually to support the ranch less transportation expenses, and that an expected 30,000 pounds of wool that year would sell for \$100,000, a figure that Browne felt could be increased “three or four fold” with capital improvements.

Browne spent much of his article expounding various ideas for the future management of the island. He figured that up to 30,000 acres could be cultivated with grain crops, and that the valleys could support orchards of apples, peaches, pears, plums, apricots, cherries, as well as figs, olives, almonds and walnuts. Or, “Divided up into farms of 200 or 300 acres each, it occurred to me that Santa Rosa presents an excellent field for a grand colonization enterprise.” His most notable scheme for the island, reportedly hinted to him by More, consisted of a “magnificent park . . . as a preserve for the wild game of the continent!



Detail of Forney's 1873 map of Santa Rosa Island, showing developments at Bechers Bay. The pier, bunkhouse, main house, hay fields and roads are depicted. *National Archives*

Here is something in which tourists from the Atlantic States and foreign countries could not fail to take a peculiar interest. It would be easy to divide the elevated portions of the island into sections of 10,000 or 15,000 acres, and to stock such subdivisions with buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, and other graminivorous animals common to the remote and thinly settled parts of our continent. These animals would find congenial ranges in the hills and cañons of the island. Isolated from the intrusion of man, they would, in a short time, largely increase in numbers. Chinese cattle and Mongolian sheep, Japanese pheasants, the Australian kangaroo, the English lop-eared rabbit, the llama of Chile and Peru, and various other rare and curious animals from foreign countries, might also be introduced; so that in the course of a few years an area of 15,000 or 20,000 acres would be stocked with an abundance of game.

Browne proposed that hunters could stalk the animals while spending off hours resting in “suitable accommodations.” The island, in Browne’s opinion, “would ultimately become the grand zoological garden of the world.”⁶²

In 1876 a drought brought on the collapse of the wool market in California, resulting in a matanza in which thousands of sheep were killed for their tallow. The island had been supporting up to 45,000 sheep, thousands of which would starve and, as a commodity would go to waste. The Mores shipped two massive boilers to the island and set them up in a barn probably built for that purpose. The events attracted the attention of the Santa Barbara press, resulting in an article describing the spectacle:

THE SANTA ROSA MATANZA.

The slaughter of sheep for their pelts and tallow on Santa Rosa Island, is still going on and will continue for some time. 25,000 sheep are to be killed, which will leave from 15,000 to 20,000 on the island. The matanza works erected by the firm are said to be among the largest and most complete on the coast. The kettles are of enormous size, large enough to take in several hundred sheep at a time. The number of carcasses boiled daily averages about 1,200. The fires are kept burning from Monday morning to Saturday evening. The sheep are skinned, the intestines taken out and the carcasses thrown into the kettles. After going through the kettles, the carcasses are thoroughly mashed up, the bones being softened so they will pulverize under the pressure of the hand. The offal is fed to hogs. In consequence of the sheep not being very fat in this year of short feed, the amount of tallow from each sheep is comparatively small; still under this systematic mode of treatment, a fair price, considering the year, can be realized per head. The skins are salted, dried and packed for market. These operations require a large force of men.⁶³

Sheep ranching continued despite the drought; stocking numbers rose as rains came and invigorated the island’s pastures, but much damage had been done.

H. H. More had been using the services of the Santa Cruz Island schooner, probably *Star of Freedom*, for transportation until that island’s superintendent, J. B. Joyaux, rather abruptly informed More that the schooner would no longer be available except in an emergency for \$35. News items regularly reported on sailing activities to and from the island. For instance, at shearing time in September of 1878, the *Star of*

⁶²J. Ross Browne, “The Island of Santa Rosa” in *The Overland Monthly*, Vol. 13, No. 3, September 1874, pp. 209-213.

⁶³O’Neill, Ed., *History of Santa Barbara County*, p. 366; article from the *Santa Barbara Daily Press*, May 29, 1877 [date noted as June 2, 1876 in T. H. Thompson and A. A. West, *History of Santa Barbara County, California* (Oakland: Thompson & West, 1883, reprinted 1961 by Howell-North, Berkeley), p. 257].

Freedom transported 25 shearers to Santa Rosa Island, while John More would bring another forty on the steamer *Santa Cruz*. And in October 1880 the Santa Barbara *Daily Press* reported that the schooner *N. L. Drew* shipped wool for the More Brothers to the mainland.⁶⁴

A. P. and H. H. More purchased a new schooner, and probably commissioned its construction, in 1879. The 61.2-foot *Santa Rosa* was built in Marshfield, Oregon and had a capacity of 30 tons gross. The Mores registered her in San Francisco, their place of residence when not on the island. The *Santa Rosa* made regular runs between Santa Rosa Island and the mainland at Santa Barbara and More's Landing at Goleta. She traveled as far as San Francisco, probably regularly, to transport her owners. Sheep, cattle and other livestock and the precious wool clip went to and from the island on a seasonal basis, and in the spring and fall teams of sheep shearers traveled from Santa Barbara to the island for the traditional shearing. While in Santa Barbara she anchored off the wharf.⁶⁵

The 1880s

On March 17, 1881, Henry H. More and his wife sold their half interest in the island to A. P. More for \$100 in gold coin, giving him sole ownership of Santa Rosa Island. A newspaper account placed the purchase price at \$600,000, and stated that Henry H. More had died before the transaction took place, but the official transaction record indicated More as a live person and the value of the island could not have been so high. That year, A. P. More hired his sister Martha's husband George Orcutt to take charge of the island ranch (he stayed less than a year), and More reportedly imported a small number of deer to the island.⁶⁶

A dark moment in Santa Rosa Island history occurred on June 31, 1884 as the island owner killed a man on the pier at Bechers Bay. A newspaper initially reported that Ah You, employed as a cook on the island for about 16 months, felt ill and wanted to leave the island on the schooner. A. P. More accosted him and after "the drawing of weapons" More shot the man in the head. Ah You died after arriving at the mainland. An inquest revealed a number of probable inaccuracies in the news article. According to information gathered at the hearing, Ah You had been working unhappily as a laborer and wished to leave the island. Failing to inform More of his plans, he attempted to sneak aboard the *Santa Rosa* but was seen by More who ordered that You's belongings be removed from the schooner. Ah You allegedly attacked More with a knife, inciting More to shoot Ah You in the head. Participants in the inquest seemed to favor

⁶⁴J. B. Joyaux to H. H. More, Esq., May 31, 1877, SCIF; unidentified news clipping dated September 2, 1878; Santa Barbara *Daily Press*, October 9, 1880, SCIF.

⁶⁵*Twelfth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States . . . for the Year Ended June 30, 1880* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), p. 169; *Thirty-First Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States . . . for the Year Ended June 30, 1899* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899), p. 167; *The [Santa Barbara] Weekly Press*, May 7, 1881, p. 7 and March 17, 1883, p. 8, SCIF.

⁶⁶Deeds Book Y, pp. 134-135, SBCRO; *The [Santa Barbara] Weekly Press*, February 19, 1881, p. 4; Santa Barbara *Weekly Press*, June 19, 1881 and January 7, 1882 (rerun in Stella H. Rouse's column of past news), SCIF.



Alexander P. More, owner of Santa Rosa Island until his death in 1893.
Santa Barbara Historical Society

More over the Chinese employee; nevertheless, the case was thrown out because the shooting occurred out on the pier some 30 feet seaward from the low tide line, where jurisdiction could not be defined.⁶⁷

A book titled, *Marvels of the New West*, published in 1888, reprinted a long article from the *San Francisco Call* about the “mammoth” sheep ranch of A. P. More, reprinted here in its entirety:

The little schooner *Santa Rosa* arrived in port [of San Francisco] from Santa Barbara a few days ago. She comes up to this city twice a year to secure provisions, clothing, lumber, etc., for use on Santa Rosa Island, being owned by the great sheep-raiser, A. P. Moore [sic], who owns this island and the 80,000 sheep that exist upon it. The island . . . [is]

⁶⁷*Santa Barbara Daily Press*, July 7, 1884; Kerry Blankenship Allen, “The Murder of Ah You,” in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 52-57.

admirably adapted to sheep-raising. Last June [1887] Moore [sic] clipped 1014 sacks of wool from these sheep, each sack containing an average of 410 pounds of wool, making a total of 415,740 pounds, which he sold at 27 cents a pound, bringing him in \$212,349.80, or a clear profit of over \$80,000. This is said to be a low yield; so it is evident that sheep-raising there, when it is taken into consideration that shearing takes place twice a year, and that a profit is made of the sale of mutton, etc., is very profitable. The island is divided into four quarters by fences running clear across at right angles; and the sheep have not to be herded like those ranging about the foothills.

Four men are employed regularly the year round to keep the ranch in order and to look after the sheep; and during shearing time fifty or more shearers are employed. These men secure forty or fifty days' work; and the average number of sheep sheared a day is about ninety, for which five cents a clip is paid; thus, \$4.50 a day is being made by each man, or something over \$200. for the season, or over \$400 for 90 days out of the year. Although the shearing of 90 sheep a day is the average, a great many will go as high as 110; and one man has been known to shear 125. Of course, every man tries to shear as many as he can, and, owing to haste, frequently the animals are severely cut by the sharp shears. If the wound is serious, the sheep immediately has its throat cut, and is turned into mutton and disposed of to the butchers; and the shearer, if in the habit of frequently inflicting such wounds, is discharged. In the shearing of these 80,000 sheep, an hundred or more are injured to such an extent as to necessitate their being killed; but the wool and meat are, of course, turned into profit.

Although no herding is necessary, about two hundred or more trained goats are kept on the island continually, which to all intents and purposes take the place of the shepherd dogs so necessary to mountainous districts where sheep are raised. Whenever the animals are to be removed from one quarter of the island to another, the man in charge takes out with him several of the goats, exclaims in Spanish, "Cheva!" meaning sheep. The goat, through its training, understands what is wanted, and immediately runs to the band; and the sheep accept it as their leader, following wherever it goes. The goat in turn follows the man to whatever point he wishes to take the band. To prevent the sheep from contracting disease, it is necessary to give them a washing twice a year. Moore [sic] having so many on hand, found it necessary to invent some way to accomplish this whereby not so much expense would be incurred and time wasted. After experimenting for some time, he had a ditch dug eight feet in depth, a little over one foot in width, and one hundred feet long. In this he put six hundred gallons of water, two hundred pounds of sulphur, one hundred pounds of lime, and six pounds of soda, all of which is heated to one hundred and thirty degrees. The goats lead the sheep into a corral or trap at one end, and the animals are compelled to swim through to the further end, thus securing a bath and taking their medicine at one and the same time.

The owner of the island and sheep, A. P. Moore [sic], a few years ago purchased the property from the widow of his deceased brother Henry for \$600,000. Owing to ill-health, he has rented it to his brother Lawrence for \$140,000 a year, and soon starts for Boston, where he will settle down for the rest of his life. He still retains an interest in the Santa Cruz Island Ranch, which is about 25 miles southeast of Santa Barbara. This island contains about 64,000 acres, and on it are 25,000 sheep. On Clementa [sic] Island, 80 miles east of that city, are 10,000 sheep. Forty miles west of the same city is San Miguel, on which are 2,000 sheep.⁶⁸

⁶⁸William M. Thayer, *Marvels of the New West* (Norwich, CT: The Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1888), pp. 600-601.

This article provided a number of details of ranch life usually ignored. The information on profit and wage figures, fencing patterns and method of dipping sheep, and the fascinating account of goats in use as shepherds had not been reported elsewhere, although the accuracy of some facts cannot be confirmed. It is likely that the rent figure is high, and the purchase price for a half interest preposterous. More's financial interest in Santa Cruz Island appears to be related to a judgment made in his favor in 1857 over ownership of a large herd of pigs on that island.⁶⁹

The 1890s

A. P. More's Santa Rosa Island sheep ranch received a great deal of publicity in the press and magazines in the 1890s, perhaps more even than its larger neighbor Santa Cruz Island. Correspondents and writers visited the More's ranch house and told tales of hospitality and roundups, sheep shearing and the fiestas that followed. Charles Holder spent time on the island in the 1890s and his descriptions appeared in his book, *The Channel Islands* published in 1910. He told of the "fine stock and blooded horses [that] were raised in large numbers for the San Francisco market." Holder described the "village" made up of houses and barns at Bechers Bay:

The hacienda or ranch house of the Mores stands near a grove of cypress trees distorted and beaten down by the strong trade winds. From here one can look out on a little village made up of the various buildings appertaining to the business of shearing sixty thousand sheep—one of the largest herds in Southern California . . . Here are great storing-barns and shearing-rooms, stables, pens, sheds, dining-rooms and houses for the Indian and Mexican shearers, all not far from a little stream which flows down from the Santa Rosa Mountains to the sea, passing a big sandstone cave, once the home of the ancients, now the sleeping apartment of the shearers.

Holder wrote, as many had in articles over the years, of shearing time, estimating the Santa Rosa Island crews to number some forty or fifty. "Some of the most skillful will shear one hundred sheep a day, and the scene . . . is most interesting. The men work in a long shed. As a man shears a sheep he throws the wool on a table and calls his tally. Some, and many of the men, sing all the while." After shearing and perhaps a "fandango," the men hunted foxes or wild hogs— "at that time plentiful, and dangerous to unmounted men." Holder also took a naturalist's view of the island ranch, comparing it to the mainland and noting the "many interesting plants indigenous to the region." Holder wrote that after the rainy season, flowers created "a garden out at sea, parts of which are very beautiful." His descriptions provided a flavor, probably somewhat romanticized, of 1890s Santa Rosa Island life.⁷⁰

Historian Yda Addis Storke, a relative of the Mores, wrote a regional history published in 1891 that described the island. She claimed that over half the island could be tilled and planted and noted the

⁶⁹Thomas Wallace More vs. M. J. Box, November 9, 1857, SCIF.

⁷⁰Charles Frederick Holder, *The Channel Islands of California: A Book for the Angler, Sportsman, and Tourist* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1910), pp. 285-286, 288.

grasses “of very fine quality . . . so that the sheep business is here conducted under particular advantages.”⁷¹

The most extensive article about Santa Rosa Island appeared in *Overland Monthly* in 1893 as a result of a writer’s three-week stay on the island. A correspondent identified only as K (probably Martinette Kinsell, author of a previous article in *Overland* about the Channel Islands) sailed to the island on *Santa Rosa* in October of 1892, experiencing a slow and often windless journey to Bechers Bay. The pier had washed out forcing the party of women to land on the beach in a small boat. Crews worked on the pier with a pile driver from the seaward end, because the storm had wiped out the center portion of the structure leaving the pile driver stranded. As most other writers of the era, K noted “quite a little village” of barns and sheds, pens and stables, and residences. She wrote of the cave across the creek where many of More’s employees stayed. The “cozy ranch house” stood “behind a group of high-shouldered Monterey cypress, squeezed out of shape by the wind which blows steadily and hard most of the time.”

Here the owner of the island lives when at home in his island kingdom, which is one of the finest sheep ranches on the Pacific Coast, and on it is perhaps one of the largest flocks of sheep now owned by one man in California.

At the time of K’s visit, more than seventy men worked at shearing and pier repairs. A Chinese cook named Ah Ming commanded the kitchen, “wrinkled as a walnut shell is he and gray as a druid, he must be very old,” she wrote.

He was first found by the owners in a half starved condition on one of the remote beaches, where he had been wandering for days after reaching the shore and finding himself the only survivor of the crew of his wrecked junk. Having lost all he possessed, he attached himself to the service of those who cared for his needs, and has now been for years the most trusted servitor on the place.

K paid most attention to the colorful shearing activities and provided an account brimming with detail, interest and Victorian prose. The following description of sheep shearing activity in the early 1890s is based on K’s report.

About forty men of Spanish and/or Indian background arrived at the island seasonally for shearing and packing wool. They worked in a long shed with adjacent small pens holding the waiting sheep, laid out so that each man could grab a sheep from the pen and shear it in the shed without taking too many steps. With carefully sharpened shears they removed the coat of the sheep, sometimes in their haste cutting the animal’s skin. The shearer placed the fleece on a table to be collected and called out his tally number, which was recorded in a book for later calculation of pay, as the shearers were paid by number of sheep sheared per day. An experienced shearer could produce up to 100 fleeces every day. The packer took the fleece from the table and added it to the stack he was stomping into a large wool bag “tied about a hole in the floor.”

The sheep were then driven through a narrow fenced lane to the narrow 20-foot-long dipping tank with a slanting, grooved floor and filled to about six feet deep with a “vile smelling” chemical mixture of

⁷¹Mrs. Yda Addis Storke, *A Memorial and Biographical History of the Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura, California* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1891), p. 58

caustic soda, sulphur and lime heated in a vat to 120 degrees. A man with a long crook helped the sheep through and made sure they were thoroughly dipped, and the sheep left wet and green from the chemical. Some did not survive the toxic morass and their carcasses were later dumped over the cliff.

Singing kept the men happy through the monotonous shearing activity:

The sharp continuous sound of the shears, and the monotonous calls to the tally man, make an accompaniment of sound to the songs they sing nearly all the time. Some Spanish folk-song or ballad will start in the corner, perhaps, and increase in volume as one and another takes up the air, until even the clicking shears are unheard.

A young man who led the shearing crew possessed “a tenor voice that would have made him a petted darling in a fashionable drawing room, if fate had not decreed that he should be a clever sheep shearer instead.”

The author described the varied personalities of the shearers, “a picturesque lot of men they were, with old ragged clothes, bits of rag or bright bandanna tied over the unkempt hair and about brawny bare throats.” She described some looking like pirates, others “bearded like Turks nearly to their eyes,” and one “hard looking fellow” who tenderly kept a lamb by his side. Only one was “wholly white,” the rest described as “swart Spanish-Californians.”

Rainy weather necessitated a lull in shearing and so inspired the colorful employees to put on a pageant in the shearing barn for the visiting women. After a day of preparation the shearers formed a costumed procession to the ranch house, with a farm wagon holding an elaborate effigy made of wool bags and horsehair, accompanied by dancing men who chanted “a strange, slow refrain . . . like some weird Indian incantation.” The young leader of the shearers was mounted on a horse and, upon reaching the gate of the ranch house, “invited the ladies to honor their entertainment that night.”

The writer and her friends watched a dramatized Indian medicine dance, Spanish songs, “fancy” dancing and minstrel acts. A single lantern illuminated the show, throwing “the swift shadows along the high rafters like fantastic goblins, and gleam[ing] on the shining eyes and teeth of the non-performers who stood close about the back to lend their encouragement in a quiet way.”

Rains stopped and when shearing was completed the men returned to the mainland on the schooner. K and her friends spent many days riding over the island, observing natural features and sheep in the pastures. She heard how sheep could be easily spooked and would occasionally panic at an intrusion and run themselves off a cliff, resulting in the death of perhaps 500 head. Island vaqueros accompanied the guests, ones who “would ride at full gallop down a trail so steep that one would think the horse would go heels over head by sheer force of gravity.” A visit to a Chumash burial grounds revealed skulls, beads and other artifacts: “in passing them the riders were sure to find something of interest.” K noted an abalone fishers’ camp and enjoyed exploring the canyons, “each with a picturesque Spanish name far more musical than its translation would be.”

The party left after three weeks as guests of the island manager. The article has been quoted extensively in histories of the island and, notwithstanding its probable journalistic inaccuracies, it has provided one of the best character studies of life on Santa Rosa Island yet produced.⁷²

Perry Gwynn More Austin, grandnephew of A. P. More and grandson of ranch manager John F. More, had many personal experiences on the island and wrote late in life this reminiscence of his mother's life on Santa Rosa Island in the late 1800s:

My mother was a More and many years of her childhood were spent in the simple, New England style white ranch house at Bechers Bay In the little white school house at Bechers Bay, my mother and her brothers, with children of the shepherders, went to school. The Mores imported a school teacher from their ancestral home in Ohio to be guide, philosopher, and friend for the children on the island. I well remember her as an old lady, this kindly soul, Mrs. Isbel, reputed to be the first white teacher in an American school in Santa Barbara County.

Sheep shearing time was, of course, the high point of the year. I vividly remember the stream of Chinese and Mexicans who came to our back door in Santa Barbara seeking my grandfather, John F. More, to be hired for another season of sheep shearing on the Island. The Chinamen would always come bearing gifts of abalone pearls, choice silks from China, and, for the children of the family, lichee nuts, candied coconut, and tasty, preserved ginger in artistic octagonal green jars much treasured by Santa Barbarans of that era. Once hired, they sailed across the Channel for the important weeks of shearing thousands of white woolled sheep for the markets of the world.

For the "Spaniards," the grand finale was always a kind of fiesta, mostly dancing in the shearing barns that were swept clean, with polished floors and gay decorations. To the music of guitars and a piano they celebrated the end of another strenuous season of labor with its neatly stored harvest of precious wool. As a reward for work well done, there was a period of hunting, as there were on the Island many wild boar with their prized ivory tusks, the little gray foxes, and little deer peculiar to the Channel Islands.⁷³

Mr. Austin's memory indicates a possibility that his father acted as superintendent of the island in the 1870s, which would explain why the family lived there. Austin's article jumps between stories his mother told him (school, the fiesta) and his own memories of when his grandfather was superintendent in the 1890s.

Dr. Gustav Eisen published an article about Santa Rosa Island following a visit there in 1897, wherein he described one of the island characters that resided in a cave, evidently the one that George Nidever hid out in earlier in the century:

The strangest man of the few who live on Santa Rosa Island is Santiago Quinteros. But Santiago might also be said to be one of the strangest men in the country. He is a hermit from choice and lives in a cave because he would rather live there than any other place in the world. Santiago is a man of some means and also earns some money from the estate,

⁷²K., "Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island," *Overland Monthly*, Vol. XXI, No. 125, Second Series, [May 1893], pp. 492-501.

⁷³Perry G. M. Austin, "Santa Rosa Island," in *Noticias*, Fall 1959, Santa Barbara Historical Society. The deer had been introduced to the island.



Santiago Quintero posed in front of his cave house, later known as Nidever's Cave. The Smith Highway passes over the entrance to the cave today, and the trail that existed at the time of the photo is visible above the cave entrance. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

but he often spends months in his cave without seeing a person. He has a couple of dogs, who live in small caves near his, and together they are a happy family. Santiago's cave is a natural hole in the rock, with the front boarded up and fixed with a door. He has a stove and plenty of good furniture, so that he is absolutely comfortable. He has lived alone in his cave for over thirty years.⁷⁴

Santiago's name cropped up in many articles about the island, including one in which he claimed that a northwestern-style totem pole had stood on Santa Rosa Island for almost 50 years; he had wanted to remove it to Santa Barbara but a suspicious A. P. More would not allow it. According to the article, the totem pole eventually rotted away, leaving only a depression in the ground.⁷⁵

Representatives of the More estate hired a number of superintendents in succession during the later 1890s, including former county supervisor Charles W. Merritt in 1897, Frank More in 1900 and a Mr. McGrath in 1901. Around 1899, A. P. More's grandnephew Thomas M. Storke acted as superintendent at the island ranch for a few months.⁷⁶ Storke later wrote, "I endured . . . an interlude of managing a sheep ranch . . .

⁷⁴Dr. Gustav Eisen, *The [San Francisco] Weekly Call*, June 16, 1897, reprinted in *Island of the Cowboys*, p. 78. The 1893 article in *Overland Monthly* noted that shearers lived in what would be Nidever's cave during the two shearing seasons on the island; the facts about residency in the cave and existence of other residential caves are confusing.

⁷⁵Unidentified newspaper clipping, circa 1900, SCIF.

⁷⁶*Santa Barbara Daily News*, March 5, 1897; *Santa Barbara News Press*, September 1, 1900; oral history interview with Charles Storke, January 8, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF.

Life was rugged on Santa Rosa At the time, it was one of the largest sheep ranches in California and, under my uncle's ownership, had carried as many as 125,000 sheep at a time.

Although it was an interesting experience, I suppose, sheep ranching on a lonely island did not appeal to me in the least. One of my few worth-while experiences was a visit from the celebrated oil painter of Western Americana, Frederick Remington, and a party of New York friends. They spent several days as my guests, horseback riding and hunting wild boar.⁷⁷

A. P. More moved to the Midwest in 1888 and leased the island rancho to his brother Lawrence for a reported, and probably exaggerated, annual rent of \$140,000. Alexander P. More died in Chicago on October 21, 1893, leaving no wife or children. Thus began a chain of events towards distribution of his estate that would last almost thirty years. More's surviving siblings were Eliza M. Miller, Eleanor H. More, Martha Jane Orcutt, Cornelia A. Baldwin and John F. More. Ten children of deceased siblings would also share in the estate.⁷⁸

After A. P. More's death his brother and current island manager John F. More applied for appointment as executor of the estate. Other family members or their counsel objected over the fact that John held advance claims, but Judge Coffee agreed that the claims fell under the sole purview of the Probate Court. In March of 1894, John More brought suit against the estate for \$101,067.21, reduced to \$32,467.09 plus interest after accounting for credits apparently incurred during the years that John leased Santa Rosa Island from his brother. A newspaper reported that

John F. More paid \$1,000 a year rent to his brother, and, in consequence, was entitled to the product of the ranch. It was in this way that he became a creditor of the estate, selling wood in large amounts to Alexander P. More, disposing of livestock, on which the latter made collections, and in other ways.⁷⁹

But by 1896, and evidently due to the financial conflicts, Mrs. Eliza More Miller had replaced More as administratrix of the estate and was represented by attorney C. A. Storke, a relative by marriage. In January 1899 John More transferred his interest in the island to Mrs. Miller as administratrix, in order to release himself "of all obligations and liabilities on his part" to the estate; he died around that time. In March 1900 Eleanor H. More transferred her share in the island to the newly incorporated Santa Rosa Island Company, composed of five investors from the San Francisco area. A newspaper speculated that the move was "a step in the consolidation of several interests, with the evident intention of keeping the property intact." No other family members got involved in the scheme.⁸⁰

⁷⁷Thomas M. Storke, *California Editor* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1958), p. 80. Storke's estimate of sheep numbers is alarming, and may have been exaggerated.

⁷⁸Deeds Book 77, p. 346, SBCRO.

⁷⁹*The [Santa Barbara] Morning Press*, March 11, 1894, SCIF.

⁸⁰*Santa Barbara Daily News*, July 1, 1896 and April 10, 1900, SCIF; Storke, *California Editor*, p. 80; Deeds Book 77, pp. 348-349, SBCRO.



Visitors in 1905 collected pine boughs and cones, and stopped at this well, location unknown, for a drink. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*



A visitor in 1905 squeezes through a fence on Santa Rosa Island. The photograph shows the construction of a typical fence 100 years ago, comprised of a split redwood post, two strands of barbed wire, and four horizontal boards placed low on the posts. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

Meanwhile, various problems arose. C. E. Sherman, who would later obtain an interest in the island, wrote to a local newspaper in 1895 describing the rundown condition and declining profitability of the Mores' ranch. Near the end of the century the 20-year-old island schooner *Santa Rosa* stranded and wrecked in Cuyler Harbor on the shore of San Miguel Island on November 24, 1899. Without their own vessel, the owners used the services of a Chinese junk, *Acme*, in her place for at least three voyages during the year 1900.⁸¹

On April 27, 1900, the Superior Court of San Francisco authorized Mrs. Miller to sell A. P. More's real estate interests on the mainland, which she did and thereby received \$244,428.36 to distribute amongst heirs. The order did not include Santa Rosa Island or the livestock pasturing there, in fact recommended against selling the livestock, as it would render the island "incapable of producing an income." A probate report stated that the island was valued at \$350,000 "and is used as a sheep-walk, upon which the stock of the estate is pastured, and is improved by fences and buildings necessary to such use." Overall, the island was "in good condition of improvement." The island contained "about 8,000 head of sheep and lambs, 200 head of cattle, and 170 head of horses, 25 head of hogs, and one hundred head of goats; 200 bales of wool and . . . farming implements . . ." ⁸²

Exactly six months after the court authorized Mrs. Miller to dispose of most of the More estate, she filed a petition stating that she had successfully enacted terms of the order and "praying for an order of distribution of the residue of said estate among the persons entitled." The following May 1, 1901, the court responded, authorizing distribution of the estate as follows:

Each of More's siblings was entitled to an undivided one-ninth of the estate; John More's share would be divided among them bringing the remaining parties about one-eighth and the next generation 1/24 share. In addition to small cash payments, the division resulted in: three sisters, one corporation (the Santa Rosa Island Company) and one niece receiving undivided 1/8 shares in the island property; six nephews, nieces and assignees receiving undivided 1/24 shares; and nephew H. Clifford More receiving three undivided 1/24 shares (a full 1/8) because he had previously accepted the shares of his brother and sister. At the close of the distribution action, twelve parties owned Santa Rosa Island and its contents. The livestock and equipment remaining on the island included:

- all the goats now on Santa Rosa Island, numbering 150, more or less;
- all the hogs now on Santa Rosa Island, numbering 20, more or less;
- all the horses now on Santa Rosa Island, numbering 180, more or less;
- all the sheep now on Santa Rosa Island, numbering 10,000, more or less;
- farming tools and implements consisting of rakes, harrows, cultivators, spades, shovels, harness and sundry articles on Santa Rosa Island;
- weighing scales on Santa Rosa Island;
- one donkey engine on Santa Rosa Island;
- one pile driver on Santa Rosa Island;
- all provisions and supplies now on Santa Rosa Island.⁸³

⁸¹Santa Barbara *Weekly Independent*, June 15, 1895 quoted in King, p. 103; Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, p. 156; *Santa Barbara Morning Press*, July 12 and 21, September 8, 1900, SCIF.

⁸²Deeds Book 75, pp. 34-43, SBCRO.

⁸³Deeds Book 77, pp. 345-358, SBCRO.

For reasons unknown, H. Clifford More sued the estate to force partition of the island. The suit hung around in the courts until dismissed in 1922. In the meantime, all of the owners save one, and including H. Clifford More, sold their shares to cattlemen Walter L. Vail and J. V. Vickers of Los Angeles between June of 1901 and October 1902:

<u>Name</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>% interest</u>
Martha J. Orcutt	6/8/01	3/24 (value \$30,000)
Cornelia A. Baldwin	6/12/01	3/24
Martha A. Duval	6/17/01	3/24
Eliza M. Miller	6/22/01	4/24
Geo. S. Edwards	7/9/01	1/24 (value \$11,000)
H. Clifford More	7/12/01	3/24 (value \$32,500)
Albert and John More	12/19/01	2/24
Geo. S. Edwards et al	7/10/02	1/24
Hammersly & Richards	10/21/02	1/24

The deed of H. Clifford More's sale of his undivided one-eighth interest in Santa Rosa Island incorrectly described the island as containing 62,696 49/100 acres of land (actual size: over 53,000 acres). More sold his share to Vail & Vickers for the sum of \$32,500, leading one to believe that the entire island would have sold for about \$250,000. The transaction included "the live stock of every kind the furniture machinery tools and other personal property" on the island. The transaction allowed Mr. Vail and Mr. Vickers to start doing business on the island, but twenty years elapsed before their firm obtained full title from the one holdout, the Santa Rosa Island Company.⁸⁴

The More era on Santa Rosa Island laid the foundations of agricultural development with its buildings, roads and fences, but also left the rangeland, as is common with sheep operations, in an altered state. The Mores produced an untold volume of wool for the markets and brought some notoriety to the island. The succeeding owners brought stability and, while preserving much of what the Mores built and many of their traditions, adapted the island into a vast and successful cattle ranch of 20th century California.

⁸⁴Deeds Book 77, pp. 508-510, also Books 80, 83, 84, 86 and 87, SBCRO. The island was commonly described as containing about 62,000 acres, a mistake probably dating from the production of the plat in the 1850s. Upon dismissal of the lawsuit, Vail & Vickers purchased the remaining 1/8 interest from the Santa Rosa Island Company on March 4, 1922. See *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1922, p. V9.

The Vail & Vickers Ranch, 1901-1998⁸⁵

The new owners of Santa Rosa Island had followed the western migration after the Gold Rush and made small fortunes in southern Arizona before settling in California. Walter L. Vail and J. V. Vickers met in Arizona, where both operated large cattle ranches, and their friendship and keen business sense led to the acquisition of Santa Rosa Island and its development as a prominent and unique coastal cattle ranch under the business name of Vail & Vickers. They appeared to be cut from the same cloth: ambitious, adventurous, personable and blessed with strong business acumen. Their early lives and land dealings in Arizona and California between 1875 and 1900 paved the way for their families' four generations-long partnership in the island ranch.

Walter L. Vail, 1852-1906

A proper introduction to this prominent Western cattleman begs for a quote from *Pioneer Western Empire Builders*:

The Western Empire was built up by such men as the late Walter L. Vail. Very few of them did more than Mr. Vail did, nor accomplished greater things than he, after enduring great hardships, but he was a man with great personal courage and determination. He was not only a great cattle man but a keen business man with wonderful foresight⁸⁶

Walter L. Vail, born in Liverpool, Nova Scotia on May 15, 1852, grew up on a farm in Plainfield, New Jersey. In his early twenties he traveled west where he obtained a job at a mine in Virginia City, Nevada; a downturn in the economy there spurred him to continue west, and he arrived at San Francisco in September of 1875. After a sojourn in Yosemite, he traveled to Los Angeles and San Diego. On the advice of his uncle Nathan Vail, who had settled in California not long before, Walter Vail headed east to Tucson, Arizona Territory, looking for ranch property. He located a suitable piece of property and returned to Nevada to work and save money to buy the ranch. Vail decided to find a partner, whom he found in his uncle's friend from England, Herbert Hislop. In August, 1876, Vail and Hislop purchased the 160-acre Fish ranch located 20 miles south of Pantano on the western edge of the Sulphur Spring Valley in southeastern Arizona Territory; the deal included over 600 head of cattle and no doubt a large grazing lease. Exhibiting a healthy dose of optimism, Vail named his small holding the Empire Ranch, and under his guidance this first parcel of his ranching endeavors grew into "one of the largest cattle outfits in

⁸⁵The 1998 date refers to the end of the cattle ranching on the island; the Vail family retained a reservation of use and occupancy for 7.6 acres at the Bechers Bay ranch complex through 2011.

⁸⁶Frank M. King, *Pioneer Western Empire Builders* (Quarter Circle TV, 1946), p. 33. Much of the biographical information in that book is based on the recollections of Harry L. Heffner who worked for Walter Vail for an undisclosed amount of time beginning in the 1890s. "He knows more about Walter Vail than anyone besides the Vail Children," the author wrote.

Arizona” with control of property reportedly covering some 1800 square miles, or more than a million acres.⁸⁷

Neighbors elected Vail to the Arizona Territorial Legislature in 1878 where he served one term, at 27 the youngest man to serve in that capacity at the time. He and his partners and cowboys spent much of their time protecting their livestock from angry Chiricahua Apache Indians, who at the time were being forced off their traditional lands by the government and settlers. Vail wrote to his brother that the Chiricahua Apaches “killed three men in our neighborhood, and it is reported they killed a good many more near the Mexican line. Ever since the Indians did the killing and stealing our ranch house has been crowded with soldiers, and settlers who have lost their horses and are making tracks for Tucson.”⁸⁸ Despite the Chiricahua uprisings, which were eventually quelled with the capture of Geronimo in 1886, expansion of the Vail ranch holdings continued throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Land acquisition expanded dramatically after silver was discovered nearby in 1879. Walter Vail and his uncle Nathan developed the highly profitable Total Wreck Mine which made them about half a million dollars. Vail’s great-grandson John Woolley wrote about the mining operation:

With capital raised from the sale of stock in New York, and using an innovative milling process promoted by a California millwright named Mahlon Boss, the mine was developed. Full production was achieved in February 1883 and generated profits of about \$4000 per day. The Vails laid out a town site near the mine and sold lots. At its peak the Total Wreck camp boasted 300 residents, a post office, four saloons, three hotels, a bank, a brewery and a lumberyard.⁸⁹

Vail married Margaret Russell Newhall in 1881. To accommodate his new family, he added “eight elegant rooms” to the old adobe ranch dwelling. Seven children were born at the Empire Ranch: Nathan Russell (1883), Walter II (1885)⁹⁰, Mary (1887), Banning (1889), Mahlon (1890), Edward Newhall (1892) and Margaret (1896). Nathan (known as Russell or “N. R.”) and Edward would later become closely involved with the ranch operations at Santa Rosa Island.

In 1883, with almost 10,000 head of cattle and good rail service to Los Angeles and Chicago, Vail incorporated the Empire Land & Cattle Company. Woolley described many of the activities Vail busied himself with during this time:

Vail’s prominence among Arizona cattlemen is evident in his election to the Pima County Board of Supervisors and his term as president of the Arizona Stock Growers Association. He promoted and saw signed into law a bill that had among its provisions steps to prevent

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 36-37.; John J. Woolley, “The Vast Empire of Walter L. Vail” in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 89-90. The late Mr. Woolley was the great-grandson of Walter L. Vail. According to Margaret Vail Woolley, Walter Vail’s forebears were United Empire Loyalists who moved to Canada during the American Revolution, returning some time after Walter’s birth in 1852. At least one account stated that during Vail’s trip to Yosemite he made the first ascent of Half Dome by a Euro-American. However, it may have been South Dome as he stated in a letter to his brother; most sources state that George Anderson made the ascent in October 1875, the same time that Vail was there.

⁸⁸King, *Empire Builders*, p. 35.

⁸⁹Woolley, “Walter L. Vail,” p. 92.

⁹⁰According to Margaret Vail Woolley, this uncle named his son Walter III, then “dis-Waltered” him and renamed him Granville.

the introduction and spread of infectious diseases among cattle, and statutory recognition of range tenure on public land through ownership of water resources.⁹¹

It was Vail's understanding of the importance of water in this arid country, Woolley wrote, that led to his success in the ranching and land business. His choice as a first investment of the Fish ranch, which had a perennial stream running through it, "allowed access to the surrounding land, according to local rangeland practice at the time. The philosophy of controlling vast areas of public land by ownership of water would guide the Empire Ranch's land acquisition."⁹²

Vail's business expansion led him to southern California, where he became partners around 1888 with successful real estate man Carroll W. Gates. Vail and Gates, operating out of an office in Los Angeles, purchased and leased ranches in Arizona and California, including a lease on the 26,700-acre Warner Ranch in San Diego County. In 1889 the partners bought a half-interest in the Turkey Track, an Arizona ranch owned by J. V. Vickers, Vail's Arizona neighbor and eventual partner in Santa Rosa Island. Vail and Gates purchased the Laguna Ranch at Los Angeles in 1890, and leased Santa Catalina Island for a year which they stocked with 2,500 head of cattle until drought forced removal of that herd to Kansas. Also in 1890, Vail and Gates drove 900 steers on the hoof to California in protest of Southern Pacific's transportation monopoly, which had come to charge exorbitant freight rates. The drought of the early 1890s severely impacted the Arizona herds, reducing numbers to a low of 2,000. In response, Vail and Gates entered another partnership with Vickers, combining the Empire Ranch with Vickers' Chiricahua Cattle Company to form the Panhandle Pasture Company in 1894, acquiring through lease and purchase large amounts of grassland in Texas and Oklahoma for fattening Arizona cattle.⁹³

Vail moved his family to Los Angeles in 1896 (thereby becoming a neighbor of friend and business partner Vickers) and pursued real estate opportunities in that growing city as well as continuing to manage his cattle interests. As the cattle market faced more and more setbacks, largely due to the oversupply of beef from the booming ranches of the West, Vail invested in city properties, oil development and subdivisions. After the turn of the century, Vail and Gates subdivided the Laguna Ranch into what would become City of Commerce and Montebello, and bought the historic Pauba Ranch and its neighbor the Santa Rosa Ranch of 87,500 acres combined in Riverside County. They acquired large tracts in the Tulare Lake region for wheat and barley farming, and with Vickers, founded and developed the coastal city of Huntington Beach. Meanwhile, in 1901, Vail and J. V. Vickers purchased their first interests in Santa Rosa Island.⁹⁴

⁹¹Woolley, "Walter L. Vail," pp. 92-93.

⁹²Ibid., p. 90. A settlement called Vail can still be found on the map of Pima County, Arizona.

⁹³Lynn R. Bailey, "We'll All Wear Silk Hats," *The Erie and Chiricahua Cattle Companies and the Rise of Corporate Ranching in the Sulphur Spring Valley of Arizona, 1883-1909* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1994), pp. 121, 178.

⁹⁴Woolley, "Walter L. Vail," pp. 93-97; King, *Empire Builders*, p. 38.



Walter L. Vail, co-owner of Santa Rosa Island 1901-1906.
Vail Family Collection, Santa Cruz Island Foundation



J. V. Vickers, co-owner of Santa Rosa Island
1901-1912. *Vail Family Collection, courtesy of
Santa Cruz Island Foundation*

J. V. Vickers, 1850-1912

Less has been recorded about John V. Vickers, partner of Walter Vail's in the purchase of Santa Rosa Island. He was born to a wealthy Quaker farmer and his wife in 1850 and raised in Chester County, Pennsylvania and Brooklyn Heights, New York. Vickers came west via Illinois about the same time as Walter Vail, representing the New York Life Insurance Company and settling in Tombstone, Arizona Territory adjacent to Vail's Empire Ranch. Vickers' wife Annie Childs Vickers and their first child Florence arrived later; the family lived in Tombstone but worked the ranch, which was east of town in the Sulphur Spring Valley. Vickers expanded his business to include real estate dealings and ranching, investing in the Erie Cattle Company of southern Arizona and then co-founding the Chiricahua Cattle Company in the northern Sulphur Spring Valley. He served as the County Treasurer of Cochise County.

Vickers and his wife had five daughters: Florence (born 1873), Dora (1876), Lillian (1879), Anna (1882) and Clara (1886). The family moved to Los Angeles in 1890, building a house on Seventh Street where, six years later, Walter Vail would move only one block away. Vickers continued in his Arizona interests, however. The daughters were sent east for schooling. While both Dora and Lillian attended Bryn Mawr College, a dormitory fire in 1901 caused the death of Lillian, an event that left Dora emotionally stricken for the rest of her life.⁹⁵

Vickers died in December 1912, reportedly from complications of an abscessed tooth. He left an estate reportedly valued at \$975, 686, which was split among his children and widow. His daughters Anna and Clara continued the family activity in the business, incorporating the Vickers Company, Ltd. in 1931 and placing their interests in the island in that corporation during 1931 and 1932. Official management of the island continued as Vail & Vickers, with members of the Vail family actively operating the ranch and Vickers family members acting as silent partners.⁹⁶

Vail & Vickers Take Control of Santa Rosa Island

While the partners in 1901 and 1902 purchased only an undivided seven-eighths interest in the island, the deed included "all and singular" the livestock and equipment on the island, allowing Vail & Vickers to do business as they wished. Undoubtedly the men had a good idea of what developments and changes they would like to make. Shortly after making the transaction, the principal members visited the island to have a close look. Edward L. Vail, Walter Vail's brother and an experienced ranch and range man, wrote this letter (excerpted here) about his first visit to Santa Rosa Island in August 1901:

⁹⁵Lynn R. Bailey, Ed., *A Tenderfoot in Tombstone, The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons: The Turbulent Years, 1880-82* (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1996), p. 101; oral history interview with Vickers' grandson Ted Naftzger, January 11, 1993 by Nita Vail, SCIF, and partially published in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, p. 31; oral history interviews with Jack Crawford, March 5, 1986 by Phyllis Lotz and May 4, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones; Vickers Family Tree manuscript, SCIF.

⁹⁶*Los Angeles Times*, November 1, 1931, p. V4, Los Angeles Public Library; unidentified news clipping dated April 24, 1932; Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, April 24 and 27, 1932, SCIF.



A group of visitors posed in front of the ranch house in 1903. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

Walter and Mr. Vickers have bought Santa Rosa Island and I made a trip there with them to see it We went from San Pedro in a small fishing schooner which had a gasoline engine in her so that we did not have to depend on the wind which is a hard one if you are going west. I was very much pleased with the island and we had a pleasant party and a nice time. We rode over the island a good deal. They have a lot of fine saddle horses on the island and I think we rode over 20 miles a day while there. Most of the horses are large from 15 to 16 hands high and will weigh from 1000 to 1200 lbs. There are from 125 to 150 horses, mares, mules, etc., about 10,000 sheep and 300 or 400 cattle. The latter are very large short-horned cattle and the fattest grass cattle I ever saw. The island contains about 70,000 acres [sic]. I should think about one-third of it is rough and mountainous, like [Santa] Catalina and the balance is hilly with large mesas in the interior. The ground is very rich on most of the island and wild oats, El filiria [alfileria], clover and other California grasses are abundant.

The island is divided into 5 or 6 large pastures with sheep-tight, board and wire fences which must have cost lots of money. There are large barns, a large two-story ranch house, shearing sheds, and dipping vats for sheep etc., a wharf and boat-house with a life boat and a two story cottage furnished comfortably that made us think of cousin Kate's house in Plainfield [New Jersey]. It even had a bible and old fashioned books in it. There are beautiful views on the island of the sea. Santa Cruz Island is only 6 or 8 miles east and looks close. Santa Rosa Island is a very windy place and so cool that we had to dress warm and a fire was comfortable at night (in August), but there is not much frost in winter.

Banning [Vail, Walter's son] had a fine time hunting foxes and digging for Indian remains and relics and went home with a sack of bones, skulls, and some stone implements which he divided with Professor Willard from Tombstone.⁹⁷

Mr. Vail saw the island at a key turning point: the end of the More era of sheep ranching. His description reflected both a glimpse of the island in its 19th century state, and a hint of the changes to come. Headquarters of the business would be Los Angeles, not Santa Barbara, and the cattle apparently thrived alongside the large number of sheep. His mention of the pasture fencing added to documentation of the island divisions during the sheep era—not much difference—that increased with Vail & Vickers' cattle to eight pastures. The “ranch house” is likely the bunkhouse that burned in 1969, while the “cottage” would become the Vail & Vickers ranch house. The new partners found the island to be a fine site for the next large cattle ranch for these experienced and successful western ranchers.

Transition from Sheep to Cattle

Mr. Vail and Mr. Vickers, being long-time cattlemen, looked at Santa Rosa Island as a cattle ranch, and soon made the decision to rid the island of sheep. Finding the island overgrazed and observing the spread of erosion and non-edible weeds across many areas of the island, they determined that sheep did not fit into their plans and presented range management problems. The Santa Barbara *Morning Press* reported that the new owners were “gradually retiring from the sheep business and are stocking the rich ranges across the channel with beef cattle;” by the following spring, the newspaper reported, “some 7,000 or 8,000 head of cattle have been shipped to the range from Arizona. The stock is brought by rail to San Pedro, thence transferred to steamers and to the company's schooner, the *Mildred E.*, and taken to the island direct.”⁹⁸

Despite the intended transfer of purpose, sheep remained on the island for many years, and Vail & Vickers apparently made an early attempt at continuing some sheep grazing. Vail & Gates secretary Alex Mills wrote to Walter Vail in 1903 of “the sheep and lamb proposition” on the island but did not elaborate, an indication that a firm decision about keeping any sheep on the island had probably not yet been made. A week later Mills reported that “the sheep are getting scabby. I suppose Mr. Vickers has written you all about this though.” By this time, however, the sheep population had been dropped to “a few thousand.” A Santa Barbara newspaper reported in June of 1903 that livestock, presumably sheep, were to be shipped to that port instead of San Pedro, a “new arrangement [that] will add materially to the business of this port.” Between 1902 and 1904 the Santa Barbara newspapers regularly reported sheep movements from the island to the mainland aboard the Vail & Vickers schooners *Mildred E.*, *Colleen* and *Santa Rosa Island*, most being sold to livestock dealers Sherman & Ealand of Santa Barbara. Sheep shearers reported to the

⁹⁷Letter dated September 25, 1901, reprinted in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 103-105.

⁹⁸Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, April 13, 1902; Al Vail and Marla Daily, “Santa Rosa Island: Past, Present and Future” in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, p. 102.



Cattle grazed in the hills near Lepe roundup in this photograph taken in the 1930s. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

island as late as 1904, but by October of that year the number of sheep on the island had dwindled to about 700.⁹⁹

A member of the Vail family had interests in sheep ranching in other areas, however; Ed Vail leased San Nicolas Island for a sheep ranch from 1919 to 1934 in partnership with Robert Brooks, and previously had stocked sheep and cattle on San Clemente Island. By 1935 he had divested himself of all sheep business, concentrating exclusively on cattle.¹⁰⁰

Local newspapers noted the transition from sheep to cattle on Santa Rosa Island, as Vail & Vickers' cattle shipments to the island regularly made news: in January 1904 the Santa Barbara *Morning Press* reported that the schooner *Santa Rosa [Island]* shipped 150 head originating from the Los Olivos vicinity

⁹⁹Alex Mills to Walter L. Vail, Esq., March 9 and 17, 1903; Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, April 13 and 17, May 8 and 15, 1902, June 2 and 25 and July 16, 1903, April 14 and October 2, 1904, SCIF. Alex Mills was Vail & Vickers' longtime secretary; his daughter married N. R. Vail. During a flurry of transactions in the area Mills bought 2 acres at Huntington Beach, and found oil, from which revenue continues to provide income to Mills/Vail descendants. From an oral history interview with John Woolley, October 7, 1978, SCIF.

¹⁰⁰Revocable Permit issued to R. E. Agee and L. P. Elliot, August 1, 1934, Seabee Museum, Port Hueneme; Swanson, *Historic Sheep Ranching on San Nicolas Island*, p. 46; Marla Daily, *California's Channel Islands: 1001 Questions Answered* (Santa Barbara: Shoreline Press, [Third Edition] 1997), p. 168.

in the Santa Ynez Valley; in November 1908 reporters noted the “final load” of about 20 of 2,700 Arizona cattle to the island; and in 1911 Vail & Vickers shipped 3,000 Arizona yearlings to the ranch.¹⁰¹

While the island became fully stocked with cattle, sheep remained on the island.

Al Vail spoke of the presumably wild herds on the island in the late 1930s:

. . . there were 300 or 400 head of sheep of remnant that were gathered in the late '30s . . . and those sheep had scabies . . . They gathered them and brought them to the ranch headquarters which was quite a feat in itself, and then they decided it would cost more money after they shipped them to town and sold them. And then they'd have the corrals and the boat and everything with the scabies problem it wouldn't be worthwhile shipping them to town. So they killed them. Slaughtered them. And the last of the sheep—there were a few remnant sheep there—we finally got rid of the last of them sometime in the '50s. So there [were] absolutely no sheep whatsoever on the island.¹⁰²

And so, the last of the More family's sheep vacated the island. Hereford cattle filled the pastures first laid out by early settlers.

From 1908 until his death in 1943, Nathan Russell “N. R.” Vail managed ranching operations on Santa Rosa Island. Vail & Vickers ran a stocker ranch, where young steers were fattened on the ranch and then sold. In the 1930s ranch managers tried to run a “cow-calf” operation, where cows were bred, gave birth, and raised a 1-1/2 year old animal that would be fed to marketable size as a steer or cow by the buyers on the mainland. In the stocker operation, the ranchers fed cattle on the island grasses until ready for slaughter, and sold directly to packing plants as “finished” cattle.

A rumor circulated in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara newspapers in 1904 claiming that “a wealthy syndicate of Chicago Capitalists” would buy Santa Rosa Island and construct a resort “which for novelty and finish of improvements will be second to none in the world.” In addition to several hotels that would “accommodate different classes of patrons,” the resort would feature driving roads and a ten-mile “automobile speedway.” A large fleet of passenger boats would ferry guests to and from the island. Needless to say, the rumored plans never saw light of day.¹⁰³

The year 1906 proved eventful in the Vail family. Walter Vail had generously used his vast resources and energy to aid victims of the San Francisco earthquake and fire with food and clothing, and the development of Santa Rosa Island as a great cattle ranch was going well. But on Thanksgiving Day, Vail stepped from a streetcar at Grand Avenue and Seventh Street in Los Angeles to be struck by a passing streetcar while his wife and a son watched. Suffering “terrible” injury, with relief beyond the skills of Los Angeles physicians, he died on December 2. Vail was in his prime at the time, aged 54, with thriving cattle and land businesses. Obituaries hailed him as “a man of the most sterling honor” and a “Cattle King;” “an energetic worker, a patriotic leader, and a devoted husband and father,” wrote an Arizona news writer who continued:

¹⁰¹Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, January 24, 1904, November 19, 1908, October 4, 1911, SCIF.

¹⁰²Oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, transcript pp. 14-15, SCIF.

¹⁰³Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, March 23, 1904, SCIF.



The branding shed and scale house were originally built with gable roofs. Although the floorplans and function of the buildings remained the same, the roofs were altered in the 1950s. The schoolhouse is seen at the extreme left in this 1930s photograph. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*



An overview of the ranch complex taken in the 1930s, looking east, shows the barns, corrals and pier. Ranch House (or Windmill) Canyon is in the foreground, with the bunkhouse obscured by trees. Note the outhouse and slaughterhouse in front of the barns, the existing shed covering the sheep rendering tanks on the right, and the original schoolhouse at center. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

Men were attached to Mr. Vail by a sort of magnetism. Ranchers from the mountains went to him for advice; business men appealed to his wisdom; friends found him sympathetic and sincere. His absolute honesty was never questioned. He was generous, open hearted and true.¹⁰⁴

Surviving adult members of the Vail family established the Vail Trust on December 31, 1912 as the entity that would carry out the family businesses on the island in partnership with the Vickers Family.¹⁰⁵

Cattle Ranching on Santa Rosa Island

While Santa Rosa Island had largely been stocked with sheep previous to 1901, cattle had been raised on the island by previous owners in smaller numbers. Vail & Vickers managers chose to rid the island of sheep and, on some areas of the island, slowly restock with cattle, giving time for the reportedly overgrazed vegetation to recover adequately in order to run a viable cattle operation. Vail & Vickers reached this goal by 1910.¹⁰⁶

Vail & Vickers traditionally raised their Hereford cattle from calves, first bringing herds from the Empire Ranch in Arizona, later buying young cattle from all over the west. During the last years of ranch operation, Al Vail changed to a crossbreed that provided lighter beef as called for by modern tastes. Vail spoke of the changes in the markets:

It was a stocker operation. We didn't have any cows and calves, no mother cows, so it worked very similar to today. We bought young cattle, calves in the fall and then shipped heavy steers in the spring. Now in those days we used to hold those cattle longer, and shipped heavier cattle . . . direct to the feed yards, and they killed 'em there. Later on, in the fifties, late forties, then we started to have to feed these cattle to make 'em grade, but those grass cattle went right to the feed yard at that time.¹⁰⁷

After World War II, with a surplus of corn and other grains, cattle artificially fattened in feedlots grew in popularity. Corn-fed beef became the standard for quality and was graded as such; soon grass-fed beef lost its allure and feed lots grew across the west.

A stocker ranch differs from the common cow/calf operation in that the Vails didn't breed cows to produce newborn calves to raise; they brought calves to the island for feeding, "stocking" the island with six-month-old calves, originally both male and female. Al Vail claimed that the island is better suited to a

¹⁰⁴Clipping from an unidentified Arizona newspaper, probably published in Tucson, SCIF; *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1906.

¹⁰⁵Deeds Book 140, p. 1, SBCRO.

¹⁰⁶Information in this section is taken from the following: interview with Al Vail by Jere Krakow, September 1992 and by the author, October 4, 1999; oral history interviews with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, and March 11 and 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript pp. 7, 8, 14, and with Diego Cuevas, July 28, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹⁰⁷Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 7, SCIF.



Vaqueros brand a young steer in the corrals, circa 1950s. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*



At Arlington corrals, the cattle were sprayed with insecticide, probably DDT, in the 1950s. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

stocker operation, largely due to southern California's propensity for droughts. In many parts of the country, cow/calf operations require shelter for new calves and their mothers, although this was not particularly true for Santa Rosa Island. Also, a cow/calf ranch keeps bulls, an added management responsibility made more difficult by island isolation.

Weaned calves destined for Santa Rosa Island arrived at Wilmington (1902-1939) near Los Angeles or Port Hueneme (1939-1998) in train carloads or by truck and were deposited into corrals at the harbor (occasionally in the early days the Vails shipped from Santa Barbara). Often the stock would be "stopped" at a mainland ranch where they would receive some or all preparation: branding, dehorning, vaccinating and feeding; stopping cattle mainly allowed ranch owners to wait for the best grass conditions on the island. The Vails made arrangements with ranches in Brawley, El Centro, Lancaster or Pomona, among others; closer to home, the Sinton & Brown Ranch in Santa Maria or the Taylor Ranch in Ventura hosted Santa Rosa Island-bound calves.

From the harbor-side corrals vaqueros loaded the calves through chutes and ramps onto a vessel, either *Vaquero*, a barge or *Vaquero II*. The vessels had pens aboard to regulate number and weight of animals. Loading preferably occurred in the dark, evening in Wilmington and early morning at Port Hueneme. After a voyage of five to eight hours the livestock were unloaded onto the pier at Bechers Bay.

Once on the island cowboys ran the calves through dips of chemicals (creosote, then, for a while, DDT) to stem parasites and diseases; then they were castrated, dehorned, branded, vaccinated, and rid of cockle burrs (found in the tail hairs) at the main ranch. After about three days in pens at the ranch house where they would be fed and observed, calves were distributed to either the Wire Field or Lobo Pasture to get further acclimated to the island. After another three weeks or so they would be put out to the large North or South Pastures, with heifers placed in Pocket Field on the west end of the island. Numbers depended on the past weather, abundance of grass and general range condition. Some dry years managers kept the ranch half stocked; the usual stocking level would reach about 6,000 to 7,000 head at the "spring peak." The largest number of cattle on the island at one time, consisting largely of calves, was about 9,000.

The Vails stocked the island using a double season strategy, where an overlap occurred between new calves and finished cattle that gave them all two green seasons. When new calves were shipped in the winter and early spring, half the stock on the island had been there at least a year. The Vails would ship off the "big feeders" in the late spring and early summer, ending by the fourth of July; otherwise for six months the island would be fully stocked with young and older cattle, until the finished stock was shipped. The remaining yearlings got the island to themselves until the next batch of calves arrived, and the cycle continued. From a new 300-450-pound calf to a 750-1,000-pound feeder steer ready for shipping, a steer spent roughly eighteen months on the island gaining about 600 pounds. True "finished" cattle would be ready for slaughter upon shipment; the Vails discontinued shipping finished stock in the 1940s after World War II ended and joined the feedlot culture.

While the herds could wander freely throughout the large pastures on the island they tended to stay in groups in particular areas. The cowboys kept an eye on them but didn't interfere unless necessary, to doctor them or improve pasture utilization. Even at roundup time, the cowboys avoided roping cattle; Al Vail spoke of keeping the cattle gentle by not "running 'em." No supplementary feed was necessary; if the

range conditions became poor, the Vails shipped cattle off the island rather than import feed which was expensive and labor intensive.

At shipping time the island came alive. The island cowboys and family members spent three months in the spring on roundups around the island. After being brought to pens at the ranch, the cattle were carefully weighed in the scale house at the ranch complex and assigned pens for shipment on the boat or barge. The sale price was based on weight on the island at the time of shipping. Cattle lost some weight on the boat trip to the mainland, and even more during shipping to feed lots. Vail & Vickers shipped cattle by rail in the early years, and later trucks, to feed lots all over the west, including the Rockies states and the Midwest. Vail & Vickers owned a feedlot at Walnut, California until around 1984. After 120-150 days of feeding on grains and supplements, the cattle were slaughtered and sent to markets as choice beef.

Branding

Branding, traditionally used to identify cattle on the range between ranches, was not truly necessary on the island as there were no other ranches bordering the Vail & Vickers ranch. Finished beef didn't need brands because they went straight to slaughterhouses. Nevertheless, the Vails marked their cattle with various brands: a V/V didn't last long because it was graphically too complicated; after the war the managers used VR (Vail-Rogers), reflecting Ed Vail's partnership with Jimmy Rogers (son of the famous Will Rogers) on the Jalama Ranch near Lompoc; a heart-slash has been the standard brand on the ranch for the last decade of the operation.

Cowboys branded Santa Rosa Island calves in the squeeze chute located in the branding shed. While captured in the chute, the calves were also vaccinated, castrated and, if necessary, dehorned.

Fields and Pastures

From early in the century when Vail & Vickers started running cattle on the island, the physical division of the island into fields and pastures saw little change. The ranch managers retained many of the fence lines dating from the mid-19th century sheep operations, no doubt because the locations made practical sense and fencing materials (not to mention labor) were expensive. It has not been recorded when the additional fencing was installed, but it was before the 1930s, and likely during the first decade of operations by Vail & Vickers. Ranch workers installed barbed wire fencing to create a handful of new fields while using the 19th century sheep fences as long as they held up (cattle place more demands on fencing than sheep, due to their size and strength). Not until the late 1940s, perhaps later, would the last remains of More-era fencing be replaced with carbonized steel barbed wire strung on posts of either wood or metal.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸Interview with Al Vail by Jere Krakow, September 1992 and by the author, October 4, 1999; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

When Diego Cuevas arrived in 1948, his first tasks included building fences at House Field and Carrington Point, and rebuilding old fences, described as two or three horizontal 1-inch boards, with wires strung below and above the boards. Cuevas dumped the worn-out remains of the old fences. He recalled a brick fence at Cañada Soledad. Cowboys had time for these activities because of a drought that had temporarily emptied the island of livestock.¹⁰⁹

The old pasture names haven't changed in Al Vail's memory, spanning more than seventy years. The largest areas, the North Pasture and South Pasture, separated by the 12-mile "drift fence," held the various herds during the general growing season, all the cattle that were fattening for eventual shipment. Pocket field, the third largest, held heifers until the ranch changed to an all-steer outfit in the early 1990s. Old Ranch pasture, on the east end of the island inclusive of Skunk Point and East Point, also held heifers (heifers, young females, were kept separated from the steers during their entire lives on the island; steers always outnumbered the smaller and lighter heifers). New cattle, after a holding period of three days at the ranch headquarters, would be sent to the Lobo Pasture on the north side, and the Wire Field south of the ranch, for three weeks of acclimation and observation before being scattered into the North and South Pastures. There the cattle tended to stay in small herds on a specific range by choice, sometimes influenced by the rugged ridges that could act as a natural barrier to travel around the area.¹¹⁰

Carrington Pasture, composed of the entire Carrington Point area, had a centrally located large concrete water trough and held miscellaneous cattle and horses. All of the working horses resided in the Horse (or House) Pasture in the lower hills west of the ranch complex. The Vails housed brood mares in the Old Ranch Pasture. Other than the areas adjacent to the ranch buildings and the traps, Santa Rosa Island was divided into eight pastures.¹¹¹

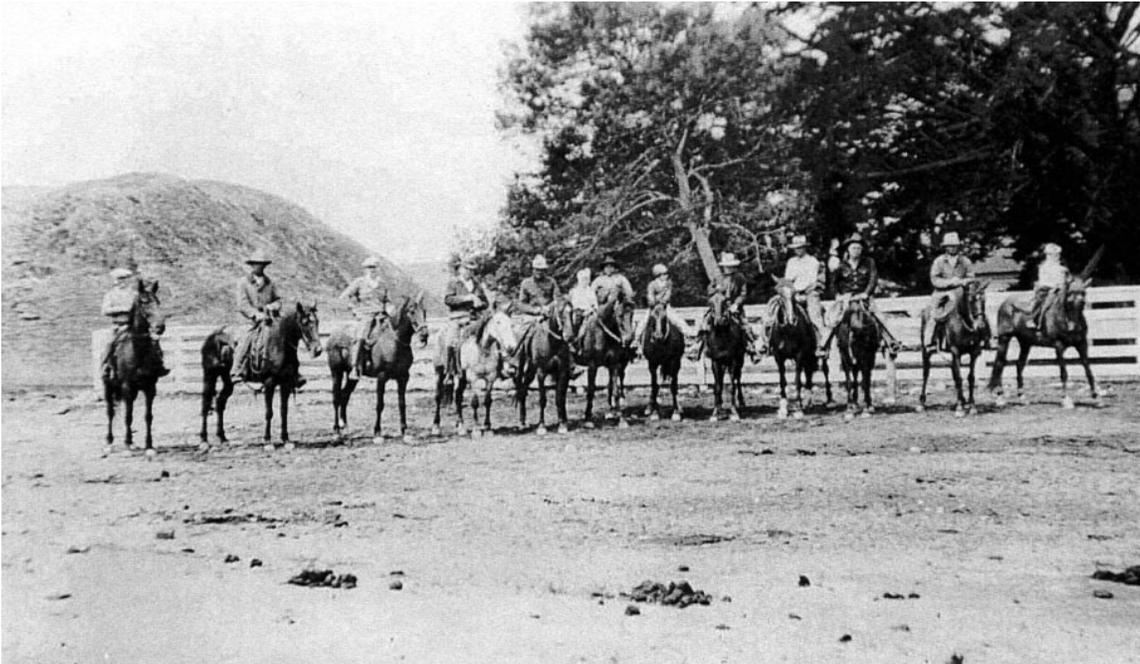
The Vails used the pastures described above as feeding and living areas, convenient to water, grass and any natural shelter (canyons) available. At roundup time, the cowboys used "beef traps" as holding areas both before and after roundups. Cattle would be moved into these 200-300 acre enclosures, and then herded into the corrals for separating. Cattle not ready for shipment would be returned to the trap, and then the outer pastures, while those to be shipped waited in the traps until being moved to the ranch corrals the next day. Cowboys used three traps: the Arlington, located on the west side in the heart of Arlington Canyon, for cattle on the north side of the island; the Wreck Trap at Ford Point for those on the south side; and the less-used House Trap, the terrace directly north of the ranch complex, which received cattle and horses from the northeast corner of the island.

Vail & Vickers managed grazing the island by leaving the pastures either half stocked or unstocked during the summer and fall, taking care to rest the smaller pastures such as Lobo, Pocket and Wire Fields for periods of months depending on conditions. Their double season marketing strategy left the island half stocked until the new shipments between November and March returned the island to full stocking levels when the grass was good. The ranch managers regularly inspected the quality and quantity of pasture and made adjustments in stocking levels when necessary.

¹⁰⁹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹¹⁰Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 9, SCIF.

¹¹¹Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999.



A large group of vaqueros and Vail family members line up in front of the ranch house at roundup time in the 1940s. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*



China Camp, August 1965. *Photograph by Mortimer, Channel Islands National Park*

Line Camps and Roundups

The roundup, an icon of the romance of the West to the reader of novels and watcher of westerns, was in reality a hard, dirty job that required concentrated preparation, precise execution and judgment, and a good spell of rest when it was all over. The art of the roundup has been fully understood only by those who have participated in the activity. It requires a sure horseman or horsewoman on a good horse, both possessing agility and endurance; a knowledge of the land being worked, coupled with a good eye and a sense of how a steer thinks; and, perhaps most importantly, the ability to work as a team with little direct communication. On Santa Rosa Island, the roundup followed a 100-year-old tradition, showing off the talents of the cowboys and marking the time of greatest activity on the island.¹¹²

Before the 1960s, cowboys gathered cattle to roundup grounds across the island mostly without benefit of corrals. These earlier sites included Piedragosa and La Jolla on the south side; Las Cruces, Sierra Pablo, Old Ranch and Water Canyon on the east side; Lobo and Green Canyon on the north; Pocket and Lepe on the west; and Black Mountain near the summit of that 1,298-foot peak. These sites provided centralized locations with enough reasonably level ground to herd 500 to 1,000 cattle into a bunch where they could then be separated and kept by a crew of cowboys. Only two sets of corrals existed before 1948, at Arlington (built before 1929) and China Camp (possibly built before 1929), both being larger than the later constructions. Vail & Vickers had a trap at Pocket Field for many of the early years.

Without corrals, roundups took up to three months across the island. Cowboys would be sent out into the canyons to find and herd cattle towards the roundup grounds, all converging at different times depending on the roughness of the terrain, distance and the difficulty of gathering strays. Once collected, the foreman (C. W. Smith or Bill Wallace, for instance) or manager (N. R., Ed or Al Vail) cut the herd, separating cattle to be shipped from those that would stay; a group of seven or eight horsemen kept the herd of cattle to be shipped in a tight bunch which grew as more cattle were separated and added. The roundup also gave the ranchers a chance to have a look at each steer before turning them back into the pasture. The free cattle roamed or were driven off, back to their range. Often it would be dark by the time the cutting was complete, so the cowboys took shifts holding the group overnight. In the morning, the cattle would be moved across the island following existing trails or roads, to corrals at the ranch on Bechers Bay. Each roundup session took about three days to complete, while pulling in all the cattle from the island could take up to three months.

The use of corrals made roundups easier and faster, and cut the number of cowboys needed. Horses, taken to the roundups the night before, would be rested when the roundup began. In the late 1940s corrals were rebuilt at the Arlington and new ones were built at the Wreck (near the older La Jolla roundup). Ranch workers began constructing roundup corrals in other areas of the island in the mid-1960s when materials became available from the abandoned Air Force station at Johnson's Lee. During that time,

¹¹²This section based on an interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999 and notes from interviews with Vail and Diego Cuevas in August and September 1992 by Jere Krakow; oral history interviews with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily and March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry (transcript p. 9), Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, and Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, and Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 19, SCIF, and from examination of aerial photos dated 1929, 1940 and 1954 in the CHIS collection.

cowboys built corrals at Lepe, China Camp, Green Canyon, Black Mountain, Water Canyon and the Old Ranch. The builders used guardrail, creosote poles and heavy timbers, all salvaged from the Air Force road and utility systems. With a specially laid out corral, cattle could be herded into enclosures and chutes where separating is made easy through a system of gates and pens.

At Arlington and the Wreck, cowboys spent a few days herding cattle into the trap from the Pocket Field, and North and South Pastures. Then, smaller bunches would be moved into the first corral through a gate; these would be forced into the alley, where they could be evaluated by the foreman or manager. At the end of the alley two cowboys handled two gates, respectively, each leading into another corral: one for cattle to be shipped, one for those who stay on the island to finish their season. On the shouted decision of the foreman, one or the other of the gates at the end of the alley would be opened and the steer would enter the corral, either to be moved to the main ranch and shipped, or to be released back to island pasture after exiting the trap. The cattle destined for shipping spent the night in the corral, and in the morning were moved to smaller pastures close to the ranch at Bechers Bay. From the Arlington roundup, the Smith Highway acted as the trail to Lobo Pasture; from the Wreck the Water Canyon road led the way to Wire Field. The other corrals at China Camp, Green Canyon, Lepe, Water Canyon and Old Ranch worked the same way, but without a trap; it took the skill of the island cowboys to move the herd into the corral from the open range. One corral, located near the summit of Black Mountain, was used for holding calves.

Diego Cuevas recalled the life of a cowboy at roundup time:

When I start working at the island [1948] we used to get up pretty early, 3:00, 3:30, 4:00 in the morning, get up, drink coffee, or whatever there was to eat at that time, and then you have to go and saddle up your horse and get your horses ready to go to work. Then we leave the ranch with everybody on their own horse and we take about 12, 13 horses, unsaddled horses When we get there, we change horses, turn ours loose and then catch a fresh one and we drive those other horses home ...

Cuevas told of separating the cattle and driving them “home” with horses. After getting the cattle settled in a corral or the House Trap, the cowboys ate, changed horses, and then put the cattle in pens for shipping.¹¹³

When N. R. Vail’s children Al, Russ and Margaret Vail were young, roundup time was a special occasion; their father allowed them to participate in roundups, where the kids could help with holding cut herds, as related by Margaret Vail Woolley:

We’d be way over there having to go to the bathroom, being hungry, wanting to talk to somebody and I think once or twice they forgot us and started home and had to go back But we thought it was pretty dramatic and we could pretend we were helping somebody that cut out a steer¹¹⁴

¹¹³Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 8, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹¹⁴Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 18, SCIF.

At each of the traps, a line shack stood to house cowboys during the days-long roundup. At the Wreck, a former military building was moved to the site in the 1950s. For many years a trailer stood at Arlington, to be replaced by a shack built by Bill Wallace in 1985; the National Park Service removed it. A line shack also stood at China Camp. According to Margaret Vail Woolley, an oil drilling shed on the west end was moved up to the Pocket Field to act as a shelter. It stood until the late 1970s; this is probably the ruined shed that lies near the south side of Sandy Point.¹¹⁵

China Camp

China Camp reportedly got its name from years of activity by Chinese abalone fishermen who used the somewhat protected site on the southwest coast of the island for processing and shipping dried abalone meat and shells. Evidence of a Chinese abalone camp was found in an archeological site at Cluster Point, a short distance northwest from China Camp. The plateau, squeezed between the beach, canyon and the steep hills, made a natural roundup ground for cattle, and probably for sheep previously. The watershed, called both Acapulco Canyon and China Camp Canyon, provided a perennial stream and shelter from the endless Pacific winds.

The Vails built a corral before 1929 and a line cabin at China Camp in the late 1930s. Margaret Vail Woolley recalled that a shed existed there previous to that time (while other family members don't recall such a shed). With lumber floated ashore from the schooner *Santa Cruz*, ranch workers (including young Al Vail) built a small board and batten structure with a kitchen/dining area and two bedrooms. Cowboys used the cabin during roundup time on the southwest side of the island, or other times doing ranch tasks. Jesus Bracamontes recalled how he would ride on horseback over the mountains to China Camp, "sleep two or three nights over there . . . check on the cattle."¹¹⁶

In the late 1950s, Margaret Vail Wise (sister of ranch manager Ed Vail) and her husband Sam Wise built a cabin room connected to the original by a wall, mostly from lumber and materials salvaged from an abandoned army camp near Black Mountain (later called Scott's Camp); the island cowboys carried the lumber down the hill. Wise, a pilot with a small plane, flew in other materials, including roofing, linoleum, some additional lumber; he also added the pantry behind the kitchen of the older structure. Wise built a garage for his jeep "from a lot of scrap of wood from the beach, from planks and things that he drag himself with the jeep." Mrs. Wise's niece, Mrs. Woolley, recalled the change at China Camp from an isolated cowboy line camp to a "comfortable" cabin. "They'd just pop over there and drive around and visit the ranch or whatever and have a wonderful time doing it."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 7, SCIF; personal communication with Will Woolley. An abandoned and eroded road, built by an oil company, descends from the site of the shed to the beach southeast from Sandy Point. The shed was reportedly originally located part way down this road, along with other temporary improvements.

¹¹⁶Op. cit.; oral history interview with Jesus Bracamontes, February 8, 1987 by Marla Daily and Don Morris, SCIF; 1929 aerial photography, UCSB.

¹¹⁷Oral history interviews with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 2 and March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, and with Diego Cuevas, August 29, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

Ranch workers built new, smaller corrals at China Camp in the mid-1960s, utilizing materials salvaged from the Air Force base. The previous corrals had been constructed of double posts with horizontal logs held between them.¹¹⁸

The route to China Camp led from the Burma Road on the ridge top down a narrow spine of a ridge with steep drops to Whetstone Canyon to the northwest and Acapulco Canyon to the southeast; this road became known as Rita's Road. In the China Camp cabin, the name Rita is seen on the wall. Al Vail told the story of the fabled Rita:

Well, that was kind of an old tale that they used to hang on these boys They would always hire a couple of new men in the spring to help work, and then before they would go to China Camp, they would always talk about seeing Rita, which was obviously a fictitious gal. But sometimes you'd get these boys, they'd . . . put on a clean shirt and bathe and get all ready to go and see Rita. So that kind of lived on for years, so that was the way Rita came into being There was a lot of people that never did really know for sure [whether Rita existed], either, or always wondered.¹¹⁹

The China Camp cabin and corrals remain on Santa Rosa Island; the National Park Service maintains Rita's Road.

Arlington Roundup

Vail & Vickers built corrals at Arlington Canyon before 1929. It is likely that T. W. More had a corral in this vicinity in the 1860s as surveyor Stehman Forney recorded the valley name as Cañada Corral in 1872; it is not known where the name Arlington originated. For a short time in the early 1950s, the Vails used a site directly south of the current corrals at a higher elevation, served by a road built in 1949 by Signal Oil Company.

The Arlington roundup served a key purpose on the island, as the final roundup point for the west and south sides of the island. The approximately 250-acre trap allowed all the cattle to be moved close to the corral for cutting and moving to the ranch complex for shipping.

In years previous to 1985 a trailer was placed at the Arlington as lodging for cowboys during roundups. Bill Wallace constructed a small line cabin to replace the trailer in 1985; this was removed by the park service in 1999.

¹¹⁸Notes from interview with Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1992 and Margaret Vail Woolley, September 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow.

¹¹⁹Oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, transcript pp. 15-16, SCIF.

Wreck Roundup

The Wreck roundup and trap replaced the earlier La Jolla roundup grounds to the west. Located at Ford Point on the southeast side of the island, the Wreck (reportedly named for the wreck of the *Jane L Stanford* in 1929) served as a collection point for cattle in the vast watersheds of La Jolla, Wreck and San Agustín Canyons. Cowboys constructed a corral here in the late 1940s, and around that time also constructed a small building using materials from a building at the abandoned army camp near Black Mountain; as recently as 1984, a board in the building was marked, “MKD for US Army 658 Sig Aircraft Warning Santa Rosa Island.” In the mid-1960s ranch workers reconstructed the corrals using salvaged materials from the Air Force base. Around 1985, Bill Wallace reconstructed the shack using materials from buildings at the Air Force base, including concrete-asbestos siding.¹²⁰

Horses

Santa Rosa Island’s herds of horses served many purposes. Foremost, they worked at the most critical times of ranch operation, roundups and moving cattle. They also provided transportation, labor, and recreation for visitors and family.

Ranch managers kept about forty head of riding horses as well as twelve to fifteen brood mares; additional ones, including yearlings, resting and retired horses, brought the number to well over a hundred. The horses, mainly quarter horses, were bred and raised for ranch use only; until auctioned upon the closing of the ranch in 1998, only a few horses were sold off the island. Known around southern California as a fine herd of cattle horses, each was trained by the cowboys and foremen to perform the jobs unique to the island.¹²¹

Diego Cuevas spoke of the ranch philosophy on horses:

Important part of the island was the horses, was number one . . . you gotta learn from the horses, teach ‘em to lead, got to teach ‘em so you can walk to and touch and play with their feet and make them gentle. That’s one of the most important parts. So you have the job, the cowboy gotta do all those things like that. You know, train the horses from beginning from baby to three or four years old. So you can drive it and then you start teaching it how to respond to the reins. Once you do that you start teaching it how to work cows. And you try your best to make a good gentle horse at the same time. Working horse and gentle horse. Lot of the horses they see that they begin to get to be gentle and nice, you can play with them and they make good kid horses, because on the island you always

¹²⁰Bruce Craig, “Preliminary Historic Resource Study: Santa Rosa Island,” Channel Islands National Park, April 1984; interview with Bill Wallace by Dewey Livingston, November 28, 2001.

¹²¹Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999, and notes from interview with Vail, September 1992 by Jere Krakow; oral history interviews with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 and E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987, by Marla Daily, SCIF. At one time the Santa Cruz Island Company bought horses from Santa Rosa Island. Vail & Vickers owned 150 head of horses at the time the ranch closed; most were sold at an auction and others to private buyers.



Riders at the main ranch house, 1930s. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*



Ed Vail posed for a photograph in the 1940s. Vail succeeded his brother, N. R. Vail, as ranch manager in 1943. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

have somebody that never ride a horse and then you can put him on the horse and you can trust him.¹²²

A cowboy would be assigned five or six horses to ride and take care of. Usually he would break his own horses, train them, and use them exclusively at roundups. The ranch had a blacksmith shop and tack room where all of the functions necessary for maintaining a horse and its equipment were fulfilled.

Working island horses spent their time in the House Field, roughly 640 acres west of the ranch complex. When not working or past their prime, horses were turned out in the high elevations of Soledad Mountain and Pecho Peaks. Ranch workers sowed oat fields in the flat areas east and south of the ranch house, to produce feed for the horses; ranch workers cut and baled oat hay in May, weather permitting. Earlier in the century, horses performed most of the transport labor, hauling wagons of materials to various parts of the island. Pack strings serviced Arthur Woodward's "elephant camp" in 1941. The first ranch vehicle, a Fordson tractor, arrived in 1939 and island managers started to use trucks in the 1950s, but horses remained the favored mode of transportation around the island. The Vail children and their friends looked forward to island visits, which afforded the freedom of riding in the hills, searching out pigs and having picnics in favorite spots.¹²³

Use of Buildings

The sturdy buildings left from the More sheep operation survived the transition to cattle ranching. Over a period of thirty years the Mores had developed two large dwellings and at least one smaller house, work areas in a spacious utility shed, and shelter for horses and equipment in a fine barn. Vail & Vickers needed to add few improvements. The cattle company built a scale house, for weighing outgoing livestock, and a branding shed to process incoming cattle. Vail & Vickers no doubt reworked the corrals at the ranch and eventually built three modern residences.

Importing construction materials to the island proved costly, inspiring ranch managers to rely as much as possible on salvaged lumber. For instance, ranch owners in 1911 purchased the wreck of the *Comet*, whose salvage would supply a reported 650,000 feet of lumber for construction of ranch buildings and fencing on the island. The Vails made use of abandoned government buildings after World War II and in the 1960s to provide for new construction projects. The bulk of materials for the new foreman's house and bunk house originated at the Air Force base at Johnsons Lee.¹²⁴

Of the ten key buildings standing at the ranch complex in 2000, three date from the More era; two are cattle-specific buildings constructed by Vail & Vickers early in the century; one is the former schoolhouse built by C. W. Smith; one dates from World War II; and three have been built since 1965. At least four older buildings, likely from the More era, were destroyed at some point during the Vail & Vickers era. The major loss was the bunk house, consumed by fire in 1969, which was a substantial More-era dwelling and

¹²²Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 2, SCIF.

¹²³Notes from interviews with Al Vail, September 1992 and Margaret Vail Woolley, September 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow.

¹²⁴Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, September 22, 1911, SCIF.

one of important function; the others were two small barns and a small house. Other buildings came and went, such as the oil company bunkhouses, World War II Army buildings, various sheds and outbuildings, and a boathouse by the pier.

The following entries note the historical background of the buildings on the island. See the Historic Resources section following for more detailed information on the buildings and features.

Ranch House: The picturesque two-story ranch house at Bechers Bay became the headquarters for the Vail and Vickers families, with generations of both families lodging there during visits and work periods. The Vail family, having the active role in running the island ranch, had the most impact on the life of the old house, performing maintenance and making the most use of the house. While the family usually stayed in the house, during a number of instances visiting workers, researchers and unexpected guests spent time in the house. The Vails hosted hunting parties throughout their ownership, and continued to house paying hunting guests in the house during the fall hunts. The house, which in 1901 had reminded Edward Vail of his cousin's home on the east coast, has now stood on this site for more than 130 years.

Margaret Vail Woolley recalled green shutters on all of the windows, and that grass matting placed on the floors "smelled wonderful." She also described the "regular drill" of opening up the house after the family arrived for a typical weekend: "Go in, open the windows, snap back the shutters, sweep the



The Vail & Vickers ranch house as it appeared before 1982. *Channel Islands National Park*

floor and change the beds and put on clean sheets which would have come on the boat. And that was the end of the work because we ate down at the other [bunk] house, which was just marvelous”¹²⁵

Other family members and E. K. Smith remember a previous interior layout, consisting of a long living room in the back with a wood stove. An open area with a wooden sink on the west side of the house was later remodeled into a kitchen with an added area for refrigerators. Ed Vail installed French doors, and in 1950 Al Vail had a room, virtually a separate but compatible one-story building, added to the west side for a residence while he and later his family stayed at the island.¹²⁶

For many years the house was lit with kerosene lamps. The Vails added electric lights, which operated only while the generator was running. The wood stove in the living room doubled as a hot water heater, as Margaret Vail Woolley recalled:

[Water was] heated from the stove in the living room. There was a pipe coming up through to a water tank and it heated it up. And it got hot! And there was no way you could stop it once it was heated until the fire went out except running water There was a big four-footed tub in there . . . it was wonderful to come in and fill it with hot water and sit in it but because of the way the place was heated, the whole bathroom would get hot and you’d come out completely steamed and withered. But it was a real pleasure after a day on the island as you can imagine. It had a great aesthetic appeal.¹²⁷

Plenty of firewood, mostly driftwood, was available on the island; family members and cowboys gathered wood with horses and wagons to feed wood stoves in the house, bunkhouse, the foreman’s quarters, and the small red house, not to mention the cook stoves in the residences. The stove in the back bedroom (once the living room) saw a lot of use, as Mrs. Woolley recalled that “we burned wood in it almost every night . . . it threw out ferocious heat but the windows and doors had to be arranged in a very particular way or it would smoke. All the doors had to be closed and the window that is now in that bedroom had to be opened about an inch and then we had a lovely time.”¹²⁸

The Vails remodeled the house a few times, changing the interior layout, expanding the kitchen, and adding a cabin on the south side. Mrs. Woolley recalled that during the 1930s the ranch buildings were painted silver-gray. Kept well maintained, the house presents a lovely form and holds its 19th century integrity well.

*Bunkhouse:*¹²⁹ The Vail & Vickers bunkhouse, actually a complex of three buildings located at the edge of Ranch House Canyon northwest of the horse barn, had been built either by Alpheus Thompson in

¹²⁵Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 17-18, SCIF.

¹²⁶Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999; oral history interviews with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, and with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

¹²⁷Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 8, SCIF.

¹²⁸Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 4, SCIF; notes from interview with Mrs. Woolley, September 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow.

¹²⁹According to E. K. Smith, the actual bunkhouse was a one-story building located adjacent to the two-story building commonly referred to as the bunkhouse. The two-story building was the superintendent’s house; a separate cookhouse stood between the two buildings. All were consumed in the 1969 fire and replaced with one building, today’s bunkhouse. For consistency, this document refers to the earlier complex as the bunkhouse.



The foreman's house, one of the oldest buildings on the ranch at the time. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*



The bunkhouse complex as it appeared in the 1930s. The bunkhouse where the vaqueros slept is seen in the right foreground, with the foreman's residence and cookhouse partly obscured by trees. The entire complex burned in 1969. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

1855 or by the More family around 1870, and was already old when the Vails commenced management of the ranch. E. K. Smith, who was raised in the house, heard that the bunkhouse had been the original superintendent's house during the sheep-raising era on the island. It was described by Edward Vail in 1901 as a "large two-story ranch house" and was used by Vail & Vickers to house the foreman and the crew's dining room. Men slept in a long, one-story shed adjacent to the larger building.¹³⁰

Margaret Vail Woolley had many memories of the bunkhouse as it appeared in the 1930s and 1940s:

. . . it was a charmer . . . it had two stories and a balcony across the front . . . and it had a bunch of rooms . . . there was a great big dining room because in past days they had great big crews . . . then there was a stairway that went upstairs to the foreman's quarters. And there was a big oddly shaped room up there with a wood stove in it and an office taking up some other space and I believe three bedrooms."¹³¹

Mrs. Woolley recalled that the kitchen in the bunk house was smaller than the later one, and had a cooler room where they stored milk and perishables; she remembered "the smell of beans and onions and all sorts of good stuff and coffee" when C. W. Smith's wife cooked. A generator powered the lights during the 1920s, and as a result of improvements after World War II the generators powered the refrigerators.¹³²

Former foreman Diego Cuevas told of how in the 1950s a diesel-fueled kitchen stove provided hot water, stored in a big tank outside. An icebox, situated between the kitchen and living room, was filled daily. Longtime island cowboy Jesus Bracamontes recalled a bathroom in a little shed off the first floor to left, a bedroom in front, a laundry room "up top," and an office; the crew installed a big window from the Air Force base to replace two smaller ones. He remembered a chicken house and barbecue in the back. Various ranch employees kept a garden behind the bunkhouse.¹³³

The bunkhouse burned to the ground on the night of November 3, 1969. Ranch cook Howard Anderson, according to Bill Wallace, "had gotten drunk and went to sleep with a cigarette in the bed. He was sleeping upstairs in the bunk house." A fire started and was doused by Wallace and a cowboy. Later, the fire erupted and quickly devoured the old house, cookhouse and bunkhouse and killed Anderson. After surveying the damage, Al Vail and Wallace sketched out a replacement bunkhouse on a napkin while returning to Santa Barbara on the *Vaquero II*. An architect put the plans on paper and, over the following year, Bill Wallace and his cowboys built the new bunk house, using much salvaged Air Force material including doors, plumbing, toilets, basins, and lumber.¹³⁴

¹³⁰Oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF; Letter dated September 25, 1901, reprinted in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 103-105.

¹³¹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 4, SCIF.

¹³²Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 17 & 23, SCIF.

¹³³Oral history interviews with Diego Cuevas, May 24, 1993 by Will Woolley, and with Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, SCIF.

¹³⁴Interviews with Al Vail and Bill Wallace by the author; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 19, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 4, SCIF; Bill Wallace quoted in Kerry Blankenship Allen, "Isla de los Vaqueros: The Ranching History of Santa Rosa Island 1843-Present" in *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 40, Number 2, 1995, p. 43.



The ruins of the foreman's house and bunkhouse following the fire of 1969. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

Clearing the rubble after the bunkhouse fire, an old flagstone foundation was revealed; speculation arose whether the foundation was from the original house on the site built by Alpheus Thompson.

To house numerous workers, Standard Oil Company built “a couple of bunk houses on the road coming down to the bunk house from the dock” (a site in front of today’s foreman’s house) in 1932, but removed them after failing to find oil.¹³⁵

Schoolhouse: The schoolhouse may have been the one used by the Mores in the late 1800s, but E. K. Smith claims that his father built it out of a generator shed around 1923. From that date until about 1932 eight to ten ranch children took their lessons in the little building from a teacher hired from the city. After the school use was discontinued, it was used for guest quarters and to house ranch workers. Diego Cuevas added a room in the early 1960s to make a more comfortable home, and lived in it until the new foreman’s house was built in 1965. Married cowboys occupied it until 1999.

Barn: The More family no doubt built the barn, probably in the mid-1870s. Sheep shearers bunked in the loft and probably sheared sheep in the big room. Vail & Vickers used it as a traditional horse and feed barn, with tack room and storage areas adjacent to the horse stalls. The large room on the west side was used for wagons and trucks, and probably to store hay. The Vails installed a corrugated metal roof in the 1950s and painted the barn red in the 1930s or 1940s.¹³⁶

¹³⁵Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 23, SCIF.

¹³⁶Notes from interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, September 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow.

Generator Shed/Blacksmith Shop: The barn-sized shed was originally two gable-roofed sheds, the western one sheltering the More's massive matanza boilers. Some time between 1940 and 1948 the west part came down, leaving the boilers exposed to the elements. The remaining building has been used by Vail & Vickers as a blacksmith shop, generator house and cold storage. Three cold rooms in the barn have not changed in the memory of ranch veterans; one held a freezer for making ice. Diego Cuevas liked to tell the story of the "Cold Room Man," a Caterpillar tractor operator who was killed in a tractor accident while unloading a barge at Water Canyon beach and was stored in the room until the coroner could come from the mainland.¹³⁷

Scale House and Branding Shed: Around 1910 Vail & Vickers built two small but functional buildings in the area of the corrals. The scale house held a livestock scale with instruments for precise weighing of incoming and outgoing cattle. Al Vail took pride in the correct weights at shipping time; a state inspector regularly checked the accuracy. A squeeze chute positioned in an open shed was used to hold cattle while they were vaccinated, dehorned and castrated.

Rope House: Vail & Vickers employees built a small utility shed above the entrance cut to the pier, to hold equipment used in boat and shipping activities.

WWII Storage: The U. S. Army built a small complex of buildings, including two storage sheds and a barracks, south of the ranch house in 1943 as the transit base for the radar station situated on other parts of the island. The buildings became property of Vail & Vickers after the war, and all but one were removed. The Vails used the building for storage.

"Little Red House": An old two-room house, painted red and probably a remnant of the More occupation, stood near the bend in the eucalyptus trees by the pier; a red outhouse stood nearby. Cowboy Juan Sierra and his family lived there in the 'teens and early 1920s; Maria Sierra was a midwife, and the couple had four children. The Lopez family lived in the red house in the 1920s and 1930s; they also had four children. Later the house was used for storage. The ranch supply of dynamite sat in the building for years until becoming deteriorated and dangerous. With the help of Navy experts, Bill Wallace burned the house and its contents, leaving only the outhouse, hidden in the eucalyptus windbreak.¹³⁸

¹³⁷Oral history interviews with Diego Cuevas, May 24 and July 19, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF; Cuevas quoted in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, pp. 45-46.

¹³⁸Smith in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, p. 38; oral history interview with Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, SCIF.



A small More-era slaughterhouse, perched at the top of the slope north of the large barn, is seen in this 1903 photograph. The domestic pigs became a problem on the island in years to come. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

Foreman's House: Ranch hands built a new house with outbuildings for the foreman in 1965. An architect/builder drew up plans and visited the job site about once a week. Located on a flat area north of the road from the pier to the bunkhouse and barns, the builders ran into “nothing but rock” as they dug out the area for the foundation. Diego Cuevas claimed that the ground needed to be drained with pumps. The building was constructed out of various materials, most salvaged, including windows left over from a construction job in Santa Barbara, and doors, walls, some cabinetry and other items from the Air Force base at Johnsons Lee. Al Vail bought new plywood siding, roofing materials, and some cabinets. Cowboys did the construction work, interspersing it with their other ranch responsibilities; it took about 8 months to complete.¹³⁹

Russ Vail House: After the National Park Service purchased the island, Russ Vail in 1988 built a prefabricated home on the Vail's reserved area on the east side of the eucalyptus windbreak. It was meant to be temporary so was constructed on a foundation of pressure treated wood.

¹³⁹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 10, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

The Old Ranch and West End Shack: A few stories from the Vail & Vickers era are told of a structure at the site of Thompson's original settlement on the island near East Point. E. K. Smith remembered an "old shack" in the 1930s, and Jesus Bracamontes saw an old building there in 1952, slowly falling down; a photograph in the collection of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History shows a shack at the site in the 1950s, likely the one referred to by Bracamontes. A collapsed building on the site, examined by park staff, had been built with wire nails, indicating a more recent construction. On the west end, a few references exist to a "West End Shack." Austin Wright noted it in the 1920s, and Mrs. Woolley referred to a shack moved for use as a cattle shelter. Remains of a shack exist near Sandy Point but appear to be related to oil exploration in the area.¹⁴⁰

Roads and Trails

The first thirty years of Vail & Vickers management of Santa Rosa Island saw no improvements in the road and trail system on the island. Existing 19th century routes apparently served the cattle ranch well, as they had been sensibly laid out following ridgelines and land contours. In 1932, however, Standard Oil Company made agreements with Vail & Vickers to drill for oil near the highest point on the island, a distance of about six miles from the ranch and pier. As this operation would require trucking materials to and from the site and landing, engineers set to work laying out a truck road. Beginning at the bottom of Windmill Canyon, the route ascended the north flank of Black Mountain and followed cattle trails on the ridge lines past Pecho Peaks and Soledad Mountain to the drilling site, located a stone's throw from the island's highest point, a 1589-foot summit. Crews used a steam shovel and blasted through rocky areas with dynamite, their labors resulting in a well-engineered ten-to-twelve-foot roadway, paved with macadam or asphalt.¹⁴¹

The Vail family members, old and young alike, took great interest in the road project. Manager N. R. Vail helped design the new road. His daughter Margaret Vail Woolley recalled that Vail "would have liked very much to be a civil engineer and plan roads. And he was able to do that somewhat on the island. He got a great big kick out of it . . . he would lay out roads to the various watering spots." And foreman C. W. Smith "knew how to set and explode dynamite. So he did that and we were all taken up to watch it. And it was great fun and the hill just rose up a little bit and settled down. We were so disappointed."¹⁴²

While the oil-drilling project met no success, the Standard Oil road became one of the most important routes on the island, being used not only by the ranch operation but also under official agreements with the

¹⁴⁰Oral history interviews with Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, and with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 7, SCIF; photograph P1319, SBMNH; comments by park archeologist Don Morris, no date.

¹⁴¹Marla Daily, with Al and Russ Vail, Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr., Robert E. Anderson, Lloyd Edwards, William E. "Bill" Kennett, John A. Forman, and K. B. "Pete" Hall, "Santa Rosa Island Geologic Mapping and Oil Exploration." Text accompanies "Geologic Map of Santa Rosa Island Santa Barbara County, California" by Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr., John J. Woolley and Helmut E. Ehrenspeck (Dibblee Geological Foundation, Map DF-68, April 1998).

¹⁴²Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 9, SCIF.



Longtime island researcher Phil C. Orr outfitted his jeep with a blade in order to maintain roads for access to study sites during the 1950s. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

U. S. Army, Navy and Air Force during and after World War II. The macadam road improved access to China Camp and Johnsons Lee, although the minimal paving ended at Soledad Peak. It remained in good condition, with few changes, throughout the Vail & Vickers ranching era.

Signal Oil Company and two partners in 1948-1949 built a number of roads on the island. One, leading from Soledad Mountain north into Arlington Canyon, accessed one of their drilling sites in that vicinity. It has been called the Signal Road since then, but saw only moderate to light use after Signal Oil left in 1949. Another, more major road followed a cattle trail between the ranch and Water Canyon roundup, taking a sometimes-steep ascent up the southeast side of Water Canyon to the divide, then down to the Wreck and on to Johnsons Lee; it was built by Signal Oil, with portions constructed by Diego Cuevas. This road became another of the important access routes to the south side of the island.¹⁴³

One of the key roads on the island is called the Smith Highway, which crosses the northern side of the island from Bechers Bay to the west end. The Smith Highway evolved from a sheep trail to an important graded dirt road. Leading from the ranch complex to the Arlington roundup and beyond on the west end, the road is named after C. W. Smith, longtime ranch foreman and dynamite expert. Smith reportedly built much of the road in the 1920s, blasting through rocky sections in Lobo Canyon and pulling the roadway in and out of deep ravines with precipitous entries and exits. Ranch workers improved the road little by little, as a number of bypasses and traces of older routes are found along the ten-mile length of the road; the

¹⁴³Daily et al, "Geologic Mapping"; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 10, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

National Park Service realigned a section prone to serious erosion above Bechers Bay in 2001. The Smith Highway followed much of a route dating from the mid-1800s that appeared on Stehman Forney's 1872-1873 topographic map of the island, and which was used for sheep and cattle drives across the island for about 150 years until the ranch ended cattle operations in 1998.¹⁴⁴

The U. S. Air Force constructed a road in 1950 that fit more the motoring style of the mainland than an isolated island cattle ranch. It was a five-mile roadway built to federal standards, paved and with metal guard rails where necessary, and engineered drainage with dozens of culverts. It led from the new pier at Johnsons Lee to the radar station on the mountaintop. Most of the pavement is intact today, although the asphalt is deteriorating, the drainage failing and the guardrails taken and used for corrals around the island. When the Air Force provided telephone service to the ranch, they reconstructed a road known as the Hunting Road from Black Mountain to the ranch area, now called the Telephone Road.¹⁴⁵

Many of the other roads on the island are either slightly improved versions of 19th century trails or bulldozer roads built by ranch workers. The road to Old Ranch and East Point dates from before 1872, although it has been graded with modern equipment over the last decades. C. W. Smith, with a cat operator named Barney, built a dramatic road to China Camp where a sheep trail had been before. Diego Cuevas was given responsibility for road upkeep shortly after he arrived in 1948. At the time, roads existed to China Camp, Old Ranch, the Arlington, and the oil road to the mountaintops. Cuevas built roads up above Water Canyon and to La Jolla, to Arlington from Lepe roundup, and a road, now abandoned, from Navy Hill to Johnsons Lee, which was superseded by the paved Air Force road built in 1950. An old route called the Hunting Road became known as Telephone Road after the Air Force strung telephone wires from the hills down to the ranch along that road. Cuevas described how two ranch men would grade a dirt road with a tractor pulling an old grader, one man riding the grader. At the time of this writing, National Park Service maintenance personnel grade the roads with a Caterpillar grader.¹⁴⁶

The most obscure roads are actually tire tracks through the grassland, usually following the spines of ridges. These are the oldest intact routes, many having been recorded on Forneys' topographic maps of the early 1870s. They include roads along the Sierra Pablo and in the old ranch area.¹⁴⁷

The ranch operators didn't have much use for these roads until they brought vehicles over to the island, mostly of the Army surplus variety. After World War II, E. K. Smith brought an old Jeep over, being the first ranch vehicle on the island. Eventually the Vails purchased a truck, which led to a point where there were perhaps three trucks on the island. The cowboys preferred using horses for transportation around the island.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴U. S. Coast Survey, "Topography of Santa Rosa Island" 1872-73; aerial photographs dated 1929, UCSB; aerial photographs dated 1940 and 1954, CHIS. National Park Service restored a badly eroded section of the Smith Highway above the ranch complex in 2001, creating a short bypass.

¹⁴⁵Air Force records, CHIS Collection; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹⁴⁶Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 10, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF. Cuevas said that his first road was the one from Navy Hill to Johnsons Lee, and that wildcatter Louis Scott used it to haul equipment to Johnsons Lee while he was drilling for oil and building the Air Force pier. He also recalled at least three wooden bridges on the island in the vicinity of Windmill Canyon.

¹⁴⁷"Topography of Santa Rosa Island," 1872-73.

¹⁴⁸Oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

As for the arrival of motor vehicles in 1932 when Standard Oil built the first road, Margaret Vail Woolley recalled her feelings about civilization reaching Santa Rosa Island:

They brought trucks over and we children thought that was just scandalous They paved the road and there were trucks going back and forth and it was astonishing. Got a ride on one if you want, up to the rig and back, and we thought everything was being ruined. Actually they did a lot of good to the road which lasted more or less.”¹⁴⁹

Water Resources

According to Al Vail, year round flowing water sources (in an average year) are found at Green, Soledad, Arlington, Tecolote, Tranquillon, Wreck, La Jolla, San Agustin and Water Canyons. But other than Water Canyon, tapped by the Mores in the 1870s, developed sources of water on the island include only a spring and a well.¹⁵⁰

The major source of water for ranch operations is located in the appropriately named Windmill Canyon west of the ranch house. At an unknown date before the 1930s someone drilled a well and installed a windmill and storage tank. Water from this reliable source fed the ranch houses, outbuildings and troughs in the ranch complex by gravity. For some time the Vails used a tractor or old Army vehicle on jacks to pump water from the well. Later the Vails built a pump house and ran pipes about a mile north to supply water to a storage tank and two troughs at Carrington Point. In 1988 the National Park Service replaced and updated the well, windmill and pump system.¹⁵¹

Margaret Vail Woolley recalled when people piped water from a dam in Water Canyon to the barley field near the ranch house “years ago;” a man at one time attempted a large vegetable garden in the lee of the eucalyptus trees which was watered by that system. Remnants of riveted iron pipe from this system remain in lower Water Canyon. N. R. Vail and C. W. Smith reportedly dowsed the area with a “witch stick” and found water supplies here and there.¹⁵²

Persons unknown excavated an extensive ditch that ran for almost half a mile between the toe of the hill slope and the hayfields south of the ranch house, with the purpose of diverting runoff away from the hay fields; the water drained into Windmill Canyon at the bend northward.

Originally, water tanks, well casings and troughs were built out of redwood, to be replaced with concrete structures beginning in the 1950s.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Ann Eggers Jones, March 10, 1994, transcript p. 23, SCIF.

¹⁵⁰Oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, SCIF. The Army Corps of Engineers maps of the island, dated 1943, denote Lobo, Windmill, Old Ranch and other Canyons as perennial as well.

¹⁵¹Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999.

¹⁵²Oral history interviews with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994, transcript p. 7-8, and March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 22, SCIF..

¹⁵³Notes from interviews with Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1992 and Margaret Vail Woolley, September 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow.

Standard Oil Company constructed a dam in Tranquillon Canyon to supply water to their oil well near the summit in 1932. Pumps lifted that water some 1,000 feet, a distance of three miles, until the operation ceased a few years later. An abandoned road, in poor condition, leads to the site from the Johnson's Lee road.¹⁵⁴

Near the top of San Agustin Canyon persons unknown developed a spring that produced a fine and reliable water source. Water from Clapp Spring runs by gravity through a pipe from the springhouse at the source to a concrete watering trough on the Sierra Pablo road. Al Vail and the cowboys built the trough in 1953, leaving the date inscribed in the concrete apron. Vail's sister recalled some aspects of the spring:

We didn't get drinking water from there because it was too far and it was too hard to carry on horseback. But that was the place where the cattle'd eat from various roundups and it was a good stopping place and good resting place because you would shove cattle up out of the canyon there and they'd be tired and you'd be tired and it would be hot and it was a real project to get them there.¹⁵⁵

No one knows who found and developed the spring. Clapp Spring allegedly got its name from an incident when its pure water cured an old cowboy's venereal disease. True or not, the water is excellent. Ranch workers bottled it in five-gallon containers for drinking water.¹⁵⁶

Vegetation and Range Management

Vail & Vickers stressed range management and weed reduction throughout their occupation of the island, following accepted contemporary management practices as developed by ranchers, farm bureaus, the University of California and government agencies. Some in the scientific community praised the conditions on the island, as Don Meadows of the Channel Islands Biological Survey wrote in 1941: "The careful way in which the Vail and Vickers ranch is conducted maintains the summer vegetation in fine condition . . . under such control the island nearly approaches the original ecological conditions." Not all reports were positive, especially during drought periods, and Vail & Vickers allowed only limited scientific research on the island. With the purchase of the island by the federal government in 1986, the transition from a commodity-oriented ranch to a conservation-oriented park began. This brought traditional ranching practices into conflict with National Park Service policies for protection of park resources, and federal laws such as the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

¹⁵⁴Interview with Diego Cuevas by Dewey Livingston, July 28, 2001.

¹⁵⁵Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 7, SCIF.

¹⁵⁶Oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, SCIF. An Air Force map from 1950 shows "Augustin Trough" at the location (SBMNH #0882).



A visitor plays with ranch dogs in 1903. Seen in the background is a row of young Monterey cypress trees, planted during the More ownership parallel to the large barn, and the roof of the foreman's house in the distant right. The photographer is looking north. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

Both Al Vail and his sister Margaret Vail Woolley recalled little change in the nature or quality of the grasses on the island since the 1930s. As of 1993 Mrs. Woolley noted that there was much less “malva” (probably *Malva parviflora*, a non-native annual that can be toxic to livestock) which commonly grew in the corrals: “It used to be just solid down in the area between our ranch house and the park service place.” The Vails did not use the services of a farm advisor, but handled range management from study and experience. They did not plant grasses or do any seeding except in the hay fields. Al Vail stated that “our policy has always been to undergraze rather than to overgraze; keep some old feed [in the range].” He called his business “selling grass.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999; notes from interview with Al Vail, September, 1992 by Jere Krakow; oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, and with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 19-22, SCIF.

Perhaps the most notable change in vegetation during the Vail's time is the reduction in prickly pear cactus, a native that proliferates when other vegetation is removed. Forney's map of 1873 depicted numerous thickets of cactus across the island. Mrs. Woolley said, "the thing I remember most vividly is that when I was young there was lots and lots of cactus. Fields of it, acres of it." Edwin Stanton on neighboring Santa Cruz Island, an avid student of agricultural science, used cochineal insects (*Dactylopius* sp.) to rid his island of native prickly pear cactus.¹⁵⁸ Both Mrs. Woolley and Al Vail speculated that Stanton's "bugs" migrated to Santa Rosa Island and eliminated most of the cactus. Mrs. Woolley noted that "it just died by the acre . . . there had been sage brush on the island for a long time but it stretched out to where the cactus had been."

Mrs. Woolley believed that the unique groves of Torrey Pines overlooking Bechers Bay were expanding, an opinion backed up by NPS monitoring data.¹⁵⁹ The expansion of the Torrey Pine grove has continued following removal of ungulates. Of the rare island oaks found on the upper elevations, Mrs. Woolley stated, "I don't see any change in them at all, none. It seems to be exactly the same number," a statement that highlights the lack of reproduction of the island oaks during the ranching period. Another tree grove that has changed little is the line of eucalyptus sheltering the ranch buildings at Bechers Bay. Apparently planted before the turn of the century, the trees are violently bent and stunted by the relentless winds. Although up to one hundred years old, the trees appear to measure no more than fifteen feet high; most of the trees' length is horizontal. Mrs. Woolley recalled that she and her friends used to play Tarzan in them, and that they once shaded from the wind a commercial vegetable crop for a time.¹⁶⁰

Many of the Monterey cypress trees around the ranch house and bunkhouse are very old as well, although a date of planting has not been found; a number of 19th century authors mentioned the trees, and most extant today appear in photographs dated 1903-1905. It is likely that the Mores planted both the cypress and eucalyptus, as the heyday of planting such trees tended to occur in California before the turn of the century. At one time the cypress trees may have surrounded the ranch house, but time and weather have reduced the number to only a handful. The two cypress planted on either side of the front entrance of the house appeared to be the oldest; NPS removed one of the trees in about 2013, due to disease. By the bunkhouse and barns a number of trees remain but fewer than the original number; they appear as young (10-20 years old) trees in a photograph dated 1903.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸Op. cit.; Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, p. 34.

¹⁵⁹See *Final Environmental Impact Statement, Resources Management Plan for Improvement of Water Quality and Conservation of Rare Species and Their Habitats on Santa Rosa Island* (Ventura: Channel Islands National Park, 1997), p. 268 for a comparison of pine forest in photos taken in 1927 and 1997.

¹⁶⁰Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 19-22, SCIF; comments by park archeologist Don Morris based on photographs of the Torrey pines taken in 1927.

¹⁶¹See photographs from the collection of the California State Library elsewhere in this document.



Ed Vail watched as cattle were herded to Water Canyon and towards the pier during the drought of 1948. *Los Angeles Times* photograph, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History



Cattle are treated for pests in the Vail & Vickers dip vat prior to being shipped off the island during the 1948 drought. *John Malmin* photo, *Los Angeles Times*, Vail Family Collection, Santa Cruz Island Foundation

Weather and Drought

While cattle ranches are commonly perceived as raising cattle, they also raise grass and must care for their pastures as they do their livestock. Ranch managers on Santa Rosa Island took stock of the weather and grass conditions, both for feed supply and fire danger. The amount of rain and quality of pasture determined the stocking levels on the ranch, and at times cattle had to be evacuated to the mainland for lack of feed. The Santa Barbara *Morning Press* reported in late 1911 that, according to ranch manager Frank Pepper, less than half an inch had fallen on the island but that there was enough feed to carry the stock until March. “If this proves to be a dry winter,” Pepper said, “we will be forced to move a considerable number of the cattle in the early spring.”¹⁶²

The winter of 1917-1918 was a dry one: In February N. R. Vail wrote to his uncle Edward Vail in Arizona that “I imagine we will start moving stuff [cattle] from the island pretty soon if the weather does not change” A week later he wrote of new rain, probably eliminating “the necessity of lightning [sic: lightening] up at the Island.” In March of the next year: “The last reports from the island were encouraging, though not as good as we had hoped. Smithy [foreman C. W. Smith] reported about a week ago that they had had the windiest thirty days they had ever experienced; in fact the weather was so bad that he could not leave the wharf to inspect the *Colleen* for fifteen days at a stretch, which is blowing some.”¹⁶³

The worst drought in island memory occurred during 1945-48, when lack of rain and the subsequent loss of pasture productivity led to evacuation of the island cattle. A newspaper reporter claimed that the hills “are as brown as a monk’s robe. Hardly a sprig of green is to be seen. The tiny tufts of grass that have escaped the hungry mouths of the herd are stunted and dead. Shrubs have perished. Trees look sick, with their leaves hanging in parched dejection.” Cowboys moved 2,500 head, about half the herd, off the island early in 1948, but still no rain came. In March Ed Vail decided to move the rest, at a rate of about 400 animals a day, to the mainland. The reporter quoted Vail as saying, “It’s the worst in history. These are going to be the travelingest cattle we ever had before we get through. We brought them down from Montana last fall and shipped them out here on the barge, now they are going back by barge to Hueneme, then to Roy Benton’s feeder lot in Puente, and then by train to Oklahoma. We hope to put 300 pounds apiece back on the poor steers by Aug. 1” Ranch managers decided to leave 10 to 20 head of steers on the island; about 5,000 had been evacuated.¹⁶⁴

Ranch foremen kept ranch rainfall records for more than 50 years. While the average rainfall between 1941 and 1995 stood at 14.52 inches, some years saw as little as 5.73 in 1946-47 and as high as 43.28 inches in 1994-95. In 1961 the Vails moved cattle off the island to Flint Hills, Kansas for a season. Al Vail recalled drought years of the late 1980s, when they put no young cattle on the island at all; the first good

¹⁶²Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, December 23, 1911, SCIF.

¹⁶³N. R. Vail to Mr. E. L. Vail, February 13 and 20, 1918, and March 4, 1919. SBMNH.

¹⁶⁴Ed Ainsworth, “Santa Rosa Island Gives Up Its Starving Herds” in *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1948, p. 1; oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 12, SCIF.

year (1992) produced more grass than cattle and a good market. Vail & Vickers ran a stocker operation largely because the fluctuation in precipitation provided poor conditions for mother cows.¹⁶⁵

Fires on Santa Rosa Island

Not only does fire affect ranching operations in its destruction of forage, it also plays a part in the development of ecosystems and can alternately control or spread exotic species. Few range fires have been documented, although studies continue on fire ecology on the island. One structure fire destroyed the bunkhouse complex and killed the ranch cook.

In 1957 a fire burned about 1,500 acres of important feed range on the south side of the island. The August blaze threatened ranch buildings at the Wreck line camp and the Air Force station at Johnson's Lee. More than 100 airmen fought the fire, according to a newspaper report, and the Air Force took charge of an investigation on the origins of the fire.¹⁶⁶

Diego Cuevas recalled that a fire burned a canyon west of Johnsons Lee on South Point in the 1950s. An Air Force employee started the fire when his backhoe fell over while making phone line repairs; men fought the blaze with gunnysacks and water.¹⁶⁷

Al Vail noted that there were a few grass fires over the years, "but nothing that ever got away I tell you, cowpunchers are people who have been raised in the country. They can be smokers but they don't start [brush] fires. It's the city people that do."¹⁶⁸

In early November of 1969 the old two-story cookhouse/bunkhouse complex at Bechers Bay burned to the ground, killing 51-year-old ranch cook Howard Anderson. Anderson had worked at the ranch for more than six years. Born in Arkansas, Anderson served in World War II and had a son and a daughter who lived elsewhere in California. The cause of the fire was never positively determined, but Anderson was known to have a drinking problem and may have gone to bed drunk with a cigarette and fallen asleep.¹⁶⁹

The Vails and Bill Wallace quickly drew up plans for the replacement bunkhouse; the cowboys slept in the family house while the new structure was being built.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵Copy of rainfall records in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS; oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1993 by Marla Daily, transcript pp. 3-5, SCIF; notes of interview with Al Vail, September 1992, by Jere Krakow.

¹⁶⁶Clipping from unidentified Santa Barbara newspaper dated August 6, 1957, SCIF.

¹⁶⁷Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 19, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 4, SCIF.

¹⁶⁸Oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 20, SCIF.

¹⁶⁹Clipping from unidentified newspaper dated November 5, 1961, SCIF. Oral history interview with Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, SCIF.

¹⁷⁰Interviews by the author with Al Vail, October 4, 1999, and Bill Wallace, November, 1998; oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 19, SCIF.

Ranch Management

While the cowboy lifestyle is familiar to the public through movies and books, the real operation of a large cattle ranch is much more complex. Behind the herding of cattle was a network of organizational activities, not the least of which was the marketing of the animals. The ranch manager evaluated his product, made deals in its sale, and planned and supervised the delivery of healthy animals to the buyer, a tricky business even if the ranch wasn't on an island. The purchase of new stock was almost an art, which required a keen sense of quality, knowledge of breeds and attendance to stocking needs in any particular year. For these tasks, a manager, always one of the Vail family, operated out of an office in Los Angeles, later Santa Barbara. This manager also spent hands-on time on the island and knew the conditions intimately. His superintendent (later foreman) handled most day-to-day management on the island but under orders from the boss. He supervised the vaqueros or cowboys who performed most of the labor on the ranch, including herding, doctoring, training horses and performing building maintenance. It was apparently a good situation for the men: many Vail & Vickers employees stayed on the job for decades. On Santa Rosa Island, this unchanging network kept the island business on firm footing for almost a century.



N. R. Vail (right) stands with his brother Ed on the pier. *Vail Family Collection, Santa Cruz Island Foundation*

The Main Offices

Of Vail & Vickers, two separate companies actually existed for most of the years in business. The Vickers Company made its headquarters in the Roosevelt Building at 727 West Flower Street in Los Angeles. In the 'teens and 1920s Sumner P. Vickers managed the office. The Vail Company had its offices in the Metropolitan Building at 315 West Fifth near Hill and Broadway; around 1940 the company moved the office to the "Miracle Mile" at 5658 Wilshire Blvd. In the years before moving to Santa Barbara in the mid-1960s, the office staff consisted of brothers Mahlon Vail and Granville Vail, their nephew Russ Vail and longtime secretaries Hilda Hayes and Norma Jensen. Russ Vail was less inclined than his twin brother Al to work out at the island ranch and so, after a stint in the Merchant marine and eight years at the Pauba Ranch, he joined the office staff where he did bookkeeping, kept records of purchases, average weights, head days and other ranch business. Russ Vail enjoyed going to the island to ride, shoot pigs, and relax.¹⁷¹

Ranch Managers

All the [Vail] brothers whom I saw were all lean and trim, and you might call them hard-bitten or cowboy-looking guys . . .¹⁷²

So stated Vickers family member Ted Naftzger describing the island managers. The management of Santa Rosa Island and its cattle ranch has always been handled by members of the Vail family, handed down through three generations on a loose system of availability and "fit." A member of the Vickers family stated it thus: "We left the operation of the island to the Vail boys who did a fine job of it." It can only be assumed that Walter L. Vail managed the ranch until his death in 1906. His son, Nathan Russell or N. R., headed the operation from 1908 until his death in 1943, and N. R.'s brother Ed the same until 1961. The other brothers managed Vail ranches elsewhere: Mahlon the Pauba and Santa Rosa Ranches in Riverside County and Banning the old Empire Ranch in Arizona. N. R. Vail's son Al Vail, groomed as a manager since his days as a young cowboy on the island, managed Santa Rosa Island for 36 years until cattle ranching ceased. The Vails took care of the ranch operations with the help of a superintendent or foreman, who managed the cowboys and laborers on the ranch. As will be seen, the employees of Vail & Vickers tended to stay with the firm for long stretches, and spoke fondly of their days on the island.

Island managers kept their offices in the Los Angeles until 1965, when Al Vail moved the office to Santa Barbara. Their responsibilities included buying and selling cattle (which involved a great deal of correspondence, travel and later, phone time), determining stocking levels depending on weather, feed and market, hiring, training and paying foremen, as well as giving them orders, approving and overseeing capital improvements on the island, keeping a budget with the help of office staff, and often supervising roundups and shipping. Vail & Vickers joined California and national cattlemen's associations and kept abreast of ranch improvements and politics. The managers commanded respect from their foremen and

¹⁷¹Oral history interviews with Ted Naftzger by Nita Vail, January 11, 1993; with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry; and with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 27, SCIF.

¹⁷²Oral history with Ted Naftzger, January 11, 1993 by Nita Vail, SCIF.

cowpunchers through their knowledge and experience of ranch life; all the Vails knew how to ride, round up, brand, fix fence and take care of the day-to-day duties on the island, and demonstrated it regularly. Of the foremen under their employ, two stayed about thirty years each (C. W. Smith and Bill Wallace) and another two, Hayden Hunt and Diego Cuevas, stayed about ten (Hunt also was a cowboy on the island for about ten years previously).

N. R. Vail, born in Arizona in 1883, was remembered as a big man, a “formal” manager with a strict way. He was innovative in his approach to island practicalities; for instance, he built a windmill with an airplane propeller (it didn’t work), and designed roads. While he was not the hands-on cattleman like his successors Ed Vail and Al Vail, he had the respect of the cowboys. Vail spent most of his time buying cattle, overseeing boat operations, and keeping up with paper work in the office. According to his son Russ, N. R. liked to “fool around” with animals on the island, trading island pigs for Santa Catalina quail, or bringing deer from Mormon Country in the 1930s.¹⁷³

N. R. Vail’s talent with the cattle business, both in the office and on the range, is illustrated in this excerpt from a letter during drought times to his uncle Edward “Tio” Vail on the Empire Ranch in 1918:

I imagine that we will start moving stuff from the island pretty shortly, if the weather does not change. Am figuring on making a deal with people here or in the East to handle the aged steers first. The cows will be next to be looked out for and with these out of the way I imagine the young steers and the heifers can get buy [sic] until things warm up a little in the northwest. I am anxious to play this so that at any time that we are moving, if we do get a rain we can keep as much stuff as possible on the island and impair our future receipts as little as possible. Mahlon, I think, can get by with what stuff he has after a fashion, as Pauba and Santa Rosa are better drought ranges and he has a fair supply of hay on hand.¹⁷⁴

Vail managed the island ranch through the prosperity of the 1920s, the hard times of the depression, and the early years of World War II. He died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1943. His passing was, in the words of a business partner, a “big deal” because he had been the operating manager for so many of the formative years of the Vail & Vickers operation. His brother Ed replaced him as manager.¹⁷⁵

Edward N. Vail, born in Los Angeles in 1893, spent his lifetime managing southern California cattle and sheep ranches. After finishing school in 1910, he managed the family’s Warner Ranch in San Diego County, and after service in Europe during World War I, managed the Vail ranches in Riverside County, the Pauba and Santa Rosa. He also leased San Nicolas Island from the government for a sheep operation. In 1932 Vail moved to northern Santa Barbara County where he leased the Jalama Ranch and later the Jesus Maria Ranch, which later became Camp Cooke and Vandenberg Air Force Base. He had obtained his ranching skills on the family ranches in California and Arizona, and stayed peripherally involved with operations on Santa Rosa Island. Since he knew more about the island ranching than anyone else he, with

¹⁷³Ibid.; oral history interview with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 5-7, 16, and with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

¹⁷⁴N. R. Vail to Mr. E. L. Vail, February 13, 1918, SCIF.

¹⁷⁵Oral History interview with Ted Naftzger, January 11, 1993 by Nita Vail, SCIF.

the Vickers' approval, became manager of Santa Rosa Island after his brother's death. "He was very popular with everybody, Uncle Ed was," recalled Al Vail. "And all us kids loved him, because we always had a lot of fun with him."¹⁷⁶

Ed Vail spent some time in the Los Angeles office and some on Santa Rosa Island, but most of his time on the Jesus Maria Ranch until around 1950 when he moved to Santa Barbara to devote all his energies to Santa Rosa Island. He had help buying and receiving calves from Louis Roripaugh, longtime foreman at the Vail's Pauba Ranch in Riverside County. Al Vail, who had grown up wanting to work on the island, worked with his uncle on both the island and the Jesus Maria ranches. Ed trained Al to eventually take over Santa Rosa Island, providing some extra attention and guidance. Ed and Al worked together on the island for twenty years. Ed Vail took Al on buying trips to teach him the business, and left Al virtually in charge of island operations during the '50s. "Uncle Ed . . . taught me more about the cattle business than anybody . . . he was very helpful and a good instructor."¹⁷⁷

Family members remembered Ed Vail as strictly a cattleman, not with the diversity of interests as found in his brother N. R. While an experienced cowpuncher, he didn't spend a lot of time with the cowboys. Many people called him Uncle Ed, but to the cowboys he was Mr. Vail. His other interests included sailing and polo. Even though he always dressed in a suit or a nice western outfit, he would work the range on horseback with all the cowboys and not care about getting dirty while partaking in roundups, inventory, and shipping. Vail spoke Spanish and conversed with the Mexican cowboys; he taught Diego Cuevas various knots and other skills handy on the ranch. Cuevas recalled Mr. Vail's involvement on the island:

Uncle Ed just came for tour, just to see how the cattle doing, what kind of shape was, how the grazing areas was, the grass was good or bad, things like that. He was always making trips just to see how the cattle doing, how the feeding was, all of this thing. At round-up he come over to help separate the loads and weigh cows and all that stuff.

"He was not an easy person to work for," recalled Cuevas. "There was two things: You have to like him, number one. Two, he like to tell you what to do and he like you to do it just exactly the way he told it . . . and if you make mistake you find out about it."¹⁷⁸

Ed Vail died in November 1961 at the age of 68, after almost twenty years as manager of the ranch at Santa Rosa Island; his death brought to a close the management of the island by Walter Vail's sons. With the blessing of Vail Company president Mahlon Vail, a representative of the next generation, Walter Vail's grandson Al, took on management of the ranch, a position he would hold for more than 35 years.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶O'Neill, Ed., *History of Santa Barbara County*, pp. 475-477; oral history interview with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript pp. 6, 16-17, SCIF. Ed Vail was occasionally incorrectly addressed as Edwin Vail in official correspondence.

¹⁷⁷Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 11-12, and with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry; notes from a phone conversation with Nita Vail, January 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

¹⁷⁸Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 19-20, SCIF.

¹⁷⁹*Los Angeles Times*, November 11, 1961, SCIF.

Al Vail, born November 24, 1921, grew up in Los Angeles and attended Beverly Hills High School. Throughout high school and college years, he worked as time permitted on the ranch as a cowboy. He attended UCLA, where he studied business administration, and then University of California at Davis for courses in animal husbandry, but World War II interrupted his college education. Health problems kept him out of wartime action, leaving Al to work for his father full time at the island.¹⁸⁰

Following Ed Vail's death, foreman Diego Cuevas found few differences in the change of managers because Al Vail had been running so much of the island work before Ed's death. Since Al Vail had worked on the island as a cowboy for 25 years, his employees felt comfortable with him, as Cuevas stated:

He was really nice, he was part of a team. He was in it with everybody, play around, he like play around. He was not much about yes and no, sir, you know, these things. He was just a plain man. You have to do something he get on it and do it, he's a hard worker . . . everybody treat Al just like us.¹⁸¹

Following in his uncle's and father's footsteps, Vail took over the manager's major responsibility to buy and sell cattle, requiring him to spend more time on the mainland and traveling throughout the west, especially Arizona and New Mexico. Vail also began commissioning men as buyers in various parts of the country to seek out cattle deals; this put him on the phone to do business much more than his predecessors. It was important to have a man, either Vail himself or a trusted buyer, to evaluate cattle, establish a price and cut a deal, and to weed out undesirable cattle from the incoming herd.

Al Vail moved the Vail & Vickers office to Santa Barbara in the mid-1960s and hired Tom Thornton to do bookkeeping, payroll and shopping (mostly clothes and groceries) for the ranch. Thornton recalled how Vail did business on a man's word, often over the phone on deals up to \$200,000. "Al has an innate sense about cattle, his uncle before him had it. They can size up cattle so quickly by confirmation, by the value." Russ Vail, Al Vail's twin brother, joined the office in Santa Barbara in 1977 after Thornton retired.¹⁸²

Superintendents/Foremen

No record has been found of the first Vail & Vickers foreman on Santa Rosa Island. The first may have been Frank Pepper, who acted as superintendent of the ranch as early as 1906. Little is known about him. Pepper had a yacht, *Tortuga*, in which he sailed to and from Santa Barbara and other ports. He left the island after his wife Dede committed suicide on her 22nd birthday in 1914.¹⁸³

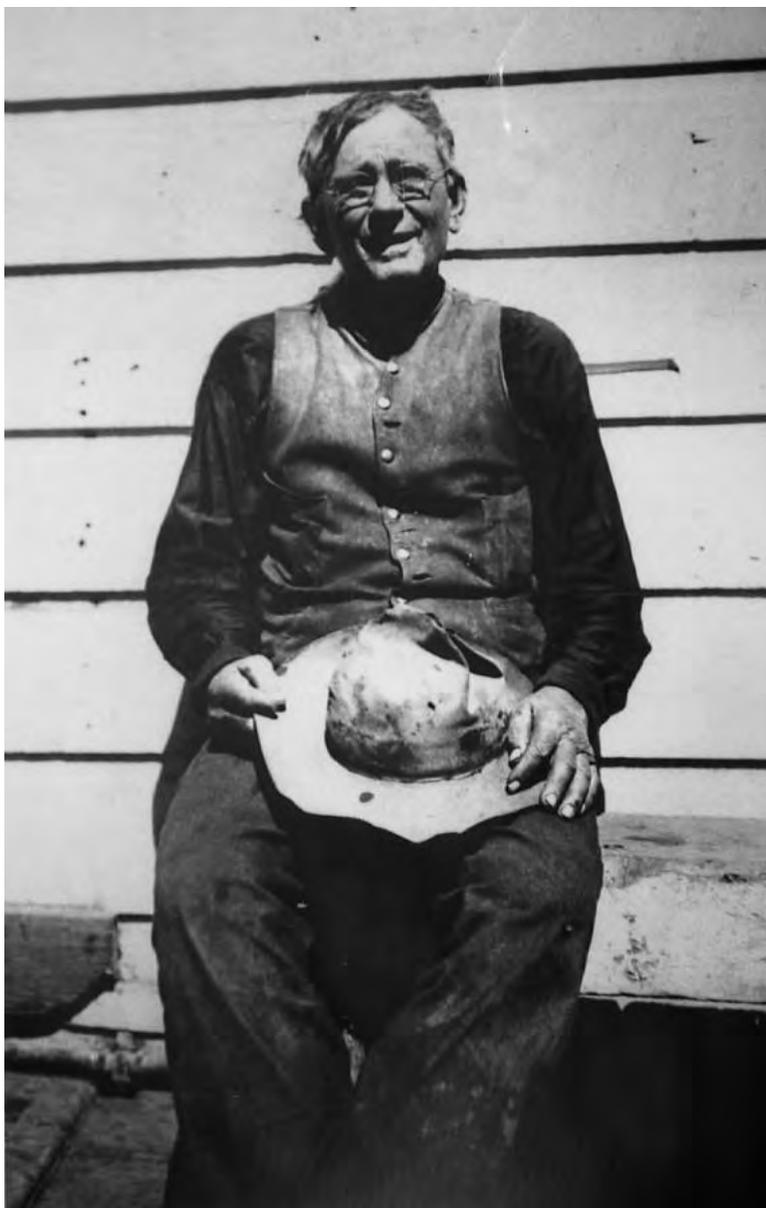
Of the many legendary employees of Vail & Vickers, perhaps C. W. "Smitty" Smith holds the highest honor. Born Charles Wesley Smith in Syracuse, New York in 1869 and half Seneca Indian, Smith left

¹⁸⁰Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 4, 15, SCIF.

¹⁸¹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 19, SCIF.

¹⁸²Oral history interviews with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 8, and with Tom Thornton, June 15, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

¹⁸³Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, December 23, 1911; information provided by Marla Daily, SCIF.



Longtime ranch foreman C. W. Smith. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

home at 13 and shipped out of New Orleans as a cabin boy on a square-rigger. After eight years at sea, the schooner he was working on visited Santa Catalina Island; here he met members of the Vail family, probably Walter Vail, who leased the island for cattle grazing. Apparently tired of the life at sea, Smith hired on as a cowboy there in 1890, and then moved on to the Empire Ranch when the Catalina operation folded. He worked his way up from cowpuncher to head cattle shipper to cattle boss and division boss. In 1914 he moved to Santa Rosa Island where he became superintendent (the term foreman was not used until the 1940s); his wife, the former Refugia “Cuca” Villa, joined him there about a year later.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴From Smith’s obituary in the Santa Barbara *News Press*, May 16, 1954, SCIF; oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

Al Vail recalled the story:

[Smith] had his own little ranch then. He said, “Well, I’ll go up for a year; but that’s all I want to spend.” And so he stayed there forever. I guess he was active for about 32 years and was then still active helping us on the mainland ship cattle and whatnot until he died.¹⁸⁵

The couple raised three children while living in the bunkhouse on Santa Rosa Island: Charlie, Edward (“E. K.”) and Mary Frances. They all attended the small school at the island, but moved to the mainland around 1932 so E. K. and Mary Frances could attend high school. Smith continued as foreman on the ranch, traveling back and forth to perform his duties both at home and on the island ranch.

Friends remembered Smith as a hard worker: “Smitty never knew how long a day was and he didn’t care,” as the *Santa Barbara News Press* quoted Ed Vail in Smith’s obituary. “If you followed him, you did a day’s work. I never knew any other man with such endurance and strength.” Russ Vail recalled that Smith

had good grounding for many years, working on the other ranches. He knew the quality of the cattle and then he got along well with the hands. Course it was . . . largely Mexican cowboys . . .; they respected him very much. He was a strong guy. He was a very good cowboy and very good as a foreman.

He could make anything run and do anything . . . he was a hell of a horseman and a good guy with the hands—strict as hell.

C. W. Smith spoke Spanish, almost a necessity with managing a mostly Hispanic crew. In his spare time he enjoyed tinkering with his short wave radio and a good FM radio which brought a dose of mainland civilization (such as “Amos and Andy”) to the island. He also reportedly kept a still at the ranch house, endearing himself to fellow drinkers with his “big ol’ five-gallon wicker-covered bottles.”¹⁸⁶

Vail & Vickers put Smith’s maritime experience to use on the island. He operated a number of boats, including the two-masted *Colleen*, the *Onward* and the large cattle schooner *Vaquero*; he later supervised operation of the barges that transported island cattle for a number of years.

After working for Vail & Vickers for 55 years, C. W. Smith retired after World War II to his home on Anacapa Street in Santa Barbara. He had experienced some bad falls on the island and his legs were giving him problems. His son E. K. can’t recall that C. W. ever returned to the island, but he continued to supervise loading and unloading of the cattle barges at Port Hueneme until his death in 1954.

Smith’s son Charlie worked as a cowboy from his teens until he was killed in an accident on a mainland ranch. His other son E. K. worked as a cowboy, along with Al Vail in what he called “wild summers.” C. W. didn’t want his other son to be a cowboy, so he sent him to aeronautical school in Glendale. After serving in the war, E. K. returned to the island, still wanting to be a cowboy, but his father

¹⁸⁵Oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 11, SCIF.

¹⁸⁶Oral history interviews with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993, and Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 9, and E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

insisted that he get a “real” job. By that time C. W. Smith had retired. E. K. Smith enjoyed a long career in law enforcement.¹⁸⁷

After Smith’s retirement, Vail & Vickers employed George Haise for several years. Haise apparently served as an assistant to Smith, as visitors referred to him as the foreman in 1939. A string of short-lived and, according to Al Vail, “inconsequential” foremen followed Haise, including Clarence Mace, Walter Lynch (1947) and Walter Zellers (1948). Zellers reportedly didn’t like cowboys much, and was never seen on a horse. In response, Ed Vail hired Hayden Hunt, who came from Arizona as a youth and worked as a cowboy on the island during the 1930s, to manage the cowboys; Zellers was unhappy with that setup and quit. Hunt acted as foreman on and off from about 1949 to 1962. Ed Vail fired Hunt for allowing friends to hunt on the island but reinstated him later. After Hunt retired Al Vail tried a few men out on the job but finally settled on his longtime cowboy Diego Cuevas for the job.¹⁸⁸

Diego Cuevas came to California at age 19 from Jocotepec near Guadalajara in 1944 and obtained a job on the Pauba Ranch under Mahlon Vail and Louis Roripaugh (at the time the Vails employed about 50 workers there). In 1948 he was offered a job on Santa Rosa Island by Ed Vail, and flew there his first time. When he arrived only one cowboy spoke Spanish. Walter Zellers, reportedly Ed Vail’s brother-in-law, was the foreman at the time; Zellers chose Diego as his helper. Cuevas spent his time cleaning barns, replacing fences, taking care of the garage and power plant, and overseeing the ice machine. Cuevas made ice in big iron cube forms, and daily distributed it to the iceboxes on the ranch where he would break it up and fill the boxes.¹⁸⁹

After Ed Vail’s death, new manager Al Vail appointed Cuevas as foreman, but Cuevas recalled that he had already been acting the role:

I was on the job already, you know without the title. So really was not much change . . . I know that I have more responsibility. But then, on the other hand, the boys held more respect for me. Or do more things that I want them to do. . . . And we got where we had a system. I never say from one day to another what we are going to do. I always give them plenty of time . . . like [Al] say, well next week we gotta do this or that. So I pass the words the same way to the cowboys so they already know what we was going to do. If Al come to me and say, “well I think by the end of next week we going to work the Water Canyon,” then I tell the boys, I say, “well, he have an idea there on mind to work the Water Canyon next weekend, so if you guys have anything to do, do it before we start working cattle.” And then they shoe their horses, they do fixing of their gear, their saddle, or whatever, so they don’t get caught right in the middle, fixing things and trying to work. So everything work out pretty nice because they see the way I was working with them, I let them know everything, I didn’t hide anything from them, so they jump ahead of me.¹⁹⁰

The older boys was very helpful to me. All I had to do was tell them what we going to do tomorrow, it all depend on the job, I say, “we have to do this job, and if we do it yesterday it’s much better. But if not, whenever we can, we finish and that’s all over.” So they don’t wait for me to tell them to go and do it. They line up and go and do it. In the morning

¹⁸⁷Oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

¹⁸⁸Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999; oral history interviews with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 11, and with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 20-21, SCIF.

¹⁸⁹Lourdes Cuevas, “Diego: A Brief Look” (paper for Anthropology 114B), May 7, 1992; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, May 24, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹⁹⁰Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 20-21, SCIF.

everybody get up and drink a cup of coffee and everybody know what they was going to do, on their own. One guy go and jingle the horses, one guy go and do something else and they always scatter on their own. Unless I have some special orders to do something else. Then I let them know the day before what we have to do and we all get together and do the work. So was pretty easy for me 'cause they was there to help, to work, was no hard feelings between the boys and myself. At that time we have pretty good crew. When Mariano was there, I think Jesus was there already, Poncho Villa, Miguel, and a couple other Mexicans at that time. It was okay.¹⁹¹

Cuevas lived with his wife Coco in the former schoolhouse where they raised two children. In 1965 the family moved into the new foreman's quarters. When daughter Lourdes (called Lulis) was ready for school in 1968, the Cuevas family moved from the island.

After Cuevas moved, Al Vail hired Cuevas's brother Muñaso for a short time. Former island cowboy and onetime foreman (about 1952-53) Bill Wallace was hired later in 1968. Wallace had been hired as a cowboy on the island in 1948 and knew the island life well; he would spend thirty more years running the island ranch.¹⁹²

"As foreman I run the ranch with Al," said Wallace in 1993. "He does all the buying and selling, and does a lot of riding. We just work together more than anything. Al does all the hiring. And sometimes he fires them, and sometimes I do. We only do that if someone hires out to be a cowboy, and then he's not a cowboy. I just tell him he misrepresented himself and we have no more employment for him."¹⁹³

Wallace took responsibility for day-to-day operations and relations with the cowboys, maintenance of the buildings and structures around the ranch, and movement of cattle under orders from Al Vail. His wife Meredith's children John and Laura were home schooled on island. When the National Park Service bought Santa Rosa Island in 1986, Wallace continued to run the ranch in the traditional manner, although under new federal oversight. He helped park staff with both technical problems and advice, gaining the respect of many park workers. Bill and Meredith Wallace moved off the island in early 1999 after the cattle operation had ended.¹⁹⁴

Cowboys

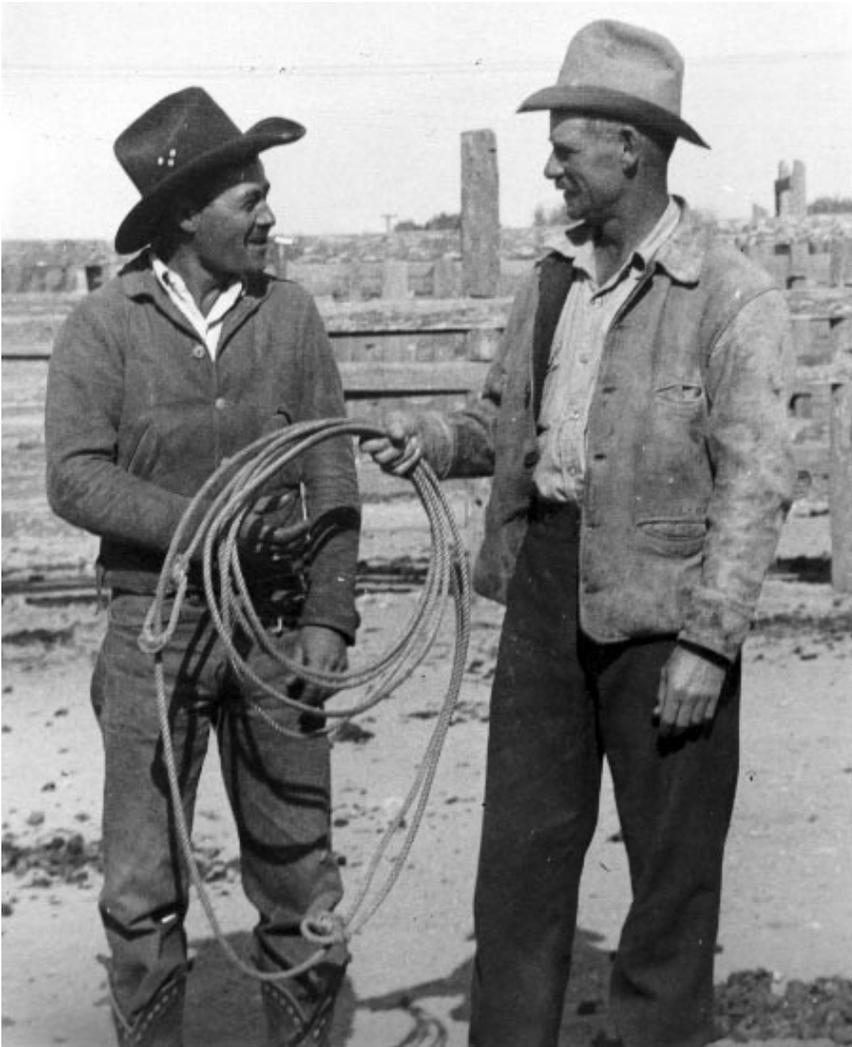
The life of a cowboy, as personified in tales of the old west, had perhaps its ideal venue on Santa Rosa Island. Although without a saloon to saunter down to in the evening and lacking in shoot-outs, island cowboys were isolated from mainland progress and hence hung on to a passing way of life for a few extra decades. Once deposited at the Bechers Bay pier, the cowboy did almost nothing but be a cowboy, day and

¹⁹¹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 29, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹⁹²Oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 11, SCIF.

¹⁹³Bill Wallace quoted in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, p. 43.

¹⁹⁴Personal communication with Bill Wallace by the author, November 1998; oral history interview with Meredith Wallace, February 8, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF; correspondence in park files, CHIS.



Two unidentified vaqueros display typical island dress and a riata, or lasso, for the photographer in the 1940s. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

night. Life revolved around the bunkhouse, tack room and range, as the men herded cattle, fixed fences, cared for their tack and horses, and ate well in the kitchen.

Al Vail, for 25 years a cowboy then 36 more as ranch manager, described the life of a Vail & Vickers employee:

A cowboy does a little o' everything. You know, the reason for the island is to run cattle . . . in between when we're shipping cattle there's lots of other work, like fence building, breaking colts, do anything that comes along as far as maintaining a ranch.¹⁹⁵

The firm needed six or seven men to handle the day-to-day ranch duties and, before building corrals around the island in the 1950s and 1960s, required even more for roundups. Most cowboys tended to be

¹⁹⁵Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 2, SCIF.

happy with the island life and the managers were lucky to have steady crews, especially in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁹⁶ Vail spoke on the hiring practices at the ranch:

Most of the personnel we have we get through word of mouth, a friend or something like that. We never had any luck going through an appointment agency or anything like that. If the guy's a good cowpuncher and he says his friend is a good cowpuncher then you hire him.¹⁹⁷

At least two cowboys grew up on the ranch. William Lopez and Charlie Smith declined a move to the mainland for high school to stay on as cowpunchers. Retired foreman Diego Cuevas told of working with new cowboys: "The foreman was watching everybody to see the skills of each one. If the foreman see, or Al see that this new cowboy can handle a horse and can show that he can break a horse, well they give him a horse, a couple of horses, instead of giving him a jeep or a tractor to go to work on something else."¹⁹⁸

Once in the saddle, cowboys worked on maintenance and the island roundups. Margaret Vail Woolley, who went on roundups whenever she could, told of treating the hard-working men:

They never used to be able to take any food with them. They'd be gone all day eating nothing. You know if anybody got hungry they were, "You're not tough enough. You'll never make a cowboy." When we used to ride out with the cowboys, my mother used to give us chocolate bars. And enough for the cowboys and that was gratefully received even though pretty well melted by the time they were passed around.¹⁹⁹

Cowboys worked seven days a week, sunrise to sunset. They were allowed four days paid leave on the mainland every six to eight weeks, or every month if not working cattle. It was an isolated life, where you couldn't run to town when you wanted—not everyone was cut out for it. Office manager Tom Thornton took care of supplies for the cowboys:

They'd send us a shopping list or call over after the phone became a very common and very easy thing to use. A simple matter. They would hope that [the clothes] fit. They always buy their shoes large so they can get thick socks or thinner socks. Buy their leather to make their chaps and to make saddles and buy their rope for their lassoes etc. You are dealing with a real family over there.²⁰⁰

The risks of isolation, of getting injured out on the island or getting seriously ill, didn't seem to bother many of the cowboys. Family men on the island had additional worries, as Diego Cuevas remarked that

¹⁹⁶Oral history interview with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

¹⁹⁷Oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 8, SCIF.

¹⁹⁸Oral history interviews with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, and with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

¹⁹⁹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, June 3, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 10, SCIF.

²⁰⁰Oral history interviews with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley; with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 14 and March 25, 1993 by Petry, transcript p. 2; and with Tom Thornton, June 15, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.



Cowboys dehorn a steer in the branding shed in the 1930s. The man at the left holds the animal's head with a squeeze, while the man on the right waits to treat the wound. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

“When you have a wife and kids that’s something extra. If you alone, what the heck. But when you have somebody else which is your responsibility, that gives you a little something to think about.”²⁰¹

Many cowboys followed the Vail family from Arizona to Santa Rosa Island in the years after the island was purchased. C. W. Smith moved to the island and became foreman. One of the most storied of the old Arizona cowboys was Juan Ayon, who spent over 50 years chasing cattle, building fences, cooking and keeping gardens on the island.

Ayon was born in 1887 in Mexico and worked at the Empire ranch for many years, forming a bond with the Vail family that lasted three generations. He is thought to have arrived at Santa Rosa Island around 1911. It has been written that

Juan, who was heavy-set with a short, stocky build, had great physical strength, and possessed many talents. He was not only an experienced cowboy, but also a good ranch hand as well—he milked cows, built fences, broke horses, nurtured the island’s garden, and occasionally worked as the island cook (he always gave that assignment a fight and often ended up cooking only for himself!). Apparently his reputation of having a

²⁰¹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 24, SCIF.

curmudgeon-like personality combined with a slightly humorous nature was well-deserved.²⁰²

Ranch workers remembered Juan Ayon as a real old-fashioned western cowboy with a few burrs in his saddle. He cursed his milk cows, and cursed the cowboys on the island, some of whom liked to play jokes on the old man. Most spoke of his favorite food treat: Ayon collected abalone at Carrington Point, shelled them and brought them back to the bunkhouse. Former ranch foreman Diego Cuevas recalled:

At home, he'd clean them He'd slice them and pound them, and then he'd boil all the abalone in one pot. He'd make a mess wherever he cleaned them. Once they boiled, he'd take 'em, put salt on 'em, and let it boil some more. Then he would put them on the roof of whatever, the closest roof he could find. He'd just go and empty the bucket up there on the roof. Then they would dry in the sun.

Later, once they were dry, he would put one in his pocket and every once in a while, wherever he was, he would take abalone out of his pocket. He would use his pocket knife to peel a sliver, like a piece of orange, and chew it. He loved his abalone jerky!²⁰³

Juan Ayon's reputation for his abalone jerky was widespread. He shared the treasure with fellow cowboys during roundups. "He would pull out a bundle of jerky, wrap each piece in a tortilla and pass them out one by one to each member of the group."

Ayon retired from the cowboy life but remained on the island tending the garden and smokehouse, living in a small house; he didn't drive.²⁰⁴ Cuevas described Ayon's later years in the bunkhouse:

He have one of the four corners in the bunkhouse, he have a little table in there and a chair and he sit down and roll Prince Albert tobacco cigarettes . . . and then he just look at us. Because we play cards and we laugh in the bunkhouse, he turn around and look at us and cuss everybody, go back and forth, back and forth, just like a lion in a cage. But he always mean something good for everybody . . .²⁰⁵

At one point in the 1920s only one non-Mexican cowboy worked at the ranch: Lon Maynard did his regular cowboy chores and milked cows as well. During the 1930s the cowboys were a mix of Anglos and Hispanics, including brothers George and Joe Lopez and their families, Hayden Hunt and his family, and Juan Ayon. According to Margaret Vail Woolley, "the rest of the population was sort of floating and people would come back year after year and sometimes they'd stay and maybe break horse or in the summer time they mended a fence, they'd fix the gates, dug up the wire, pulled weeds, whatever there was to do. And you know they worked all the time and they didn't get paid much but then they got fed. But I think some of those guys worked for \$30 a month It took more people to work the cattle the way they

²⁰²Kerry Blankenship Allen, in the memorial pamphlet, "Juan Ayon, 1887-1966, Santa Rosa Island Cowboy," 1996, SCIF. The Santa Rosa Island Chapter of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation placed a granite marker on his gravesite in Santa Barbara 30 years after his death.

²⁰³Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 8, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

²⁰⁴Oral history interview with Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, SCIF.

²⁰⁵Oral history interview excerpt, Diego Cuevas, October 1994, published in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, p. 48.

worked them then and there were more people willing and able to come. People from this country still knew about cattle.”²⁰⁶

Al Vail recalled a couple of cowboys before the war named Howard Rogers and his friend Boxcar Bill (nicknamed from his days hopping freight trains) who left for the war.

During WWII the Vails enrolled in the Bracero Program, created by the Farm Security Administration and the Mexican government to help staff agricultural operations at a time when labor was short. The program granted temporary visas to 2.6 million Mexican citizens and helped find them work in the United States. Vail & Vickers hired these bonded Mexican cowboys, who had 10% of their pay deducted by the program for a retirement fund. Later Vail hired “wet cowboys” (with probably-borrowed social security numbers) but after about 1982 the Mexican cowboys all had green cards. Mexican cowboys got along fine at the ranch, following a long tradition. Many didn’t speak English on arrival but picked it up as time went by. Al Vail spoke some Spanish.²⁰⁷

Jesus Bracamontes, born in January 1925 in Sonora, Mexico, spent his whole life a cowboy in Mexico and the United States; he worked for more than 35 years on Santa Rosa Island. He arrived by small plane for a short stint in 1952, working with Bill Wallace, Paco Escalante, brothers Diego & Muñaso Cuevas, and others; Bracamontes returned in 1962 at Cuevas’s request, after being offered better wages than he had seen before. He drove a truck “el Comando” with a star on side, and occupied the schoolhouse after the Cuevas family moved to their larger quarters. For many years Bracamontes was “second man” on the ranch. Like many cowboys on the ranch, Bracamontes enjoyed fishing on the shores of the island.²⁰⁸

Al Vail worked as a cowboy during summers and, shortly after his father died, full time. He claimed he wasn’t treated differently being a Vail; “I was just another cowpuncher at that time.” He didn’t think of himself as different, sleeping in the bunkhouse, or in the room behind it. Only later did he move into the “family house,” where he built a room of his own next to the kitchen.²⁰⁹

Cowboying didn’t change much in the last half of the century. The ranch procured a few trucks, and modern conveniences changed some of the traditional off-time activities such as leatherwork and music; television was perhaps one of the biggest cultural developments on the island until the National Park Service arrived. Tom Thornton speculated on why Vail & Vickers has been so successful in getting and keeping good cowpunchers on the ranch:

. . . the Vail & Vickers cowboys are probably the best fed cowboys in the world. They get what they want. Al has no restrictions on . . . reasonable foods. So they eat very well. Probably that’s one reason they stay so long. They are probably the best paid cowboys in the country. There is nothing “pickey-unish” about Santa Rosa people.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶Oral history interviews with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, and with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 19, SCIF.

²⁰⁷Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript pp. 6-7, SCIF; *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 6, 1999, p. 10.

²⁰⁸Oral history interview with Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, SCIF.

²⁰⁹Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 2, SCIF.

²¹⁰Oral history interview with Tom Thornton, June 15, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

Ranch Life

With a crew of cowboys, a foreman and a large managing family, Santa Rosa Island offered many of the comforts of home while remaining a wild outpost on the sea. Self-sufficiency was essential; much of the food needed for island consumption originated on the island until the 1960s. There certainly was no shortage of beef, and various cowboys tended gardens. Arthur Sanger, a long-time visitor and hunter on the island, wrote about the products of the small dairy at the ranch while visiting in the 'teens:

There were six or seven fine milk cows in the corrals. The cooks would put pitchers of the finest milk and cream on the long eating table, and you can imagine my look of horror when the cowboys would brush these wonderful pitchers of cream aside and call for canned milk! I drank milk until it ran out of my ears²¹¹

E. K. Smith recalled that later, during the 1920s, about 12 cows were milked in the sheds between the pier and the bunkhouse. In the 1940s and 50s residents made cream, butter and cottage cheese. Chickens provided eggs and meat, at times there was an abundance of vegetables and fruit, and the cowboys dried a lot of meat, as the refrigeration was poor. Castagnola's fish boats dropped off fresh fish, sacks of lobster, and occasionally salmon from Alaska. The family went to town about every six months for supplies. Most ranch food production stopped because it ended up costing the ranch managers more than it provided in food.²¹²

When the Vail family visited the island, they usually ate at the bunkhouse with the cowboys. Al Vail recalled the friendly atmosphere as the men and family members sat at the big long tables,²¹³ and his sister Margaret spoke of how their "mother loved to go because she didn't have to do any cooking or cleaning"

There was always a cook there during when people were working and there was often a cook during the off season It was a big strong husky meal and it was meat, tough meat from the cow and potatoes in some form or other and beans, beans, beans Sometimes rice, not very often. Lots of canned vegetables and oddly, bread instead of tortillas From time to time they had chicken . . . sometimes they had fish but it was the same, full of fat, gravy. And everything that came off a cow was fried. It might have made a nice roast but the cook would put it in a frying pan anyway. Course by that time there were Anglo cooks and Cuca had fled. But the food was great And breakfast would be, gee there'd be oatmeal, there'd be fried eggs, there'd be some kind of breakfast meat, there'd be coffee, tons of coffee. Just all you could put inside yourself and there were pies, pies, pies, lots of pies, lots of cakes, lots of dessert, and maybe a bunch of apples and oranges²¹⁴

²¹¹Arthur R. Sanger, "Santa Rosa Island" in *Sea*, [no date], 1952, p. 41, SCIF.

²¹²Oral history interviews with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, and with Diego Cuevas, May 24, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF. Austin Wright wrote in 1930 of "the cook and superintendent, who live there in primitive style." Austin T. Wright, "An Islandian on the Islands." Introduction by Lawrence Clark Powell. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, p. 73.

²¹³Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 10, SCIF.

²¹⁴Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Ann Eggers Jones, March 10, 1994, pp. 22-23, SCIF.

For many years, C. W. Smith's wife Cuca cooked for the cowboys (reportedly after a Chinese cook, remembered as tall and slender with the classic white chef's hat, had returned to China). In the 1950s, a cook named Earl, who had retired from a job in Los Angeles and brought his wife to Santa Rosa Island, lived in the old school house. Diego Cuevas recalled that Juan Ayon cooked for a while, then "several wino cooks who go and cook a few days and leave." During times without a cook, the crew took turns cooking and washing dishes. Howard Anderson, who died in the bunkhouse fire, was an ex-Navy cook who baked bread every day, as well as pastry, pies and cakes. His experience in the Navy required adjustments to the smaller crew at the ranch, according to Cuevas: "Say if there was 15 cowboys, he just kind of say, 'well, for 400 soldiers take so much flour, well for 15 cowboys, going to take so much.'" Anderson always had a fresh pot of coffee ready for cowboys and visitors alike, and Cuevas said that "he always want people to be happy. If he know if your family coming over, always he make sure that he have plenty for everybody to eat, and then throw something extra, like a pie or cookies or something for the kids, 'cause he liked kids." The cooks fed kitchen wastes to pigs kept in a pen near the bunkhouse.²¹⁵

E. K. Smith remembered the 1925 earthquake that devastated Santa Barbara across the Channel: "Shook the whole place out. Scared the horses, I thought they were going through the fences at the barn. We were all down at the ranch house when it happened."²¹⁶

N. R. Vail's family grew up in the city of Los Angeles and enjoyed traveling out to the island for regular visits, including Easter and parts of Christmas and summer vacations. The kids explored favorite and new places, visited with the cowboys, brought friends, shot pigs and rode horses. "The main reason for getting over there, or as far as I was concerned, was to ride horses," recalled Al Vail. "It was a very happy environment that we grew up in, and we were damn fortunate for it." The Vail children played with the Smith kids, and often brought friends from Los Angeles to the island. Needless to say, they didn't like to go home when the visit ended.²¹⁷

Margaret Vail Woolley told of the freedom she and her brothers enjoyed during visits to the island:

[Our mother] didn't really have to do anything with us . . . she just cut us loose and my dad took us out and I'm not sure she had a very clear idea of what we always did but that was fine if she didn't know. She would take over a couple of friends and have a bridge table and they would just play bridge . . . and maybe walk down to the point right next to the dock, which is an Indian midden and they would dig up a skull or two or whatever they had, a bead more probably and then go back up. Her island weekends were in great demand among her friends. So then we having been turned loose, the first thing everybody wanted to do was go riding. And we usually had friends there so my father would have a bunch of yahoo kids to take care of and they'd find horses that were gentle enough to ride and shorten the stirrups and we'd go wherever the guys went and they would probably be rounding up cattle to bring into the hold to cut the next day and ship."²¹⁸

²¹⁵Oral history interviews with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, with Diego Cuevas, July 28 and August 10, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

²¹⁶Oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

²¹⁷Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 3, 8, SCIF.

²¹⁸Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 17-18, SCIF.

Mrs. Woolley also recalled a memorable day on the island with E. K. Smith and her brother Al in the late 1930s:

We'd gone out on horseback with Charlie [Smith], just to ride and maybe shoot a few pigs. We were in our teens and went to Carrington Point, went out to the Pocket Field, went clear around the island shooting . . . shot a pig down in Water Canyon. I remember climbing up on a rock to get away from it. We had the most wonderful time and it was the quintessential free island day and until we got back to the gate in the house and there was C. W. Smith waiting for us. He had no idea where we'd been. He was scared out of his wits. But since we were safe he was ready to kill us. So we were very downcast little kids as we came in. He didn't say anything really. God knows what he did to E. K. But he gave us the iron Indian glare . . .²¹⁹

Sometimes the Vail kids came without their parents; the family visits lasted anywhere from a week to three or more. If the parents weren't there, Ed Vail and others kept an eye on them:

Uncle Eddie could charm the curls off the trees or anything . . . he was a wonderful uncle for kids. He taught us or helped teach us all to ride, made us clean our tack, brush our horses, be sure their feet were clean. If we didn't sit down to trot he let us know about it. If the horse's bridle wasn't straight we heard about that too. Just so much fun.²²⁰

Ed Vail constructed a picnic ground and barbecue pit at Lobo Canyon where the road crossed. Once a year the ranch held a picnic there for family and hands, hauling the supplies on a wagon.

The U. S. Air Force provided a telephone system for the ranch as a courtesy of their operations based at Johnsons Lee. Technicians connected the ranch complex by cable on poles with a microwave station at Soledad Peak that linked the island with the mainland, but when the Air Force left in 1965 the telephone system was shut off. Ranch staff salvaged the poles for corrals, but found them full of termites.²²¹

Generators provided power to the ranch buildings, and during the 1950s they were only run during the day. Diego Cuevas woke early to start the generator, a process that took 35 minutes to an hour to complete: he turned a stiff crank until the engine would catch, and then released the compressor so the fuel would have combustion. According to Cuevas, lots of cranking "tunes you up for the whole day." Power remained on from about 7 to 9:30 or 10:00 am, and from 6 to 10 or 11 pm. Cuevas thought up inventions to make the work easier, like using ice and string for a timer to shut off the generator, which didn't work, or using a rat trap and an alarm clock, which pulled a string to shut it off, which did work, at least for a few years. Cuevas also tinkered with other inventions: he built a motorized cart to haul slop to the pigs, and a diesel hauling trailer with tank; he installed a truck engine in a boat given to the ranch by the Air

²¹⁹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 26, SCIF.

²²⁰Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 2 and 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF.

²²¹Oral history interviews with Diego Cuevas, July 17 and 28, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

Force and devised a cooling system for it that worked with salt water and a kelp knife to protect the rudder and prop, but found that fishing still was better from the rocks on the island shore.²²²

Santa Rosa Island provided a unique backdrop for ranch life. While it was not the life for everyone, many of the cowboys and foremen stayed on for much of their working lives, dedicated to the island traditions and their employers. Those traditions contributed to the preservation of the “old ways” on Santa Rosa Island, a place almost untouched by the hurry of city life and pressures of development from nearby suburbs. The end of ranching in 1998 brought to a close a truly unique way of life in coastal California.

The Island School

The isolation of island life posed a problem for families of the full-time workers when school time came. N. R. Vail and his wife Nita solved this by creating a school in one of the small, older buildings on the ranch, possibly the same one that had served as a school during the More period on the island. E. K. Smith believes that his father and a Santa Barbara carpenter converted a small generator building into the school in the early 1920s. Whatever the origin of the schoolhouse, Mrs. Vail hired a number of teachers from Los Angeles who would live in their own room in the bunk house and hold classes for grades one through nine in the small one-room building.²²³



The former island school was remodeled into a residence. In this picture, the older building section can be seen on the right side of the photo. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

²²²Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 28 and August 4, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

²²³E. K. Smith, quoted in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, p. 37.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, eight to ten children attended the school, including Charlie, E. K. and Mary Frances Smith; Josephine, William, Isabel and Ray Lopez; and Pamela (or Palmer) Hunt, daughter of cowboy Hayden Hunt who would later become ranch foreman.²²⁴

According to Margaret Vail Woolley,

it was a little room . . . with a bunch of old desks, inkwells and all that. . . . Dad had a teacher for the youngsters of the workers there, like the Smiths and the Lopezes and the Gomezes . . . it was just a standard school, but it was one gal taking care of all of ‘em!

Smith remembered it as “just like a regular school:”

We would go to school at 8 o’clock, and we had a recess and then went home at 3:00 or 3:30. At recess we’d play baseball in the corrals and stuff. We were assigned desks. They were the kind that we would just shove all our books in from the back end. My dad made the desks when he made the school.

They taught us everything: penmanship, typing—they had two typewriters—and all the regular stuff: math, spelling, geography and history.

Occasionally the children went on field trips to the Old Ranch for a picnic, or to see whaling vessels in the Channel on the ranch boat *Onward*.²²⁵

Woolley noted that teachers stayed on a while, but changed a time or two, while E. K. Smith recalled that they had “good instructors” but a new teacher was needed every year or two years except one who stayed a bit longer. Woolley claimed that Mary Frances Smith, her same age, had advanced a year beyond her with the individual attention at the one-room school, while Woolley attended a high quality school in Beverly Hills. Because generators and batteries provided electricity, use of lights was limited.²²⁶

When not in school the ranch kids spent time riding calves, walking over the island, trapping and killing skunks, or doing chores. They stayed away from the cattle: E. K. Smith recalled how a kid would get a whipping for stirring up the cows. According to Smith, the island kids got along fine, “either fighting or playing.” They looked forward to visits to the island from strangers and friends.

The school closed around 1932 when many of the students reached high school age. Charlie Smith and William Lopez stayed and worked as cowboys on the island and elsewhere. E. K. Smith recalled the difficult transition from the small island school to a big Santa Barbara High School. The Smiths had a home at 630 Anacapa Street that C. W. Smith had bought around 1925. E. K. graduated from high school in 1936.²²⁷

The Vails added on to the one room school and remodeled it into a small house; Diego and Socorro (Coco) Cuevas resided there, then longtime island cowboy Jesus Bracamontes lived in it for many years. The last occupants were Sergio Marquez and his family.

²²⁴Oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, transcript p. 15, SCIF.

²²⁵E. K. Smith, quoted in *Isla de los Vaqueros*, pp. 37-39.

²²⁶Oral history interviews with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry; with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily; and with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 26, SCIF.

²²⁷Oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

Maritime Ranching

Vail & Vickers, as well as their neighbors on the Channel Islands, operated unique livestock businesses wherein their location required a transportation system entirely relying on boats and, to a smaller extent, aircraft. From the time of Alpheus Thompson shipping cattle and sheep on a small schooner to the final shipment of cattle off Santa Rosa Island, boats have played a key role in ranch operations. Santa Rosa Island owners almost always had a boat specifically for transporting livestock, supplies and personnel, and for more than 125 years, maintained a substantial pier to accommodate the maritime traffic. Few other places in the Americas operated this way, and the Vail & Vickers ranch was among the last.

Bechers Bay Pier

The long pier at Bechers Bay served the More's sheep operation and had apparently fallen into disrepair by the early Vail & Vickers years. A trade magazine published a report in 1913 claiming that the Mercereau Bridge & Construction Company had secured a contract to construct a 500-foot wharf, 20-ft. wide, at Santa Rosa Island. This may have been one of the occasional reconstructions of the pier. Otherwise, the pier needed regular maintenance and repair, especially in the winter as storms and swells buffeted the structure.²²⁸

The Army occupation of parts of Santa Rosa Island from 1943-1946 put strain on the pier, as military activities involved unloading equipment, construction materials, vehicles and personnel. The lease with Vail & Vickers stipulated that the government would repair any damage or wear that may interfere with ranch operations. On March 3, 1944, Ed Vail wrote to the division engineer stating that the pier needed repair and that the ranch would be shipping cattle beginning April 1. The request gave the government little time to survey and make repairs, and apparently no work was accomplished. The following March civilian engineer L. J. Sullivan, representing Case Construction Company, and Post Engineer Captain Van C. Smathers of March Field in Riverside inspected the pier, accompanied by Ed Vail. Vail wrote shortly after that if the work was not accomplished speedily, Vail & Vickers could lose up to \$95,427.72 in income and the war effort would lose 124,200 pounds of beef. Sullivan filed a report describing the condition of the pier and made a number of recommendations:

Pilings—18 pilings in the first (shoreward) seven bents were deteriorated and needed replacing; Sullivan recommended replacing all seven bents entirely with 35 new creosoted pilings of 45 to 50 feet in length;

Bents—Sullivan noted that bents were spaced about every 15 feet, five piles per bent except the five shoreward ones which had seven;

Caps—composed of 12 x 12-inch timbers 20 feet long in fair condition, replace seven;

Joists—varying dimensions from 3 x 12-inch to 4 x 14-inch, “dapped” to provide a level bearing surface;

²²⁸*Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer*, April 19, 1913, p. 11.

Bracing—“Sway bracing only and this has been placed as a flat angle to lessen the resistance to wave action and seaweeds;” place 14 pieces on seven bents

Deck—18-20 pieces 3 x 13-inch x 18 feet, need replacement;

Dolphins—two at the outboard end of the pier, steel piles wrapped at the top with chain and cable, one broken, one bent, both need repairs.

Sullivan determined that the outboard section of the pier was in a “reasonable” state of repair, but the first seven bents were unsafe and the dolphins created “extremely hazardous” conditions. Construction would require a skid pile driver which would be transported to the island on a derrick barge and, to meet Vail’s deadline, a work schedule of ten hours per day, seven days a week. Vail & Vickers would be required to furnish water via a temporary pipeline for the steam boiler on the pile driver. He estimated repairs to cost \$19,638: \$9,900 for transportation of equipment and materials to and from the island, and \$9,738 for materials, installation, labor and subsistence.

According to Al Vail the work was completed as planned. The pile driver would have been loaded onto the end of the pier by the derrick on the barge, and skidded to the shoreward part of the pier where the repairs would occur. Sullivan felt that the piles “will have to be equipped with steel driving shoes in order to penetrate the layer of boulders overlying the sandstone formation.” While the work was being done, Vail & Vickers used Case Construction Company’s barge to haul cattle to the mainland. The contractor left the pile driver on the island for future repairs.²²⁹

The pier endured constant battering by surf and swells. With the pier a vital part of the lifeline between island and mainland, maintenance was a regular part of cowboy life. At times, the structural integrity of the pier would be questionable. Margaret Vail Woolley spoke of the risks of walking on the pier “wondering if you’re going to be flung into the ocean:”

Every several years, there would be a storm that was strong enough to throw the boards off the dock so there’d be a big blank space. A lot of the boards would wash ashore down the coast and the cowboys would go get ‘em and bring ‘em back and stick them on again, and do what repairing they could, or drag somebody in to repair it. Every now and then the pilings had to be replaced or repaired or shored up or something and that was a kind of a casual program that went on year after year. They just patched together enough to use and then wait for it to blow up again, which made sense.²³⁰

In a storm once, Diego Cuevas had to climb up the A-frame as water came over the deck: “Then the first break we got man, we run!” He claimed that a couple of storms washed the pier out. Vail & Vickers owned a pile driver and would barge in materials for repairs. Cuevas described installing the pilings by driving them into the sand, cutting the tops level and installing a cap, then placing 12x12 stringers and the deck of large planks. Photographs from the 1950s through the 1980s showed the deck planking laid straight but cut to random lengths, making a ragged edge on either side of the pier. At the east end of the pier the Vails constructed a wooden A-frame structure which held the cattle chute, and a metal boom for

²²⁹Ed N. Vail to Mr. Minner, Division Engineer, March 3, 1944; G. A. Blackburn, Case Construction Company to Major Sexsmith and Capt. Van C. Smathers, Post Engineer, March 13 and 15, 1945; Ed N. Vail to Major Sexsmith, March 16, 1945; Ed N. Vail to Lt. Col. R. A. Marchant, August 20, 1945, SBMNH #0887; notes from interview with Al Vail by Jere Krakow, November 1993.

²³⁰Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Ann Eggers Jones, March 23, 1994, p. 9, SCIF.



Because of storm damage, the pile driver was often in operation on the pier. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*



Bechers Bay pier during World War II, 1944. *Channel Islands National Park*

loading and unloading heavy materials from boats and barges. The cattle chute would be lowered to the boat or barge deck off the A-frame.²³¹

Woolley recalled that there was once a “little shed up on the end of the wharf where people could go and watch cattle.” A rope house, consisting of a small shed on land at the west end of the pier, stored lines and materials needed for the operation of the pier, and remains there in poor condition. In 1987, upon purchase of the island, the National Park Service replaced most of the pier, using steel pilings. Workers eliminated the ragged deck edge, rebuilt the cattle chute and A-frame and installed handrails that spanned the entire length of the pier. Park staff removed a steel “stiff arm” crane in 1999. In 2010, the Park Service completed construction of a new steel pier of roughly the same dimensions and on the same footprint as the old pier. To better resist storm and wave action, the new pier sits several feet higher than the old pier, necessitating a lower level landing for park and concession boat passenger loading and unloading.

Vessels Serving Vail & Vickers’ Santa Rosa Island Operations

Mildred E.

According to a U. S. Certificate of Enrollment issued from the Port of Los Angeles, Walter L. Vail and J. V. Vickers registered an 83-foot schooner on December 10, 1901. Vail, listed as a stock raiser of Pantano, Arizona Territory, and Vickers each owned one-half interest in the boat. The wooden, two-masted *Mildred E.* was built in 1884 in Weteghan, Nova Scotia, and was of 118 tons gross. James G. Prescott was her master for Vail & Vickers. Shortly after her purchase, the *Santa Barbara Morning Press* described her:

The *Mildred E.* was in port yesterday. Captain James Prescott is in command. She is an 80 ton schooner, and was brought from around the horn from a Maine port some years ago. Until her purchase by Vail & Co. she was engaged in the Alaska trade. She carries a crew of five men. It is proposed to fit the vessel with gasoline power.²³²

Subsequent news items reported *Mildred E.* bringing sheep from Santa Rosa Island to Santa Barbara. On one voyage 300 sheep and 30 sheep shearers arrived in port, the paper noting that she “made the best time she has ever sailed between the islands and this port, making the trip in just four hours.” Vail & Vickers used *Mildred E.* in island service for a short time; in 1903 the firm had the *Santa Rosa Island* constructed expressly for livestock transport, leaving *Mildred E.* to few duties. Proving unsatisfactory to the needs of the company, Vail & Vickers abandoned *Mildred E.* in 1909, claiming she was unfit for service.²³³

²³¹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

²³²*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, April 13, 1902.

²³³*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, May 8, 15 and 24, 1902; United States of America, Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Navigation, *Certificate of Enrollment*, No. 3 dated December 10, 1901.

Santa Rosa Island, Cattle Boat, 1903-1915

Some confusion has existed as to the *Santa Rosa* and the *Santa Rosa Island*. They were actually two different vessels. A. P. More's sailing schooner *Santa Rosa* wrecked in San Miguel Island's Cuyler Harbor in November 1899. Vail & Vickers contracted construction of the gasoline schooner *Santa Rosa Island* in Wilmington in 1903. The 87-foot vessel had a 26-foot beam and drew 8.9 feet of water, and was listed at 140 tons gross. Her homeport was Los Angeles. Vail & Vickers put her to work hauling sheep off the island by July of 1903.²³⁴

A news article published in 1910 noted a difficult incident aboard:

The power boat *Santa Rosa Island* had a strenuous time yesterday attempting to land 200 Arizona cattle at Beechers Bay on the island. The schooner finally put back to Santa Barbara after battling all day with the elements and unloaded the cargo at the wharf in order to give the animals feed and water. While the day was quiet here, a stiff nor'west gale was blowing outside, with a tremendous ground swell running. There will be no further attempts at cattle transportation until the weather moderates.²³⁵

Little else is known about *Santa Rosa Island*. After the ranch owners obtained the *Vaquero*, three of Walter Vail's sons, N. R., Ed and Banning, took the old schooner on a four-month voyage to Mexico in 1915, leaving San Pedro for Cabo San Lucas, the Gulf of California and Mazatlan. They and their friends, with a hired captain and cook, spent their time "fishing, hunting, trading with the locals of coastal fishing villages, and socializing with Mazatlan's upper society of the day." Apparently the boat was sold shortly after the trip to Mexico and entered service in the South Pacific.²³⁶

Onward

Smaller boats served the island's smaller needs for transportation to and from Santa Barbara for supplies and provisions. Vail & Vickers' power boat *Tortuga* operated around Santa Rosa Island in the early 'teens, hauling supplies and mail "for various camps on the island," according to a newspaper item; little else is known of her, or of *Colleen*, another small vessel on the island. Vail & Vickers purchased the motor launch *Onward* for \$7,737 in 1921 to perform errands around the island and Channel in the 1920s and 1930s. She was a gasoline-powered, wood-hulled tender 64.5 feet long with one mast and a cargo boom. C.W. Smith used her for various tasks, including retrieving lumber from a wreck that came in handy for building corrals. Smith reportedly took *Onward* to Santa Barbara after the 1925 earthquake to check on damage there. The Vails kept her on a mooring at Bechers Bay. Vail & Vickers sold *Onward* in August

²³⁴*Thirty Eighth Annual List of Merchant Vessels in the United States . . . for the year Ending June 30, 1906*, p. 299; *Fireman's Fund Register, 1914*, p. 133.

²³⁵*Santa Barbara Daily News* [or Press?] November 30, 1910, quoted in Woolley.

²³⁶Woolley, "Maritime Ranching" in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 108-109.

1942 to the DeLuxe Water Taxi Company, hoping to stave off the potential military seizure of the main island boat *Vaquero*, reasoning that the government would not take their only vessel; the attempt failed.²³⁷

Vaquero, 1913-1943

To bring consistency and reliability to the island cattle transportation challenges, Vail & Vickers commissioned a new cattle boat in 1913 and christened her *Vaquero* (Spanish for cowboy). She was not the first *Vaquero* to operate in Southern California waters. Harris Newmark recalled that a steamer *Vaquero* offered excursions from San Pedro to Santa Catalina in August of 1871. Vail & Vickers registered *Vaquero* in 1914.²³⁸

William Muller built *Vaquero* as a sturdy workhorse of a ship. A wooden-hulled boat similar to the coastal steam schooners common in California at the turn of the century, she measured 121 feet with a 29 foot beam, capacity 231 tons gross and had a draft of 14 feet, loaded. A ten-knot vessel, she was “beamy” or wide in order to handle the cattle cargo, and of a shallow draft to allow navigation close to shore. She had six staterooms to sleep 18, a galley and dining room, and two toilets in the single deckhouse. An icebox with block ice stood on the main afterdeck. Three generators supplied electricity for lights, an icebox and a 25-watt radiophone. Two fuel tanks held 2,000 gallons each, and two water tanks stored a total of 1,800 gallons. She was rigged with two masts, one of which was later removed, and a gasoline engine, which was replaced in 1928 with a Western Enterprise six-cylinder diesel. The holds, divided into five cattle pens, had a capacity of about 10,000 cubic feet, or 200 head of cattle, which constituted seven carloads (rail cars) on the mainland. The deck, equipped with 3 1/2-foot gunnels topped with two-by-sixes to hold the cattle in, was divided into ten pens, ranging from 144 to 219 square feet. A ramp would be deployed to load and unload the cattle to and from the deck and holds. During cattle shipping season, the crew spread sawdust and wood chips over the deck, which would be cleaned out after the runs and sold by the skipper’s son door-to-door for 25 cents a sack.²³⁹

N. R. Vail took a personal interest in the *Vaquero*, helping maintain her and learning to skipper the vessel. Margaret Vail Woolley recalled her father’s interest in the mechanics of the boat:

He worked on the motor of the *Vaquero* endlessly . . . it was a big old diesel, bigger than this table, just huge. I don’t know if it was the best thing in the world to begin with, but it

²³⁷Ibid., p. 111; *Santa Barbara Morning Press*, August 20, 1915; oral history interviews with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily; with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 2; and with Jack Crawford, May 4, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF; information about *Onward* from Marla Daily, SCIF. *Onward* sank off Catalina Island in 1950 as the result of a fire.

²³⁸Newmark, *Sixty Years*, p. 430.

²³⁹Vessel survey form (“Commercial Form”) by Harry C. Wilson & Co., Ltd., Terminal Island, California, no date (circa 1941); *Fireman’s Fund Register*, 1915, p. 148; oral history interview with Russ Vail, October 14, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF; Claude R. Morris, untitled manuscript about his experiences with his father, Skipper Al Morris, on *Vaquero* in the 1920s and 1930s, May 24, 1999, pp. 1, 4. Interestingly, the *Fireman’s Fund Register* lists both the *Vaquero* and the *Santa Rosa Island* in its 1915 edition; this was the first listing for the former and the last for the latter boat. *Vaquero*’s owner was listed as J. V. Vickers.



The original *Vaquero*, circa 1940. Courtesy of E. K. Smith

was hard to keep up and it had a real hard run to go. So he'd go down there a lot and work with the assistant engineer fiddling with it and getting it to run again and it usually ran.²⁴⁰

Al Morris spent twenty years aboard *Vaquero* as chief engineer and later skipper, employing his five sons for much of that time. Morris took the boat as far as San Francisco and San Diego, and often to Santa Barbara and San Pedro. He lost an eye while working on the engine when a valve blew out. N. R. Vail put his son Russ to work on the boat. "I was a deckhand, a sailor, a swab jockey," Russ Vail recalled; he obtained his seaman's papers in 1939. He stood watch over 210 head of cattle on the long night runs. The Vails docked *Vaquero* at San Pedro for many years, loading and unloading cattle at Wilmington nearby. Railroad lines served the corrals for direct shipping to the stockyards and packing plants until the later 1930s, when trucking supplanted rail hauling.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Ann Eggers Jones, March 10, 1994, p. 11, SCIF.

²⁴¹Oral history interview with Russ Vail, July 28 and October 14, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF; Morris, pp. 1, 3, 5.

The 115-mile trip to the island from Wilmington took at least twelve hours, and in the worst weather up to 23 hours, providing somewhat of an adventure when the Vail family came out to the island many times during the year. N. R. Vail brought his wife and three children to the island for the summer, many holidays and often for the shipping season. Margaret Vail Woolley recalled the family's first trip to the island on the *Vaquero* around 1928:

My mother decided to trick us out in little yachtsman's uniforms. So she did—little white pants, little hats. We were so cute . . . and cold and filthy but over we went and slept. There were cabins on the *Vaquero* then . . . we could get our whole family in the rear cabin by doubling up considerably.²⁴²

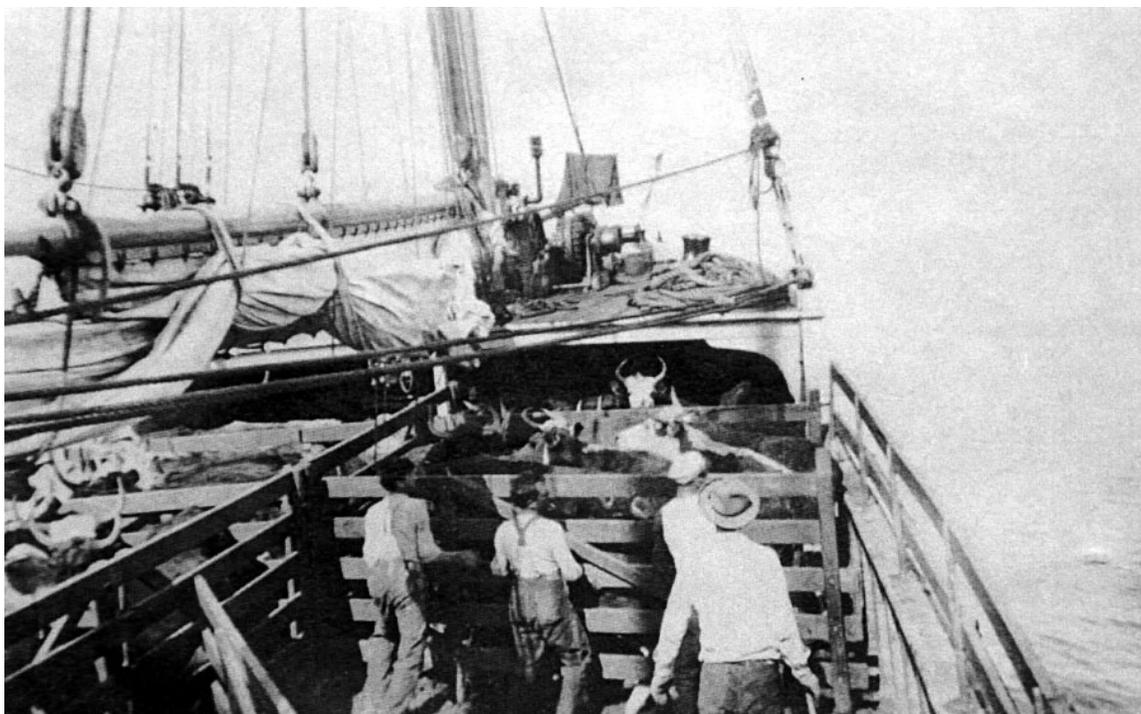
On a typical weekend trip to Santa Rosa Island, the family would board *Vaquero* after school on Friday, and sleep aboard in the staterooms during the night trip over. A cook made hot meals in the cozy galley, a popular spot to stay warm during winter voyages. After spending Saturday and Sunday on the island, the family departed Sunday night, arriving in time for Monday morning school. During the 1930s, Russ Vail recalled, “the vessel was used a little more easily in those days,” with cheaper fuel and labor costs, so the Vail family traveled to and from the island on her regularly.²⁴³

Vaquero not only shipped the supplies and cattle for Santa Rosa Island, but also contracted with the other islands' operators. Managers of Santa Cruz Island inquired about using *Vaquero* to supplement the loads taken by their *Santa Cruz*; the manager wrote, “Wouldn't it be possible to make a deal with the Vail Co. for the transportation of wine and wool and also for one or two large shipments of sheep? We understand that the *Vaqueros* [sic] is busy only about half the time . . .” In 1937 *Vaquero* transported many of Edwin Stanton's new sheep to Santa Cruz Island, and regularly transported Robert Brooks' sheep to and from San Miguel Island and Ed Vail's sheep to and from San Nicolas Island, which he had rented. The Vails hired out *Vaquero* for other purposes in the off season, including hauling supplies to southern California ports, as a fishing barge off Santa Monica, for wreck salvage and, at one point in the 1930s, acting as a mother ship for a whaling operation. Al Morris's son Claude Morris recalled some of the memorable off-season voyages:

The Hollywood studios used the boat for many movies. One early one was, “Laurel and Hardy Go to Sea.” Other trips were hauling turtles from Turtle Bay in Mexico, tuna from San Diego, beans from Port Hueneme . . . Catalina Island had an over population of rattlesnakes, so we hauled a group of young wild pigs to Catalina from Santa Rosa Island. Deer . . . were taken to Santa Rosa for sport hunting.

²⁴²Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Ann Eggers Jones, March 10, 1994, p. 16, SCIF.

²⁴³Oral history interview with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993, and Al Vail, March 11, 1993, by Carolyn Petry, SCIF; Morris, p. 2.



Cattle in their pens aboard *Vaquero*, 1930s. Courtesy of E. K. Smith

Morris told of making many crossings to Santa Barbara where *Vaquero* anchored off Stearns Wharf; cowboys would row or motor in a skiff to and from the boat. She hauled oil-drilling equipment to and from the island in 1932. At least once Vail & Vickers delivered cattle to San Francisco, according to Morris, and made a short run to Gaviota across the Channel: “There was no dock in Gaviota, so the cattle were just pushed overboard and herded ashore with skiffs, as the cattle would often swim out to sea.” She had a few mishaps in the 1930s, including running on the rocks on Santa Rosa Island, and bumping a freighter on a night run.²⁴⁴

In 1939, Vail & Vickers leased docking space at the newly developed Port Hueneme, eleven miles south of Ventura. The move resulted in a savings of 60 miles round trip (cutting the voyage distance by more than half) for the vessel and cargoes, but perhaps even more significantly, the shorter run saved in crew pay, as told by Russ Vail:

In about ‘38 . . . the unions came in and said, “We shall staff your vessel, see, and there’s not much you can do about it.” The marine unions were in their heyday, so we went from a crew of about four or five to nine, with increased operation costs. So it was better to make short runs. Formerly the runs out of Wilmington would take us 12 hours up and 12 hours back, of course. And then we’d lay over at Santa Rosa Island for a day or so. Well, if you did that under the union rules, . . . you’d be paying these guys for layover days and all that—a greater expense Actually, we used to pick the crew up down in San Pedro and drive ‘em up to Hueneme We were scraping the bottom of the barrel for money.

²⁴⁴Unidentified news clippings dated March 23, 1924 and October 13, 1937, SCIF; oral history interviews with Russ Vail, July 28 and October 14, 1993 by Carolyn Petry; oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Ann Eggers Jones, March 2, 1994, SCIF; Morris, p. 3; Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Books, SCIF.

At Hueneme we built the first corrals, and the chute there . . . built them especially for cattle. We were probably the first, if not the first, vessel into Hueneme.²⁴⁵

Vail explained that prior to unionization, with Al Morris as skipper, the boat crew worked six hours on, six off, and the four or five men were paid five dollars a day. After 1930, the schedule changed to the union's four hours on, eight off, nine men at twenty dollars a day, marking a huge increase in shipping costs. Under new union rules, the Vails had to hire skippers and crews through the hiring hall.²⁴⁶

The United States' entry into World War II caused a chain of events that would alter the sea transport of Vail & Vickers cattle for many years to come. In August, 1941 as worldwide tensions increased, the Vails hired K. I. Hogstrom as Captain of *Vaquero*, and N. R. Vail signed on as alternate Captain, noting in his application to the Bureau of Marine Navigation that "Her trips to Santa Rosa Island with our cattle and supplies are not regular nor often, but it is essential they be made without delay when the cattle are assembled and weather permits a smooth trip. The captains we would sign on are local men and are both subject to call as pilots from time to time." Vail's application was granted, although how often he piloted *Vaquero* is unknown. Hostilities with Japan commenced less than four months later.²⁴⁷

Naval authorities commanded that all civilian boats be moved from Port Hueneme by April 24, 1942, to make way for an emergency Navy base to be constructed there. The timing couldn't have been worse for Vail & Vickers. Their spring movement for 2,000 head of finished beef cattle to mainland markets would have to be moved to Santa Barbara, an "impossible" situation. N. R. Vail wrote to Rear Admiral R. S. Holmes claiming that

We have never been able to handle finished beef through Santa Barbara with our present equipment, it being an open port. The chute and apron, as at present built in, is so restricted that proper unloading of beef cattle would be impossible, not to mention the fact that corrals and trucking facilities would all have to be built.

Vail also objected to reverting to San Pedro as a shipping point, noting that "we would have to tie the boat to the dock and load at the Island in darkness, to be sure to make San Pedro before the Port is closed in the evening." Trips to San Pedro held too many risks, such as weather delays, dangers of loading and docking in darkness, and the potential for bruising and fevering of finished beef cattle, which would "go largely to supply Army and Navy contracts." Not only were Vail cattle movements at risk, so were Edwin Stantons' Santa Cruz Island cattle and sheep numbering about one thousand, and Robert Brooks' 1,000 sheep from San Miguel Island.²⁴⁸

Vail requested that his operations continue at Port Hueneme at least during shipping seasons of mid-April to mid-July, although "we would much prefer" a continued permanent berth. Vail received a reply quickly from the officer in charge of construction at Port Hueneme, granting Vail & Vickers permission to

²⁴⁵Interview with Russ Vail, *Isla de los Vaqueros*, pp. 22-23.

²⁴⁶Oral history interview with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

²⁴⁷N. R. Vail to United States Customhouse, San Pedro, August 13, 1941; N. R. Vail to Bureau of Marine Navigation, Washington, D.C., August 13, 1941, SCIF.

²⁴⁸N. R. Vail to Rear Admiral R. S. Holmes, April 12, 1942, SCIF.

use the facilities “for cattle and supplies to outlying islands for an indefinite period after 24 April 1942.” No doubt the Vail family sighed in relief, but it would not last long.²⁴⁹

At Christmas time in 1942 Vail received a letter from Commander G. W. D. Dashiell, the port director at San Pedro’s Naval Transportation Service, informing him that the U. S. Army would requisition *Vaquero* for wartime service. Dashiell wrote,

When and at what berth in the Harbor you will be requested to deliver the boat has not been determined, but you will be informed as much in advance as possible. Major E. S. Clark, U. S. Army, Port of Embarkation, has very kindly offered to endeavor to ascertain from Fort Mason, San Francisco, whether or not the vessel will be used as a cattle boat, in order that you may be informed whether you may remove certain stalls, etc., prior to delivery to the Army.²⁵⁰

Vail had reportedly sold their smaller boat *Onward* in an attempt to circumvent taking of the *Vaquero*. The tactic didn’t work, so Vail renewed the ships’ papers on January 1, 1943, and delivered the boat to the Army at San Pedro on the 14th, ending thirty years’ service by the sturdy and unique cattle boat of Santa Rosa Island. *Vaquero* traveled across the Pacific Ocean under her own power. At least two persons associated with the island cattle operation saw *Vaquero* in the South Pacific later in the war. E. K. Smith, son of ranch foreman C. W. Smith, and Granville Vail, both saw her: Smith observed her from the air moored off Biak Island in New Guinea, painted green, and by coincidence met “Boxcar Bill,” a former Santa Rosa Island cowboy, who was attached to the 41st Infantry Division holding the perimeter on Biak; Vail boarded her in Finchhaven, New Guinea, and met two former Santa Rosa Island crew members who had been allowed to stay with her because of their knowledge of the “temperamental” engine. Francis Gherini, a co-owner of east Santa Cruz Island and familiar with *Vaquero*, also saw her in New Guinea. The fate of the boat after 1944 is unknown, although one researcher traced the boat up to 1954, still in use by the Army.²⁵¹

Use of Barges and Landing Craft, 1943-1959

Captain Charles E. Voegeli, Commanding Officer of the U. S. Naval Amphibious Training Base at Coronado in San Diego, was aware of the need for beef in the war effort and, being sympathetic to the Vails’ predicament, made available landing barges under one Lt. Wottwood to ship Santa Rosa Island cattle. The Navy used the event as an exercise, using three L. C. T.s (landing craft) and transporting 3,000 head of cattle to the beach at Ventura where the cattle would be herded across the state highway and

²⁴⁹G. G. Werner, Jr., Lieut. (CEC) USNR, to Mr. Russell Vail, April 16, 1942, SCIF.

²⁵⁰G. W. D. Dashiell, Port Director, to N. R. Vail, 22 December, 1942, SCIF.

²⁵¹Memorandum to Vail & Vickers files, January 15, 1943, SCIF; oral history interview with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF; Woolley, “Maritime Ranching,” pp. 111-112; comment from park archeologist Don Morris, no date.

penned for shipment at the Taylor Ranch. Of the landing methods, Al Vail explained simply that “Well, you drop the ramp and kick ‘em off . . . most of ‘em didn’t even have to go through the water.”²⁵²

Unfortunately for the Vails, by the fall of 1943 the landing craft were needed elsewhere. Ed Vail hired Edwin Stanton’s island schooner *Santa Cruz* to restock the island that fall, but found that the *Santa Cruz* was “totally inadequate for that size job.” Vail & Vickers turned to the only answers they could at the time — hiring barges and tugs to make the cattle movements. Unfortunately, adequate craft all along the Pacific coast had been requisitioned by the armed services as had *Vaquero*. By April of 1944, with a full cattle movement imminent, ranch manager Ed Vail had no form of transportation. He wrote,

. . . I have made a thorough search of the water front in our effort to rent some type of commercial craft suitable to our needs but to date have been unable to find such equipment that isn’t tied up in government work.²⁵³

Vail addressed agriculture officials in Sacramento and the Navy seeking suitable craft. He eventually contacted a Mr. Connors of the Wilmington Transportation Co. but still needed to test the feasibility of a landing on the beach at Ventura. “If [Connors] turns it down . . .,” Vail wrote to his now-friend Voegeli, “we will certainly be in a jam, and there will be two millions pounds of dressed beef, or more, that will not be available for human consumption this year.”²⁵⁴ Vail successfully made the shipment, not with Connors but with a stone barge belonging to Wrigley Transportation Company (associated with Catalina Island). Vail wrote to Capt. Voegeli that

I have a hell-of-a-lot more gray hairs in my head worrying, whether or not the barge would knock the dock down, how long before this line parts and that line gets tangled in the propeller In other words when the last steer went ashore I let my hair down, took a bath and went to bed. In other words things did not run as smooth as when we had your good old L. C. T’s²⁵⁵

In April 1945 Vail used a stone barge owned by Case Construction Company, contractors working on the pier for the Army. For almost fifteen years following the war the Vails used rented barges and tugs (paid by the hour) to move cattle to the mainland, although at one point they bought and converted a landing craft for the job; this was lost on west Santa Cruz Island in rough weather. The barges were equipped with pens and loaded from the Bechers Bay pier except to occasionally unload calves, which typically balked at entering the chute on the pier. On such occasions the cowboys built a ramp of sand to the beached barge and drove the livestock ashore, or drove them ashore simply by opening the pens and

²⁵²Ed Vail to Captain C. E. Voegeli, Commanding Officer U. S. Naval Amphibious Training Base, Coronado, May 3 and June 22, 1944; oral history interview with Al Vail by Carolyn Petry, March 25, 1993, SCIF; Woolley, “Maritime Ranching,” pp. 111-113.

²⁵²[Ed Vail] to Capt. Voegeli, June 22, 1944; Oral history with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 16, SCIF.

²⁵³Ed Vail to Dr. C. U. Duckworth, Department of Agriculture, Sacramento, April 21, 1944, SCIF.

²⁵⁴Ed Vail to Captain C. E. Voegeli, May 3, 1944, SCIF.

²⁵⁵[Ed Vail] to Capt. Voegeli, June 22, 1944, SCIF. The friendship between Vail and Voegli no doubt grew out of the season of Navy shipping of Vail cattle. In a footnote to this letter, Vail offers Voegli’s son Freddie a job “that he will enjoy as well be helpful to me.”



A vaquero waits on shore as a tug and cattle barge are seen in the background. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

shooing the calves out into the shallow water. The barge would be tied to shore firmly with a cable while the tug kept tension on the seaward line to avoid the barge shifting and getting capsized in the surf; the only places this was possible was at Old Ranch and Water Canyon beaches. Occasionally, when weather permitted, the barges went ashore at Johnsons Lee and China Camp. On the pier, cowboys loaded the cattle on chutes to the barge, as they had on the *Vaquero*. The barge would be tied to the pier as a boat would, then the cattle loaded in groups to the various pens on the barge. When finished the cowboys hauled the lines to the pier. Diego Cuevas recalled that the lines were “wet and so heavy and really hard to handle.” Later the crews used a winch to pull the barge, and eventually lighter lines replaced the heavy manila ropes, which were stored in a shed at the ranch when not in use.²⁵⁶

During the drought of 1948 Vail & Vickers hauled 400 head of cattle a day off the island on barges, a tremendous effort.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁶Ed N. Vail to Lt. Col. R. A. Merchant, August 20, 1945, SBMNH #0887; oral history interviews with Diego Cuevas by Will Woolley, July 8 and August 4, 1993, SCIF; notes from interview with Al Vail by Jere Krakow, November 1993. According to park archeologist Don Morris, a one-inch cable is extant south of Skunk Point.

²⁵⁷*Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1948, p. 1.

Vaquero II

After more than 15 years hauling island cattle by barge and tug, and no doubt tired of the inconvenient and costly method of transport, Vail & Vickers contracted with Lindwall Boat Works, 512 West Micheltorena Street in Santa Barbara to construct a wooden cattle boat. Working in consultation with Ed Vail, Paul R. (“Sugar”) Lindwall followed designs by prominent naval architect Arthur LeFever for a 64’6” cattle carrier with a 23’6” beam, to be built of oak and fir, equipped with two 150 horsepower D-342 Caterpillar diesel engines and a small wheelhouse and cabin with four bunks and a galley. Six open cattle pens constituted the bulk of the boat’s square footage, with a capacity of about 100 head of adult cattle or 210 calves. The boat would be half the size of the original *Vaquero* and hold half the number of livestock as cargo, but would be faster and more efficient both in operation and crew requirements (she required only a skipper and a deckhand). Ed Vail and Paul Lindwall signed the contract, for a price of \$70,170, on June 30, 1958, with delivery to the harbor expected no later than January 10, 1959.²⁵⁸

“Sugar” Lindwall worked feverishly on the boat for six months. “I almost lost my family on account of this boat,” he told a reporter in 1993. “I had a couple of sawhorses and a sheet of plywood in the living room for three weeks, designing the boat.” On February 7, 1959, Lindwall delivered the boat to Santa Barbara Harbor for launch, with the cabin and engines removed for later installation. Diego Cuevas described the delivery to water “like a parade.” The local newspaper noted that the boat might have been the largest ever built in Santa Barbara. Diego Cuevas and his crew constructed corrals and gates on the deck, and accompanied Ed, Al and Russ Vail on the party-like dry run to Port Hueneme. The Vails christened the boat *Vaquero II*.²⁵⁹

Vaquero II became a landmark at Santa Barbara Harbor. Operation between Port Hueneme and Santa Rosa Island for cattle shipments took about five hours. She made regular runs to the island (about every ten days) with food and supplies from her homeport at Santa Barbara harbor, a trip of about three hours. Considered to be the last operating wooden cattle boat on the Pacific Coast, she handled the island cattle shipments with few breakdowns and enjoyed a reputation for seaworthiness.²⁶⁰

Diego Cuevas claimed that the new boat didn’t change the island cattle business much, pointing out that *Vaquero II* actually hauled fewer cattle per boatload. The boat had a capacity of 100,000 pounds of live cattle. It held from 90 to 100 head of heavy steers and over twice as many light calves, held in six corrals each holding 10 to 15 head (more for the calves); the barges moved about 120 to 130 steers. The major difference was that *Vaquero II* made more trips to and from Santa Barbara and Port Hueneme for groceries, personal business and the like, and hauled feed, which was difficult on the barges.²⁶¹

During the first years of operation of *Vaquero II*, crews unloaded cargo using a cathead with the boat’s boom and a rope that was tied to the boat’s engines. This became too complicated a process,

²⁵⁸Contract and Specifications dated June 30, 1958, SCIF; Woolley, “Maritime Ranching,” p. 112. The Navy did not reimburse Vail & Vickers for the old *Vaquero* until 1956, thirteen years after it had been requisitioned by the government; receipt of the \$25,000 no doubt spurred the company to invest in a new boat.

²⁵⁹*Santa Barbara News Press*, February 6, 1959 and August 22, 1993; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

²⁶⁰Woolley, “Maritime Ranching,” p.113.

²⁶¹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.



Vaquero II during her last year in operation, 1998. Photograph by Dewey Livingston

according to Cuevas, with intricate teamwork and “too many lines.” They adopted a technique of using a tractor parked on the pier that would pull the loads. To unload fishing boats and supply boats they used the wooden A-frame and an Army vehicle loaded with materials as counterweight and equipped with a winch, pulling off barrels of fuel and molasses and other supplies. The A-frame handled up to 500 pounds, with men working on top and below. To keep the operation safe in the island swells, the skipper stayed in full control of the untied boat, moving forward and reverse as necessary to remain aligned with the pier.²⁶²

The Vails used *Vaquero II* to haul Stanton Ranch cattle and sheep from Santa Cruz Island after their venerable schooner *Santa Cruz* wrecked off anchor in a storm in 1960. In March of 1961 Carey Stanton and Al Vail agreed on rates for hauling on *Vaquero II* as follows:

Livestock shipment	\$200.
Cargo shipment	\$300.
Livestock one way and cargo back constituting a round trip	\$350.

Stanton would supply labor for cargo loading (although the *Vaquero II* crew would help as well), and the Stantons signed a Hold Harmless agreement protecting Vail & Vickers from third party insurance claims. *Vaquero II* and its crews hauled Santa Cruz Island livestock for 26 years, including the final shipment of

²⁶²Op. cit.

cattle after Carey Stanton's death in 1987. The original rates applied until 1976, when Vail & Vickers raised the charges from \$200 to \$300 per load of cattle, and added a charge of \$150 per day for "stand by" time caused by weather conditions; three years later, shipment costs increased to \$500 and standby time to \$250 per day. The Gherini family of east Santa Cruz Island also employed *Vaquero II* for their sheep shipments after their boat, *Hodge*, wrecked in 1976. *Vaquero II* held up to 600 sheep.²⁶³

Los Angeles Herald-Examiner columnist "Cholly Angeleno" wrote of the challenges an uninitiated passenger might have faced on what must have been *Vaquero II* in the early days:

I remember when one of [the Vails'] cattle ships stopped over at Catalina, with Ed Vail skippering the vessel. He promptly invited Hook Beardslee and me to take "the cruise" to Santa Rosa to pick up some cattle. But when we got aboard ship we promptly declined the offer. The farmyard aroma was stifling!²⁶⁴

After closure of the ranch, Vail & Vickers sold *Vaquero II* in 1999; she has been converted to other uses.

Skippers of *Vaquero II*

Albert (McGee) Ball was the first skipper of the new *Vaquero II*; Diego Cuevas recalled that Ball "was a good skipper, he can make that *Vaquero* sing. He can turn it on a dime . . ." Paul Ray ran the boat from 1960 to November 1967, after which Kenny Ople took the helm. According to Vail & Vickers office manager Tom Thornton, Al Vail "knew [Ople] as a very responsible boat captain. One who wanted to be sure that the boat was tied up right and taken care of right. And he would. A wind shift in the night to a southeast, Kenny would wake up and be down there. Al didn't have to stew about it. Kenny would be there." Rick Helfrich took over after Ople's death in 1987, keeping the job for four years. Russ Collins, an experienced captain with a fascinating history at sea, was regarded by the Vail family as one of the best, sailing often with Sonny Castagnola as crew. Collins made the last run with cattle from the island in 1998.²⁶⁵

The reliance on cattle boats to do business added to the unique character of Santa Rosa Island's uses. The island owners formed one of the more interesting chapters in California maritime history in their development and use of specialized livestock vessels over a span of 154 years. This maritime ranching component adds to the significance of the Santa Rosa Island ranching history.

²⁶³Al Vail to Dr. Carey Stanton, March 14, 1961; Carey Stanton to Al Vail, March 20, 1961; Al Vail to Dr. Carey Stanton, April 19, 1976 and April 23, 1979, SCIF; John Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island: A History of Conflict and Diversity* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1997), p. 193.

²⁶⁴*Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, June 27, 1965.

²⁶⁵Oral history interviews with Tom Thornton, June 15, 1987 by Marla Daily, and Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF; personal communication with Nita Vail.

Airstrips

In a flyer's eyes, Santa Rosa Island is blessed with a number of suitable flat areas for landing small planes, but the owners restricted flights and landings throughout their tenure. The Vails and others started flying over to the island in the 1930s, landing on a section of hay field southeast of the ranch house. This developed into the "official" landing strip on the island, and was noted as such on the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map dated 1934. Vickers family member Jack Crawford flew his Waco plane to the island, and often had to tie it to a fence because of the high winds. Crawford once landed on the west end on "that nice landing strip on that little bit of bay across from San Miguel Island."²⁶⁶

During World War II the Navy identified four suitable areas for landing airplanes, and in 1950 the Air Force marked five strips on a map: Bechers Bay, Old Ranch, China Camp, Pocket Field (probably where Crawford landed) and Orr's Camp. The Air Force reportedly landed occasionally at a sloping field above Officers Beach but a fatal crash there killed the project engineer during construction of the facility; the commander of the base, Col. Jack Blacker reportedly landed there a number of times in the early 1960s.²⁶⁷

Pilots David Gray and George Hammond regularly landed their planes in service of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's archeological expeditions led by Phil Orr, first landing at Orr's Camp on the northwest side of the island, then, at the request of island owners, restricting landings to Bechers Bay. Margaret Vail Wise and her husband Sam flew often to China Camp, which they used as a vacation getaway in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Bechers Bay airstrip, in use since before 1934, has been graded into a serviceable dirt strip, lengthened and equipped with a windsock. The National Park Service, which now maintains the airstrip, graded out a "hump" in the late 1980s to make the field more level and safe.²⁶⁸

Transition Period: The End of an Era

The booming post-war economy brought increased visitors and residents to California, especially to the scenic coastal areas. The demand for housing promoted the sale of large ranches and the breaking up of traditional family businesses, some after many generations of operation. The new mobility of Americans, with better cars and modern roads, brought with it a call for more recreational areas and parks, and with these a more heightened environmental awareness. Seemingly isolated out on the Santa Barbara Channel,

²⁶⁶Oral history interviews with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 18, and with Jack Crawford, May 4, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF; notes from interview with Margaret Vail Woolley by Jere Krakow, September 4, 1992.

²⁶⁷Capt. R. R. Smith, District Planning Officer to Commandant [et al], 3 August 1943, p. 6, in RG 77, H2 Navigation 1941-42, NA(LN); Drawing Number 294-M-2 [U. S. Air Force], SBMNH #0882; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

²⁶⁸Interview with Bill Wallace by the author, November, 1998.

the longtime family managers of Santa Rosa Island eventually faced challenges they may have never expected.²⁶⁹

Vail & Vickers: Business Changes in the 1960s

On December 31, 1957 trustees terminated the Vail Trust and incorporated the Vail Company as a Nevada Corporation, with Mahlon Vail as president. Until 1964, the island and its livestock had been owned in equal halves by the Vail Trust/Vail Company and the Vickers Company, Ltd., doing business as a joint venture called Vail & Vickers. As noted earlier, the Vickers Company acted as silent partners, having a financial interest only, while the Vail Company operated the ranch business. The Vail Company also owned and operated the huge Pauba and Santa Rosa ranches in Riverside County, property owned by the family since before the turn of the century. As succeeding generations made the business divisions more complicated, the family met and decided to change the structure of the company. Russ Vail recalled:

It was decided to liquidate Vail Company, and in turn that meant that certain parties . . . could either stay in or pick up an interest in the Vail Company's interest in Vail & Vickers because that was going to continue Down through the generations there were 23 stockholders or landholders of Pauba Ranch. It had gone down into the second or third generation so it was too unwieldy to continue an operation of that number so it was decided to let the interested parties . . . retain an interest in the island. And it wound up where Al [Vail] and Margie [Woolley] and myself and Sandy [Wilkinson] wanted to retain an interest, because we were closer to it And then in regards to the ownership of the livestock, well then Al wanted to continue that . . . so it was decided, okay he can buy into that and we'll just have a landholder's interest, the other three of us.²⁷⁰

Vail Company stockholders voted to liquidate the organization and on January 1, 1965, sold Pauba and Santa Rosa Ranches to a consortium including Kaiser Industries Co. for a reported \$20,000,000 in cash. Al and Russ Vail, Margaret Vail Woolley and their cousin Sandy Wilkinson then bought out the Vail Company's interest in Santa Rosa Island, which came under the ownership of the four Vail family members (1/2 interest) and the Vickers Company. In addition, Al Vail bought the Vail Company's entire interest in the island cattle business.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹For a pictorial and editorial account of ranching on Santa Rosa Island, see Gretel Erlich, *Cowboy Island: Farewell to a Ranching Legacy* (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 2000). The book includes further detail on ranching techniques, customs and personalities.

²⁷⁰Oral history interview with Russ Vail, October 14, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

²⁷¹Oral history interviews with Al Vail, March 25, 1993, p. 1, and Russ Vail, October 14, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF; Supplemental Agreement No. 1, Department of the Army (change in lease for Johnsons Lee property following termination of the Vail Trust); Philip S. Rush, *Some Old Ranchos and Adobes*, (San Diego: Neyenesch Printers, Inc., 1964), pp. 29-32. The Vails' 87,500-acre Pauba and Santa Rosa ranches (a vast property put together from four old land grants) were located on old Highway 395 in Temecula, Riverside County. They were sold to Kaiser Aluminum Company, Kaiser Industries Company and Macco Realty Company who developed the Pauba property into a community called Rancho California; the Santa Rosa Ranch, on which Vail Lake is located, was left undeveloped (from Rush, *Old Ranchos* and an oral history interview with John Woolley, October 7, 1978, SCIF).

With the southern California ranches sold, Al Vail moved the offices of Vail & Vickers to a small office complex at 123 West Padre Street in Santa Barbara. From this office all Santa Rosa Island business was accomplished. Russ Vail joined the Santa Barbara office staff in 1977.²⁷²

National Park Legislation and Acquisition of Santa Rosa Island

Impending legislation to establish Channel Islands National Park concerned the owners of Santa Rosa Island. Vail & Vickers wanted out of the park boundaries and in the beginning had no desire to sell. Congressman Robert Lagomarsino was a friend of theirs, but was convinced that the park proposal was a good one. According to Al Vail, the family lobbied California Senator S. I. Hayakawa, who wrote a failed amendment to remove the island from the bill that only garnered seven votes. The Vail family traveled to Washington, D. C. twice to argue for exclusion from the proposed park boundaries, feeling that a national park and a historic cattle ranch wouldn't be a desirable combination. Monument superintendent Bill Ehorn worked with the Vails to craft a workable compromise, and convinced Al Vail to express "concern" rather than "opposition" to the park bill in front of a Senate committee. "We, really in retrospect were spinning our wheels," commented Al Vail later, "because a National Park is kind of like motherhood and apple pie. If the people want it, you're not going to stop it."²⁷³

President Jimmy Carter authorized Channel Islands National Park on March 5, 1980. The act redesignated the Channel Islands National Monument islands of Anacapa and Santa Barbara as a National Park and added Santa Cruz, San Miguel and Santa Rosa islands. As a result of negotiations with Vail & Vickers, the legislation stated, "With respect to the privately owned lands on Santa Rosa Island, the Secretary shall acquire such lands as expeditiously as possible after the date of enactment of this title. The acquisition of these lands shall take priority over the acquisition of other privately owned lands within the park." According to Bill Ehorn, the Vails had asked for the priority acquisition, which caused some conflict with the owners of Santa Cruz Island, who wanted to sell as well. Almost seven years would elapse until the island could be purchased, first delayed by lack of an adequate appropriation, creation of planning documents and agreements with island owners, and then a contentious title dispute with representatives of the Chumash Indians.²⁷⁴

The appraisal process moved slowly, so by mid-1983 no appraisals of Santa Rosa Island had been accomplished. The NPS associate director in Washington wrote in mid-1982 that, while Santa Rosa Island had been appraised at \$18,900,000 in 1979, a new appraisal would be "premature" in light of an appropriation of only \$3,840,000 which was intended for purchases of the Gherini property at east Santa Cruz Island. Despite the language in the bill stipulating that Santa Rosa Island would be purchased first, the park service drafted plans to acquire both Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island in a "piecemeal" fashion, apparently to make use of the small initial appropriation. Representative Lagomarsino stated

²⁷²Interview with Al Vail by Jere Krakow, NPS, September 1992.

²⁷³Oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 21-22, SCIF; oral history with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston.

²⁷⁴Public Law 96-199, 94 Stat. 67.

before a house subcommittee that the landowners would be willing to consider phased purchases; on Santa Rosa Island the park service targeted the area around Johnsons Lee and mountain top areas near Soledad Peak. Lagomarsino noted that only four million dollars of the initial appropriation had been spent, mainly on the new visitor center and headquarters in Ventura, and asked for an \$8 million appropriation to fund the first phase. Vail & Vickers, through their attorney William C. Kelly, Jr., protested the recent Draft Land Protection Plan which would authorize purchase of only about ten percent of the island at first, claiming that such a pattern of acquisition would interrupt the operations on the island and that it “flies in the face of the plain language of the statute” granting first purchase rights to Vail & Vickers. Kelly noted that Vail & Vickers, during legislative debate, had first asked for exclusion from the park bill, then failing that, that the island be acquired “as expeditiously as possible.” No matter the outcome of the appropriation and planning work, acquisitions of any kind would have to wait.²⁷⁵

A title dispute, in which representatives of the Chumash Indians claimed ownership of Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands, interrupted the acquisition process. On June 7, 1984 Frances S. Herrera, a Santa Barbara Chumash referred to in the court action as Chunie, filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of the Chumash people and their living descendants, claiming that the Mexican land grants “did not divest the Chumash of their aboriginal Indian title.” The Chumash had never signed a treaty or agreement that ceded their title to the Spanish Crown, church or the Republic of Mexico. The suit also claimed that the islands had not been legally transferred to the United States under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Attorneys for the plaintiffs asked for damages totaling \$600,000,000 as well as penalties and numerous declaratory judgments. The defendants, consisting of the Vail Family, Vickers Company and the six owners of Santa Cruz Island, filed a Motion to Dismiss that was granted in November. Senior U. S. District Judge David W. Williams found that “Spain’s discovery of California and its conquest of the Indians conferred upon it the exclusive right to extinguish the Indians’ aboriginal occupancy rights.” The United States Supreme Court had described aboriginal Indian title as the “mere right to occupancy which exists at the will of the discovering sovereignty.” Williams noted that the Chumash had not filed a claim for the islands at the time the U. S. government was confirming grant titles in the early 1850s. The case then went to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in December 1985; a final Supreme Court decision in December 1986 upheld Judge Williams’ findings.²⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the National Park Service and Vail & Vickers debated plans for acquisition and continued use of the island. Vail & Vickers wanted at least 25 years of continued use of the island for their cattle and hunting operations, as the legislation creating the park had provided the option for such an agreement:

(d)(1) The owner of any private property may, on the date of its acquisition and as a condition of such acquisition, retain for himself a right of use and occupancy of all or such portion of such property as the owner may elect for a definite term of not more than

²⁷⁵Memorandum, Associate Director to Regional Director, May 13, 1982; Rep. Robert J. Lagomarsino, Testimony before the Subcommittee on the Interior of the Committee on Appropriations, U. S. House of Representatives, May 5, 1985; William C. Kelly, Jr., Latham, Watkins & Hills, to Mr. William H. Ehorn, June 21, 1983, file L14, Santa Rosa Island Land Acquisition, CHIS; oral history with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston.

²⁷⁶United States of America ex. rel. Chunie (Frances S. Herrera), and all Chumash descendants similarly situated, vs. Marie Ringrose [et al.], Civil No. 84-4144-DWW, and other documents in file L14, Santa Rosa Island Land Acquisition, CHIS.

twenty-five years, or ending at the death of the owner, or his spouse, whichever is later. The owner shall elect the term to be reserved. Any such right retained pursuant to this subsection with respect to any property shall be subject to termination by the Secretary upon his determination that such property is being used for any purpose which is incompatible with the administration of the park or with the preservation of the resources therein . . .²⁷⁷

In December 1985 a draft reservation of use and occupancy was prepared that stipulated that Vail & Vickers could reserve the entire island, except for eight parcels for park service use, for a period of 25 years. However, because this would have substantially reduced the government's purchase price for the island, Vail & Vickers decided not to exercise this option. Instead, the Vail family (Al Vail, Russ Vail and Margaret Woolley and their families), the Vickers Company, Ltd. and Superintendent Ehorn negotiated a reservation of use and occupancy for a small parcel of land.

After the Chumash title dispute had been settled, Congress authorized full funding for purchase of Santa Rosa Island. After a period of appraisals and negotiations with Vail & Vickers, the federal government made an offer and then purchased Santa Rosa Island for \$29,580,259.00.²⁷⁸

The deed, dated December 29, 1986, granted to the United States of America "All of Santa Rosa Island as per U. S. Government Survey of 1862, being the same land and premises patented by the United States of America, October 3, 1871, to M. C. De Jones, et al. . . ." The boundaries and general uses of the property had not changed since well before the legal patent of 1871. The grantors were:

The Vickers Company Ltd., a California corporation, as to an undivided fifty percent (50%) interest;

James Vail Wilkinson, a married man, as his separate property, as to an undivided fifteen percent (15%) interest;

Nathan Russell Vail, a married man, as his separate property, as to an undivided seven and one-half percent (7 1/2%) interest;

Margaret Vail Woolley, a married woman, as her separate property, as to an undivided seven and one-half percent (7 1/2%) interest;

Alexander Lennox Vail, a married man, as his separate property, as to an undivided twenty percent (20%) interest.

The deed described the size of the property as 53,364 acres, more or less. As per the purchase offer, Vail & Vickers was allowed a period of three months to continue their livestock operation while a longer-term agreement was negotiated.²⁷⁹ The 25-year use and occupancy reservation, dated December 29, 1986, enabled the Vails to retain personal use of 7.6 acres in the ranch complex, including the upper house and a parcel east of the eucalyptus windbreak. With permission in 1988, Russ Vail constructed a small temporary house on the reserved area east of the windbreak. The 1,200 square foot prefabricated Lindal Cedar Home was placed on treated timbers as a foundation. Vail built a septic system to serve the residence.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷Public Law 96-199, 94 Stat. 67, Title II, Sec. 202 (d)(1)(2).

²⁷⁸Edward R. Haberlin to Jill Slater, December 18, 1986, on file at Channel Islands National Park.

²⁷⁹Copy of Warranty Deed on file at Channel Islands National Park; Haberlin to Slater.

²⁸⁰Memorandum, Bill Ehorn to Regional Director, August 16, 1988; Environmental Impact Statement dated September 1988; Ehorn to Russ Vail, October 12, 1988, in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS.

Continued Use by Vail & Vickers

So began a historical and controversial transition in uses of Santa Rosa Island, from 150 years as a productive livestock ranch to a unit in the National Park system destined for environmental protection and restoration. It took exactly a year to develop and finalize a special use permit for continued ranching and hunting use of the island by Vail & Vickers. In 1987 the park drafted a permit and solicited a report from the Soil Conservation Service to help develop a reasonable grazing regimen for the island. After visiting the island in the spring, Petaluma [California] District Conservationist Lynn Brittan wrote that the island “appears to be grazed carefully, even in this year of below normal rainfall.” Brittan noted that to gain optimum grazing use the island would require additional fencing, water development and cattle movements, actions that would not be cost effective. “The forage on Santa Rosa Island is a valuable resource and has been carefully managed over the years,” Brittan wrote, recommending that a Resource Management Plan be drafted with major emphasis on grazing management. Brittan reported an average of 4,204 head of cattle on the island over the last six-year period.²⁸¹

By the end of 1987 a five-year special use permit had been drafted. The park worked out a fee schedule wherein Vail & Vickers would be reimbursed for any services they provided park staff such as boat travel, use of equipment, housing, maintenance, even use of ranch horses. The Vails were reluctant to enter this part of the agreement, telling the superintendent that they “would rather help out whenever needed and work together;” the paragraph was subsequently dropped. The National Park Service calculated a figure of \$80,000 annual rent based on fair market value, taking into account animal unit counts, isolation and transportation costs, and potential interference by park activities. Ehorn noted that the legislation “recognized the historical and cultural significance of this early California island ranch” and worked diligently with the Vails and representatives of the Vickers Company to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement.²⁸²

Al Vail signed the five-year special use permit on December 29, 1987. The permit covered the entire island except for the 7.6 acres reserved and 935 acres in eleven parcels for NPS use, for a total of about 52,421.4 acres. It allowed Vail & Vickers to operate a “beef cattle ranch and a commercial hunting operation for feral elk, deer and domestic swine compatible with the administration of the park and with the preservation of its resources.” The permit stipulated that Vail & Vickers maintain and protect the buildings and fences, discontinue use of trash dumps, and “operate the ranching operation in a manner consistent with traditional good livestock ranching and range management practices as has been done in the past.” Growing of crops in traditional areas could continue. The commercial hunting rights “may manage the population of deer, elk, and feral domestic swine,” and provided the right to construct temporary quarters for up to 12 hunters. The park service would not interfere with the ranching or hunting operations by allowing excessive public access, recreation and research, and would give Vail & Vickers

²⁸¹Lynn Brittan, District Conservationist, Soil Conservation Service to Ed Haberlin, NPS, April 15, 1987, in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS.

²⁸²Memoranda, William H. Ehorn to Regional Director, December 4 and 22, 1987, file L30.

priority in use of the pier. The two entities would share use of the line camps at China Camp, Ford Point (the Wreck) and Arlington.²⁸³

The NPS identified eleven parcels for their use and protection: 45 acres at Johnsons Lee, consisting of the ruined former Air Force base, for administrative headquarters; 18 discontinuous acres on the highest points of the island, called “Soledad oaks”; one acre of the former Navy facility on Navy Hill; two areas supporting Torrey pine forests totaling 142 acres; 220 acres of scenic Lobo Canyon; 14 acres at the old ranch lagoon; 289 acres of the caliche area at Sandy Point; and three parcels of beach dunes on the northwest side totaling 206 acres. The park service also identified a number of areas to be ranched but open to public use: 1,535 acres at Johnsons Lee including all of South Point and Officers Beach; 1,136 acres of Carrington Point; and road access easements to the Torrey pines and East Point.

Family members regularly used the ranch house, bunkhouse, foreman’s house and Russ Vail’s house for pleasure and business. After Bill and Meredith Wallace moved from the island, the Vails employed caretakers. Regular visitors with long-time ranch ties included the families of E. K. Smith and Diego Cuevas among others. The facilities were also used seasonally by hunters who paid a fee to spend a week with guides stalking elk and deer.

As the five-year term approached its end, new superintendent C. Mack Shaver and Al Vail began negotiating another five-year permit. Discussion arose among park staff to separate the cattle and hunting permits, but a new permit, almost identical to the first, was issued January 1, 1993 for another five-year term. In February 1993 the NPS approved a Range Management Plan, written by University of California range management specialists, which dealt with both cattle and feral animals. As of 1994 the island’s rangelands supported the Vail’s cattle, approximately 120 horses, 900 elk and 1,000 deer, the latter two having been imported to the island early in the century. The park service had eradicated hundreds of feral pigs in the early 1990s. Following acquisition of the island by the park, increased scientific study and monitoring of the island and its traditional grazing regimen led to a dramatic turnaround in island management.²⁸⁴

An increased park natural resources staff commenced the first organized monitoring and inventory of ecosystems on Santa Rosa Island shortly after its purchase, compiling lists of rare plants and documenting water quality issues in riparian areas based on water quality standards set by the state government. As federal property, activities on the island were now regulated by additional conservation laws. As an integral part of the transition from ranching to conservation and public access, park scientists were assigned to insure that land use practices fell within the law, specifically conservation and recovery of native flora and fauna. Although Vail & Vickers were highly regarded ranchers within the regional ranching industry, island managers worked under a mandate for conservation and protection of native natural resources; livestock production was not considered compatible with such protections.²⁸⁵

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) evaluated problems on the island. The FWS in 1995 proposed that ten plant taxa on

²⁸³Special Use Permit (SUP) WRO-8120-2600-001 dated December 29, 1987, in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS.

²⁸⁴Special Use Permit (SUP) WRO-8120-2600-001 dated January 1, 1993, and correspondence in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS.

²⁸⁵Memorandum and attachments, Kathryn McEachern to Ann Huston, June 8, 2004.

Santa Rosa Island be listed as Endangered under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act, and with the park established an interagency conservation team to look more closely at species that were candidates for the Federal list of threatened and endangered species. The RWQCB inspected parts of the island in 1995 and responded with a Cleanup or Abatement Order, threatening a fine of \$10,000 per day. The RWQCB was critical of the NPS-approved practices of Vail & Vickers and ordered NPS to develop solutions “to abate rangeland and road management practices which degrade riparian habitat, degrade water quality and induce sediment transport into surface waters of Santa Rosa Island.” The Board requested installation of riparian exclosures in lower Water Canyon and lower Arlington Canyon and reduction to seasonal grazing at Old Ranch pasture. While the park superintendent and the Vails pressured the RWQCB to back down on some of the issues, disputes arose between ranch managers and the NPS on responsibility of the costly livestock exclosures.²⁸⁶

In response to these events, park staff developed a Resources Management Plan (RMP) specifically addressing water quality and rare plants, which investigated the problems, devised alternative management actions and provided for public input as required by the National Environmental Protection Act. The adopted plan listed five management alternatives ranging from no action to immediate removal of grazing animals. The plan proposed adoption of Alternative D, Revised Conservation Strategy, which would phase out cattle grazing and commercial hunting over 14 years. This alternative proposed immediate closure of Old Ranch and Carrington pastures and “rapid phased reduction” of grazing in Pocket Field and the large North Pasture. Elk numbers would be reduced and deer removed entirely. The plan addressed road and weed management and proposed monitoring programs for rare species, water quality and riparian recovery. Vail & Vickers felt that the preferred alternative would put them out of business unless they subsidized the operation, an untenable proposition. However, in response to the findings of the RMP, in May of 1997 the park drew up revised special use permits, divided between the cattle operation and the hunting operation. The cattle permit followed the recommendations of Alternative D; Vail & Vickers did not agree with the proposed restrictions, and the park and the cattle company argued over who would be responsible for erecting costly exclosure fencing. Vail & Vickers did not sign the cattle permit, but did sign the hunting permit, which allowed seasonal commercial deer and elk hunting and determined limits of deer and elk populations on the island.²⁸⁷

Meanwhile, a non-profit environmental group, the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA), entered the dispute. As NPCA’s regional director, Brian Huse claimed that cattle ranching was an activity incompatible with resource protection in a national park. On behalf of NPCA, Huse filed *NPCA v. [National Park Service director] Roger Kennedy et al* on October 22, 1996. At the end of the year Superintendent Tim Setnicka wrote to Al and Russ Vail telling them that, in light of the activities

²⁸⁶Interview with Tim Setnicka, January 27, 2000 by the author; *RMP*, 1997, pp. iv, 1-2; correspondence in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS. Threats to nesting snowy plovers also became an issue on the east side of the island, eventually resulting in seasonal closures of certain areas. Please refer to the RMP for more information on natural resources management on Santa Rosa Island.

²⁸⁷*RMP*, pp. 24-27, 198; interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999; correspondence in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS.

surrounding the operation of the ranch, NPS was forced to “reevaluate the responsibilities between it and Vail & Vickers.”²⁸⁸

Vail & Vickers responded by filing for and being granted a Right to Intervene, disputing the contentions of NPCA, and then filed a suit of their own on June 3, 1997, *Alexander L. Vail et al. v. Deny Galvin [NPS] et al.* NPCA also filed for and was granted a Right to Intervene. Following the judge’s ruling²⁸⁹, Vail & Vickers abandoned their objections and entered into a Settlement Agreement dated October 28, 1997 that phased out the hunting activities and ended the historic ranching operation.

The Settlement Agreement, noted in the Final Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement of the RMP as Alternative F, Negotiated Settlement, required that Vail & Vickers reduce the number of cattle on the island to 50 by November 30, 1998, and that none (except for a maximum of twelve in Lobo pasture) remain a month later. A maximum of 150 horses would be reduced to no more than 50 by the end of 1999. A panel of scientists would be convened by the National Park Service and Vail & Vickers to monitor conditions on the island and set standards for current and future uses by Vail & Vickers. Park management modified the 1997 special use permit to reflect the changes in management, and Vail & Vickers retained their use of buildings and the right to operate their commercial hunting operations, with certain restrictions, until 2011.²⁹⁰ By November of 1998 only one steer remained on the island, in a pen at the ranch. Ninety-seven years of cattle ranching by Vail & Vickers on Santa Rosa Island, under the management of three generations of the Vail family, had ended.

Al Vail, the patriarch of the family, died on January 4, 2000 at the age of 78. His life had revolved around the Santa Rosa Island ranch—his childhood there, cowboy life as a young man, and his leadership of island operations for almost 40 years—and he took pride in his family’s century of island management. Vail felt stung by the criticism from the environmental community and resisted changes in his tradition-based management of the island, but had to acquiesce to the inevitable science-based management and restoration of the island as a public natural area. Al Vail’s twin brother Russ died in 2005, and their sister Margaret Woolley died in 2009, leaving the fourth generation of Vails and the Vickers descendants to close out their remaining island interests by the end of 2011.²⁹¹

The ranching tradition on Santa Rosa Island is kept alive through the historic buildings, structures and features remaining on the island. Beginning with Alpheus Thompson’s stocking of the island during the Mexican Period and continuing with the More family’s ambitious development of a huge sheep ranch, the island was established as a grazing range that brought attention from all over the country. Vail & Vickers spent almost a century operating a well-respected beef cattle ranch with one of the largest single herds in the region, changing only a few of their practices as time went by. Their commitment to ranching traditions essentially preserved a historic island landscape that is now under the protection of the National Park Service.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Tim Setnicka, January 27, 2000 by the author; Tim Setnicka to Al and Russ Vail, December 30, 1996; and various correspondences in file L30, Vail & Vickers Special Use Permit, CHIS.

²⁸⁹ Tentative Ruling, Case Number CV 97-4098 WJR, United States District Court, Central District of California, August 11, 1997.

²⁹⁰ File W32, Settlement Agreement NPCA v. NPS, CHIS; *Final Supplement to the Final Environmental Impact Statement, RMP*, 1998, p. i; Special Use Permit dated October 1, 1998.

²⁹¹ Interview with Al Vail by the author, October 4, 1999; *Santa Barbara New-Press*, January 5, 2000.



The Vail & Vickers ranch at Bechers Bay in 1947. *U.S. Army*

Military Uses of Santa Rosa Island

Following the Spanish-American War and the First World War, the leaders of America's armed forces saw reason to fortify and protect the country's coastal areas from aggression by air and sea. The west coast's major ports were fortified as early as the Civil War, but most development occurred after 1900. On Santa Rosa Island, no military activity was seen until World War II, when the threat of Japanese invasion seemed imminent. Although the activities of the 1940s on the island were relatively insignificant, the U. S. Air Force in 1950 developed an important early warning radar base on the island that operated for 13 years. The Navy also had a presence on the island, mainly radio facilities in support of the U. S. Naval Air Missile Test Center.

U. S. Army During World War II

Prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States activated a number of defense mechanisms on the Pacific Coast, but the events of December 7, 1941 put coastal defenses at the forefront of military activity in California. Following the attack, at least three incidents occurred involving Japanese attacks on the California coast, including the torpedoing of a freighter off Los Angeles and a submarine firing on the Ellwood Oil Field near Santa Barbara. The evolving war in the Pacific spawned a network of Coastal Lookout Stations and aircraft warning installations from San Diego to the Canadian border. The Navy established coastal lookouts on all of the Channel Islands, and radar posts on two of the northern islands, Santa Barbara Island and Santa Rosa Island.

Radar, largely credited as a British invention, was patented in the United States in May of 1937. Radar pioneer Col. William Blair, director of the Signal Corps laboratories at Fort Monmouth, worked diligently at perfecting a system based on emerging radio technology that could detect approaching objects such as planes and ships and accurately pinpoint their location. Before the U. S. entry into the war, the government began mass production of radar units designated SCR-268 and SCR-270 (SCR is the acronym for Signal Corps Radar). An SCR-270 reportedly detected the attack on Pearl Harbor, albeit too late to take defensive action. Radar technology is considered to be, along with tactical FM radio, the most important commercial development of World War II. SCR installations, which can be fixed or mobile, played vital roles in major events such as the invasion of Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge.²⁹²

In early 1941, before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the U. S. District Engineers had contacted N. R. Vail regarding installation of a "listening post" on Santa Rosa Island. Initial plans called for a six-acre tract located at the top of Soledad Mountain and a road right-of-way to the site from the pier at Bechers Bay for cash rental of \$100 per year for five years or more. Vail wrote a detailed list of work requiring the government to build a road with cattle guards and gates as necessary, fencing, alter and maintain the wharf and give preference to cattle loading, refrain from shooting, limit personnel, etc.

²⁹²A *Concise History of the U. S. Army Signal Corps* (Office of Command History, U. S. Army Signal Center, Fort Gordon, n.d.); information provided by the Historic Electronics Museum, Linthicum, MD.

When the U. S. became involved in the war, plans expanded to provide for joint uses: a manned Army Signal Corps radar base, a Coastal Lookout Station, Coast Guard communications and extensive Military Police operations.²⁹³

The first known plans for the facility, produced by the U. S. Engineers Office in Los Angeles and dated October 1942, called for use of approximately fifteen acres at Soledad Peak for a joint Army Air Forces and Navy receiver building, approximately 70 acres at the higher peak southwest of Soledad Peak for housing and operational buildings and approximately fifteen acres at Bechers Bay for fuel storage and a sea water distillation unit, as well as a pontoon boat landing ramp and road access between the bay and beyond the housing facilities. By January of 1943 the plans had changed. Site J-38, as it was known, would now locate its housing and operations on a small dry pond a short distance south of the Soledad Road near Pecho Peak. The antenna site would be located near a knoll about two miles above South Point and east of the Piedragosa roundup, and would be reached by a camouflaged ranch road.²⁹⁴

The government signed a lease with Vail & Vickers, apparently back-dated to September 24, 1942, providing 45.776 acres of unimproved land in five parcels, including road right-of-way, water rights for springs in Water Canyon, permission to construct buildings and utilities, to use the pier, and to improve roads, bridges and docks on the island with the agreement of the ranch owners. Military personnel and equipment would be restricted to within the boundaries of the leasehold, and not be allowed to hunt or trespass, disturb cattle or fire “artillery and other explosives” unless needed for strategic purposes. The government would “use all reasonable effort” to prevent importation of weeds, seed, diseases, insects and animals other than pigeons and horses. The government agreed to restore the premises to its previous condition before the lease was terminated; the lease would end six months after the termination of the unlimited National Emergency declared by President Roosevelt on May 27, 1941.²⁹⁵

Construction commenced some time after January 1943 and was apparently completed by the end of August. The Army constructed a small group of wood frame buildings at Bechers Bay south of the ranch house, consisting of a barracks measuring 20 feet by 40 feet, two storage buildings measuring 14 feet by 20 feet and ten feet by 13 feet, respectively, and a pit latrine. Engineers then built an SCR-type radar beacon facility on the hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean at an elevation of about 1400 feet, consisting of a radar unit mounted on a sturdy concrete base, a buried concrete operations building or bunker measuring 21 feet by 80 feet and consisting of four rooms, a prefabricated generator house measuring 16 feet by 20 feet with a concrete floor, a prefabricated hutment measuring 20 feet by 24 feet, two pit latrines, and a buried concrete radio building measuring ten feet by ten feet with a 15 foot wall on the hillside above. Utilities included a water tank, telephones and electricity from generators. A dirt road connected the site with the camp area, which according to plans was constructed on the small dry lakebed near the center of the island, adjacent to the headwaters of Water Canyon and one mile south of Black Mountain at an elevation of 950 feet. Engineers constructed a short road from the Soledad road to the Dry Lake Camp Site, graded the area and installed drainage structures, and installed a water system using one or two dams in Water Canyon that

²⁹³N. R. Vail to Col. Kelton, United States District Engineers, April 1, 1941, SBMNH #0887.

²⁹⁴Original plans dated October and November 1942 and January 1943 located in RG 77, 31-1-1, NA(LN); copies at SBMNH #1923, 1926, 1927, 1980-1983.

²⁹⁵Lease Between The Vickers Company, Ltd., and N. R. Vail [et al], Trustees and the United States of America, dated September 24, 1942, SBMNH #0882.



Santa Rosa Island's Army camp in 1944. *Channel Islands National Park*



Flag staff and barracks at the Army camp, 1944. *Channel Islands National Park*

fed a 5,000 gallon steel water storage tank below. This water was then pumped up a steep hill to a 10,000 gallon steel storage tank on the road above the camp, and then fed by gravity to the facilities.²⁹⁶

The camp consisted of sixteen wood frame buildings: five barracks buildings measuring 20 by 40 feet; a five-room barracks building measuring 20 feet by 44 feet; a large barracks building measuring 20 feet by 60 feet; a mess hall with concrete floor measuring 20 feet by 44 feet and 20 feet by 32 feet, its kitchen equipped with an oil-fired range and oven with griddle, a double sink, a walk-in refrigerator and a phone system; a bath house measuring 20 feet by 20 feet with seven lavatories and seven showers equipped with hot water; a pit latrine measuring 8 feet by 12 feet with half concrete floor; a motor repair building measuring 16 feet by 32 feet, with a concrete floor and equipped with tools and equipment; a generator building measuring 16 feet by 20 feet with concrete floor and two generators; and four sheds, one of which apparently acted as a pharmacy. A flagstaff stood near the center of the camp, inscribed by the companies that would occupy the base:

26 Aug 1943
770
MP BATTALION
CO C
THIRD PLATOON

LAFW
658 SIGNAL
AW CO
DET SIX

These inscriptions have provided the only clue as to who occupied the base: the 770th Military Police Battalion, Company C, Third Platoon; and the Los Angeles Air Defense Wing, 658th Signal Corps Aircraft Warning Company, Detachment Six. Their activities, other than manning the radar site as a forward observation and warning system or watching post, which requires a relatively small crew, remains somewhat of a mystery. It is likely that the MP battalion used the island for training and provided general protection. Diego Cuevas remembers seeing sandbagged foxholes in the hills above the camp. Al Vail, who worked the ranch during the war but didn't spend time at the facilities, described the place as housing about 75 men; "As far as I could tell I think duty over there was mostly for the real foulups . . . it wasn't much of an operation . . . it wasn't that sophisticated a deal." Some people have speculated that the camp housed a secret intelligence unit or acted as a site for punishment duty, being isolated and windy as it was. It is known that the U. S. Coast Guard installed radio equipment for blackout control of the South Point Light, to be operated by personnel from the Air Defense Wing, and that typically sites like this were joint

²⁹⁶A site survey revealed numerous foundations, pipelines, a trash dump and roadways at the cantonment, and the intact underground building and radar foundation, as well as an apparent anti-aircraft gun site at a higher elevation on "Navy Hill." Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.



AACS crew, 1944. *Channel Islands National Park*



Radar building on Soledad Peak, 1944. *Channel Islands National Park*

enterprises between the Army, Navy and Coast Guard. After the Battle of Midway in June of 1942 the Japanese threat diminished, thus lessening the importance of outposts like this.²⁹⁷

At the end of 1942 Vail & Vickers gave permission for the Navy “to erect a Coast Lookout Station, on the ridge between Hills No. 1350 and 1220 as shown on U. S. C. G. S. Chart No. 5115 and 5116.” The U. S. Coast Guard, operating under control of the 11th Naval District, established these lookout stations on all of the Channel Islands and the entire Pacific Coast during the war. Typically a wooden lookout tower with radio and/or telephone communication to superiors, and a temporary barracks and mess, a station required only a small crew to operate. Unfortunately, little is known about the Santa Rosa Island station, but it likely followed the pattern of its neighboring island stations.²⁹⁸

Damage to the pier at Bechers Bay became an issue in 1944, as Ed Vail wrote to the division engineer claiming that the upcoming April shipment of cattle was at risk if repairs were not made. Available correspondence did not indicate a response at that time, but in March 1945 two engineers accompanied Vail to assess the condition of the pier. The engineers found a number of problems and estimated repair costs at just under \$20,000, recommending the work be performed the following month. Ed Vail wrote to them of the importance of the repairs being made speedily, noting that a 30 day delay would result in “a loss of 124,200 lbs of beef to the war effort and \$95,427.72 to my firm.” While documentation has not been found, it is assumed that the government made the repairs as promised.²⁹⁹

Ed Vail asked for use of the government boat *Schofield* in the summer of 1945, noting lack of transportation at the time to supply the island ranch. He listed the travails the island operators had gone through with transportation since *Vaquero* had been requisitioned early in the war, and wrote that

This has been a proposition of give and take between Vail & Vickers and the Government. We have tried to accommodate the troops at all times. We have given them free target ranges, refrigeration for months at a time when theirs was inadequate to handle their supplies; and have given many privileges that are definitely not in our contract.³⁰⁰

At war’s end the Coast Guard considered renewing the lease with Vail & Vickers to continue operating what they called the Racon station after the Army left. Officials considered the site as “the most ideal location from the viewpoint of surface and air coverage” but noted the logistical difficulties on the distant island that would involve “considerable time and expense.” The investigating officer noted that a staff of eleven would be required and recommended that the beacon be moved to Point Conception Light

²⁹⁷Oral history interviews with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, transcript p. 16, and March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 13, and with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF; personal communication with David “Gus” Gustafson of Morro Bay, California, April 28, 1999; Joseph Greenspun, Assistant District Coast Guard Officer to The Commandant, Eleventh Naval District, 20 August 1943, in RG 77, Classified Correspondence Files 1921-1947, Box 24, NA(LN).

²⁹⁸N. R. Vail, Vail & Vickers to Ensign John H. Shurette, December 20, 1942, SBMNH #0887.

²⁹⁹Ed N. Vail to Division Engineer, March 3, 1944; Post Engineer, March Field to Major Sexsmith, March 13 and 15, 1945; Ed N. Vail to Post Engineer, March Field, March 15, 1945, SBMNH #0887.

³⁰⁰Ed N. Vail to Lt. Col. R. A. Merchant, August 20, 1945, SBMNH #0887.



The Army camp in 1944, viewed to north. Note the water pipeline in the foreground, fed from a large tank at a higher elevation. *Channel Islands National Park*



The Army building at Bechers Bay (upper ranch house in background) prior to remodeling, circa 1982. *Channel Islands National Park*

Station; this course was apparently taken, as the Army moved out and the Coast Guard did not stay on the island.³⁰¹

The Army abandoned the camp and radar site pending a decision about its disposal. In the spring or summer of 1946 government estimator L. R. Chandler inspected the premises at the three sites, making detailed lists of 26 buildings and numerous structures, vehicles, equipment and supplies. Isolation and transportation played a big role in the decision to value the improvements at zero dollars; the government negotiator wrote:

the improvements . . . are on an island, approximately 30 miles west of the mainland, and 11 1/2 miles inland on the island. They are inaccessible to prospective bidders and can only be removed at a cost far in excess of their market value on the mainland.³⁰²

The appraiser figured that it would cost about \$2.00 per square foot to move the buildings to the mainland, where they would be worth 80 cents per square foot. Vail & Vickers managers (probably Ed Vail) informed the government that their company would accept the improvements in lieu of restoration if the sites would be turned over as is, i.e. with all equipment and supplies intact including a tractor, grader, motors and other usable items. The government agreed to these terms on September 27, 1947, transferring all improvements and paying Vail & Vickers \$3,000 (the difference between the value of the improvements and the estimated cost of restoration), thereby terminating the lease.³⁰³

After the war, the Vails slowly tore down the buildings for lumber, which they used all over the island. Diego Cuevas and the other cowboys took the “good lumber” down to the ranch and put it to use; he remembered that “a few houses” remained there in 1948 when he arrived on the island. The Army also left a radio truck and electronics equipment on the sites.³⁰⁴

Wildcat oil prospector Louis Scott took up residence at the abandoned army camp during the late 1940s. He fixed up a small number of buildings and at times had a crew living there. Scott renewed one of the reservoirs and pumped water again to the site. He was a good mechanic and also flew small planes. From this base Scott performed contract jobs, including drilling piling holes at Johnson’s Lee, installing a deadman for barges at Officers Beach, drilling for water for the Air Force, and drilling oil wells for the Vails at Carrington Point and other locations. The Vails have called the location Scott’s Camp since that time.³⁰⁵

³⁰¹Assistant DCGO J. Trebes to The Commandant, 5 November 1945, in RG 181, files of District Planning Officer, San Diego, General Correspondence Files 1925-52, Box 28, EG 1940-50, NA(LN).

³⁰²Document by Negotiator William L. Byrne, 17 July 1946, with Summary of Estimated Market Value, SBMNH #1778.

³⁰³Ibid.; William H. Cupples to The Vickers Company, Ltd. [et al], 20 October 1947, and Supplemental Agreement Transferring Improvements to Lessor and its Schedule “A”, dated September 27, 1946, SBMNH #1778.

³⁰⁴Oral history interviews with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, transcript p. 16, and March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 7; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, May 24, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

³⁰⁵Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, May 24, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

Post-War Military Facilities on Santa Rosa Island

In moves to upgrade post-war readiness, and accelerated by Cold War tensions with the U. S. S. R. and China after World War II, the branches of the military used the momentum gained in wartime research and development of detection and weapons systems to establish new defense and communication systems throughout the world. The west coast saw much of this development, especially in missile technology and radar communications, and these relatively new disciplines would be represented on the Channel Islands from the 1940s through the 1990s. On Santa Rosa Island, the Air Force and Navy established complex communications systems that followed in the footsteps of the relatively primitive World War II era facilities there.

Of great interest to military leaders was readiness: the ability to detect enemy attack through precise identification of incoming aircraft and vessels and to subsequently respond instantaneously with destructive results. Radar technology blossomed during and after the war, and so the United States commenced a program to rim the country, its possessions and allies with protective systems such as Early Warning Radar operated by the Air Force and the Navy's deadly missile defenses, called Airborne Weapons Systems or Pilotless Aircraft in the early days.

U. S. Navy Operations on Santa Rosa Island

The U. S. Navy established the Special Weapons Tactical Test and Evaluation Unit in 1943 at Point Mugu, a former swamp located south of Ventura and Port Hueneme; the location provided "an overwater space through which missiles can be launched while data on their performance are being obtained in such a manner that correct evaluations of their performance can be made." The Navy created its Pilotless Aircraft Unit Detachment at Point Mugu in 1945 where engineers tested guided missiles using the expanse of ocean, which it called the Instrumented Sea Range, as a proving ground. The offshore islands provided locations for monitoring missile paths and, in some cases, acting as targets, dummy ships at sea as it were.³⁰⁶

In early 1946 the Navy contacted the Vail Company requesting a meeting in which Navy representatives could brief the island's owners on a proposed Pilotless Aircraft observation station on the island. That September, Vail & Vickers granted permission for Navy personnel to enter the island to make electronic tests. Two or three men would make use of "several hundred pounds of equipment, performing four tests requiring one or two days each. The Navy wrote, "It is to be understood that the granting of the requested permission will have no significance with respect to the government's ultimate leasing of land on your island." Two months proved to be inadequate time to complete the tests, and the Navy asked for an extension, which presumably was granted.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶*Design Criteria and Schematics for U. S. Naval Air Missile Center at Point Mugu, California and San Nicolas Island and Santa Barbara Channel Islands*, October 1948, p. 7.

³⁰⁷Capt. R. Fowler to Vail Company, 19 February 1946; A. B. Scoles to Vail-Vickers Company, 24 September 1946; Robert S. Hatcher to Ed N. Vail, September 18, 1947; Entry Permit, no date [marked as "mailed 10/22/47"]; SBMNH #0887.

The U. S. Naval Air Missile Test Center, as the Pilotless Aircraft Unit had been renamed, made plans in 1948 for facilities at Point Mugu and the Northern Channel Islands. With major installations at Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island, plans included a radio communication center on Santa Rosa Island, involving data transmission, voice and teletype communications. The facility would consist of a 1,500 square foot telemetering and radio receiving building, a radio and radar transmitting building of the same size, officers' quarters, barracks for 30 men with mess hall and recreation building, and utility systems; cost was estimated at \$469,000.³⁰⁸

In 1952 the Navy installed a communications station that used telemetry to gather data and track missiles fired from its installations at Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island. The Naval Air Missile Test Center planned a relay station for the island similar in scope to the one recently constructed on Santa Cruz Island; according to a Navy document, the Edward R. Siple Company constructed instrumentation buildings on Santa Rosa in 1952 at a cost of \$338,000, resulting in a significantly smaller installation than that on Santa Cruz. The Navy leased 4.52 acres from Vail & Vickers on what would become known as Navy Hill beginning September 4, 1952 and, as of 1965, maintained a receiver building of 3,000 square feet and nearby a transmitting building of 3,128 square feet, and an enlisted men barracks of 5,626 square feet located at the Air Force base at Johnsons Lee. A drawing dated 30 June 1955 depicted a proposed receiver site on a peak near Soledad Mountain as "P-15 Sage Additions" and also depicted two apparently extant buildings at Navy Hill identified as high power and low power transmitter sites, but at a different location than those noted above. The Navy prepared a mineral appraisal, which found no mineral value for the site. A secret memo dated 6 January 1959 spoke of a possible joint agreement with the Air Force for a facility and referred to ten-year-old correspondence concerning the Naval Air Missile Test Center. In 1985 the Navy continued to use a communications building at the site on Navy Hill but soon after abandoned the site. Al Vail spoke of a military microwave station for communication with "town" on Soledad Peak, former site of a weather station and "shack"; this may be the telephone company's microwave station used until 1965. The Navy facility was one of the many communications links of what would eventually be called the Pacific Missile Test Center, based at Pt. Mugu; other facilities existed on Santa Cruz, Anacapa and San Nicolas Islands. As late as 1993 an unmanned EATS (Extended Area Test System) Ground Reference Station sat on Black Mountain, under the operation of the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, successor to the Pacific Missile Test Center.³⁰⁹

The communications buildings associated with the Navy have been removed and the sites cleared, presumably by the Navy.

³⁰⁸*Design Criteria*, pp. 22-23, 203-211, 289.

³⁰⁹Pacific Missile Test Center, *Days of Challenge, Years of Change, A Technical History of the Pacific Missile Test Center* (1989), p. 73; Stephen R. Wee and David S. Byrd, *The Navy's Pacific Guided Missile Sea Range, 1946-1991: Historic Context for Cold War-era Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California* (Draft, February 1997), pp. 116-117; Pacific Missile Test Range, Facility Maps [1965], in RG 181, Pacific Naval Test Center, Pt. Mugu 1944-, Public Affairs Office, Special Studies and Reports, Maps, Box 43, NA(LN); Chief of Naval Operations to Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, 6 January 1959, in RG 181, Commandant's Office, General Correspondence 1924-55, Box 431, NA(LN); Drawing 1156-R-QC-23 in RG 77, Records of Projects Affecting Mineral Resources 1944-1957, and Memorandum Mineral Appraisal, 6 September 1955, and Wm. S. Eddelman, Jr. Val. Engr (Mining) to Chief, Mining Branch, 7 September 1955, in Box 7, NA(LN); oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, transcript p. 16, SCIF.

Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station at Johnson's Lee

The U. S. Air Force activated the 669th Aircraft Control and Warning (ACW) Squadron on May 5, 1950 at Fort MacArthur. The squadron's mission would be to detect, identify and track air traffic in Southern California as a defense against enemy invasion; the detection system would be directly linked to armed air defense stations throughout the area which could respond instantly to any attack or threat. After tests, Air Force officials chose Santa Rosa Island for the operations site, making use of the protected area on the central southern shore called Johnson's Lee.

Negotiations with the Vail Company apparently went smoothly, as a lease resulted fairly quickly. The lease, wherein the Air Force paid an annual rent of \$20,000, included 336.5 acres of land in four parcels denoted as A, B, C and D: Parcel A consisted of 155 acres covered in a long northeast-to-southwest rectangle including the peaks of Soledad Mountain and what would later be referred to as Vail Peak; Parcel B of 131.6 acres covering two knolls in the vicinity of the old Army radar station, later called Navy Hill; Parcel C of 30 acres for the housing and dock area at Johnsons Lee; and Parcel D of 60 acres, a joint use area of the coastline stretching for one mile east of the housing area. The lease also called for construction by the government of a new road about three miles in length.³¹⁰

Government lease DA-04-353-ENG-2247, dated December 1, 1950 and to expire on or before November 30, 1965, stressed protection of the ranch operations from "animal diseases of any kind and of poisonous and noxious weeds and plants of every kind" and restricted the government in ways to avoid interference in the day-to-day business of the ranch. The lease granted the government exclusive use of Parcels A, B and C and joint use of Parcel D; also joint use of the pier at Bechers Bay and the road between the pier and the Air Force base, and the roadway from Parcel A to B, allowing ranchers access to the Piedragosa roundup; and right-of-way for water, oil, power and telephone lines on or adjacent to the roads, as well as water rights on its parcels. Vail & Vickers granted permission to use the pier at Bechers Bay for almost two years (the government being held liable for any damage and repairs) and to build a pier if practicable at Johnsons Lee. The Air Force had the right to unload heavy equipment and materials at what would be called Officers Beach, and Air Force personnel gained the privilege to swim there. To prevent hoof and mouth disease, the government agreed to adequately dispose of its garbage, and to prohibit importation of "any non-human form of life" or firearms and ammunition other than that needed for security, and provides for a shooting range on Parcel C. Hunting was strictly forbidden, as was any person of school age, in order to avoid school taxes. The lease states that activities on the island are understood to be "for the purposes of conducting observation sites and not for the purposes of fortification or the launching or landing of weapons of war."³¹¹

³¹⁰Drawing Number 294-M-2, Santa Rosa Island, SBMNH #0882; Real Property Disposal Case Files, RG 291, NA(SB). The map is a valuable source for locations of fences, landing strips, roundups, roads and other ranch features as they appeared in 1950.

³¹¹Lease Number DA-04-353-ENG-2247, December 1, 1950 (signed September 30, 1952), SBMNH #1778.

The government agreed to restore the premises as long as the owners requested such restoration in writing within 30 days of after notification of termination of the lease. Restoration would involve removal of buildings but not restoration of the contours of the land or removal of roadways, concrete construction, fencing or wells and water storage. The government retained the option to make cash settlement with the owners in lieu of restoration. Signatures on the lease included Clara Vickers Naftzger and Anna Vickers Crawford for the Vickers Company, Ltd., and Vail Trustees Mary Vail Wilkinson, Margaret Vail Wise, D. A. Baughman, Mahlon Vail and Edward N. Vail.³¹²

Construction

The Air Force hired civilian contractors Morrison Knudsen to construct the facility, which would consist of the radar, transmitting and receiving facilities located at the top of what is sometimes referred to as Vail Peak (elevation 1,589 feet), and a cantonment area for personnel near the shore at Johnson's Lee. The cantonment included five two-story barracks for the airmen, a dining hall and NCO mess, training and recreation buildings, offices, warehouses and maintenance facilities, and a dispensary. Among the first structures to be completed was the solid concrete pier with heavy loading apparatus, reportedly built with the help of oil wildcatter Louis Scott who had been working on the island. Engineers constructed a modern paved road between the Johnson's Lee facilities and the communications station on top of the island. Squadron personnel performed a great deal of the work including equipment installation and landscaping; the last quarter of 1951 saw 33 officers and airmen working on the site with four civilians. At this time, the entire squadron consisted of approximately 185 airmen and 18 to 20 officers, most stationed at Fort MacArthur awaiting their move to Santa Rosa Island. Late in 1951 the squadron newsletter spoke of how "many rumors are flying as to when the squadron will complete its move to the P-Site, but as of this date no date has been set."³¹³

The Air Force received transportation support from the Navy, which provided boat transportation between Port Hueneme and the construction site, and continued to do so throughout the life of the base.³¹⁴

By the end of 1951 most of the construction work had been completed and members of the squadron worked on the island readying the site for occupation by the full detachment. Men planted grasses in the cantonment area to stem erosion and flying dust. Some delays occurred in obtaining materiel for operations, largely technical equipment supplied under contract with RCA, General Electric and Philco; personnel solved some of these problems by borrowing test equipment from other bases. The Air Force flew in supplies as often as possible to save time; during the first year of construction some 7500 pounds of equipment had been flown to the site. Other problems encountered included November wind damage to the AN/CPS-6 radar tower under construction, which resulted in a one-week delay and redesign of the roof

³¹²Ibid.

³¹³Squadron History, 1st October '51 to 31 December '51; oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 17, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

³¹⁴Major General Junius W. Jones, USAF to Rear Admiral Wilder D. Baker, USN, 5 October 1950; W. D. Baker to Major General Junius W. Jones, 13 October 1950, in RG 181, files of District Planning Officer, San Diego, General Correspondence Files 1925-52, Box 28, EG 1940-50, NA(LN).



The Air Force radar station was located at the highest elevation on Santa Rosa Island. *Channel Islands National Park*



Air Force base at Johnsons Lee seen from the pier, August 1965. *Channel Islands National Park*

structure, an injury to a civilian employee of Hub City Steel Company who in December fell from a scaffold and suffered internal bleeding, and contamination of the drinking water supply from an unknown source (which was subsequently improved). A Navy boat, unloading cargo, rammed the new concrete pier, damaging both the boat and pier. According to Al Vail, a plane carrying the construction engineer crashed while attempting to land in a field east of the cantonment, killing the engineer and injuring two others. In December of 1951 technicians turned on the power for the first time to test equipment, with generally positive results.³¹⁵

At this time, the Air Force referred to the new station as the “P-Site,” and it was officially designated as Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station P-15. The Navy site nearby would now fall under security authority of the larger Air Force organization, as stated in a squadron bulletin: “It is understood by the Navy that the 669th Commanding Officer will be in charge of the P-Site and that all Navy personnel and civilians connected with the Navy, will be subject to the policies and security regulations prescribed by the Squadron Commander. Close liaisons with the Navy at Point Mugu will eliminate any misunderstandings.”³¹⁶

As final details were completed in the first six weeks of 1952, Brigadier General Hutchinson conducted a general inspection of the facilities. A group of engineers made a study of soil erosion and its effect on the roads and grounds, an agronomist made a visit, and numerous other inspections occurred. On February 13, 1952, the 669th Squadron made its official move from the temporary “L” site at Fort MacArthur to its permanent “P” site at Santa Rosa Island. One day previously, Major Charles F. Hobart assumed command of the organization; that day he flew to the site for an inspection and gave the go-ahead for the much-anticipated move.³¹⁷

While squadron personnel reported that they were “in full operation and carrying out our assigned mission,” they encountered many difficulties in fulfilling these duties due to the harsh conditions on the island:

Accomplishment of the squadron’s mission has been most trying at times due to many obstacles affecting the operating efficiency of the squadron. Transportation of personnel to and from places of duty due to poor road conditions and high winds causing damage to power lines and transformers during adverse weather conditions presents the most serious of obstacles.³¹⁸

Complaints arose about the poor construction of the paved road from Johnson’s Lee to the mountain top installations, as erosion and drainage problems caused much damage to the road during its first year in use. During bad weather, the five-mile trip to the transmitters could take up to an hour. On March 18, a landslide on the lower portion of the road blocked passage between the cantonment and the operations area, causing the stationing of trucks on either side of the slide to transport personnel to their destinations. The size of the boulders blocking the roadway required dynamiting for removal.

³¹⁵Ibid.

³¹⁶Ibid.; oral history interview with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

³¹⁷Squadron History, 1st January ‘52 to 31st March ‘52, pp. 1-2.

³¹⁸Ibid., p. 2.

By contrast, transportation by sea went comparatively smoothly during the first period of operations. The Navy provided a fast PT boat that transported personnel, rations, mail and other items on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The 54-mile trip from Port Hueneme usually took one and a half hours in good conditions, two to three hours in poor weather. A newspaper writer described “these men of the skies huddled together secured to their seats with safety belts, bundled in overcoats and wrapped even more snugly in Mae Wests as they cruised to the island base.” A new building was constructed near the pier to house the liaison officer, whose duties included “close surveillance of incoming and outgoing passengers,” coordination with Navy interests, and supervision of cargo transport to and from the island.³¹⁹

It took time to bring technical operations up to a high level at the new facility. After the Air Defense Net acceptance at 1100 hours on February 16, the station officially went “on line” with 60 airmen and ten officers working seven days a week, six hours on and twelve hours off. Personnel took about eight days leave per month on the mainland. Eventually the station would be staffed by up to 300 (average 200) men, including about 30 civilians. During the first month tracking efficiency decreased, a problem attributed to new equipment operated by inexperienced personnel. The shortcoming was quickly overcome. Aircraft identification improved, with 99.5% of incoming aircraft being identified within one minute, but tactical intercepts decreased largely due to poor weather conditions and a shortage of fighter aircraft for the drills. The move from San Pedro to the island caused some changes in areas of responsibility and identification procedures. The station, charged with identifying all incoming aircraft to its assigned region, required a new reporting line for the incoming over-water flights. Some faulty installations by contractors had to be repaired, and weather disrupted communications and electrical power on a number of occasions. Less than a month into operations, the 11th Radar Calibration Team inspected the new radar equipment and found that it was “operating at a considerably substandard level.” Fourteen new radar mechanics had been trained and would deal with such problems, guided by three Philco Technical Instructors and one General Electric Field Representative who were permanently assigned to the station. However, the Communications Center and VHF section faced manpower shortages that slowed operations somewhat and added tensions only alleviated by assigning inexperienced personnel to duty. A staffed “Cryptocenter,” charged with decoding international communications, went into operation in March of 1952.³²⁰

While the problems of contamination of the water supply were mostly solved, having adequate supplies became an ongoing concern. The well dug by the Air Force proved inadequate for the station’s needs. On March 7, a Navy barge, pumping water to replenish the low island supply, had to abort due to heavy seas at the pier. Four days later the officer in charge ordered a temporary state of emergency that outlawed showers, shaving and use of toilets; a “slit trench” was dug for alleviation of the latter problem. The Air Force met the problem by installing three salt-water conversion units capable of producing 600 gallons of fresh water per hour from seawater. These would have ongoing problems, such as a total breakdown in 1959 that necessitated the transport of two barges containing 400,000 gallons of water for the station’s needs. In December of 1960, a 280,000 gallon barge wrecked on the approach to Johnson’s Lee, causing emergency activation of the salt water conversion plant (a newspaper headlined, “200 DRINK

³¹⁹Ibid., pp. 2-4; Charles Hillinger, *Charles Hillinger’s Channel Islands* (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1998), p. 200.

³²⁰Squadron History, pp. 9-14.

CONVERTED BRINE AS BARGE LOST”). By the time the station closed, all water was reportedly imported at great expense.³²¹

The Air Force Station: A Description

The Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station originally occupied two sites on the island, the cantonment or squadron area at Johnson’s Lee and the operations area on the summit of Vail Peak; later, apparently in conjunction with the Navy, a microwave communications center was constructed on a nearby hill. All sites were surrounded by barbed wire-topped chain link fences, and connected by a paved road that followed the spine of the ridge near the top then cut down across side hills and across a large gulch to reach the cantonment area. Security forces manned gates at the facilities.

Upon arriving at the station by boat, a visitor would be transported from boat to pier in a secure seven-foot high steel cage attached to a crane. Base vehicles then drove passengers on the pier to the land, passing the liaison building on the left at the foot of the pier, and then winding up a road past a series of barracks and service facilities. At the top of the slope, at an elevation of about 150 feet, stood a complex of maintenance buildings and, even higher, the water storage tanks. Below here the road forked: to the right or east a ranch road which would pass the ill-fated landing strip and Officers Beach towards The Wreck roundup area; to the left the paved road continued west and north a distance of about four miles to the operations area, passing minor cutoff roads to other government facilities, including the South Point Light, the abandoned Army radar site, and the Navy/Air Force communications site.

The Operations area on the flattened summit of Vail Peak was reached after branching left on a fork of the old Standard Oil road (right leads to ranch headquarters at Bechers Bay) then right to the summit. Here stood the radar towers, transmitting and receiving antennas, and the operations buildings where men monitored air traffic.

Operations and Life on the Base

The primary function of this Western Air Defense facility was to monitor incoming air traffic in the southern California area, tracking and identifying all aircraft whether military, commercial or private. Checking each aircraft with their Air Movement Information Section (AMIS), presence of any unidentified craft would activate fighter planes from nearby Air Force or Navy bases. The island location of this base provided a forward alert base that could provide advance information to prevent an enemy attack by air from the west. A reporter quoted base commander Major Charles E. VanBibber describing their mission: “We detect, identify, intercept, and, if necessary, destroy.”³²²

³²¹Ibid., pp. 21-22; *Historical Record of the 669th ACW Squadron for the period ending June 30, 1959*, p. 1; unidentified news clipping dated December 8, 1960, SCIF.

³²²Hillinger, *The Channel Islands*, pp. 75-76.



Personnel and visitors to the Air Force station were transported from boat to dock, and vice versa, in a cage lifted by a derrick. *Los Angeles Times* photo, courtesy of UCLA Special Collections

Los Angeles Times feature reporter Charles Hillinger and photographer Howard Maxwell visited the island in 1956, as the first representatives of the press allowed to tour the secret facility. Hillinger first published his reports in a series of features in the *Times*, then in a book, *The California Islands* (1958). Edited versions have since been published by the Santa Cruz Island Foundation as *Charles Hillinger's Channel Islands* (1998).³²³

Men worked an eighteen-month tour of duty with three days a month leave, which included transport to and from the island. Hillinger described the trip from Port Hueneme on a 78-foot PT boat “manned by a leathery-faced, wind-blown and salt-sprayed crew of six sailors” that took anywhere from one-and-a-half to three hours depending on weather. On arrival, men were off loaded in a cage lowered and raised to the boat deck by a crane, then transported to their barracks or duty station by van.

Men were assigned duty depending on their training and skills; most were technical, involving monitoring air traffic on large scopes in the operations area, while others performed guard duty and patrol. Civilians took care of most maintenance and repair. All ate at a commissary staffed by civilians.

The cantonment included numerous venues for entertainment and relaxation, according to Hillinger:

Hobby shops, recreational facilities, television (with reception exceptionally good on all the Islands), nightly movies, fishing trips on calm days in four light boats, archery, badminton, baseball and tennis provide activity for lonely hours. The camp library, stocked with donated books, rates high in popularity.³²⁴

Hillinger noted that lack of women was the only drawback to many of the men: Vail & Vickers prohibited women and children to take up residence at the base; the lease prohibited “any person of school age, unless such person be an active member of the Armed Forces There are no schools on Santa Rosa Island, and therefore, Owner does not pay any school tax”³²⁵ Otherwise, morale was “surprisingly good.” The barracks were kept clean and featured a number of “homey touches like curtains and tablecloths.” Men formed bands and played music, played pool and ping-pong, but hiking and hunting were outlawed. A minister and priest visited the island once a month for three days to conduct services in a small chapel.

An enlisted medic provided basic medical treatment in a well-equipped clinic; a dentist spent a week per month in an equally well-equipped dental lab. Lulis Cuevas, young daughter of ranch foreman Diego Cuevas, received medical attention from the Air Force doctors, including shots and treatment for the measles.³²⁶

Air Force Base and cattle ranch interacted well, according to most sources. Ed and Al Vail visited the station regularly and Air Force men came to the ranch headquarters. The Vails were friendly especially with Col. Jack Blacker, the last commandant of the base. Col. Blacker flew a plane and usually landed at ranch field, although reportedly once at the deadly field near the base which had claimed lives years before. The facility had a bar that attracted island workers as well as archeologist Phil Orr and his crew.³²⁷

³²³Charles Hillinger, *The California Islands* (Los Angeles: Academy Publishers, 1958).

³²⁴Hillinger, *The Channel Islands*, pp. 73-78.

³²⁵“Land Lease,” pp. 13-14.

³²⁶Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 24, SCIF; personal communication with Lulis Cuevas, January 3, 2000.

³²⁷Oral history interview with Al Vail, March 25, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 14 SCIF.

Once Ed and Al Vail, after receiving “first class invitations,” dressed in tuxedos and brought the *Vaquero II* around for a formal party with the “big brass”; Phil Orr attended, too. Former ranch foreman Diego Cuevas remembered what he called “the Army camp,” with

. . . everyone running up and down and whistling and singing, and some on their jeeps, some on their pickups, doing something. Have a movie theater, have a playroom, have pool tables, movies, church, doctor’s office, paramedics; and then go back now and nothing but dirt.³²⁸

Sometimes the interaction had its problems: cattle chewed on the telephone cables, enlisted men occasionally trespassed or hunted illegally. According to Cuevas, when Hayden Hunt was foreman, he took the officers hunting. “The officers get away with anything with the foreman. All they have to do is take him a case of beer or a bottle of booze and they could do anything they want.” After Hunt left, Diego did not allow hunting. Enforcement of the island hunting rules made Cuevas unpopular with many of the men, but at the motor pool and offices he was well respected for his helpfulness and mechanical knowledge. Cuevas provided fresh meat for base barbecues, and bought things he needed at the base store. The Air Force invited island cowboys to the movies, and to beer parties on the beach; the commanding officer allowed the ranch to take parts and tires from the motor pool, and shared stores; Cuevas recalled receiving a huge four-foot wheel of cheese given as a gift for ranch workers.

Cuevas told of an incident when some enlisted men got drunk and decided to leave the island. They reportedly stole the CO’s jeep, drove to the pier where they stole a skiff which soon swamped; the men made it back to shore where they drove onto the island and wrecked the jeep in the dark, resulting in at least one fatality. Cuevas, true to island form, made a water pump with the salvaged jeep engine.

During the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the island base came under temporary alert, instituting increased restrictions on the cowboys’ travel. Air Force personnel put up gates and check points and stationed armed guards various places on roads; Cuevas had to call headquarters to obtain permission to go to China Camp.³²⁹

Deactivation and Disposal, 1963-1996

News of the planned deactivation of the Santa Rosa Air Force Station reached the personnel as rumors late in 1962. An Air Force study concluded, after reviewing operations at Santa Rosa Island and investigating potential sites on the mainland, that the station could be moved “without significant sacrifice of radar coverage” to a site at Point Conception. The study noted the high “cost of support and operation of the present island site, as compared with the expected cost of support and operation of a site at Point Conception . . . [by moving, the] savings effected through relocation would pay for the construction over a

³²⁸Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, October 10, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

³²⁹Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 19, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

period of years.” The study outlined the “extremely expensive” activities needed to support operations at the island, detailing how supplies, fuel and water, and personnel had to be transported by Navy launches, electricity had to be generated by diesel power, and contract construction and maintenance costs were at least 50% higher than on the mainland and “frequently, contractors will not even bid on construction projects on the island.” Morale and family problems affected personnel on the island as well. All pointed towards closure of the island facility, and the headquarters agreed with the study’s recommendations.³³⁰

Headquarters approved the closing of the base in late 1962, directing the Squadron Commander to commence deactivation procedures with a target closing date of March 31, 1963. *The Islander*, the squadron’s newsletter, published its last edition on March 1, its headline reading, “Santa Rosa Island Bids a Fond Farewell” and reporting of the base closing party complete with “delicious” steak dinners, softball, tug-of-war and relay races.³³¹

The 669th ACW Squadron operated for its last day at Santa Rosa Island on March 31, 1963. The 669th moved to the Lompoc Air Force Station at Point Conception the following day with no interruption in service. The squadron’s Historical Record told of the significance of the station:

A review of the 669th’s accomplishments since its activation into the Air Defense Net on 16 February 1952 shows an impressive record. The unit was awarded the Western Air Defense Force “A” award two years in succession for outstanding performance during Operational Readiness Inspections conducted in 1959 and 1960. The unit compiled a total of 7363 intercepts in 1961 and claimed second place in the Air Force for intercepts conducted by an ACW Squadron. The unit has received correspondence commending the unit and individual sections for superior performance from numerous inspection teams as well receiving excellent evaluations. Recently the unit was commended by Brigadier General Henry C. Newcomber, who was then Commander, Los Angeles ADS, for the unit’s clean sweep of inspections and operational evaluations in 1962. These highlights demonstrate that the mission of the 669th has been accomplished in an outstanding manner and for this the men of the 669th are proud.³³²

Colonel Frederick J. Nelander, Commander of the Los Angeles ADS, and staff members made the final inspection of the facilities, making “many favorable comments . . . concerning the unit and its facilities.” For phaseout purposes the base became Detachment #2 of the Los Angeles ADS. About 50 personnel remained during the phaseout to assist a Ground Electronics Engineering Agency team from Norton AFB that would remove equipment. During the months previous, efforts had been made to distribute operable equipment, including technical, medical and recreational items and the unit library, to other units, reportedly saving thousands of dollars. In anticipation of the removal of the switchboard and phone system, technicians had installed portable field phones in the squadron area.³³³

The Army Corps of Engineers notified Vail & Vickers of the closure, and in May 1963 mailed a Notice of Cancellation, effective June 30, that terminated the 13-year-old lease that had been set to expire

³³⁰Pages of unidentified document provided by staff at USAF Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, pp. 97-98.

³³¹*The Islander*, Vol. I, No. 8, March 1, 1963.

³³²*Historical Record of the 669th ACW Squadron*, p. 1

³³³*Ibid.*, pp. 1 and 3.

on November 30, 1965. Soon the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company officially abandoned its communications system, including two 10-foot parabolic antenna “dishes” and equipment in a cement block building reportedly located at the summit of Soledad Peak, leaving it for the Vails to make use of. The entire base, however, required a great deal of time and labor to dispose of.³³⁴

The General Services Administration accepted the Air Force’s Report of Excess on April 22, 1963 and proceeded to pursue disposal of the site (including a number of surplus Navy buildings in the area), spurred by the Army Corps of Engineers’ concern about the high rental costs on the vacant facility and the fact that funding for rent and custodial services had been programmed through June of 1963. In seeking alternate uses of the facility, the GSA notified the Department of Defense and the U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, who in turn contacted the State of California for potential interest as a site for educational or health facilities; neither agency, nor any other federal agencies, held any interest in future use of the site. The GSA noted on its Report of Excess that “although contrary to [the] land owner’s expressed desire it is considered that [the] most practical use of government properties would be development as [a] recreational area.” It was also noted that “the cost of removing the buildings to the mainland is considered to be greater than their value on the mainland,” pointing out the difficulties in transportation and high labor costs. Paper work during this process revealed the acquisition costs of the site to be \$3,206,000 for 78,647 square feet of building space and associated roads and utilities. The Air Force then abandoned the facility, leaving all buildings, utilities and much equipment to Vail & Vickers. At the time of abandonment by the Air Force, the site consisted of at least forty buildings and structures.³³⁵

Vail & Vickers took over the facilities at Johnson’s Lee and the mountaintop and soon made use of their bounty. Small buildings could be moved intact. Ranch workers used salvaged materials all over the island for buildings, including the new foreman’s residence and the replacement bunkhouse, and roundup corrals. Cowboys used the guardrail left on the military road as railing at all the roundups, resulting in some of the sturdiest corrals existing in California. The Air Force left the water plant, heating and steam systems, cots, mattresses, lamps and the like; in the motor pool the cowboys found an abandoned compressor, car lift, fuel tanks and pumps. Trespassing fishermen reportedly took a lot of items; one was caught by Russ Vail and Diego Cuevas and disciplined at the ranch.³³⁶

Not all of the staggering amount of materials and buildings could be used, and the facilities lay deteriorating for more than 30 years, used as occasional shelter by trespassing boaters, and continually picked over by the ranch crew for odds and ends. The National Park Service developed a document studying the demolition and/or rehabilitation possibilities of the complex in 1985, which recommended retaining a handful of the buildings but removing the rest. Park staff prepared a FONSI in 1986 that covered removal of many buildings, restoration and reconstruction of the pier. At the time, the base had been determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. After a few years of National Park

³³⁴Carl M. Neely to The Vickers Company, Ltd. and Vail Company, 29 May 1963; H. S. Hitchcock to Mr. A. L. Vail, July 18, 1963, SBMNH #0884.

³³⁵Real Property Disposal Case Files, RG 291, NA(SB); “Buildings, Structures, Utilities and Miscellaneous Facilities,” Schedule A—Supplement to Report of Excess Real Property, NA(SB). See Appendix for complete list of structures.

³³⁶Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 19, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 4, SCIF; personal communication with park archeologist Don Morris.

Service use as island headquarters, about 1987 to 1990, the site was abandoned except for one building. In the late 1980s the Army Corps of Engineers removed asbestos and underground storage tanks, and the park service then burned most of the buildings. After completing environmental and historical studies, in 1991 and 1992 the National Park Service buried the remaining foundations of the facility, removed the pier ruins and revegetated the terrain. Only one building of the base remains in place, Building 147, the 2,193 square foot auto maintenance shop, which is now used by park personnel as a remote storage and study base. The asphalt pavement on the road to the mountain remains, but is deteriorating and in some places hazardous.³³⁷

Aids to Navigation: South Point Light Station

In response to growing maritime traffic at Los Angeles, the U. S. Lighthouse Service built the only navigational aid on Santa Rosa Island at South Point in 1925. Using a small landing below and a trail, and with the help of Vail & Vickers horses and cowboys, the lighthouse crews from Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay erected a “beacon light,” a typical pyramidal tower on a forty-foot square plot of land at an elevation of 430 feet. The Service probably pre-constructed the tower at Yerba Buena Island and reassembled it on site, as was the practice of the day. The pyramidal tower acted as a base for the electric-powered, unmanned light, which was maintained about twice a year or when needed. The government paid Vail & Vickers one dollar per year for the use of the plot of land, the landing below and the connecting trail. In 1937 the Lighthouse Service decided, after some study, to replace the pyramidal tower with a small house at a higher elevation.³³⁸

Before making these improvements, the Coast Guard prepared specifications for improving the trail from Johnson’s Lee to the site, until then a crude track. Specifications called for a “suitable trail over the most convenient and advantageous route . . . to afford safe and satisfactory use by pack animals carrying at time bulky loads with weights ranging up to 200 lbs.” The trail would be three feet wide and of a reasonable grade:

It is desired that the trail lead in a northwesterly direction from the shack at the boat landing [apparently a U. S. Coast Survey shack at Johnson’s Lee that may have been built in the early 1930s when the island was being surveyed] up the side of the hill gaining altitude on a grade which shall be as even as practicable and not in excess of 15%.

In addition to necessary cuts, fills will be made of depressions where necessary, and sharp turns that would interfere with proper use of the trail by pack animals are to be avoided The present side hill trail at the approach to the light is to be improved as necessary by cuts and fills.

³³⁷Personal communication with Tim Glass by the author; *Special Study, Environmental Assessment, Demolition, Restoration of Abandoned Military Facilities, Channel Islands, Johnsons Lee, Santa Rosa Island* (Denver: National Park Service, 1985).

³³⁸Lease signed by N. R. Vail and H. W. Rhodes, October 28, 1924, and “rough sketch” by H. A. Lang dated August 10, 1935, SBMNH #1780; photographs at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park; James T. Lima, *San Nicolas Island Lights, A Study of Maritime Aids to Navigation on San Nicolas Island, California* (Pt. Mugu: Environmental Division, Naval Weapons Station: 1997), pp. 4-3, 4-5, 4-21.



The original South Point Light, circa 1930. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

At the site of the light, the ground immediately north of it is to be leveled off as necessary to provide room for unloading a pack train and for the proper handling of construction and other materials.³³⁹

The trail was completed by Vail & Vickers employees on June 15, 1937 at a width of 24 to 30 inches, narrower than called for in the specifications, but acceptable in the final inspection. The area leveled adjacent to the new light site measured thirty by forty feet. Vail wrote to Lighthouses Superintendent Rhodes informing him that instead of following the requested route at the lower end, “we followed the

³³⁹“Specification for Constructing a Trail on Santa Rosa Island,” February 17, 1937, with completion notes undated but known to be after June 15, 1937.

south slope with two switch backs, which in my judgment will make a more lasting trail, puts the trail on more level ground at a lower altitude and is a shorter distance than if we had followed north through the canyon.”³⁴⁰

On August 4, 1937, Superintendent Rhodes wrote to ranch foreman C. W. Smith with a copy to Vail, alerting him of the arrival of the Lighthouse tender on or about August 12 with “material and equipment for erecting a small house above the present light and establishing a new electrically operated light.” The ranch would supply the pack animals from the landing at Johnson’s Lee over the newly improved trail. Rhodes told Smith to expect to haul up to 4900 pounds, consisting of “approximately 35 boxes and crates of equipment and miscellaneous short lengths of lumber,” the longest piece of which would be eleven feet. The construction crew would also require adequate drinking water and water for charging the primary cell batteries. Vail assured Capt. Rhodes that the pack horses would be ready at Johnson’s Lee when notified, but warned that “landing is pretty ticklish even in ordinary weather as we found out in landing and handling our stuff.”³⁴¹

The new seven-by-seven foot house was constructed on the mainland, each piece marked, disassembled and rebuilt on site, now 530 feet above sea level. Shortly after, crews built a six-by-seven foot wood frame addition to the building. The resulting new light structure was rectangular with lapped siding painted white. Benches inside held the banks of batteries that powered the small 375-mm electric, 4,300 candlepower light located on the roof, the batteries being charged by a windmill generator. In operation, the light beamed white flashes of 1.2 seconds duration every 20 seconds and was visible 19 miles out to sea.³⁴²

During World War II the Navy put all coastal light stations on a blackout alert. In late 1942 the 11th Naval District listed the aids to navigation in the district, noting that the South Point Light was temporarily out of operation, but nevertheless would require about three hours’ time to turn it on or off by men from the new Coastal Lookout Station which at the time of the memo was not yet in operation. The light must have been returned to operation by the following August, because the Coast Guard, under the auspices of the Navy at the time, installed temporary radio facilities for blackout control communications at the radar site operated by the Los Angeles Air Defense Wing newly located about a mile and a half up the hill from the light. The equipment, a type TRC-120 transceiver was authorized to operate on 2854 kilocycles and was given portable radio call sign NNDA-1. Blackouts were ordered through radio communication in somewhat of a leapfrog operation emanating from headquarters in San Diego.³⁴³

Cowboys on the Vail & Vickers ranch assisted the Coast Guard on contract, supplying transportation, at first horses, and vehicles on occasion. Diego Cuevas recalled that the Coast Guard men walked the trail from the tender anchored at Johnson’s Lee to maintain the light, and would contract with the Vails if any equipment needed hauling in or out. In many instances the staging area would be the pier at Bechers Bay.

³⁴⁰N. R. Vail to Capt. H. W. Rhodes, Superintendent of Lighthouses, August 6, 1937.

³⁴¹H. W. Rhodes to Mr. C. W. Smith, August 4, 1937; Vail to Rhodes, August 6.

³⁴²Information from files of U. S. Coast Guard Public Information Division, Coast Guard Historian’s Office, Washington, D.C.; Lima, *San Nicolas Island Lights*, p. A1-3.

³⁴³Lt. (jg) Harry O. Hill to Patrol Commander, December 28, 1942, p. 3; The Commandant to DCGO, 11th Naval District, 9 August, 1943; Joseph Greenspun to The Commandant, 11th Naval District, 20 August 1943, all in RG 77, Classified Correspondence Files 1921-1947, Box 24, NA(LN).



The South Point Light is seen in this photograph taken from the air in 1939, looking north. *Channel Islands National Park*

In later years, according to Cuevas, a Coast Guard helicopter made the trip. Originally the batteries were charged by a windmill generator, but more recently by solar power.³⁴⁴

The Coast Guard put South Point Light out of operation prior to 1986, and left the house and light in place. The structure has been abandoned for more than 15 years but remains standing.

Shipwrecks and Bootlegging

Sea-going vessels have visited the Channel Islands from prehistoric times to the present. The heyday of coastal shipping, the late 19th and early 20th century, brought hundreds of vessels past the islands, and traffic only increased as the importance of Los Angeles as a port grew early in the century. The islands have been a popular destination for both commercial and pleasure craft, as well as government vessels: the Navy, the Lighthouse Service and Coast Guard, the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, various state agencies all have had business in the area. Channel Islands National Park is one of the few units in the National Park Service that relies almost entirely on water transportation within the park.

The isolated nature of the islands made them attractive for bootleggers during Prohibition, 1920-1933. No doubt rumrunners used a few isolated locations on Santa Rosa Island for their trade, but stories are few.

³⁴⁴Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas by Will Woolley, July 8, 1993, SCIF.

Al Vail recalled that foreman C. W. Smith and Ed Vail went out to a “mother ship” to buy some booze but were refused; instead the crew gave them a case. Vail quoted Smith as saying “they were the hardest looking sons of bitches he ever saw.” Santa Cruz Island appears to have had the highest level of illegal activity during the 1920s.³⁴⁵

Maritime travel in the vicinity of the islands was often hazardous, as heavy fogs and wind, high seas and swells, and numerous rocky shorelines dotted with offshore rocks posed serious threats to even the best of coastal mariners. Santa Rosa Island’s position on the south side of the Santa Barbara Channel invited disaster to some ships passing the coast, although neighboring San Miguel Island proved more hazardous. At least 17 shipwrecks have been identified within park boundaries in the vicinity of Santa Rosa Island, eight of which have been located and identified by marine archeologists. The following are highlights of island incidents from the *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment* produced in 1996.

Yankee Blade (1854). This side-wheel passenger steamer wrecked near Point Arguello on October 1, 1854, but the current deposited much of the wreckage on the northwest side of the island. Dixey Thompson, working for his uncle who was one of the owners of the island, came across “a number of pieces of cabin furniture, also cases of lard, and saw many pieces far out in the kelp.” Further investigations the following day produced a chest of medical books and a couple of trunks. Thompson salvaged a carved eagle from the paddle-box, which was eventually placed in the Lobero Theater in Santa Barbara. Items that may be parts of the *Yankee Blade* have been excavated in a Chinese abalone camp on the west end of the island.³⁴⁶

Convoy (1884). A small schooner used for sealing and otter hunting by Rogers Brothers of Santa Barbara, *Convoy* broke her rudder and cables in a storm and wrecked on what was reported as the northwest point of Santa Rosa Island on January 27, 1884. Although considered by historians to have wrecked, a newspaper reported that she had been retrieved a few weeks later. No wreckage has been located.³⁴⁷

Goldenhorn (1892). The 268-foot four-masted bark was headed for San Pedro from Australia with a cargo of coal destined for railroad use. Sailing on September 12, 1892 in a dense fog and driven by a strong current with heavy swell, the captain misjudged his position and ran into offshore rocks on the southwest coast of the island. The crew took to two 25-foot ships’ boats and eventually rowed to Bechers Bay, then on to Santa Barbara. Soon a schooner from Santa Barbara visited the wreck and reported that “her stern is caved in and the upheaval of the cargo has splintered the deck in many places and the whole aspect is one of ruin and destruction.” Parts of the ship were salvaged; a salvage tug from San Francisco blasted the hull with powder to aid in salvage, and various parties took numerous other items. By early November the wreck had “completely collapsed.” Much wreckage remains at the site and was mapped in 1985. The largest pieces of the vessel found were an 83-foot section of the bottom hull and a 60-foot

³⁴⁵Oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 14, SCIF.

³⁴⁶Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56 (Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996), pp. 24-25.

³⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 112.

section of side hull. Sections of masts, the rudder, deck stanchions, rigging and other parts have been documented at the site by NPS survey staff.³⁴⁸

Crown of England (1894). A 297-foot cargo steamship only three years old, *Crown of England* wrecked in fog at Ford Point around midnight on November 6, 1894. Some of the crew crossed the island the next day and failed to find anyone. An officer and five crewmembers then rowed to Santa Monica, arriving almost six days after the wreck had occurred. The *Los Angeles Times* described her as “a total wreck. She lies broadside against the shore and her bottom is full of holes made by pounding on the rocks. When Capt. Haskell visited her . . . he could put a plank from the shore to the steamer’s bow and walk aboard . . .” A court of inquiry found Captain John Hamilton to have acted responsibly. The California Iron and Wrecking Company sent three boats and about forty men to salvage the engines and other equipment, working easily from the shore. The salvagers apparently set up a donkey engine from the ship on the shore and used it to haul heavy items ashore. Today, the remains of the donkey engine stand on a bench on the shore, with other wreckage. Offshore, a large anchor and chain, tubular pipe and other items have been found and documented. The *Crown of England* gave the name to the canyon and ranch features on shore: Wreck Canyon, trap, line camp and roundup.³⁴⁹

Scientist Dr. Gustav Eisen visited the island in 1897 and wrote of the latter two wrecks:

In spite of all the buffeting they have received since [wrecking], the hulls are still intact. The waves wash over them at high tide, but when the water is low both of them are plainly visible. The wrecking machinery which was brought out at great expense in the hopes of recovering something from them is still lying on the shore. It was found, after the venture proved a failure, that it would cost more to put the machinery on board a steamer than it was worth, owing to the roughness of the sea at the places where the wrecks are lying.³⁵⁰

Magic (1899). A lobster schooner operating out of San Pedro, *Magic* went on the rocks off Rancho Viejo and sank in August of 1899. Ranch schooner *Santa Rosa* delivered the crew to Santa Barbara. Salvagers worked on the boat; no wreckage has been found.³⁵¹

Ella G (1908). This Canadian sealing schooner sought refuge in Bechers Bay after stormy seas damaged her rudder on February 2, 1908. A strong gale forced her ashore about half a mile from the pier as the crew took to the ship’s boats. Vail & Vickers personnel aided the crew on the island and in returning to Santa Barbara. While a portion of a wooden hull has surfaced near the pier, it has not been positively identified by park archeologists as *Ella G*.³⁵²

Dora Bluhm (1910). A three-masted lumber schooner built at Hall Brothers shipyard in Puget Sound in 1883 and owned by the Pacific States Trading Company, *Dora Bluhm* had 27 years experience in Channel waters before wrecking near Santa Rosa Island. She ran into a “heavy gale” and got off course on

³⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 28-37. Don Morris wrote, “In addition to the submerged component, there is a significant quantity of wooden timbers and coal, evidently stockpiled by Chinese abalone fishermen, along the coast. Some of the hatch covers were incorporated into a platform at SRI-94-01.”

³⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 37-40.

³⁵⁰Dr. Gustav Eisen, *The [San Francisco] Weekly Call*, June 16, 1897, reprinted in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 77-78.

³⁵¹Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 154-155.

³⁵²Ibid., pp. 144-116.

May 25, 1910, while on her way from Coos Bay, Oregon to San Pedro with a cargo of 350,000 board feet of lumber. Finding her in darkness at the breaker line off the island, the crew abandoned ship and the *Dora Bluhm* broke up on the rocks in the surf. Eight crewmembers struggled to keep afloat in the small boat, to be picked up the next day by Vail & Vickers' schooner *Santa Rosa Island*. The location had not been accurately reported due to the darkness and intensity of the storm. Park teams felt that the likely site was marked by a wreck scatter at Cluster Point on the western south side of the island. Numerous pieces of wood and hardware have been found on the beach and have been mapped by NPS crews, although certain other ships such as the *Shasta*, which wrecked off Point Conception in 1906, may also be represented in this "coastal woodpile" at Cluster Point.³⁵³

Aggi (1915). The three-masted, steel-hulled *Aggi* was under tow with a cargo of barley and beans when a severe storm parted the towing cable. She ended up on Talcott Shoals near the west end of the island on May 3, 1915. The crew abandoned ship and set up camp on the island before reaching Santa Barbara. Three weeks later a silent film crew shot footage of the wreck as a backdrop for a film drama. The stars and crew camped on the island "in one of the few good spots for camping that this part of the island supplies," wrote the local newspaper. A copy of the resulting film, "Smuggler's Island," has not been located. Unauthorized divers have stolen much of the wreckage, and park service divers have mapped the site where large and small pieces of wreckage remain.³⁵⁴

Jane L Stanford (1929). A fine wooden barkentine built in 1892 to carry lumber from northern ports to Asia, Australia and Hawaii, *Jane L Stanford* saw an ignominious end as a fishing barge, stripped of her masts and rigging, off Santa Barbara. A steamer rammed her during the night of August 30, 1929; with a gaping hole and decks awash, she was not expected to sink because of her buoyant wood construction. She floated for two weeks before being deemed a hazard and towed by the Coast Guard to Santa Rosa Island for destruction. The Coast Guard cutter *Tamaroa* deployed TNT and mines to break up the ship, a process that took five days. The wreckage of *Jane L Stanford* has been found on the north shore of Skunk Point, and has been mapped and recorded by NPS teams. A motor barge, *W. T. and B. Co. No. 60*, saw a similar fate two years later, as the cutter *Tamaroa* towed the burned hulk to near East Point and sank her with mines.³⁵⁵

Blue Fin (1944). The California Fish and Game patrol boat stranded in an undisclosed location on September 3, 1944 during World War II. She was under charter to the U. S. Army at the time and probably wrecked in Bechers Bay during operations supplying the Army radar base on the island.³⁵⁶

Aristocratis (1949). The renamed Liberty ship grounded near Johnson's Lee on December 1, 1949 with a cargo of coal or ammonium sulphate. After the "soupy fog" kept Coast Guard cutters from pulling her free, a tug did the job the following day. The *Patria*, a steel Canadian freighter, ran aground at Skunk Point on June 21, 1954 with a load of coal destined for Japan. Although the ship had been pulled from the shoal, ranch residents found coal on the beach for years after, and divers have located coal at sixty-foot depths offshore.³⁵⁷

³⁵³Ibid., pp. 78-86, 157-158; Russell, "Three Beached Shipwreck Scatters," pp. 10, 84, 113.

³⁵⁴Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 44-50.

³⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 95-105, 162.

³⁵⁶Ibid., p. 165.

³⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 62-63.

Chickasaw (1962). As the military transport *Thurston*, this 439-foot freighter saw much action during World War II, including invasions of North Africa and Sicily and at Omaha Beach in the invasion of Normandy; later in the war she participated in the attacks on Iwo Jima and Okinawa. After the war she was sold and renamed *Chickasaw*. In her thirteenth year of private service hauling goods across the Pacific, she went hard aground in a severe storm near South Point on February 7, 1962. Thirty-two crewmen and four passengers used a breeches buoy to reach land and most climbed the steep hills and over to the Air Force base at Johnsons Lee where they found aid. Four others sheltered in a small building near the wreck, perhaps the South Point Light or the old Coast Survey shack, although Al Vail stated that survivors found the cabin at China Camp and then walked to the mountaintop Air Force facilities. Vail and foreman Diego Cuevas rode on horseback to the wreck and walked through it, finding it full of automobiles and toys. The tide came up during their visit so the men had to jump into the surf to get off the ship. Vail thought some military men stole much of the cargo, although Cuevas reported the presence of a guard; some was salvaged. The sturdy ship took years to break up, and only recently has been ground by surf into small pieces. The huge portions of the ship became a landmark on the south coast of the island.³⁵⁸

At least five fishing boats stranded or wrecked at Santa Rosa Island in the 1960s: *Broadbill* (1966), near Orr's Camp, where the hull and diesel engine block remain; *Eileen D* and *Shoshoni* (1967); *Rosemond* (1969) which wrecked near East Point; and the *Standard Nut* (1969); another fishing vessel, *Pleides* went ashore at the site of the *Broadbill* in 1992 and sits on top of the latter's wreckage.³⁵⁹

Hunting & Collecting

Hunting has been a long tradition on Santa Rosa Island that continues to this day. Dixey Thompson noted a hunting trip by a Mr. Kimball in 1853 on the island, the earliest reference to hunting there. Pigs appeared to be the quarry in the 19th century, as few references to any other animals appear before the turn of the century. The following section briefly deals with various hunting and collecting topics documented on the island.³⁶⁰

Abalone and Shellfish

Freed from their two primary predators, humans and sea otters, abalone and other shellfish populations exploded in the nineteenth century after the disruption of Chumash culture and the localized extinction of otters. These events allowed abalone stocks to flourish, growing to unprecedented sizes and abundances. Chinese immigrants who arrived in California in great numbers during and after the Gold Rush saw prosperity in abalone collecting, for both the meat and the shell were of value. Chinese

³⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 63-66; oral history interviews with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 16-17, and with Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF.

³⁵⁹Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 141-143.

³⁶⁰Dixie [Dixey] W. Thompson to Alpheus Thompson, November 26, 1853, collection of Santa Barbara Historical Society, reprinted in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 17-18.

considered dried abalone a delicacy, and as early as 1853 harvests by Chinese fishermen on the Pacific Coast were recorded. While some of the harvest remained in California for domestic use, merchants exported large quantities to China from San Diego, Santa Barbara, and other coastal cities. The Channel Islands proved a favored location for abalone collecting. Linda Bentz wrote a paper on Chinese abalone collecting and described the typical collecting process:

The abalone could be obtained on foot by gathering along the tide, or rowing among the rocks just off shore in a sampan. The abalone gatherer would examine the submerged rocks and crevices for abalone. Two methods could be used to remove the abalone from the rocks. A trowel, spade or long pole with a wedge tip was used to pry the abalone from the rocks. A gaff was used to recover the abalone. Gatherers would also pour a small quantity of warm water on them, then gave them a sharp push sideways.³⁶¹

A 1900 newspaper account stated that two men harvested two tons of abalone in a single day, although that figure is probably above the usual daily harvest. Abalone collectors gathered in shoreline camps where they lived and processed the abalone for shipment. These camps would require a rocky, dry area to dry the meat in the sun. While some of the harvest may have been transported live to nearby cities, drying the meat on site was a common practice. Drying could take up to six weeks, and the meat was typically reduced to one-sixth the weight after drying. A San Diego newspaper described a typical drying process:

After filling a large bag with the meat, which is removed from the shell, it is carried to the place chosen to dry it, and is there treated in the same manner that a tough beef-steak is in a first class boarding house—that is, it receives a good pounding. After this beating, the meat is thrown into a large kettle and boiled for a short time; then is spread out to dry in the sun.³⁶²

Harvesters shipped the product to the mainland on junks, where it was sold. The early market for dried abalone was almost entirely comprised of immigrant Chinese in the United States and overseas markets in mainland China. Euro-Americans did not develop a taste for abalone meat until the early 1920s. As for the shells, not until the 1870s did a market develop for decorative ornaments, jewelry, and the like. By 1879 shells brought higher prices per pound than did the meat.

Over twenty historic abalone processing camps have been identified on Santa Rosa Island, most consisting of nothing more than clusters of large, mostly whole black abalone shells eroding from historic dune sands along coastal sea cliffs and near rocky intertidal shores. Most of these sites are located along the western shoreline from Sandy Point to Johnsons Lee. Interestingly, China Camp is a named location along the west coast of the island. However, no historic abalone sites or nineteenth century Chinese artifacts have been found in this area. Several historic abalone camps have been recorded along the coastline to the north and south, however, some with brown stoneware ceramics, porcelain, glass, and other ethnically distinctive cultural materials. When each of these sites was occupied has not been determined. A camp existed on the island in 1881-1883. A newspaper reported in 1893 that the More's schooner *Santa*

³⁶¹Linda Bentz, "Overseas Chinese Abalone Collectors of Santa Rosa Island," presented to National Park Service, February 7, 1996, pp. 12-13.

³⁶²San Diego *Daily Union*, October 5, 1871, quoted in Bentz, p. 14.

Rosa delivered a cargo of 321 sacks of abalone shells, 69 sacks of abalone and five sacks of seaweed from the “Chinese camp” on Santa Rosa Island. The report noted that abalone and seaweed would be shipped to China “where they are cooked and served in oriental style and considered great delicacies.”³⁶³

By the 1870s, the anti-Chinese movement gripped the United States and was especially strong in California. Chinese communities in many American towns were burned and violent acts were common. Fueled by racist sentiments, Chinese domination of the abalone industry came to an end by the late 19th century when the United States Congress passed three laws restricting the ownership of Chinese junk vessels, their reentry into American ports, and the collection of abalone. Japanese and Euro-American divers quickly took the Chinese’s place and expanded the industry to include subtidal species such as red, pink, green, and white abalone.

While the era of Chinese abalone collecting has been considered to have ended around 1900, records show that some harvesting continued into the 20th century. Vail & Vickers issued a permit to a group of Chinese for establishment of camps and abalone harvest on the south side of the island in June of 1911, and again in 1913. No subsequent leases or activity by Chinese have been documented since then.³⁶⁴

Charles Holder described an operation by Japanese shell hunters in 1910 on Santa Catalina Island:

Their boat was a “double-ender,” like the ordinary boat of the Italians of San Francisco, but in the stern of this, on deck, was a brick fireplace where the men cooked.

They were black pearl and abalone shell hunters, one crew out of numbers which have so thoroughly plucked the entire Pacific coast that there is little left for the American It is not easy to get them, which possibly explains why the Americans allow the Japanese to monopolize the trade.

As we drew near the Japanese were seen to have on big goggles. They were perfectly at home in the water and appeared like seals. Each man had a short chisel and a box with a glass bottom.

It has not been documented whether the Japanese shell hunters occupied or worked on Santa Rosa Island.

Lobster fishermen worked the island at times, but accounts are few. A lobster schooner, the *Magic*, (see shipwrecks above) was operated in the area by the Catalina Conserving Company, but it is unclear whether the schooner worked at Santa Rosa Island. Al Vail recalled that some lobster fishermen commonly left their gear in various places around the island. Vail remembered two old characters that fished for lobster on the island, one named “Dirty Neck Bill;” evidently they operated with the permission of Vail & Vickers.³⁶⁵

³⁶³Bentz, “Overseas Chinese Abalone Collectors,” pp. 37-39; Santa Barbara *Daily Independent*, October 18, 1893; K., “Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island,” p. 498; oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 15, SCIF.

³⁶⁴Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, June 29, 1911, SCIF; Bentz, p. 42.

³⁶⁵Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 154-155; oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 12, SCIF. Todd Braje contributed to this chapter.

Fishing

Santa Rosa Island attracted the attention of fishermen early on, as did the island's neighbors in the Channel. Fishing operations out of Santa Barbara and other areas on the coast ranged from single men in a boat to small fleets operated by businessmen. Charles Holder wrote of fishing activities around the island in 1910:

The island abounds in fine fishing, especially in Spanish mackerel (oceanic Bonito), whitefish, sheepshead, and yellowtail. Here is the ground of professional fishermen from Santa Barbara, Larco being the best known. He takes parties over from the mainland and knows the islands well The rocky shores abound in crayfish, limpets, mussels, crabs and abalones.

Santa Rosa is particularly rich in its valuable market food-fishes of the kind known as rock-fish or groupers. They are taken on banks, in deep water. The black-banded rock-fish, tree-fish, corsair, orange rock-fish, beach rock-fish, yellow rock-fish, flesh-colored rock-fish, red rock-fish, grass rock-fish, and green rock-fish, are a few of them, all fine food-fishes. [many rare fishes come with the Kuro Shiwo or Black Current of Japan]³⁶⁶

Santa Cruz Island received the most publicity about its fishing opportunities and activities, while Santa Rosa Island has not been well documented. The Castagnola family of Santa Barbara fished for decades around Santa Rosa Island for commercial catches, and Sonny Castagnola continued the family tradition as late as the early 1990s.³⁶⁷

Hogs

Pigs had a presence on Santa Rosa Island for more than a century. Pig hunting became a popular and necessary sport as means to keep the population in check and to slow the damage caused by their voracious rooting. In 1991 and 1992 the National Park Service eliminated all pigs from the entire island.

The origin of pigs on the island has not been determined, although it is known that some time after 1844 Alpheus Thompson raised "a lot of hogs." Since then, pigs had become a source of delight to the hunter and bother to the rancher. Charles Holder wrote in 1910 that "years ago wild pigs were placed on the island and are now 'wild hogs' . . . dangerous to approach or hunt on foot." Al Vail stated that hogs inhabited the island long before Vail & Vickers took possession of the island in late 1901. In the early 1930s, according to Vail, they traded hogs for Catalina Island quail, shipping them over on the *Vaquero*. "Just for a bird, to turn loose." E. K. Smith's father ordered him to kill pigs when he was young, and he

³⁶⁶Holder, *Channel Islands*, pp. 288-289.

³⁶⁷Oral history interviews with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.



E. K. Smith, born on Santa Rosa Island, hunted regularly with his family. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

continued the tradition with his own family; he felt that there was “thousands of dollars of ammunition” out on the range, spent in shooting at pigs.³⁶⁸

Vail claimed that the hogs ate the cattle’s molasses blocks and dug up valuable soil, which caused erosion, encouraged weeds and reduced pasture productivity. Hog hunting became a Vail & Vickers tradition on the island: “We were continually shooting on them to keep them pinned down.” Guests would be encouraged to shoot them, always accompanied by a cowboy on hunts. Ranch foremen kept a pigpen by the bunkhouse for tame pigs destined for the table.³⁶⁹

Arthur Sanger, who hunted hogs on the island between 1910 and 1917, described “wild hogs weighing as much as 150 and 200 lbs. with curved tusks six inches long. They have the appearance of large hyenas, high heavy shoulders and low rumps.” He continued,

Many times they charged us with their teeth snapping with a grinding noise as if they wanted us to know what to expect if they reached us, but they never did. At the time I will admit that I felt more like running than shooting. We had some exciting experiences and we learned that if you corner or wound a tusker, he will always charge you.

³⁶⁸Alpheus Thompson to Timothy Wolcott, Esq., June 12, 1857, SBHS; Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 288; oral history interviews with Al Vail, March 11, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 17, and July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 17, and with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

³⁶⁹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 13, SCIF; notes from interview with Al Vail by Jere Krakow, November 1993.

Sanger related his displeasure in the flavor of the wild hogs on the island; even one brought to the mainland as a piglet and fattened there ended up “strong and unpalatable.”³⁷⁰

Trespassers usually shot pigs but also ranch livestock: Sanger wrote in 1952 of “trigger-happy persons” shooting livestock “purely for fun.” C. W. Smith told him that they lost a fine stallion worth over a thousand dollars to a trespasser. Sanger, writing a travel article, recommended obtaining permission to land, “and if you do land, shoot hogs, not cattle.”³⁷¹

Vail & Vickers set their sights on trespassing hunters in 1938 when, in cooperation with owners of the neighboring islands, issued a warning that hunters would be prosecuted. The *Santa Barbara News Press* reported that three convictions for pig hunting by boaters had already been attained; “the free and easy [unrestricted] way of earlier days clung on and hunters...used the excuse that they had ‘always heard it was all right’ to hunt on the islands.”³⁷²

The National Park Service targeted the feral pigs for elimination, citing soil disturbance and the non-native status of the approximately 2,000 animals. The 1984 supplement to the *General Management Plan* noted that feral pigs, not to mention livestock, elk and deer, would be removed from Santa Rosa Island. A major eradication effort in the early 1990s eliminated all pigs from the island.³⁷³

Elk and Deer

Elk and deer roamed Santa Rosa Island for over a hundred years. Much speculation has arisen over the origin of the elk herds. A writer visited the island in 1892 and reported on an ill-tempered pet female elk that “weighed as much as an ordinary horse.” N. R. Vail wrote that around 1905 they obtained three elk from Oregon, and a few years later a bull. One story goes that around 1908 an old elk that had been the mascot for the Elks Club in Long Beach was retired and taken to the island. Other family members recalled that the elk were imported in the ‘teens.³⁷⁴ In 1911 a local newspaper reported on the introduction of elk to Santa Rosa Island:

A herd of elk, now numbering nine, is the nucleus of a game preserve that has been started on Santa Rosa Island under the management of Frank Pepper, superintendent of the big ranch property across the channel.

About two years ago, Mr. Pepper secured from the Sierras, three specimens of elk, and transported them to the island, where they soon became acclimated, they have since thrived the number increasing each season. It is an ideal range for them, and the day may come when the island may be well stocked with this species of game, now becoming extinct in other portions of the continent.

³⁷⁰Sanger, “Santa Rosa Island,” p. 13.

³⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁷²*Santa Barbara Daily Press*, January 22, 1938, *Santa Barbara News Press*, January 20, 1938, SBMNH #1786.

³⁷³*Draft GMP Supplement*, 1984, p. 60.

³⁷⁴K., “Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island,” p. 499; oral history interviews with Ted Naftzger, Jan 11, 1993 by Nita Vail, Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 11, and with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

Absolute protection is guaranteed them on the island.³⁷⁵

According to N. R. Vail, he imported two elk cows and a bull around 1913. The bull was reportedly a Rocky Mountain elk and the cows Tule elk from the San Joaquin Valley. Within eight years the herd had expanded to 14 or 15, but decreased by 1929 to ten or less. Vail was concerned about the low reproduction rate of the herd and looking for more, especially from the San Joaquin Valley. He wrote to the Board of Supervisors in Kern County, the city park superintendent in Visalia, an ex-commissioner with the Board of Game and Fish, and officials at the U. S. Biological Survey and Yellowstone National Park in his quest. In January of 1930, Yellowstone National Park sent twelve elk, five bulls and seven cows, to Vail & Vickers for placement on Santa Rosa Island. Park officials crated the animals and sent them by express to Wilmington, where the elk were likely loaded aboard the *Vaquero* and taken to the island.³⁷⁶

Margaret Vail Woolley said that the elk “were brought over with the idea that someday they’d be hunted, or at least they’d be meat producers and be profitable.” Difficulty in getting fresh meat to shore, the depression and refrigeration problems hindered those plans, and the elk were hunted only sporadically. Family members and friends of the Vails and the Vickers’ enjoyed elk hunting, and in the 1950s under Ed Vail a number of prominent men came to the island to hunt not only elk but deer and pigs, including Governor (and later Chief Justice of the Supreme Court) Earl Warren, Bing Crosby (who had a ranch in Nevada and sold cattle to the Vails), and newspaper publisher and More descendant Thomas Storke; Storke had worked on the island around 1899 and commented that the island hadn’t changed in 50 years.³⁷⁷

According to Mrs. Woolley, at various times before 1962 some elk meat was sold to gourmet stores on the mainland. Vail & Vickers established a commercial hunting operation in 1978 with Wayne Long, of Multiple Use Managers, Inc. By 1993 elk numbered about 900 head on the island.³⁷⁸

Deer have been reported on Santa Rosa Island as early as 1880, although the story printed here may be partly tall tale:

Mr. F. W. Frost was the owner of a couple of pet deer, which last fall he gave to Mr. More, who took them to one of the islands. The vaqueros have frequently been in the habit of lassoing the deer, out of mere sport. The buck became thereby enraged, and meeting a horseman on one of the mountain trails, he made a fierce attack on the horse. The rider was thrown off, and the deer pursued the horse with such venomous rage, that he finally killed the animal, goring it frightfully with his antlers.³⁷⁹

In his quest for increasing the number of game animals on the island, N. R. Vail had 19 fawns and 19 trapped deer from the Kaibab National Forest in Arizona sent to the island in the fall of 1929, although seven died in transit and several others were injured. Vail reported that the fawns did well on the island but the others all died off. In late 1929 the family’s Pauba Ranch (Riverside County) foreman Louis Roripaugh

³⁷⁵Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, November 5, 1911, SCIF.

³⁷⁶[N. R. Vail] to Chief, Biological Survey, August 17, 1929, and other correspondence circa 1929-1930, File 1785, SBMNH.

³⁷⁷Oral history interviews with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript pp. 1, 4-6, and with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF.

³⁷⁸Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 11, SCIF.

³⁷⁹*The [Santa Barbara] Weekly Press*, February 19, 1881, p. 4, SCIF.

drove a truck to southern Utah to pick up fawns. According to Russ Vail, Roripaugh also bought deer from people out in the country. Roripaugh brought the deer to Los Angeles where they were transported to the island on the *Vaquero*. The next year the Vails had eleven more deer brought from the Pauba Ranch, and five white Fallow deer as well. The Vail Company's Alex Mills wrote to the forest supervisor at the Kaibab National Forest in 1930 asking for 45 female and 15 male deer. That August, the Vails paid \$432 for eight male and eight female deer from Arizona, and in October, officials at Kaibab gave them nine fawns. Lt. Commander Stanley A. Wheeler wrote of being "fortunate enough to see a rare white deer" on the island in the early 1940s.³⁸⁰

Vail & Vickers began hosting commercial hunts, targeting elk, deer and pigs, as early as 1979. The lawsuit brought against NPS by the National Parks and Conservation Association in 1996 resulted in a Settlement Agreement that guided the management and reduction of deer and elk between 1998 and the termination of Vail & Vickers Use and Occupancy in 2011. The Settlement Agreement established maximum numbers of deer and elk that could remain on the island, with a phased reduction in the final four years of the Agreement. The Vails continued their commercial hunts as well as culling operations through the end of 2011. NPS cooperators eliminated the elk and nearly all the deer by the end of 2011. The last of the deer were eliminated by the end of 2015.³⁸¹

Scientific Study on Santa Rosa Island

Owners of Santa Rosa Island allowed limited numbers of qualified scientists access to the island for more than 100 years. The More family opened the island to numerous parties of archeologists, botanists and others. Vail & Vickers management traditionally supported scientific study on the island, but took a conservative approach, making sure that activities remained low-key and were scheduled around busy times on the island. For some time Al Vail consulted with Adrian Wenner at UCSB regarding scientific permits, which were issued out of the office on West Padre Street in the later years. During the 20th century, considerable amounts of scientific data have been collected, especially in the fields of paleontology and archeology. These scientific "explorers" received and acknowledged the support of the Vail family and their employees.³⁸²

As will be seen in the following pages, scientists have had a keen interest in Santa Rosa Island since the 1870s and the curiosity has never waned.

³⁸⁰[N. R. Vail] to Forest Supervisor Walter G. Mann, Kaibab National Forest, August 27, 1930, and other correspondence in File 1785, SBMNH; oral history interviews with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, and with Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, SCIF; Lt. Commander Stanley A. Wheeler, "California's Little Known Channel Islands," in *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings [March 1944]*, p. 260.

³⁸¹File W32, Settlement Agreement NPCA v. NPS, CHIS; Special Use Permit #PWR-8120-2600-98-, dated October 1, 1998, CHIS.

³⁸²Oral history interview with Tom Thornton, June 15, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

Archeology

The rich history of native peoples on Santa Rosa Island has intrigued scientists and laymen for over a century. Evidence of prehistoric occupation could be found by anyone who walked or rode any distance on the island in the 19th century. The first organized government surveys noted the profusion of artifacts and bones “scattered” about the island. In 1872 surveyor Stehman Forney reported:

Many of the peaks on the south side of the island are covered with fossil shells, Indian mounds, covered with mortars, pestles, arrow heads and other ancient curiosities, are scattered over the island, from the vast number of these mounds, grave yards and human skeletons, that are to be found here, no doubt the island at some time was thickly inhabited by Indians.³⁸³

Visitors on no particular business noted the archeological remains, for example this article which appeared in a Santa Barbara newspaper in 1873:

We have explored the island pretty thoroughly, and have found many interesting spots, the natural bridge, the caves, one large enough for 20 men on horseback to ride in, and where there are prints in the sandstone of feet which may have crumpled into dust before the pyramids were built. There is the usual cave legend of money buried here, and there are traces of several Indian villages where we saw some stone mortars, arrows and hammers, and one place which must have been a battle field, as skulls and bones are scattered thickly around for more than half a mile³⁸⁴

Popular 19th century histories usually mentioned antiquities, as did this regional history book published in 1878:

Seventy human skulls were recently uncovered [on SRI] through the action of the wind which blew away the overlying dirt and exposed them to view. The locality is supposed to be an ancient burial-place.³⁸⁵

Ranch employees considered it routine to encounter burials or artifacts. Island cowboy Jesus Bracamontes spoke of finding “Indian things”—metates, bowls, arrows, and skulls in places like lower Green Canyon, and “elephant bones” in a canyon near Bee Rock and Pocket Field. The proliferation of easy-to-find artifacts attracted pothunters and archeologists almost side-by-side, resulting in major disturbances through either looting or outdated professional collecting methods.³⁸⁶

Serious study of archeological resources on Santa Rosa Island appears to have started with the U. S. Coast Survey parties assigned to map the islands between 1852 and 1875. Numerous government

³⁸³Stehman Forney, Sub Assistant, U.S.C.S. to Prof. Benjamin Peirce, Superintendent, U.S.C.S., October 31st 1872, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP).

³⁸⁴Articles from the *Index* published in March and April of 1873, edited and reprinted in “The Way It Was,” *Santa Barbara News Press*, February 10, 1991.

³⁸⁵Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara & Ventura Counties*, p. 257.

³⁸⁶Oral history interview with Jesus Bracamontes, February 8, 1987 by Marla Daily and Don Morris, SCIF.

mapmakers worked on the islands establishing triangulation points in the 1850s and no doubt encountered artifacts. W. G. Blunt of the Survey, found a “large fossil tooth” in 1871 which he presented to the California Academy of Sciences; that organization published an account of the find relating that “the tooth had been found *in situ*, and near it was embedded the tusk of an elephant; the latter so far decomposed that it crumbled in an attempt to get it out.” While Stehman Forney surveyed Santa Rosa Island making a detailed topographic map in 1872-73, fellow Coast Survey employee W. G. W. Harford collected artifacts that he gave to naturalist William Dall. Forney’s reports to Washington which mentioned extensive artifacts apparently inspired USCS topographer Paul Schumacher to pursue archeological collection on the islands; while Schumacher apparently did not visit Santa Rosa Island but rather spent most of his time on Santa Cruz, at least two artifacts from Santa Rosa (unidentified items manufactured of greenstone and serpentine) were recorded at the Smithsonian in 1876.³⁸⁷

Reverend Stephen Bowers, with the help of Dr. Lorenzo G. Yates and sponsorship of the Smithsonian Institution, explored Santa Rosa Island in 1875-76 and published his observations in the Smithsonian Institution’s annual report the next year. Bowers described the geology and history of the island as best he could, and examined the archeological resources found in dwellings, shell mounds and burial sites. He wrote that a “large portion of this island appears as a vast rancheria, and it once doubtless supported a vast population. Just west of the wharf a rancheria begins and extends for the distance of two miles . . . [and] has an average width of one mile.” In this area Bowers noted human remains “scattered promiscuously over the surface.” With the help of island owner More, who provided horses for riding and packing artifacts, Bowers gathered up as much of this as he could: he reported that he had “obtained about one ton of specimens.” He wrote to Prof. Spencer Baird of the Smithsonian that after 25 days on the island, that he had “nine (9) boxes of specimens which I will send to the Alaska Commercial Co. [for shipping] tomorrow; one shipment weighed two tons. The island is covered with rancherias, and we examined the principal ones, exhuming many hundred skeletons.” Overall, Bowers claimed to have exhumed 5,000 skeletons. Bowers did not limit his distribution of the artifacts to the Smithsonian, however; he sold much of it, sometimes by the barrel-load.³⁸⁸

The activities of Bowers have raised the ire of responsible archeologists and historians for over a century. Bowers was criticized for sloppily invading burial grounds “with the finesse of a bulldozer and the discrimination of a vacuum cleaner.” Called “the Prince of the Pot-Hunters” by Santa Barbara historian Walker Tompkins, Bowers sold skulls, tools and implements to private collectors and museums around the country. Apparently so damaging were Bowers’ depredations that C. D. Voy, an associate of archeologist Dr. Lorenzo Yates of Berkeley who had visited the island previously, wrote in 1893 that there was

³⁸⁷Michael A. Glassow and Larry R. Wilcoxon, John R. Johnson and Gregory P. King, *The Status of Archaeological Research on Santa Rosa Island*, Volume I (Santa Barbara: University of California, February 1983), p. 148; Phil C. Orr, *Prehistory of Santa Rosa Island* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1968), p. 4; Charles Rau, *The Archaeological Collection of the United States National Museum, in Charge of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.* (Washington City: The Smithsonian Institution, 1876), p. 31.

³⁸⁸Stephen Bowers, “Santa Rosa Island” in *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, showing the operations, expenditures, and condition of the Institution for the year 1877* (Washington: GPO, 1878), pp. 316-320; Stephen Bowers to Spencer Baird, April 18, 1876, reprinted in Wallace E. Smith, “The Reverend Stephen Bowers, ‘Curiosity Hunter’ of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands.” *California History, The Magazine of the California Historical Society*, Volume LXII, No. 1, Spring 1983, p. 30.

“scarcely anything left of any account” at the sites he encountered. Voy wrote, “There has been an immense quantity of stone relics of various kinds, found on this island at various times, but they have all been shipped away, to enrich various museums.”³⁸⁹

Yates published three scientific papers on the islands including Santa Rosa in 1890 and 1891. Gustav Eisen, curator of biology at the California Academy of Sciences, explored features of the island and excavated burials on the north side in 1897 supposedly for the Academy. He made many observations and published a number of statements that were incorrect or naive. As the century closed, archeology on the island had not progressed to any extent.³⁹⁰

Philip Mills Jones, trained in medicine and inexperienced as an archeologist, opened the 20th century with an extensive series of excavations in 1901 for the University of California at Berkeley. Jones worked at 34 sites on the island, excavating cemeteries for the most part. His collections, “substantial both in quantity and diversity” according to Glassow, would be housed in the new Museum of Anthropology at the Berkeley campus. Jones’ most interesting find was a slab of sandstone with engravings that appeared to be a stick figure of a man with the initials JR. U. C. Berkeley anthropologist Robert Heizer later proposed that the slab may have been the grave stone of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.³⁹¹

The first excavations exhibiting a new disciplinary order of archeology, in which collections were secondary to the information potential from a particular site about the culture of its inhabitants, were carried out by David Banks Rogers in the spring and summer of 1927 for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Rogers came to Santa Rosa Island with experience on the mainland side of the Channel, carrying out important excavations and from his research defining the distinctive groups of inhabitants of the Channel (the Oak Grove People, the Hunting People and the Canalino People) and established a chronology of migration into and out of the region. Glassow wrote that

Considering that Rogers was among the first archaeologists in California to use stratigraphic excavations to define cultural differences from one time period to another, he was definitely an innovator who reflected the major intellectual transformations archaeology was undergoing in the teens and twenties.³⁹²

Rogers excavated three houses, finding that wood posts and whale bones made up the superstructure of the house. As a result of his work on Santa Rosa Island Banks came to believe, mistakenly, that only one group inhabited the island, the Canalino, who in turn settled on the mainland. Later work by Rogers’ successor at the museum revealed a much more complex chronology of groups inhabiting the island.

In 1928 paleontologist Dr. Chester Stock of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena excavated mammoth sites on the northwest side of the island and declared in the *Los Angeles Times* that Santa Rosa Island and its neighbors were once connected to the mainland, using the presence of mammoth

³⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 30-32; C. D. Voy, *Santa Rosa Island*, transcript p. 51, Bancroft Library, copy at SBMNH. Voy’s paper on San Miguel and Santa Rosa Islands was considered “poorly prepared” by Phil Orr and was rejected for publication by the State Mining Bureau.

³⁹⁰Orr, *Prehistory*, p. 5; Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, p. 150; Gustav Eisen, “Exploration of Santa Rosa Island” in *The [San Francisco] Weekly Call*, June 16, 1897 (reproduced in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 73-78).

³⁹¹Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, pp. 150-151. Jones’ notes were published in 1956.

³⁹²Ibid., p. 152.

fossils and similar geologic formations as evidence. While his premise was not new, Stock's idea became "semi-popular" (in Phil Orr's words) and has hung on in the literature until recently.³⁹³

The last publicized non-scientific private collecting activities on Santa Rosa Island occurred in 1933 when H. Arden Edwards, founder of the Antelope Valley Museum, and Arthur Sanger worked on excavations at Skunk Point and the mouth of Cañada Verde. The location of the artifacts has not been established; most apparently were sold to private collectors.³⁹⁴

The Channel Islands Biological Survey: Archeology and Paleontology

The Los Angeles Museum (later called the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History) sponsored a series of expeditions to all of the islands beginning in 1939, which were halted only by the war in late 1941. The Channel Islands Biological Survey consisted of a team of eight to ten scientists of varying disciplines and included investigations of archeology, undertaken by the museum's curator of history Arthur Woodward, later joined by John Shrader. The team, administered by the museum's curator of science Dr. John A. Comstock and led by entomologist Don Meadows, made three visits to the island between 1939 and 1941 where they recorded sites and made minimal collections.³⁹⁵

After visits to other islands, the Survey's Fourth Expedition brought a nine-man team to Santa Rosa Island for the first time August 4 to 11, 1939. Allan Hancock's "scientific cruiser" *Velero III* delivered the team from San Miguel Island to the pier at Bechers Bay. George Haise, said to be the foreman at the time, greeted the team and made them at home in the former schoolhouse. "Running water, electric lights and work tables," Meadows wrote, "made the establishment a perfect laboratory from which to study the island."

Meadows extolled the condition of the island at the time:

Grazing is kept under control, there are no sheep on the island, and as private property it is kept closed to the public. Under such control the island nearly approaches the original ecological conditions.³⁹⁶

The expedition members focused on the northeast coast, covering about 20% of the island. Woodward visited about 30 archeological sites and saw 26 others shown to him by C. W. Smith and island cowboys. He discovered a bead factory near Old Ranch Canyon and collected about 1,700 beads and chert drills, as well as 20 arrowheads and other items. He wrote, surprisingly, "Sites on this island were least touched by pot hunters."³⁹⁷

³⁹³Orr, *Prehistory*, p. 7; *Los Angeles Times*, April 4, 1928, p. II 12.

³⁹⁴Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, p. 151.

³⁹⁵Chris D. Coleman and Karen Wise, "Archaeological Field Research by Los Angeles Museum: Channel Islands Biological Survey 1939-1941" in *The California Islands: Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary Symposium*, Dennis M. Power, Editor (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1980), p. 183.

³⁹⁶"*Progress Report*," pp. 15-16, 17.

³⁹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 18, 35.

A small number of historical investigations occurred as well. Meadows claimed to have found inscriptions in the ranch house, for instance the notation “J. Smith St. Kate’s Canada 1877” cut in a board wall and a date from the mid-1870s inscribed on a beam. Woodward claimed that there remained evidence of 1830s occupation of what has been called Nidevers Cave near the ranch house, and noted that it was being used as a duck blind.³⁹⁸

Comstock made arrangements for a second visit to Santa Rosa Island to occur from March 29 to April 5, 1941. N. R. Vail, having “talked to members of the Vickers family and my own,” consented to the expedition and offered food and lodging at “the cottage where I think you will find ample beds and mattresses,” and also instructed C. W. Smith to provide saddle horses if the team desired them. Comstock replied that, because “our very individualistic group of scientists . . . have very strange and irregular comings and goings,” he would kindly decline the offer of bunkhouse food but would gladly accept the offer of horses.³⁹⁹

The last party of what would be the last expedition of the Channel Island Biological Survey by the Los Angeles Museum arrived on November 25, 1941, and was composed of Woodward and two archeologists, Marion Hollenbach and Barbara Loomis (who would become Woodward’s wife). They joined other scientists already working on the island. Museum student assistants Harry “Bill” Fletcher and Jack Couffer, accompanied by museum employee Richard Case had been assigned to remove some mammoth bones previously located by paleontologist Chester Stock. The students found that the bones had been destroyed by the cattle, but located a lower jawbone that they started excavating. Fletcher had been instructed to help Woodward for a few days (“it will give you good archeological experience”), and then return by packhorses to the “elephant camp.” Woodward spent only three days on the island but his assistants worked well into December on a previously undisturbed midden. The bombing of Pearl Harbor abruptly ended the museum’s survey—the seven remaining expedition members were on the island on December 7th and their scheduled Fish and Game boat *Yellowtail* had been diverted to wartime duty, leaving them stranded. On December 14 an island boat, reportedly the *Santa Cruz*, removed the party and most of its belongings to the mainland. The paleontologists were unable to fully excavate the sites and left their first attempt empty-handed: “their necessary abandonment of these valuable fossils leaves uncomplete one of the most interesting projects of this expedition.” Thus ended any surveys of the island until after the war.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸Oral history interviews with Arthur and Barbara Woodward, December 28, 1978 by Ron Morgan, and with Don Meadows, January 12, 1979 by Morgan, SBMNH.

³⁹⁹Letters, John A. Comstock to N. R. Vail, January 3, and February 4, 1941, N. R. Vail to John A. Comstock, January 31, 1941, LACMNH.

⁴⁰⁰George Willett, *Expedition No. 13 Los Angeles Museum - Channel Islands Biological Survey, Report on Birds and Mammals*, p. 1; [John A. Comstock?] to “Bill” Fletcher, November 21, 1941, LACMNH; oral history interview with Arthur and Barbara Woodward, December 28, 1978 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH. Some confusion exists as to what boat removed the scientists from the island under emergency. Oral tradition has it that the Vail’s boat *Vaquero* transported them, but the report from the Survey and the notes of Barbara Woodward stated that it was the *Santa Cruz*, through the cooperation of Vail & Vickers. It is likely, however, that the writer of the report was mistaking the *Santa Cruz* for the *Vaquero*. Oral history interview with Jack Couffer, 2011; transcript on file at CINP.

Phil C. Orr

The best known of the scientists working on Santa Rosa Island, and the one with the longest experience there, was Phil C. Orr, curator of anthropology and geology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Orr had previously worked for the Nebraska State Museum, the Field Museum of Natural History and the Colorado Museum of Natural History (where he no doubt knew T. D. A. Cockerell who had made studies on the Channel Islands), all of which gave him a great deal of field experience. Hired to replace David Banks Rogers in 1938, Orr worked on Santa Rosa Island for 21 seasons from 1947 to 1968, operating out of a base camp he had constructed on the northwest side of the island near the foot of Cañada Garañon. Orr pioneered the use of radiocarbon dating on the Channel Islands. He considered Santa Rosa Island to be “the last undisturbed archeological frontier on this coast.”⁴⁰¹

In December 1941 Ed Vail invited Orr, who had recently met Arthur Woodward, to investigate the dwarf mammoth bones present on the island, but the war interrupted his plans:

For this trip, Miss Bessie Owen volunteered the use of her plane and her services as pilot. Miss Owen and I made a complete aerial coverage of the island, spotting promising fossil deposits, wave-cut terraces, caves and prehistoric village sites and returned to the airport on the mainland, only to find that the Japanese had raided Pearl Harbor!

This abruptly ended our hopes for immediate work on Santa Rosa Island, which had been so long in the planning⁴⁰²

The Coast Guard flew Orr over the island a number of times in 1945 allowing him to build on the information learned in the 1941 flight. In March of 1947 Orr made daily flights allowing a more detailed observation of features on the island, and was landed in “the rugged and isolated section of the island which could only be reached by air or on foot” by pilot David Gray. By this time the U. S. Geological Survey had published topographic maps of the island, which aided Orr immensely in his planning and fieldwork.

In the late summer Orr and Edward Rice erected a temporary camp and began field reconnaissance as the First Expedition, focusing on a two-mile stretch of coastline on the northwest section of the island with its paleo-rich eroding alluvial sediments. David Gray and well-known Montecito pilot George Hammond delivered all supplies and water, as at that time no road existed to the site. Hampered by 45-mile an hour winds, Orr and Rice found a spot for their camp virtually hidden from the wind: a “deep erosional gulch” on the cliff-top overlooking the channel. Orr noted that the camp was “in the path of a cloud-burst. Fortunately it was a dry year.”⁴⁰³

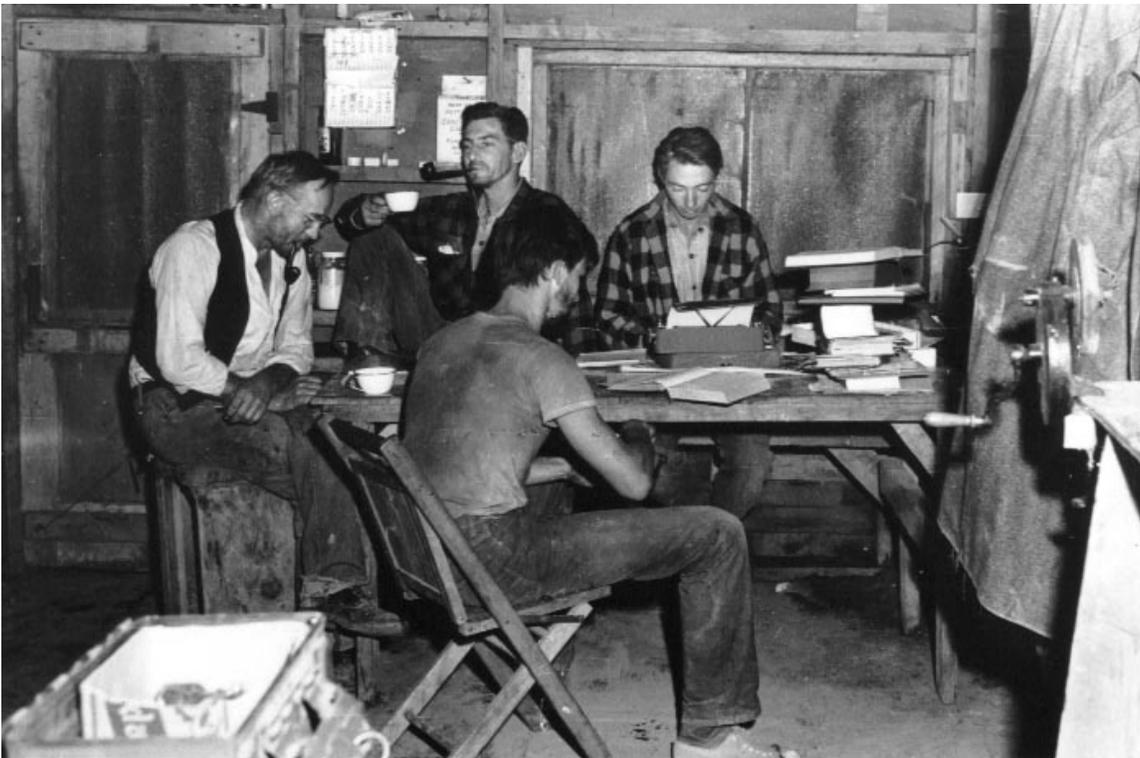
⁴⁰¹Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, p. 154; Michael A. Glassow, “Recent Developments in the Archaeology of the Channel Islands” in *The California Islands: Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary Symposium*, D. M. Power, Editor (Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1980), p. 79; Phil C. Orr, *Report on Santa Rosa Island 1952*. Sixth Santa Rosa Island Expedition (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1952), n.p.

⁴⁰²Orr, *Prehistory*, p. 9. Orr and Owen may have observed the Los Angeles Museum archeologists and paleontologists at work on the island below.

⁴⁰³Ibid., pp. 9-10; “Report from Santa Rosa Island,” 1st (1947), 2nd (1948-49) and 3rd (1949-50) Santa Rosa Island Expeditions (Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, [circa 1950]). pp. 2-3.



Phil C. Orr's camp on the north side of Santa Rosa Island was built in an erosion gully. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*



Interior of Orr's Camp, with Mr. Orr seated on the left. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

In the two months duration of the First Expedition, Orr and Rice had collected two dwarf mammoth skulls and enough other bones to create what Orr called “the largest collection of the dwarf mammoth to be found in any museum.” The men returned to Santa Barbara and Orr began to plan the Second Expedition.

The Second Santa Rosa Island Expedition commenced the following year and lasted into 1949. Richard S. Finley replaced Rice, and this time the expedition had a jeep. Orr was aided by the presence of oil prospectors on the island, whose activity provided increased opportunities for travel. Geologists for the Signal Oil and Honolulu Oil Companies assisted Orr as time allowed. The expedition received its heavy equipment by boat owned by oil contractor Macco Construction Company, and the landing strip on the northwest corner of the island was closed, probably on order of Ed Vail. After that, landings occurred at the safer landing strip at the main ranch on Bechers Bay. “Mr. Gray and Captain Hammond continued to fly perishables, ‘buzzing’ our diggings and landing at the ranch, where we would meet them after a two hour trip across the Island by jeep.”

The jeep proved to be a welcome improvement for the members of the expedition, allowing them to explore the whole island with relative ease. Orr reported that “the oil company had built a main road down the center of the island, but many times it was necessary to utilize the bulldozer blade attached to the jeep to cut trails down into canyons or to fill steep-sided gulches.” Orr developed a road that led north from the Smith Highway to his campsite located between Jaw Gulch and Skull Gulch (both sites named by Orr in honor of finds there). The men hauled water from a small dam built “about seven miles away” by Signal Oil.

Orr and Finley excavated enough bones during the expedition to construct a complete five-foot high skeleton of the dwarf mammoth, which they put on display at the museum. The duo also excavated Chumash sites at Skull Gulch and Green Canyon, finding burials and artifacts and denoting four different “types or groups” of Indian sites; they recorded 23 village sites within a two mile radius of the camp. Orr noted that

On the hypothesis that this area could only support one village at a time, twenty-three “village cycles or phases” were represented in the total age of the habitation of the island. Therefore it was decided that the Third Expedition would concentrate in this area, excavating key sites in an effort to determine whether a consecutive series of prehistoric habitations and artifact inventory could be established, which then might be utilized to good advantage on the mainland or on the other islands in determining the antiquity and relationship of the hundreds of ancient villages.⁴⁰⁴

The Third Expedition, 1949-1950, got a late start for lack of transportation. Oil drilling contractor Louis Scott brought the jeep and supplies to Santa Rosa Island on a landing craft at no charge. Orr wrote of his own arrival:

A few days later the expedition members stepped out of Mr. Gray’s plane and two hours later were greeted at the camp by our friends, the island foxes, who for three years have welcomed us to their island. We appreciate their welcome and reciprocate by respecting them and inviting them to breakfast. Occasionally, when it is cold and raining, they drop in

⁴⁰⁴Ibid., p. 4.

for the evening, curling up under the table or our beds, just like the more civilized dogs or cats.⁴⁰⁵

Orr and Finley excavated what they called Turtle House at the Skull Gulch village called *Niakla*. The researchers learned much about the life of island Indians at this site, discovering construction techniques for shelters and shell mounds. Also during this expedition, Orr made emergency excavations on the south side of the island where the Air Force was constructing their communications station.⁴⁰⁶

By the end of the Third Expedition Orr and his cohort had developed a unique and somewhat picturesque base camp in the eroded cliff. Of the earlier comment about the dangers of a cloudburst, Orr wrote that “after three years, the camp has taken on aspects of permanency with a solid dugout, still below the surface, but with adequate drainage to prevent washouts.” He and Finley excavated an area roughly 15 by 20 at the edge of the eroding gulch, and with salvaged lumber built sleeping quarters, a work area and a kitchen. They smoothed the sides and made bunks on the wall, and installed shelves, a long table, a stove and refrigerator, even carpeting. A power plant provided lights at night. Diego Cuevas recalled,

He built his bathroom, he was very proud of [it]. He haul water in 50 gallon barrels and got it up on the platform and then he run a hose to the bathrooms to shower. He had a beer can with lot of little holes and poured water through and then he get under and get showered . . . during the middle of the day the water get nice and warm with the sun.⁴⁰⁷

Still, he referred to the experience as spending “from three to four months out of the year living in a hole in the ground.” At another erosion cleft in the adjacent cliff, Orr constructed a small room with windows looking west. He hauled lumber, largely from pre-fab buildings, from the army camp near Pecho Peak and made a garage for his shop that featured a mechanic’s pit fashioned out of two boards over a deep trench.⁴⁰⁸

Orr summed up the first three expeditions (1947-1950) in his “Report from Santa Rosa Island” published by the Museum in 1950. Orr had begun to develop his theory of the presence of “early,” “middle” and “late” people on the islands, later breaking down the intervals of time with radiocarbon dating of remains and artifacts from what he renamed Early Dune Dwellers (6,800-7,500 radiocarbon years ago), Highlanders (4,000-6,000), Late Dune Dwellers (4,300-3,000) and Canalino (2,500 to the mission period). He learned about construction of dwellings and shell mounds, the consumption of abalone, and the possibility of contact with mainland cultures.⁴⁰⁹

The field work was hampered by a low budget and island weather: “. . . two men working under the handicap of isolation from supplies and bucking winds and bad weather cannot do in one year that which should take a largest group several years.” Orr had hopes for the future, recommending a long-range plan targeting Santa Rosa Island investigations. “From a scientific point of view, we have an opportunity to do in our own front yard what other museums go far afield to accomplish.” Orr urged immediate action on a

⁴⁰⁵Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁴⁰⁶Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, p. 155.

⁴⁰⁷Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 page 27, SCIF.

⁴⁰⁸Orr, *Report on Santa Rosa Island*, n.p.

⁴⁰⁹“Report from Santa Rosa Island,” pp. 5-6, Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, pp. 157-158.

“complete and thorough study of the Skull Gulch Population Center with the hope that it will prove a key to the various cultures and phases of both mainland and other islands.” He asked for additional men, secretarial help and equipment, especially a radio. Orr was concerned about the commercial activities on the island:

Santa Rosa Island is a cattle ranch and, as such, is relatively free from [military target practice] danger, but OIL is a magic word which leads to the destruction of nature by road and building construction, pipe lines and tanks, not to mention the human inclinations of oil workers, ranchmen, storekeepers and people in general to “pot hunt.” So far, oil has not been found on Santa Rosa Island, but more than three million dollars is said to have been invested in a hunt for oil there. Some day it may be found, and then there will be no more undisturbed prehistoric Indian sites in the extremely interesting Skull Gulch locality!

. . . Now is the time—while the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History has the cooperation of the Vail-Vickers Company, owners of the Island, and while David Gray and Captain George Hammond are willing to furnish the invaluable aerial transportation so vital to the work, and before the ravages of nature and commerce have destroyed the pages of history recorded in the sands of the Island—to gather this important information. Already, in three years time, commercial developments or pot hunting have damaged or destroyed seven per cent of the existing prehistoric sites on the island.⁴¹⁰

Orr was responding to threats from the construction of the Air Force Base at Johnsons Lee and the oil exploration activities, which brought dozens of new people to the island.

The following three expeditions resulted in further reports from Orr, the last (1952) extolling the additional financial support that provided a doubling of field crew and a much-desired radio (W6JYK Santa Rosa Island). Finley remained with the expedition, and Arthur Lange and Ray de Saussure joined for the season. Ed Vail donated a jeep trailer but the old jeep experienced a breakdown that required members of the crew to “walk a round trip of forty miles and . . . wait a week or more for parts.”

In 1952 Orr’s crew found the long-sought Late cemetery at the Skull Gulch site, after digging a trench 150 feet long, eight feet wide and up to six feet deep. There they collected 92 burials and numerous artifacts. Orr promoted the concept of mainland connection some one million years ago, and of a possible connection between early man and the mammoths on the island. He further developed his concept of three phases of occupation by the Dune Dwellers, the Highlanders and the Canalinos who came from the mainland. Orr discovered what may have been the earliest evidence of human occupation in 1959, a skeleton fragment found 37 feet from the surface at Arlington Canyon, which he named Arlington Springs Man and dated at 10,000 years Before Present. Orr’s expeditions continued until he published his *Prehistory of Santa Rosa Island* in 1968. In it, he recounted the excavation of some 200 village sites representing four distinct cultures, the prehistoric geology of the island and the presence of dwarf mammoths, and the dramatic climatic changes that occurred over 10,000 years. He wrote:

Annually, for the past 21 years, we have visited the Island for periods of from one to four months’ duration, excavating mammoths and Indians, making studies of climate, geology, geomorphology, and botany. The island has been explored not once, but many times, on foot, by horse, jeep, helicopter and airplane. We have investigated the coastline by boat,

⁴¹⁰“Report from Santa Rosa Island,” pp. 5, 7-9.

ranging from canoes to fishing boats to research vessels specially equipped for oceanographic surveys.

. . . the great majority of our efforts have been expended in a two-mile-square area on the northwest coast. This area constitutes one of the best natural laboratories in the world for the study of the late Pleistocene and Recent periods, with its many wave-cut terraces, fossil dwarf mammoths, submarine geomorphology, and a continuum of man's habitation during the past 10,000 years or more, represented by 22 village sites in this one area of about 200 known on the Island.⁴¹¹

Orr's work had great significance, particularly because of his rare opportunity to spend so much time focused on one area, and his use of radiocarbon dating. Orr's claim that humans may have coexisted with mammoths during the Pleistocene Epoch has elicited much debate. Although some published reports discounted Orr's theory, recent findings, such as the dating of Arlington Man to 13,000 BP coupled with mammoth remains dated at approximately the same age, enlivens the issue. Archeologist Michael Glassow of University of California Santa Barbara, one of the foremost experts on Channel Islands prehistory, noted Orr's accomplishments with radiocarbon dating, which commenced in 1955 and resulted in numerous important sources of data used today; Orr's chronology of settlement over 10,000 years, developed with the help of radiocarbon dating, has unfortunately also been largely discounted. Glassow wrote that Orr failed to produce detailed site reports, and that some of Orr's work was "rather casual, and his provenience documentation is frequently cursory." Nevertheless, Glassow praised Orr for his contributions to the understanding of island prehistory, especially the discovery of Arlington Springs Man and the effect of a changing environment on prehistoric cultures. "In many respects," Glassow wrote, "Orr anticipated the modern era of archaeological research in the Channel region and in California as a whole."⁴¹²

Phil Orr became a fixture on the island during his two decades of work there. The Mexican vaqueros called him "Huesero" ("bone man"). But Diego Cuevas, who enjoyed helping him out with mechanical problems, welding, and supplying him with parts for his jeep and bulldozer, remembered, "He was an easy going guy. He was always joking and laughing. He smoked a pipe and cigars." Because he had poor food and a low budget, according to Cuevas, "he always got to go to the ranch almost at dinner so he can have a free dinner."⁴¹³

The Vails called it Orr's Camp. Orr regularly visited with the Vails while digging on the island, and drank at the Air Force Officers Club on the south side of the island. He was invited there once for a black-tie dinner along with the Vails. He rarely if ever had his wife with him on the island. Orr appreciated the support he received from the Vails and their crew; in one publication, he made special mention of island cowboys Bill Wallace, Diego Cuevas and Earl Turner and his wife.⁴¹⁴

Orr's Camp sat abandoned after 1968; nature has taken its toll, reducing the quirky cliff dwelling into a ruin of boards and appliances that are slowly eroding into the Channel. As of 1999, Orr's road remains as tracks in the deepening grassland.

⁴¹¹Orr, *Report on Santa Rosa Island*, n.p.; Orr, *Prehistory*, pp. 4, 10, 52-53.

⁴¹²Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, pp. 155-160.

⁴¹³Oral history interview with Diego Cuevas, July 26, 1993 by Will Woolley, Tape 7 pages 27, 29, SCIF.

⁴¹⁴Oral history interviews with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 3; with Jesus Bracamontes, February 8, 1987 by Marla Daily and Don Morris, SCIF; Orr, *Report on Santa Rosa Island*, n.p.

Archeological and Paleontological Study Since 1968

Almost ten years passed until further archeological work was initiated on Santa Rosa Island. Orr's former collaborator Rainer Berger, representing the anthropology and geology departments and Institute of Geophysics at UCLA, excavated in 1976 a fire site at Wreck Canyon discovered the previous year by John Woolley, a geologist and member of the Vail family. Berger removed mammoth bones, stone tools and charcoal samples which he sent out for radiocarbon dating, and concluded that the site represented the best example of a roasting pit in which early humans prepared mammoth for food. Berger presented his findings at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's symposium on the California Islands in 1980, but faced much skepticism from fellow scientists.⁴¹⁵

In 1994 a group excavated a complete pygmy mammoth skeleton near Carrington Point, a cast of which is now on exhibit at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (with a copy at the Channel Islands National Park visitor center). This find and subsequent publication of findings spurred a renewed interest in the subject. Dr. Larry Agenbroad of the Department of Geology at Northern Arizona University has spent many years investigating sites on the island and promotes the theory that mammoths reached the large island of Santarosae by swimming from the mainland, and that as the island shrunk and created a number of smaller islands, the mammoths adapted to this environmental pressure by shrinking in size. Dan Guthrie has also collected numerous fossils on Santa Rosa Island, which are now in the collection at Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The question of whether mammoth and humans interacted is of great interest and continues to be researched.⁴¹⁶

Channel Islands National Park archeologist Don Morris commenced archeological investigations when Santa Rosa Island was purchased for the park in late 1986. Besides overseeing all archeological research on the island, Morris located Chinese abalone camps and coastal fishing sites, and followed up on many of the earlier archeological investigations including the renewed radiocarbon dating of materials using new technology. He also published an extensive *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment* with Dr. James Lima, covering shipwrecks within the park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary. Dr. Douglas J. Kennett of Pennsylvania State University; Dr. Jon Erlandson of the University of Oregon, his former student Torben C. Rick, now with the Smithsonian Institution, and several of their students have performed important work on the island in recent years. Erlandson and Rick continue their investigations into late Pleistocene occupation of the island and have sites dating back to 11,000 -12,000 years before present. Dr. John R. Johnson, curator of anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural

⁴¹⁵Rainer Berger, "Early Man on Santa Rosa Island," in *The California Islands*, 1980, pp. 73-78; Glassow, "Archaeological Research," p. 161.

⁴¹⁶Notes from Don Morris [2000]; Agenbroad, Larry D. "California's Channel Islands: A One-Way Trip in the Tunnel of Doom." Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium, 1999. Thomas Rockwell and Kevin Colson discovered the Carrington Point mammoth, which was subsequently excavated by Larry Agenbroad, Louise Roth, Rockwell and Don Morris.



Unidentified man with and exposed mammoth tusk on Santa Rosa Island. *Channel Islands National Park*

History, and others have undertaken a re-evaluation of the noted remains of “Arlington Springs Man” with new methods, determining a date of 13,000 years before present, and doing further investigations at the Arlington Springs location. Survey work continues; much of the island’s coastline has been surveyed; archeological survey in 2012 and 2013 has focused on the island’s interior. The site inventory has expanded to include 850 sites as of 2013.⁴¹⁷

It is clear that Santa Rosa Island presents rich opportunities for archeological investigation. Glassow, in the 2010 Archeological Overview and Assessment concludes that considerably more research is needed to document the important early record of coastal peoples. This is also true of research on Middle and Late Holocene occupation, which lags behind analyses of the early record. Further study of island settlement, subsistence and technology will benefit our understanding of the island’s earliest inhabitants.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁷Glassow, *Archaeological Research*, pp. 161-162; Jon M. Erlandson, Torben C. Rick, René E. Vellanoweth and Douglas J. Kennett, “Maritime Subsistence at a 9300 Year Old Shell Midden on Santa Rosa Island, California” in *Journal of Field Anthropology*, Vol. 26 Number 3, Fall 1999; John R. Johnson, Thomas W. Stafford, Jr., Henry O. Ajie and Don Morris, “Arlington Springs Revisited” in *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999; notes from Don Morris [2000].

⁴¹⁸Glassow, “Archeological Overview and Assessment, 2010.

Geological Study and Commercial Oil Exploration

The Channel Islands form the southern boundary of the Ventura/Santa Barbara Sedimentary Basin, an area rich in oil deposits and thus exploited for more than a century. Early oil exploration centered on the south coast of the mainland, and in the last 50 years in the Channel itself, using offshore drilling platforms. Since the first geological study of Santa Rosa Island by William S. W. Kew and his associates in 1926, a number of attempts at finding oil on the island have occurred, and these attempts have produced the bulk of geological study on the island.⁴¹⁹

The Standard Oil Company apparently had expressed interest in the island as early as 1927, and obtained a lease in 1932 stipulating that drilling would commence no later than June 22 of that year. After Carl St. John Bremner completed field mapping, Standard Oil procured the use of Vail & Vickers' cattle boat *Vaquero* to haul materials and supplies to the island. The company built three bunkhouses that slept up to sixteen men near the pier at Bechers Bay, and company employees ate at the Vail's bunkhouse. Standard Oil constructed a good road to the drilling site west of Soledad Mountain, and also constructed a road down to a water source in Tranquillon Canyon. The Vail family and foreman C. W. Smith helped in the road building: ranch manager N. R. Vail had a long interest in road engineering and Smith was an experienced dynamite man; a photo showed Laura "Dusty" Vail, niece of N. R., drilling holes in the rock for a stick of dynamite. Construction of the road proved rigorous in places. While the road generally followed older routes, a number of locations required blasting and excavating with a steam shovel provided by Standard Oil.⁴²⁰

With the infrastructure in place, including water pumped from the water source, crews utilized a stationary drilling rig to drill a single well to a depth of 6,298 feet at a site adjacent to the highest peak on the island. The well produced no oil; Al Vail quipped, "they hit a lot of dust." Vail's sister Margaret, age 11 at the time, later recalled her dismay at the events:

When the Standard Oil Company came, they built a couple of bunk houses . . . they'd have quite a crew of people over there and they brought trucks over and we children thought that was just scandalous. So we begged and pled that nobody would find oil and of course they didn't. And my mother was very sorry about that. But it seemed strange. They paved the road and there were trucks going back and forth and it was astonishing . . . We thought everything was being ruined . . . we wanted them to go away."⁴²¹

Standard Oil removed the drilling tower and improvements and capped the well in 1933 and also removed the bunkhouses at the ranch.⁴²²

⁴¹⁹William S. W. Kew, "Geological Sketch of Santa Rosa Island, Santa Barbara County, California," Reprinted from *Bulletin of The Geological Society of America*, Vol. 38, pp. 645-654, December 30, 1927.

⁴²⁰Daily et al, "Geologic Mapping;" water analysis dated February 10, 1932, SBMNH #1786; oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 9, SCIF; notes from interview with Mrs. Woolley by Jere Krakow, September 4, 1992.

⁴²¹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 23-24, SCIF.

⁴²²Daily et al, "Geologic Mapping."



The Standard Oil Co. crew posed in front of their barracks at Bechers Bay, 1932. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*



Standard Oil Company's well site as it appeared ten years after drilling operations (1942). *Channel Islands National Park*

Richfield Oil Company of Los Angeles sponsored the next recorded investigations in 1938. Richfield assembled a team of men to survey parts of the island, consisting of Frank A. Morgan, discoverer of the Ellwood Oil field, Harold Hoots, chief geologist for Union Oil Company, Rodman K. Cross and Thomas Dibblee. After making a reconnaissance of the north side of the island, Cross and Dibblee spent more than two weeks mapping the island's geology. Richfield did not pursue a lease, but the resulting geological information inspired tests some years later by competitors. Tom Dibblee described his work on the island in 1938:

When the four of us arrived, we rode horseback over the northern part of the island for a day or two to see the geology. After Morgan and Hoots departed to their office suite in the black and gold Richfield Building in downtown Los Angeles, Cross and I remained on the island for over two weeks in November 1938 to map the geology primarily north of the Santa Rosa Island fault, where the Vaqueros and Sespe sands that might contain oil are buried beneath the impervious Rincon Shale. It was thought there was a better chance of finding oil there than where Standard had drilled south of the fault. We also spent a day or two on the steep southeast side of the island to see the Vaqueros and Sespe sands wherever exposed. Rodman Cross and I spent most nights at the ranch house with Mr. Vail or his foreman, and we rode horseback each day to where we mapped the geology, usually one or two canyons a day, using aerial photographs to map on, as topographic base maps did not exist until years later. We camped a few nights on the western part of the island due to the long ride just to get back to that part to do field work. During our stay, the weather was surprisingly hot for that time of year, and in some of the canyons the temperature ranged into the nineties. It was a strenuous effort, but when we returned to the mainland, we produced a geologic map of the part of the island we had mapped, showing what areas would be most favorable for a test well. We found the best conditions to be in the vicinity of Tecolote and Garañon canyons, and at shallow depths.⁴²³

The Superior Oil Company sent William E. Kennett to the island in 1947 for six weeks to map prospective test sites and the geology in general. He stayed with ranch foreman Walter Lynch and his wife Helen. No testing occurred as a result of Kennett's work. The following year a partnership between Signal Oil and Gas Company, Honolulu Oil Corporation and Macco Construction (known as Signal-Honolulu-Macco) obtained a five-year oil lease from Vail & Vickers and over part of the next two years drilled three wells. Company geologists Lowell E. Redwine, Paul McGovney and Robert E. Anderson mapped the sites, and the company rehabilitated some structures at the Army camp to use as a base of operations while drilling. The company built a road north from Soledad Mountain to reach the three wells: Soledad #1 about half way up Soledad Canyon (3,772 feet, abandoned 1948); Garañon #3 on the flats of the west end (3,630 feet, abandoned 1949); and Tecolote #1 on a small ridge between Cañada Garañon and Tecolote Canyon (3,563 feet, abandoned 1949). Only Tecolote #1 produced any oil, and not enough to pursue commercially. It was at this time that archeologist Phil Orr wrote that Santa Rosa Island "was now a thriving focus of civilization with boats coming in to the Beechers Bay landing, almost daily planes, and surveyors, drillers, geologists all over the Island." Orr was no doubt perturbed because the Garañon and Tecolote wells were in his research area, and he wrote of his worry that oil exploration would damage archeological sites;

⁴²³Ibid.

nevertheless the Signal and Honolulu geologists Redwine and Anderson aided Orr in his work when they could. Orr obtained his water from a dam built by the oil company some seven miles from his camp; presumably this was the small dam at the head of Water Canyon first developed by the Army in 1943.⁴²⁴

In 1949-1950 Vail & Vickers co-sponsored exploration and drilling as a joint venture with their friend, geologist J. R. Pemberton who, with Harold Hoots, would drill in the area of Tecolote #1 on the northwest end. Robert Anderson joined the group and used his knowledge from the previous two years of prospecting with Signal Oil. The Scott Drilling Company of Chino, California, performed the on-site work. Louis Scott transported his equipment on landing craft, and helped Orr with transportation. Scott and his crew occupied the Army camp, which after that time became known as Scott's Camp. He also worked on other projects while on the island, mostly for the Air Force drilling water wells and pier foundations. Scott drilled three wells for Pemberton: Tecolote #2 (2,284 feet); Tecolote #3 (1,585 feet), both adjacent to Tecolote Canyon; and an unnamed core hole at the west end. He found no oil, and set to work capping the wells. After Scott left, no oil exploration occurred on Santa Rosa Island for almost twenty years.⁴²⁵

Vail & Vickers hired K. B. "Pete" Hall in 1967 to facilitate oil exploration. Hall negotiated a lease for Tiger Oil Company of Denver, but nothing happened; the lease expired in 1971. A number of oil companies expressed interest in exploring the island in the 1970s, and the Mobil Oil Company successfully negotiated a highly restricted lease in October 1971, less than two years after the much-publicized oil spill at Santa Barbara. The state attorney general's office filed suit against Mobil and Santa Barbara County (which had issued a drilling permit), claiming that drilling "could destroy the esthetic, recreational and ecological value" of the island, at the time under consideration for inclusion in a national park; the suit demanded an environmental impact statement.⁴²⁶ Mobil, under pressure from negative public opinion about the proposed island drilling operations, took modern precautions with their construction and drilling:

Each location was treated like an offshore drilling platform, and we took the same precautions that are normally required in the North Atlantic, the Pacific offshore and the Gulf of Mexico. The whole operation was sort of a test case. We had to reconfirm that an oil company could successfully drill in an environmentally hypersensitive area.

Mobil geologists John Forman and Lloyd Edwards prepared the plan for drilling and testing, and with other geologists supervised the drilling. A crew ranging in size from 25 to 55 occupied the abandoned Air Force base at Johnsons Lee, receiving equipment and supplies via barge at Officers Beach. Mobil drilled six unsuccessful wells: Santa Rosa #5 at Jolla Vieja (1,003 feet elevation); Santa Rosa #6 at Sierra Pablo (2,497 feet); Santa Rosa #7 at Carrington Point (3,996 feet); Santa Rosa #8 on Black Mountain (4,000 feet); Santa Rosa #9 at Tecolote Canyon (2,502 feet); and DS-SRI #1 (drilled for Diamond Shamrock; 2,500 feet) west of Garañon Canyon on the west end. All were drilled, plugged and abandoned between 1973 and 1975. DS-SRI #1 would be the last oil well drilled on Santa Rosa Island. No oil of any extent had

⁴²⁴Ibid.; "Report From Santa Rosa Island," pp. 2, 3.

⁴²⁵Ibid. p. 4; Daily et al, "Oil Exploration;" oral history interviews with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 23-24, and with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 11, SCIF.

⁴²⁶Unidentified newspaper clipping dated December 7, 1972, SCIF.

been found in over forty years of exploration. Of the last well, the Mobil geologist summed up the situation: “We really pounded every nail in the coffin on that island. It was over.”⁴²⁷

Geological research on Santa Rosa Island has not been limited to oil exploration. Paleontologists working on the island have for decades investigated the geological history of the island, and academic geologists have spent time exploring the island. The United States Geological Survey published topographic maps, in four quadrangles, of the island in 1943. Thomas Dibblee returned after almost sixty years to produce, with John J. Woolley (geologist and Vail family member) and Helmut Ehrenspeck, a geologic map of the island published in 1998. Woolley published three other papers on Santa Rosa Island geology.

During the early 1990s Kenneth Cole of the National Biological Survey and Geng-wu Liu of Academia Sinica in China investigated the Holocene paleovegetation at the Old Ranch site, called Abalone Rocks Marsh during the study. Using coring and radiometric dating technologies, the pair found evidence of Torrey pine pollen dating from the middle to late Holocene, and documented “unprecedented” erosion, sedimentation and vegetation change as a result of grazing by sheep and cattle on the island.⁴²⁸

Resources remaining from the oil industry’s attempts at drilling include the road built by Standard Oil in 1932, now one of the two major roads on the island, and some debris at the drilling site; the mostly-abandoned Signal road and some debris remains from drilling in various locations.

The Natural Sciences: Study on Santa Rosa Island

The Channel Islands have long attracted the interest of naturalists because of their isolation and potential for study of adaptation and evolution of plants and animals. Santa Rosa Island has a long history of scientific examination that has been carried out with the blessings of the island’s owners. The island supports over 360 native plant taxa and four species of native animals, three species of native reptiles and two species of native amphibians. Non-native floral and faunal species also inhabit the island, including grasses and weeds, and animals such as elk and deer.⁴²⁹

As with archeological exploration, the first natural history investigations appear to have been linked with the U. S. Coast Survey of the Santa Barbara Channel, 1852-1875. During Stehman Forney’s mapping expedition in 1872-1873, William G. W. Harford collected botanical specimens, and was later joined by prominent California botanist Albert Kellogg. Townshend S. Brandegee made extensive collections in 1888, reporting some 200 plant taxa on the island. Blanche Trask collected on Santa Rosa Island in 1900, but her specimens were destroyed in two separate fires. Philip Mills Jones did a small amount of collecting

⁴²⁷Daily et al, “Oil Exploration;” oral history interviews with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 23-24, SCIF.

⁴²⁸Kenneth Cole and Geng-wu Liu, “Holocene Paleoecology of an Estuary on Santa Rosa Island, California” in *Quaternary Research* 41, [1994], pp. 326-335.

⁴²⁹Steve Junak, “A History of Botanical Exploration and Discovery on Santa Rosa Island,” in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 169-170; NPS, *Resources Management Plan*, 1997, pp. 54-61.

while pursuing his archeological explorations in 1901, and was the last known scientist to pay attention to island botany until 1922.⁴³⁰

Harford of the Coast Survey also collected specimens of insects, as did Reverend Stephen Bowers in 1877. Gustav Eisen of the California Academy of Sciences made at least two trips to Santa Rosa Island, collecting spiders, beetles, earthworms and invertebrates, most of which were also destroyed in a fire. The first professional entomologist to collect on the island was Edward P. Van Duzee of the California Academy of Sciences who visited in May of 1919.⁴³¹

In the 1920s a number of botanists visited Santa Rosa Island, including Mary Fisk Spencer (June 1922) and Guy L. Fleming who investigated the Torrey pine (July 1922, May 1924 and April 1928). Ralph Hoffmann, director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, has long been considered to be the most active naturalist on the island of his time. Between 1927 and 1932, Hoffmann made at least ten trips to the island, at times accompanied by botanists Philip A. Munz, Elizabeth Crow and John Voss. Hoffmann's work, according to Steve Junak, "contributed significantly to our current knowledge of the island's plant life. [Hoffmann's] discoveries nearly doubled the known flora of Santa Rosa Island." At least ten other botanists explored the islands in the 1930s, including LeRoy Abrams and Ira L. Wiggins of Stanford University and Carl C. Epling of UCLA.⁴³²

The Los Angeles Museum expeditions to the islands, the Channel Islands Biological Survey, explored many aspects of natural and cultural history on Santa Rosa Island. Headed by the museum's Dr. John A. Comstock and led by entomologist Don Meadows, the Survey's Fourth Expedition sent eight scientists to the island from August 4 to 11, 1939. Besides Comstock and Meadows, vertebrate zoologist Jack von Bloeker, invertebrate zoologist George Kanakoff, botanist M. B. Dunkle, entomologist Lloyd Martin, student biologist Jewel Lewis and cook Russell Sprong made up the expedition. The team covered about 20% of the island, centering along the northeast coast from Black Mountain to East Point to Carrington Point. Meadows noted that the island "nearly approaches the original ecological conditions" due to the strict control of grazing and public access by Vail & Vickers, and the lack of sheep. Of the expedition, Meadows reported:

One hundred and ninety two vertebrates were collected during the week spent on Santa Rosa. The first night in camp von Bloeker trapped a small series of the Santa Rosa White-footed Mouse, and the following night, a few hours after sunset, he took 62 mice within a few yards of the Survey headquarters [the old school house]. A new race of *Peromyscus* mouse was discovered on the island. Santa Rosa Island foxes were common and tame. The careful way in which the Vail and Vickers ranch is conducted maintains the summer vegetation in fine condition. Fifteen hundred sheets of one hundred and three species of plants were collected for the Museum. Insects were abundant. Coleopters, Hymenoptera and Diptera were especially common, and in all, over 4600 specimens were accumulated.

Seven thousand, two hundred and seventy six biological specimens and considerable ecological material were gathered by the Survey party on Santa Rosa Island.⁴³³

⁴³⁰Junak, "Botanical Exploration," pp. 170-173.

⁴³¹Scott E. Miller, "A History of Entomological Exploration on Santa Rosa Island," *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 194-195.

⁴³²Junak, "Botanical Exploration," pp. 174-177. See also Wright, "An Islandian on the Islands," pp. 73-91. Wright makes many detailed observations about the island based on his visit there in 1930 with Hoffmann and others.

⁴³³Meadows, *Progress Report*, pp. 16-18.

The 12th and 13th Expeditions visited Santa Rosa Island in 1941. The 12th Expedition of March and April 1941 included botanist Reid Moran and entomologist Chris Henne, as well as the zoologists von Bloeker and Kanakoff. George Willett, curator of Mammalogy at the museum, filed a report on the 13th Expedition that consisted mainly of archeologists and paleontologists seeking the dwarf mammoth. Mammalogist Kenneth E. Stager collected and preserved 18 specimens of the island Spotted Skunk, eleven Santa Rosa Island Fox skins and one bat, leading Willett to comment that “we now have much the finest lot of Santa Rosa Island mammals in existence.” Willett and his wife Ora collected birds, mostly indigenous species. He collected and preserved 88 specimens of 18 kinds of birds, a bald eagle skeleton and a few land mollusks. Willett also observed 59 bird species, of which thirteen were recorded from Santa Rosa Island for the first time. The bombing of Pearl Harbor interrupted the 13th Expedition, and the onset of war canceled the Channel Islands Biological Survey.⁴³⁴

Numerous botanists visited the island after the war, including Reid Moran, oak expert Cornelius Muller, and Clifton Smith and Ralph Philbrick of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. Smith and Philbrick performed volumes of research on the Channel Islands during their careers, and published many important papers on the subject. An experiment to control heel flies, bane of the rancher, was undertaken from 1960-1963 by UC Riverside and Dow Chemical Company; the experiment proved successful. Entomologists continued to collect and study the insects of the island, including groups from the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale and the USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History commenced a series of zoological expeditions to Santa Rosa Island in 1975. Representatives of Stanford University, the California Academy of Sciences, the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, University of California at Santa Barbara and University of California at Los Angeles have visited the islands. Marla Daily and Ann Bromfield collected plant species numerous times in the 1970s and 1980s; Steve Junak of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden has collected extensively on Santa Rosa Island and many of the islands and has published books and numerous articles on the island flora. Daniel Guthrie has performed recent work of significance on environmentally sensitive small birds and animals on the island. Dr. R. Scott Anderson of Northern Arizona University has conducted research on fire history, paleoecology and climate history of plant communities on Santa Rosa and other park islands.⁴³⁵

Since government purchase of the island, National Park Service natural resources staff and others have undertaken dozens of studies of many aspects of island flora, fauna, hydrology and geology. In partnership with museums and universities, the island has never seen the amount of study and monitoring occurring today. The National Park Service has implemented long-term ecological monitoring on the island to track the health and changes of the ecosystem. The island is changing rapidly due to recovery following the removal of non-native ungulates (cattle, pigs, deer, elk, horses). Additionally, the physical

⁴³⁴Willett, *Expedition No. 13 . . . Report on Birds and Mammals*, pp. 1-5; Miller, “Entomological Exploration,” p. 195.

⁴³⁵Junak, “Botanical Exploration,” pp. 177-181; Miller, “Entomological Exploration,” pp. 196-197; R. Scott Anderson, “Fire History and Vegetation of the Northern Channel Islands, Channel Islands National Park, California: Phase II,” Channel Islands National Park and Northern Arizona University, 31 January 2001; comments by Don Morris [2000].

environment is changing at an accelerated pace due to human-induced climate change, sea level rise, and ocean acidification. The goal of the NPS is to eliminate non-natural stressors to the degree possible to best support the continued presence of endemic species and natural assemblages of plants and animals.

Ecological restoration projects are underway to assist the recovery in areas of the island that are unlikely to recover on their own. Preservation of buildings, historic landscape features, and prehistoric resources is a priority of the park. The natural and cultural sciences are now well represented on a permanent and full-time basis.

Park Management and Public Access

Channel Islands National Park's General Management Plan (GMP), adopted under the direction of park superintendent Bill Ehorn in January of 1985, included a conceptual plan for Santa Rosa Island, designating it to be a focal point for visitor use after the Vail & Vickers operations ceased. After the island changed hands, the park GMP and Statement for Management took effect. The park's Development Concept Plan (DCP) for the island noted that

Because of its size, ruggedness, diversity and unique resources, this island has the potential to provide visitors with opportunities to enjoy multi-day exploration of insular and marine resources, participate in unique learning experiences, and be surrounded by early California history.

The NPS established their headquarters and visitor center in the abandoned Air Force motor pool maintenance building at Johnsons Lee. Superintendent Ehorn didn't want to interfere with the ranch operations for the duration of the 25-year reservation agreement and five-year special use permits. The park initiated a number of projects on the island including reconstruction of the pier with metal pilings and upgrading the water and electrical systems.⁴³⁶

Within a few years park management realized the headquarters arrangement at Johnsons Lee wouldn't work: water had to be imported; Johnson's Lee was too isolated causing an excessive number of long trips over the island to the pier, thus causing damage to roads and requiring additional maintenance to vehicles; and visitor contacts were few. By 1990 the park began establishing more permanent facilities at Bechers Bay; one NPS trailer had been placed there as early as 1989, to be followed by a generator building, maintenance shop and new water system to serve both the park's needs and those of the Vail & Vickers. In 1999 construction on the hill behind Windmill Canyon of two two-bedroom duplexes for park staff commenced; three one-bedroom units were added, as well as two four-car garages to complete the residential complex.⁴³⁷

The first public visitors arrived by chartered plane, private yacht or on a concession vessel. Channel Islands Aviation of Camarillo, Island Packers in Ventura and Truth Aquatics of Santa Barbara were awarded park concessions to provide visitor access to all the park islands. Ranch and park rules forbade

⁴³⁶Oral History interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston.

⁴³⁷Personal communication with Tim Glass and Don Morris by the author.

visitors from wandering freely, but NPS provided guided tours with a ranger through the ranch complex and to the Torrey pines.⁴³⁸

Around 1990 the NPS built a small campground in Water Canyon about one mile south of the pier, open by reservation. Still, visitors could not explore the island freely because of the active cattle operation and hunting season. Not until the cattle operation ceased did the park service open the island, although on a limited basis. Visitors could explore the island on an unlimited basis except during the commercial hunting season, and for seasonal closings of areas at and near Skunk Point for bird nesting. Seasonal beach camping from kayaks has also been allowed. Popular attractions have been the Torrey pines and scenic Lobo Canyon, where a lucky hiker might get a shuttle ride from a ranger or volunteer. With the end of Vail & Vickers use and occupancy in 2011, visitors are able to walk through the ranch when they disembark at Becher's Bay and explore the island. The park has published a hiking map that details some 50 miles of trails, almost all of which are former ranch roads.



Planes used the flat fields at Bechers Bay until a landing strip was constructed. *Courtesy of E. K. Smith*

⁴³⁸*Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Development Concept Plan, Santa Rosa Island, March 1994, pp. 1-2; Los Angeles Times, June 20, 1988, p.3; oral history interview with Al Vail, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, transcript p. 24, SCIF.*

Significance and Recommendations

Vail & Vickers' cattle ranch on Santa Rosa Island was one of California's largest operations of its kind and the most commercially successful of the Channel Islands. It was likely the last intact large Mexican land grant rancho in California, one whose boundaries and uses had not changed in over 150 years. Until closure of the ranching operation, a manager, foreman and cowboys ran the ranch in the style they had for most of that century-and-a-half: raising healthy livestock in a rich and spectacular landscape, gathering the cattle on horseback into remote roundup grounds and corrals, cutting them into pens, driving them overland on well-worn trails, and herding them in darkness onto a rare wooden cattle boat, the last of its kind on the Pacific Coast. It was a world of bunkhouses, silver and leather tack, rope and barbed wire, old wooden barns, fence lines that ran for miles, productive pastures, and fresh meat in the cooler, all surrounded by the Pacific Ocean. The modern conveniences of the mainland were kept to a minimum: a couple of pickup trucks, a road grader, a couple of television sets, a refrigerator, and a primitive landing strip.

The Santa Rosa Island ranching heritage should not be lost in a fuzzy romantic snapshot of western cowboys riding the range. Rather it was a real thing: a longtime family business operation with remarkable historic integrity, both physically and on a very human and personal level. One hundred years ago a pair of successful mainland ranching families took on an additional and unique ranch property which outlasted their other business interests; this challenging operation passed through the hands of three and four generations. Their employees lived close to the land, working as a team for all their waking hours. All of them, from management to vaquero, were devoted to their chosen livelihood and way of life.

The ending of the ranching activity on the island compromised the uniquely high level of historic integrity that the island possessed, and that once-living history described above is irreplaceable. Only by the committed efforts of the National Park Service and its partners can the story of the ranching life on Santa Rosa Island be kept alive through preservation and interpretation.

Notwithstanding the removal of cattle and vaqueros, the remaining ranch buildings and landscape features of the Vail & Vickers Ranch on Santa Rosa Island possess a high level of historic integrity. The ranch complex at Bechers Bay contains intact ranch houses, barns, outbuildings, corrals, windbreak trees and the pier, along with many of the ranch implements and equipment. The island range includes fence lines, roads, roundup corrals and grounds, line camps, water tanks and historic sites associated with the ranching heritage of the island. The historic significance of the island ranching era is great as well. The contribution to California agriculture and economy, the architecture of the buildings and barns, the social aspects of cattle ranching, all add to its historic significance. It is recommended that the entire island be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a Rural Historic District or cultural landscape. Other significant resources may be significant as well, and it is recommended that they be treated as components in various thematic nominations: the World War II radar station site for its contribution to coastal defenses of Southern California during World War II; the South Point Lighthouse for its contribution as an aid to navigation for the coastal maritime industry; and the archeological resources of the island and its neighbors.

As has been noted in this document, Santa Rosa Island possesses a rich and varied history spanning two centuries, as well as the prehistoric activities and paleontological interests. Under the management of the National Park Service, these resources, and the natural resources that are of great importance as well, should be preserved and interpreted for generations to come.

Statement of Significance and Context

Summary

The Santa Rosa Island Ranching District is significant on a local level under Criteria A and C as an intact nineteenth and twentieth century California sheep and cattle ranch. Further significance under Criterion B may be determined at a future date pending further research to develop a broader context for significant ranching figures in Santa Barbara County and California. Its period of significance is 1870-1960, starting with the construction of the main house at Bechers Bay and ending at a point at which the ranching operation had reached its maturity as a cattle ranch. The vernacular landscape at the Vail & Vickers Ranch on Santa Rosa Island retains historic integrity and is in fair condition. The seven qualities of historic integrity (location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association) relating to the ranching operation remain intact. As a rural vernacular landscape, the Vail & Vickers Ranch retains integrity in all landscape characteristics except land use; in that category, several years of inactivity is visible in the vegetation growth in former grazing and cultivated areas. The ranch retains integrity in its natural systems and features, spatial organization, cluster arrangement, topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, constructed water features, cultural traditions, views and vistas, archeology and small scale features.

Vail & Vickers and its predecessor, the More family, created and operated one of the largest and most productive livestock ranches in the state, contributing to the growth of agriculture and the continued economic development of Southern California and the West (Criterion A). Island owner A. P. More, as well as members of his immediate family, was a prominent landowner and early agriculturalist and businessman in Santa Barbara County; Walter L. Vail and J. V. Vickers and their heirs owned a handful of large ranches in California and Arizona, being among the important men in the livestock industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The three owner families constructed buildings, structures, and a complex system of fields and pastures, ranch roads, watering systems, and roundups that now stand as good examples of a rural vernacular landscape, showing how the ranchers adapted to the unique island environment to develop a large stocker cattle ranch within the context of shrinking ranches along the California coast and the general conversion to feedlot ranching throughout the United States (Criterion C).

The property's significance in agriculture in the southern coastal area of California can be seen in the extant historic features that are located across the island. A complex of buildings at Bechers Bay acted as the headquarters and includes houses, barns, sheds, utility buildings, corrals, water systems, a long pier and historic vegetation. On the outer parts of the island are two "line camps" and a vast network of corrals,

fencing and roads, all of which played important parts in operating the ranch. Water systems, including wells, springs, pipelines, tanks, troughs and reservoirs are found at numerous locations on the island. Many of these resources were developed in the nineteenth century, while other buildings and structures originated during periods of change, upgrading and modern improvement during the twentieth century. The reuse of available materials during the latter part of the period of significance embodies the unique situation of operating an island ranch. These features come together as a whole, with its patterns of fields, circulation routes, building clusters and vegetation producing a holistic and intact historic landscape.

These features, which possess cohesion of purpose and historical integrity, represent the important livestock industry of California, which had its start with the Spanish missions of the late 1770s and blossomed during the Gold Rush and early statehood. The ranches contributed to the local and state economy through depressions, wars and during the unprecedented growth of post-war America. Until the end of ranching on the island in 1998, the ranch was operated under the traditional system of *vaqueros* (*Spanish: cowboys*) on horseback tending cattle, which would be shipped to and from the mainland using a unique system of wooden cattle boats and barges.

Context: Sheep and Cattle Ranching in California and Santa Barbara County

California holds an important place in American history for many reasons, not the least of which is its leading role in the country's westward expansion and its contributions through agricultural production. The first industry in California, predating even the American period, was stock raising for purposes of providing food and clothing. This industry grew to become one of the hallmarks of California's growth during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and helped it maintain its position as the country's leading agricultural producer since the 1950s. On Santa Rosa Island, owners and their employees developed a large stock ranch that evolved and contributed to these industries, especially on a local level as the largest and most productive stocker cattle ranch in Santa Barbara County, yet did so against the odds of operating from an isolated, weather-beaten island some thirty miles offshore of the southern California mainland.

In making the second-largest land grant in Santa Barbara County (neighboring Santa Cruz Island was the largest), the Mexican governor granted Santa Rosa Island to the Carrillo brothers, two men prominent in the development of Alta California. These men immediately passed the property to the daughters of one of them, who in turn allowed their American husbands to develop a ranch. Alpheus Thompson and John C. Jones had also made a place for themselves in the history of Mexican California as traders and businessmen. In 1844 Thompson and Jones stocked the island with cattle, sheep and horses and began to develop facilities including houses and corrals. All commerce with the mainland was by boat. By 1868 the island had passed into the ownership of the More family, who were prominent in Santa Barbara-area commerce. The Mores constructed a well-defined complex of ranch buildings, including houses, barns and corrals, and stocked the island entirely with sheep in numbers that ranged up to 80,000 at one time, becoming one of the largest sheep ranches in the state.

While sheep provided wool and meat from the earliest days of the Spanish missions in California, not until the Gold Rush of 1849-1860 did sheep ranching grow as a Western industry. Events of that period

brought not only thousands of people to California but also the eyes of the east coast and other parts of the world looking to exploit the new state's material riches. What would be called the state's "other gold"—agricultural products—came into prominence as the state's major industry and its contribution to the growth of the country during the industrial revolution and 20th century. The Santa Rosa Island sheep ranch, by virtue of its size and production, contributed to the state's economy and reputation as a premier region for wool production.

Significant sheep production in the United States began in the 1830s and 1840s bringing about changes in ranching processes and product focus. For example, Spanish Merino were introduced into this country for their wool rather than meat. With this new emphasis, the east coast woolen mills developed new manufacturing techniques that, especially during and after the Civil War, created a demand and spurred a boom in sheep ranching in the American West. The Gold Rush brought immigrants from all over the world to California, including French and Basque who arrived with sheep ranching skills from their homelands. By the early 1870s, Los Angeles became a major sheep and wool market, and the statewide sheep industry enjoyed a boom that lasted into the 1880s when it peaked.

The years of A. P. More's sheep ranching operations coincide with the dramatic rise in sheep ranching in the state. Under his management, Santa Rosa Island became known as one of California's finest sheep ranches, giving impetus to the development of high quality sheep ranches elsewhere in the state. More's neighbors on Santa Cruz Island also focused on sheep raising and even surpassed Santa Rosa in production. Most of the other Channel Islands, including the southern group, supported sheep operations as well.

Natural conditions played a major role in the success of the sheep industry on the California coast. Conditions were excellent for grazing and the Channel Islands provided rangeland free of predators. Although a drought in 1862-1864 devastated the California livestock industry, sheep made a remarkable rebound and took over some of the range formerly grazed by cattle. The health of the sheep industry leveled out after the boom-and-bust 1870s as the west settled into its permanent status as the dominant wool-growing region of the country. California consistently ranked second behind Texas in numbers of sheep and wool clip. More entered the business at the height of the wool boom, and his ranch proved to be the second largest sheep ranch on the California coast (after neighboring Santa Cruz Island) and, as smaller outfits turned from sheep to cattle, the islands' output dwarfed that of any other ranch in Santa Barbara County.

Although successful in these endeavors, the family's interest began to dwindle after the death of A. P. More in 1893. In 1901 the island was sold to a pair of Los Angeles cattlemen, Walter L. Vail and J. V. Vickers. Messrs. Vail and Vickers both had been pioneers in the Arizona cattle industry, having been neighbors on their vast holdings in and around Tombstone. The two had, separately, established themselves in the California cattle and land business in the late nineteenth century, buying large ranches in southern part of the state. Their activities mimicked, but on a smaller scale, the business of Miller & Lux, a partnership of German immigrants that grew to dominate the cattle and irrigation industry in the West. Miller & Lux owned and/or controlled millions of acres of land between the 1860s and 1930s but eventually failed after neglecting economic threats from outside packing houses and corporate ranch operators. Smaller, but still relatively huge ranches such as General Beale's sprawling 200,000-acre Tejon

Ranch in the Tehachapi Mountains east of Santa Barbara, the 100,000-plus acre Irvine Ranch on Orange County, the million-acre Rock Springs Land & Cattle Company in the Mojave Desert (mostly operating on public lands) and the varied operations of Vail & Vickers, continued to prosper through much of the twentieth century.

On Santa Rosa Island Walter Vail and J. V. Vickers incorporated their partnership as Vail & Vickers, Inc., and commenced stocking the island with beef cattle while removing the sheep. Eventually the island supported between 6,000 and 8,000 head of cattle on its 52,000 acres, all shipped to the island as calves and shipped off ready for fattening and market. Vail & Vickers expanded the Mores' network of roads, fence lines and water systems, and developed a number of roundup grounds and line camps on the island. Although incorporated, the Vail family managed the ranching operation through three generations, following island traditions laid down as early as the Thompson era. The isolation of the island ranch supported the preservation of its traditions and features, and kept twentieth-century subdivisions and non-ranching development at bay.

The Vail & Vickers Ranch was a major part of Santa Barbara County's cattle industry, raising up to 20% of the county's beef cattle at various times between 1940 and 1980. Most large local beef cattle ranches, such as the 34,000-acre San Fernando Rey Ranch and the 28,000-acre Bixby Ranch, operated as cow-calf farms with small numbers of stockers adding up to a maximum of three to four thousand head. Even among those, Vail & Vickers remained the largest with five to eight thousand head on the range at any one time. Santa Barbara County, while never a leader in California's beef industry, nevertheless held a position among the top ten or twelve cattle producers throughout the twentieth century and usually led production in coastal Southern California. California became the nation's largest agricultural producer by 1948, with cattle the major commodity of the state's production. California cattle production followed only Texas and a few other Western states in economic importance nationwide. Vail & Vickers proved to be among the last of the large ranches in operation in the state, as most of the prominent cattle ranches such as the Irvine Ranch and the Hollister Ranch fell to subdivisions. At the time of its closure in 1998, the Vail & Vickers Ranch was the largest undivided land grant rancho in Santa Barbara County. Its greatest significance in relation to the cattle industry, however, lies in the period during the 1940s and 1950s as California's feeder cattle industry boomed. While historic resources such as buildings and circulation routes remain from the More era, the ranch gains much of significance in the evolution into a prominent and successful cattle ranch during the twentieth century.

Livestock ranching in northern Santa Barbara County took a downturn in the 1920s through the 1940s with the development of row crop farming, a result of improved transportation opportunities, organized marketing and irrigation. Military acquisitions of coastal ranches around Point Conception to the northwest also contributed to the demise of many family ranches, mostly dairies; beef cattle ranching continued in the Santa Ynez Valley, along the coast between Vandenburg Air Force Base and Goleta, and on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands. The industry revived during and after World War II. While the number of cattle and prices for cattle sold steadily rose in Santa Barbara County during the 1940s and 1950s, the acreage devoted to stock raising dipped from 610,000 acres to 426,000 acres between 1955 and 1958, and continued to decline through the 1960s and 1970s.

Per capita consumption of beef in California more than doubled between 1940 and 1970, and the number of cattle on state farms reflected this rise, although national growth of cattle numbers did not match that of California's. Prices for beef off the farm rose almost 400% during the same period, with the most dramatic growth between 1940 and 1959. The industry took a dramatic downturn during the 1970s, which opened a period of instability that lasted two decades.

A science- and economy-driven revolution in production took place in the 1950s as cattle fattening in feedlots became popular with surpluses of grain and dwindling quality grazing land. Cattle feeding started in the 1930s but exploded after World War II, focused especially in the Midwest. In the twenty years following the war, the number of cattle on feed jumped by over 600%. Vail & Vickers followed this trend, switching in the 1950s from a cow-calf ranch (where cows produce calves for sale) to a stocker operation, in which steers are imported solely for preparation for feedlot finishing.

All of the historic California ranches mentioned above operated in a similar fashion that changed little since its beginnings as an industry, but few remained into the 1990s with integrity such as that found on Santa Rosa Island. Phases of economic expansion in California, especially during post-war booms, caused the breakup of most of the large old ranches, as family-run operations gave way to subdivisions and corporate ownership. For example, the decades following World War II saw explosive growth in the state that led to the decline of cattle ranching as a family enterprise, as real estate-oriented land and cattle companies purchased many of the remaining large acreages, to be operated under temporary leases to ranchers while awaiting development. During this period, ranch buildings deteriorated or were torn down. The typical layout of house, barns, supporting structures, fenced fields, rangeland, water distribution systems, cattle control structures was often fragmented with the coming of new uses to the property. The Vail & Vickers Ranch saw changes that only reflected the evolution of cattle ranching in a working landscape. While retaining most of the nineteenth century structures dating from the More period, Vail & Vickers constructed a few buildings specific to the needs of a cattle ranch, and replaced a major building lost to fire. They made use of available materials on the island, building structures with lumber, doors, windows, siding and guardrail scavenged from abandoned island military developments. The district is significant as an intact island ranching landscape with almost all components retaining integrity.

The Vail & Vickers Ranch is significant as a fine example of historic ranch complexes surviving in California and, more specifically, on the California coast. The ranch buildings and features embody a tradition of California coastal cattle ranching that was passed down through 125 years of island management and four generations of the Vail family. Its location on a coastal island only adds to its significance. The isolated conditions of Santa Rosa Island sparked the evolution of a unique maritime ranching operation, which was associated, until recently, with the 65-foot custom wooden cattle boat, *Vaquero II*, the last remaining cattle ferry on the west coast of North America; it is now out of service. The Upper House is an example of vernacular Greek revival architecture from the 1870s and is potentially significant within this context.

Coastal California ranchers of the nineteenth century developed a style in their buildings based on functionality, access to materials, response to natural conditions, and their knowledge of and nostalgia for their original homes, usually New England or the eastern Midwest. Most ranchers began with simple structures that filled the immediate needs of a newly established ranching operation: a small house, a

processing shed, minimal shelter for animals and various outbuildings, fences and water developments. They would later enlarge or replace the house with a better one of architectural interest, and build a large barn when economics permitted. The availability of redwood and Douglas fir, the former known for its durability and beauty and the latter for structural strength, made for an almost universal use of these woods as the primary materials in construction of houses and barns well into the twentieth century. The California barns, for example, were built with fir and redwood superstructures clad with rough sawn redwood siding and sawn cedar shingles. The builders stuck to a simple plan of gable roof with extended sheds, in contrast to the more ornate and elaborate construction of many East Coast barns. Horse barns and sheds also followed this simple plan. The houses, however, tended to be based entirely on East Coast architectural ideals, with decoration varying from simple to ornate. Not until the twentieth century did a distinctive California ranch house style develop and was accepted nationwide.

The ranch house and barns built by A. P. More in the 1870s and used for almost a century by Vail & Vickers represent good examples of developing California coastal ranch architecture of the nineteenth century. The ranch house is simple yet attractive, and its function is unquestioned, having stood on its original location through storms and salt air for more than 130 years. Most of its alterations occurred near the end of the period of significance, as the economy of the island ranch improved along with the general trend statewide, spurring improvements in comfort and efficiency. The barns also show their durability and function, with simple board construction and few alterations. The other outbuildings, built by Vail & Vickers and including the scale house, branding shed, school and China Camp cabin, are additional examples of the utilitarian structures needed to operate the island cattle ranch.

From its inception, Channel Island National Park has recognized the historical importance of the ranch, noting its intact cultural features and the continuing traditions that had retained the ranch's historic feeling and associations. Studies have found that few alterations have occurred to the historic landscape and that the features more than adequately convey its significant associations to the period of significance, 1873-1960 under Criteria A and C. This period encompasses the significant ranching period on Santa Rosa Island from the time of the More family's development of permanent ranching infrastructure to the heyday of Santa Barbara County beef cattle ranching fifty years ago.

Historic Resources

Santa Rosa Island's history is reflected in the dozens of remaining buildings, structures, roads, fences and vegetation described below. The resources contribute to a proposed Santa Rosa Island Ranching District. As an intact cultural landscape, the island possesses integrity; please refer to the Level II Cultural Landscape Inventory completed in 2002 for more detail on the landscape characteristics of the island ranch.⁴³⁹

The island is also rich in archeological resources. Archeological survey unrelated to this project continues, and archeological resources will be documented as part of a National Register of Historic Places multiple property nomination, or in a separate archeological district nomination.

Buildings

Ranch (Upper) House (contributing)
Structure # 527, IDLCS 59640

The construction of Alpheus Thompson's second house on Santa Rosa Island marked the movement of ranch operations from Rancho Viejo (Old Ranch) near East Point to the Northwest Anchorage at Bechers Bay. The first building in this vicinity has been described as a large ranch house built around 1855 in "a cypress grove," although it is unlikely that the cypress trees had been planted at that time. In May 1860, U.S. Coast Survey employee William Greenwell sketched a building very close to a bend in the creek at Ranch House Canyon. This building is believed to be what later became known as the lower ranch house or bunkhouse (which burned to the ground in 1969), although the possibility exists that it is the subject ranch house.⁴⁴⁰

It is most likely that the family of A. P. More, who purchased the island in stages between 1859 and 1869, constructed the current "Upper House" or main ranch house at Bechers Bay, the residence that has come to be known as the Vail & Vickers Ranch House, after 1869. In the spring of 1873 the [Santa Barbara] *Index* published a series of reports on Santa Rosa Island, detailing the More's progress on the island. One article noted that the Mores were currently constructing a new house as well as a pier and a water system to transport water by pipeline from a spring some two miles away. The U.S. Coast Survey topographic map, drawn by Stehman Forney in 1873, clearly shows the ranch house in its current location, surrounded by a fence; another building stands in the location of the existing bunkhouse, with corrals adjacent to it. Forney, who spent two years making the survey, appears to have been working on the island at the time the subject ranch house was built.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹*Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II: Santa Rosa Island Ranching District*. Prepared by National Park Service, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, 2002.

⁴⁴⁰ Record Group 23, Box 144, Book 25048, NA(CP).

⁴⁴¹ Articles from the *Index* published in March and April of 1873, edited and reprinted in "The Way It Was," *Santa Barbara News-Press*, February 10, 1991.

Physical evidence indicates that the original form of the house was a two-story gable-roofed rectangular mass with a one-story shed running the full length of the west side, forming an almost square floor plan and a design reminiscent of traditional saltbox architecture. The roofs were clad with wood shingles. A brick chimney served a fireplace in the north bedroom on the second floor. At least two outbuildings stood adjacent to the house, a kitchen with a tall brick chimney, located several feet south of the west end of the south elevation and later absorbed into the mass of the house, and an outhouse. The Mores planted Monterey cypress trees as a windbreak to the north and east, and planted two trees directly in front of the house, framing the porch.

A writer in 1893 described the “cozy ranch house, behind a group of high-shouldered Monterey cypress, squeezed out of shape by the wind . . . Here the owner of the island lives while at home in his island kingdom.” Another writer who visited the island in the 1890s described the “hacienda or ranch house of the Mores standing near a grove of cypress trees distorted and beaten down by the strong trade winds. From here one can look out on a little village made up of the various buildings appertaining to the business of shearing sixty thousand sheep—one of the largest herds in Southern California . . .”⁴⁴²

When Vail & Vickers purchased a share of the island in 1901, Walter Vail’s brother Edward described the house as “a two-story cottage furnished comfortably that made us think of cousin Kate’s house in Plainfield [New Jersey].” Earlier reports intimated that the ranch had become run-down in the 1890s due to neglect by the island’s previous owners, the heirs of A. P. More. While no records have been found, it is likely that Vail & Vickers spent money on the repair and maintenance of the ranch house during their early years of ownership.⁴⁴³

The picturesque two-story ranch house at Bechers Bay became the headquarters for the Vail and Vickers families, with generations of both families lodging there during visits and work periods. The Vail family, possessing the active role in running the island ranch, had the most impact on the life of the old house, performing maintenance and making the most use of the house. Margaret Vail Woolley, granddaughter of Walter Vail and familiar with the house since her childhood, described the house as it appeared in the 1930s and 40s, recalling green shutters on all of the windows, and grass matting placed on the floors that “smelled wonderful.”⁴⁴⁴ The older Vail family members remember fiberboard paneling in the house, dating the installation to the 1920s or 1930s. The linoleum flooring also may date to this period. While the family usually stayed in the house, visiting workers, researchers, and unexpected guests spent time there as well. The Vails hosted hunting parties throughout their ownership, and continue to house paying hunting guests during the fall hunts.

An earthquake shook the Santa Barbara area in 1925, causing serious damage to the city of Santa Barbara. E. K. Smith, six years old and a resident of the island at the time, stated that the ranch house was not damaged to his knowledge, although the quake was felt on the island.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴² K., “Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island,” pp. 492-501; Holder, *The Channel Islands*, p. 285.

⁴⁴³ Edward L. Vail to Agnes Vail, September 25, 1901, reprinted in *Island of the Cowboys*, p. 104.

⁴⁴⁴ Vail & Vickers-era information is drawn from oral history interviews with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript pp. 17-18; with E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily; with Russ Vail, July 28, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, all on file at Santa Cruz Island Foundation; interviews by the author with Al Vail, October 4, 1999; with Russ Vail, January 28, 2000 and January 23, 2001; with E. K. Smith, January 23, 2001; with Diego Cuevas, July 28, 2001; with Bill Wallace November 28, 2001.

⁴⁴⁵ Letter, E. K. Smith to Dewey Livingston, March 11, 2002.

Vail family members have noted that the floor plan of the house was changed in the 1950s under Ed Vail's direction. Originally one entered the front door to a narrow hallway; immediately on either side were doors into the two front bedrooms, each with a window facing east towards Bechers Bay and Santa Cruz Island. At the end of the hall was a door into the living room, a long rectangular room across the back of the house with a wood stove in the northeast corner. In the north wall of the living room was a door into the bathroom (located in the northwest corner of the house), equipped with a tub and a hot water tank. Water was heated in pipes that ran through the wall and through the wood stove on the other side of the wall in the living room and stored in the water tank in the bathroom. On the south side of the living room, a door exited to a partially enclosed area with a wood washbasin: this breezeway was open on the east side and its roof and west wall matched those of the attached kitchen. The kitchen was a small, gable-roofed building attached to the south side of the ranch house by the aforementioned wall and roof. The kitchen had a wood stove with brick chimney.

Upstairs in the house, there were two bedrooms; the northern (larger) one was heated by a fireplace with a hung brick chimney. Each bedroom had a window affording views to the north or south. The long, low area under the shed roof (west side of house) was accessed by a small door and used for storage; small windows lit either end (north and south) of this space.

The family used kerosene lanterns to light the house until after World War II, when a Delco plant in the barn provided electricity via overhead wires, which entered the house above and to the left of the front porch.

Beginning in 1950, the Vail family commenced a number of alterations to the ranch house under the direction of ranch manager Ed Vail, son of Walter Vail. Vail's employees removed a wall dividing the living room and south downstairs bedroom and installed a wall in the center of the former living room; in essence, moving a bedroom to the back of the house (adjacent to the bathroom) and reorienting the living room towards the south with newly-installed French doors and multi-light windows. The windows were salvaged from a recently abandoned World War II Army camp on the island. The nearby Army storage building shows a number of windows of the same size missing and infilled with siding.

In 1950 or 1951, Al Vail and ranch workers (including Bill Wallace) built a separate but architecturally compatible one-story building adjacent to the south side of the main house. The small gable-roofed structure, consisting of a bedroom and a bathroom, was constructed from a combination of new materials barged from the mainland and materials (such as the multi-light windows) salvaged from the Army camp. The cabin was placed on creosote blocks and connected to the main house kitchen by a wood wall aligned with the east elevations of this building and the adjacent kitchen and a plank walkway. Vail used the cabin as his residence and office while he stayed at the island. Al Vail became the ranch manager in 1962, a position he held until his death in 2000.



The Upper House, or main ranch house, on the Vail & Vickers Ranch, looking northwest, 1998. Al Vail's room is on the left. Kitchen center, and original house on the left. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

The Upper House has undergone a number of remodeling projects since those described above. Also in the early 1950s, the open area between the house and kitchen was enclosed with a diagonal wall, and the interior of the kitchen was remodeled. Large openings were cut in the south wall of the house and the north wall of the kitchen to join these rooms. The door in the south wall of the Upper House was located a bit east of the east elevation of the kitchen. Historic photographs show that the eave of the east slope of the breezeway roof was angled to cover the door. The east breezeway wall was built to align with the oblique eave. The bathroom on the first story was remodeled to include a toilet, eliminating the need for the backyard outhouse, which was then moved to its current corner location. The main chimney does not appear in a photograph dating after 1951, suggesting that it may have been demolished by this date, and only the base of the kitchen chimney remains at this date. At an unknown date sometime before 1968, a second story bathroom was installed by installing a massive, off-center shed-roofed dormer at the west side of the building. The utility pipes for the new bathroom exited the structure to the west, and were hidden by a small gable-roofed false dormer located under the bathroom dormer. Foreman Bill Wallace extended the kitchen towards the west and further remodeled it in 1970; at this time the lower portion of the kitchen chimney was removed. Wallace added a small water heater shed to the back of the house. He also jacked up the rear of the house and installed eucalyptus pilings, raising that end of the building a few inches and presumably leveling the floor. In the 1980s a utility porch was installed off the north side of the house to accommodate refrigerators and clothes washers for the commercial hunting clients and Bill Wallace installed composition shingles in the early 1980s, replacing roll roofing as the roofing material. Wallace remodeled the bathroom in Al Vail's cabin in 1985. Electrical services were buried by NPS in 1987, and the front porch posts and flooring were replaced in 2001.

The Vail & Vickers ranch house is called the Upper House by members of the Vail family. It is located on a level site about one-quarter of a mile south of the complex of barns and employee houses. The house yard, measuring about 120 feet square, is surrounded by a white horizontal-board fence and remnants of an encircling grove of Monterey cypress trees. Two tall, mature Monterey cypress trees were planted on either side of front door; in 2013 NPS removed the one on the left that had decayed on the inside and posed a hazard if it were to fall or drop limbs on people or the house beneath. Various ornamental bushes and trees line the back fence. The house yard is composed of trimmed Bermuda grass. There is an outhouse, now used for storage, at the rear (southwest) corner of the yard.

The house complex is actually composed of two buildings: the main house/kitchen and a small cabin connected by a short section of wall. The buildings form an ell shape, with an uncovered patio or courtyard in the center. The front door (apparently rarely used as an entrance) faces Bechers Bay or east. The rear of the building overlooks Ranch House Canyon, an incised perennial drainage backed by the hills of northern Santa Rosa Island.

The main house is a two-story, gable-roofed rectangle with a shed at the rear forming a square plan. The house has been described as a saltbox, but the shed roof appurtenance in the back is discontinuous from the primary roof, dropped by about six inches, and the result is not a true saltbox. The original roof has very shallow eaves. A flat shed dormer has relatively recently been placed asymmetrically at the rear, utilizing both the primary roof and the shed addition. A gabled dormer with no window has been added under this, to shelter utility pipes exiting the bathroom located in the dormer; it overhangs the rear wall by about a foot. A small water heater shed has been added to the rear as well. A shed porch supported with four posts protects the front door, and a flat-roofed utility porch has been added to the north side of the house. Both the kitchen addition and the cabin have gable roofs; an even later gable addition on the kitchen and an original bathroom extension on the cabin extend perpendicular from the main roofs. The roof surfaces are clad in composition shingles; the main house has no protrusions of chimney or vents, although the house once had a brick chimney. Vents penetrate the kitchen and cabin roofs.

The house sits on a foundation of eucalyptus posts, concrete piers and ground, while the later additions may be on concrete of some form. No foundation is visible at any location of the structure. Porch floors apparently sit on the ground: a small covered porch at the front door and an ell shaped board walkway stretching from the main house to the cabin.

The exterior walls are clad with shiplap siding. The siding under the gable and shed is trimmed with boards, with an indication of simplified cornice returns. The kitchen and cabin additions to the house all have siding nearly identical to the original. The house is painted white with green trim. Various utilities are run in conduit on exterior surfaces of the main house.

A relatively narrow door with a transom light marks the main entrance at the front of the house. What would appear to be the original house windows are six-over-six double hung windows, of which there are six; two smaller double-hung windows are found at the upper part of the shed addition and three small casement windows face the bay on the second floor. The north side of the main house has what are newer twelve-light fixed windows (salvaged from World War II Army buildings) and a set of French doors with ten lights each. The kitchen section also has a six-over-six double-hung window and a twelve-light fixed

window on an angled wall section. At its rear is an aluminum sliding window, and another aluminum window faces the rear of the main house. A panel door with screen door provides access to the kitchen from the outside front. The cabin, aligned with and connected to the kitchen with a shiplap wall, has one door facing east with screen door. It has four fixed twelve-light windows, two at the front, one at the south and one at the rear, while a small aluminum window has been placed in the bathroom wing. A rose bush is crowded into the corner at the rear of the cabin, a situation that could cause damage to the structure.

The interior of the house has been altered as well. The main house now has two bedrooms, a bathroom, a hall, a living/dining room downstairs, and two bedrooms and an added bath upstairs. A narrow stairway leads from the landing near the front door to the upper floor; under the stairway is a hidden door that leads to the living and dining room. The kitchen has been doubled in size with an addition to the rear. It is equipped with appliances, cabinets and storage. The interior walls are composed of painted celotex. The added cabin is simple and compatible in design, with one sleeping room and a small bathroom.

The main house measures roughly 28 by 32 feet, with a five-foot by 11-foot extension with one diagonal wall towards the kitchen addition. The kitchen measures 12 by almost 20 feet. The cabin is 14 by 20 feet with a six by nine-foot bathroom extension, and is separated from the kitchen by a five-foot gap that has a wood platform for propane canisters hidden behind a five-foot high shiplap wall.

Although the house has been well maintained through most of its life and is in good condition considering its age and location, the lack of a foundation had caused some settling to the main house. There is soil contact and vegetation is growing against the lower ends of the siding on all portions of the house. The trees at the front of the main house pose a hazard in the event of their dropping limbs or falling in a storm, although their presence is an important part of the landscape scene.

Vail & Vickers holds a reservation of use and occupancy on the house for a period of 25 years; it expires in December 2011.

Please see the recent *Historic Structure Report*, produced by Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco, for more detail.

Upper House Outhouse (contributing)
IDLCS 59647

An abandoned outhouse sits in the yard behind the main house. No record has been found to establish a date for construction of the outhouse, although it appears to be at least 100 years old and may be contemporary with the house, which would date it to about 1873. Island native E. K. Smith stated that the outhouse was moved in the 1950s from the back fence of the house to the current corner location. It was built and painted to match the house, with a steeply pitched gable roof with composition shingles, shiplap siding painted white and green trim of vertical boards. One door is located on the north side and a small window on the east. The outhouse measures 4 feet 9 inches by 6 feet 6 inches, and is in good condition. The outhouse was stabilized on a new foundation and repaired in 2003 by NPS.

Horse Barn (contributing)
IDLCS 59642

The horse barn, sometimes called the saddle barn, the barn & mechanical equipment storage building or simply the barn, no doubt dates from the heyday of the More sheep era. It was probably built in the mid-1870s, and contains graffiti dating from the 1890s. It is presumed that the Mores used the barn for horse stables, tack rooms, wagon and feed storage, and lodging for visiting sheep shearers during the season. It may have been used for shearing as well, and storage of wool. No documents have been found that definitively state the uses of the barn by the Mores, although the fiesta described in an 1893 article may have taken place in this building.

Vail & Vickers used the barn for stabling horses, tack rooms, feed storage, vehicle storage and mechanic's shop (a pit had been dug under the west room floor). The Navy used part of the barn to store their vehicles until the 1970s, and Vail & Vickers parked their trucks and tractor there often. A photograph of the barn taken in the 'teens shows it painted white. The Vails repainted the barn red in the 1930s or 40s and installed a corrugated metal roof in the 1950s. The barn has apparently seen few alterations; little documentation exists to provide a clear picture of any modifications.

The barn is the largest structure in the ranch complex, measuring 59 feet by 101 feet. It is a four-level building with a long main gable flanked by shed roofs of equal length in a traditional California barn design (rectangular footprint, simple roof line, vertical board siding, no adornment). It has a corrugated metal roof, rough-sawn random-width redwood board and batten siding painted red, and a foundation variously of stone and concrete. The openings, consisting of twin large open doorways on either (north and



The horse barn, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Graffiti in the horse barn, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Barns at Vail & Vickers Ranch, 1998. Left, horse barn, right generator barn, with matanza boilers in center, looking north. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

south) end and some closed-up windows, are trimmed with boards painted white. The east side of the barn, location of the stables, is an open wall facing a horse corral.

The barn can be divided for description purposes into three long rooms. The east portion is a long shed containing a colt shed, horse stalls with feed bins and an area with saddle racks where horses were prepared for ranch use. On the northern side of this area are two tack and storage rooms with a stairway up

to the loft. The central portion of the barn is two stories with wood plank floors and large door openings at either end; the lower part was used for feed storage, a carpenter shop and an area for storing fence materials, both with work benches. The larger area of the upper story of the central barn was used for storing additional feed; the use of this area as seasonal lodging is likely. Historical graffiti is found on the west wall of the loft near the north end. The inscriptions, appearing in black paint or ink, include: “John Hicks/Nov. 11, 1896/Santa Rosa/Island;” “Henry Lopez/Oct. 31/1896” (Lopez’ inscription is accompanied by fancy but crude decorations); and “[?] May 1, 1897.” This level of the barn also has an enclosed tack room and two rooms without east walls which are open to the lower level of the barn on its open end. The west portion is another shed off the main structure, with an old rough wood floor laid diagonally and otherwise one large room open at both ends with large doorways. A mechanic’s pit is located near the north end of this room. The 1984 appraisal found the barn to be in fair condition.. The condition of the barn has deteriorated in the intervening years and rehabilitation is urgently needed.

Generator Barn and Matanza Boilers (contributing)
IDLCS 59641

This building has been called the blacksmith shop, freezer barn and a barn-utility building in the 1984 appraisal. It was probably constructed in the early 1870s and housed the original blacksmith shop and other workshops and utility areas. It was originally twice the size with two side-by-side gable-roofed sheds, the western one sheltering the More’s massive matanza boilers. Some time after 1948 ranch crew removed the western structure, leaving the boilers exposed to the elements. The remaining building has been used by Vail & Vickers as a blacksmith shop, generator house, slaughterhouse and cold storage. Three cold rooms in the barn have not changed in the memory of ranch veterans; one held a freezer for making ice.

The building measures 32.5 feet by 49 feet and has a gable roof sheathed in corrugated metal (it was no doubt originally wood shingles). It is of mortise-and-tenon construction and has random-width board-and-batten siding painted red to match the horse barn. There are numerous window and door openings, all with wood trim painted white. The building contains six rooms: a maintenance/repair shop once housing a blacksmithy (equipment remains), with doors exiting to the east and north; a former generator room (equipped as of 1984 with two 30 kw Lima diesel generators) with a doorway facing the ocean; a workshop equipped (as of 1984) with a saw and grinder, with a door facing the ocean; a butcher room with a loading dock out its door which faces west; and two walk-in freezers with heavy doors. All the rooms have concrete floors. Outside the west side of the building stand two massive iron boilers on circular stone foundations with flattened fronts. The boilers are constructed of four rolled plates of iron riveted together with a convex top with hatch and a small doorway at the bottom. They each measure about 6 to 8 feet in diameter and 12 to 15 feet high. In these tanks hundreds of sheep carcasses would be rendered into fat in the infamous matanzas at the ranch during drought years.



The generator barn, with the upper ranch house in the distance, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Boilers dating from the More era outside the generator barn, 1999. These were once enclosed in a shed addition to the existing barn. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Bill Wallace noted the cattle chute on a ramp leading to the door located on the south side of the building: a steer could be walked up the chute to be keeled for slaughter, tumbling conveniently into the room through the door. The loading dock on the west side and ramp which was installed around 1988 accommodated trucks picking up meat and other supplies.

The 1984 appraisal rated this structure as fair to good condition and the 1997 LCS rated it fair, which describes it today. Despite the building's age it is remarkably solid, but is in need of rehabilitation.

Old Schoolhouse/Residence (contributing)
IDLCS 59639

The schoolhouse may have been the one used by the Mores in the late 1900s, but E. K. Smith claims that his father built it out of a generator shed around 1923. From that date until about 1932 eight to ten ranch children took their lessons in the little building from a teacher hired from the city. After the school use was discontinued, it was used for guest quarters and to house ranch workers. Diego Cuevas added a room in the early 1960s to make a more comfortable home, and lived in it until the new foreman's house was built in 1965 (some reports indicate that the addition was installed around 1946). It was occupied by cowboys until 1999.

Upon acquisition by NPS, the schoolhouse was composed of four rooms: a bedroom and kitchen, which had been adapted from the original school structure; a small living room; and a bathroom. The house measured 20 feet 3 inches by 27 feet 5 inches with a gable roof on the original portion and a shed-roofed addition, all covered with composition shingles. The original portion and part of the shed had wood frame windows, some six-over-six and others multi-light fixed sash. The large window in the living room shed



The former school house, converted into a residence, 1999. The older portion of the building is evident in the foreground. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

addition was aluminum. A simple shed roof formed a small porch or landing at the front door, which faces east. Concrete-asbestos siding had been applied to the entire structure, covering the original wood siding on the schoolhouse portion. The corners were trimmed with vertical boards painted green, as is all the trim. The concrete door stoop is inscribed with the date 2/3/52. A television antenna was mounted on a post attached to the southeast corner of the house. The house is surrounded by a sturdy horizontal-board fence painted white which forms a small yard, with a gate.

In 2014-2015 the NPS preservation crew restored the building to its historic schoolhouse appearance. The crew removed the addition on the south side, placed a new foundation under the building, removed the asbestos shingles, repaired/replaced the underlying horizontal siding and other members, restored the windows and front door and placed a new cedar shingle roof on the building. A new rear door was added, as in the original schoolhouse, and interior finishes were repaired and restored.

Corral Outhouse (contributing)
IDLCS 59648

The long-abandoned ranch outhouse is located on the side of the gully overlooking Ranch House Canyon across the road to the north from the barns. It measures about six by ten feet. It is of single-wall construction with vertical boards (square-cut nails have been noted) and has a gable roof covered with wood shingles. Three toilet holes can be seen. The corral outhouse was stabilized, placed on a new foundation and reroofed by NPS in 2003.

Ranch Outhouse in Windbreak (contributing)
IDLCS 59647

Another, smaller outhouse is found in the eucalyptus windbreak near the dipping vat. The one-seater outhouse is well constructed, has shiplap siding once painted red and has been long neglected. It is in good condition. This outhouse served vaqueros and residents of the small red house that once stood at the bend in the windbreak. The outhouse pit also has archeological potential. The outhouse was stabilized, repaired, placed on a new foundation and reroofed by NPS in 2003.

Scale House (contributing)
IDLCS 59638

Most literature states that the scale house was constructed around 1910, while Bill Wallace dates it to the early 1930s. Photographs from that period show the building in place, but with a steep-pitched gable roof. An inscription in the foundation reads, "Vail 2/17/4—[indecipherable]," indicating that the building was renovated in the 1940s, including installation of the foundation. This small but very important building houses a Howell livestock scale original to the building, used for precise weighing of incoming and outgoing cattle. A state inspector annually checked the accuracy and certified the scale.

The scale house measures 29 feet by 15 feet 4 inches. It has a low-pitched gable roof with corrugated metal roofing, and neat board-and-batten wood siding painted red. It is almost entirely open at the two ends where cattle entered and exited the scale. It has a concrete floor (the scale) and foundation. A chute guided cattle from the north end into the scale, and they exited into a small corral on the south end. The scale house is in good condition.

The scale house was an important part of ranch business, where outgoing steers would be weighed and evaluated, a process which determined the amount of income Vail & Vickers would acquire from a sale after roundup. Weights also determined the pattern of loading cattle on the cattle boats and barges. The scale house contributes to the historical significance of the Vail & Vickers Ranch.



Branding shed, view to north, 1999. The roof had been changed from a gable to this shed roof. Note the metal squeeze chute inside. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Branding Shed (contributing)
IDLCS 59637

Near the scale house is the branding shed (or chute shed), a utilitarian shelter housing the ranch squeeze chute and equipment used for processing incoming cattle and others as needed. The squeeze chute held cattle while they were vaccinated, dehorned and castrated. It was reportedly constructed around 1905-1910 but could have been constructed later. It is a wood frame structure with two open walls and a large opening on the north wall allowing entry of livestock from a chute; the west wall and upper parts of the north and south elevations are vertical planks nailed to a post-and-beam structure. The 17-foot 4-inch by 18-foot building is painted red. It has a corrugated metal shed roof and an additional narrow shed roof placed under the main roof's eave forming a protected "porch" running the length of the east side. A wood

floor area supports the metal squeeze chute while the remainder of the floor is earth. This squeeze chute was installed in the 1960s to replace a wooden one. There is soil contact and intrusive vegetation but the structure is in fair condition.

Rope House (contributing)

Vail & Vickers employees moved a small utility shed to this location above the entrance cut to the pier, to hold equipment used in boat and shipping activities; its date of construction and original location is unknown. The rope house measures 8 feet by 12 feet 2 inches. It was built of vertical boards covered by tarpaper, which was affixed with 1-inch by 2-inch battens. There is a window and a door. The building has a corrugated metal shed roof, a wood foundation and plywood floor. It has not appeared to be used for a number of years and is deteriorated. The rope house was stabilized, placed on a new foundation and reroofed by NPS in 2003.

WWII Storage Building (non-contributing)

The U. S. Army built a small complex of buildings, including two storage sheds and a barracks, south of the ranch house in 1943 as the transit base for the radar station situated on other parts of the island. The buildings became property of Vail & Vickers after the war, and all but one were removed. The Vails use the building for storage.

The storage building measures 20 feet 4 inches by 40 feet. It has a gable roof with composition shingles, concrete-asbestos siding and rests on concrete piers. It is in fair condition. It was remodeled between 1984 and 1987 with salvaged concrete-asbestos siding that covered the original horizontal wood siding and some of the window openings, after some original windows had been removed for reuse in the ranch house and school house.

Foreman's House (non-contributing)

Ranch hands built a new house for the foreman in 1965. An architect/builder drew up plans and visited the job site about once a week. Located on a flat area north of the road from the pier to the bunkhouse and barns, the builders ran into "nothing but rock" as they dug out the area for the foundation. Diego Cuevas claimed that the ground needed to be drained with pumps. The building was constructed out of various materials, most salvaged, including windows left over from a construction job in Santa Barbara, and doors, walls, some cabinetry and other items from the Air Force base at Johnsons Lee. Al Vail bought new plywood siding, roofing materials, and some cabinets. Cowboys did the construction work, interspersing it with their other ranch responsibilities; it took about 8 months to complete.

The foreman's house is a one-story rectangular building measuring 48.5 feet by 26.5 feet with an entrance/utility/bath extension to the west side measuring 24 feet by 5 feet. The gable roof has composition shingles installed over roll roofing (job done in 1983). The house has three bedrooms and two baths with

sheet rock ceilings with acoustic tiles in some rooms. Wall-to-wall carpeting was in all rooms except the kitchen in 1983.

In back of the house are two sheds. A utility building, constructed around 1977, measures 8 feet 2 inches by 12 feet 3 inches. A gun and saddle workshop that was moved to the site in 1976 measures 10 feet 3 inches by 20 feet 4 inches. It is wood frame with a gable roof covered in roll roofing and asbestos shingle walls. As of 1984 a septic tank was located in the rear of the house yard.

Bunkhouse (non-contributing)

The original bunkhouse and foreman's house burned to the ground on the night of November 3, 1969. After surveying the damage, Al Vail and Wallace sketched out a replacement bunkhouse on a napkin while returning to Santa Barbara on the *Vaquero II*. An architect put the plans on paper and, over the following year, Bill Wallace and his cowboys built the new bunk house in 1970, using for much of it salvaged Air Force materials including doors, plumbing, toilets, basins, and lumber.

The new bunkhouse is in an L-shape with an open porch running the length of the inside of the L. It is 20 feet wide with two wings, one 60 feet long (the kitchen, pantries and private bedroom) and the other 72 feet. The porch is 8 feet wide and totals 92 feet long. The freezer room added on the west side measures 32 feet by 8 feet.

In linear order from the southwest corner, the building layout shows: a kitchen-dining area with two pantries; a private bedroom with bath; a utility room with a sink and two lavatories; a central bathroom area with two toilets and two showers; six small bedrooms, three on each side of a hallway; and a lounge room with TV, sofa and lounge chairs. The kitchen has a counter and bar stools in the style of a diner, as well as a large table with chairs. An addition at the rear of the kitchen is used for storage, a cooler-freezer and butane tanks. Most of the interior features plywood paneling. In the back yard sits an abandoned brick bake oven.

Clearing the rubble after the bunkhouse fire, an old flagstone foundation measuring about 12 feet square was revealed; speculation arose whether the foundation was from the original house on the site built by Alpheus Thompson. The new bunkhouse covers this site.

Bunkhouse Shed (non-contributing)

Behind the bunkhouse and at the edge of the cliff overlooking Ranch House Canyon sits an abandoned chicken shed built after 1969 from salvaged materials. It has a corrugated metal shed roof, vertical board siding and chicken wire covering the open east side. The shed measures about 8 feet by 16 feet. It is collapsing under the weight of an overhanging tree and is in poor condition. A picket fence painted white surrounds a former garden enclosure and orchard in front of the shed. Growing in the orchard are lowquat and peach or apricot trees. Various trees including cypress and eucalyptus are found between the bunkhouse and the shed, and many unidentified trees are planted in rows forming a larger enclosure. Outside this enclosure and roughly east of the shed is a broken down brick meat smoker measuring 6 feet by 4 feet. It is no longer usable.



World War II-era building at Bechers Bay, remodeled and used for storage, view to southeast, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The bunkhouse, built in 1969-70. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Russ Vail House (non-contributing)

After the park service purchased the island, Russ Vail in 1988 built a prefabricated home on the Vail's reserved area on the east side of the eucalyptus windbreak. It was meant to be temporary so was

constructed on a foundation of pressure treated wood. It is an attractive yet simple wood structure with knotty pine interior. A deck faces the ocean.

Metal Barn/Implement Shed (non-contributing)

Near the south end of the eucalyptus windbreak, in the vicinity of a former barn, stands a prefabricated metal shed measuring 22 feet 7 inches by 62 feet 8 inches. It was built around 1980, with corrugated metal walls and roof with dirt floors. It has held tractors, a harvester and various ranching equipment.

NPS Buildings (non-contributing)

Since the late 1980s the National Park Service has constructed a number of buildings for island rangers and maintenance workers. South of the upper ranch house NPS constructed a generator building, fuel storage and shop/garage. This facility serves both the ranch and NPS facilities with electrical power and fuel.

In 1998-1999 the park service constructed a residential compound for rangers, researchers and maintenance personnel on a hill above the ranch complex. The complex comprises two two-bedroom duplexes, two one-bedroom duplexes and two garages. At a site across Windmill Canyon the NPS constructed a maintenance and water supply facility with pumphouses, storage tanks and utility buildings. A level area below this site contains a fenced plant nursery, a tiny shed housing a clinic for treating foxes called the “foxpital,” and storage items.

China Camp Line Shack (contributing)

IDLCS 59667

Vail & Vickers first built a line shack at China Camp in the 1930s to supply overnight lodging for cowboys working the remote south side of the island. The building site is near the corrals but at a slightly lower elevation and somewhat hidden from the wind. The board and batten China Camp line shack is actually two buildings joined by a board fence. The older is the westerly one, with two bedrooms, a kitchen/dining area and a lean-to storage room. The easterly cabin, built by Vail family members in the 1950s with salvaged lumber from the World War II camp, is one room with exposed rafters. The cabins are in fair condition; they were repaired in 2000.

The westerly cabin measures 16 feet 2 inches by 24 feet 2 inches with a shed addition on the north measuring 6 feet 8 inches by 6 feet 4 inches. It has a gable roof covered in composition shingles. The cabin has six-pane wood sash slider windows.

The easterly cabin is one room with exposed rafters. It measures 18 feet 10 inches by 15 feet 2 inches, has board and batten siding and has a gable roof with roll roofing held by battens. Two large fixed four-light windows are on the front of the building.



China Camp line shack, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The Wreck line shack, view to north, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

China Camp Outhouse (non-contributing)

The 1997 LCS team recorded a wood frame outhouse at China Camp but was apparently mistaken; the outhouse is a modern fiberglass model.

The Wreck Line Shack (contributing)
Part of IDLCS 102080

As the Wreck roundup was developed as an important cattle-gathering site in the 1950s and 1960s the need arose for an overnight shelter for cowboys during roundup time. Accounts vary as to the origination of the Wreck line shack, although all state that the building was moved there from a military site. A survey of the building in the 1970s indicated that it originated at the World War II camp at the head of Water Canyon high in the hills above the Wreck. To move the small building to this site would have been fairly simple although steep downgrades would have been encountered. The 1970s report noted that the roof was caving in and the shack had been abandoned for some years. The shack was entirely rebuilt around 1985 by Bill Wallace using some of the older materials but largely newer ones from Johnsons Lee.

The three-room building has a gable roof with composition shingles, plywood walls sheathed in concrete asbestos siding, aluminum sash windows and two exterior doors. It measures 20 feet by 12 feet and is located in a spot surrounded on three sides by the roundup corrals at the Wreck; a fence on the south side provides a full yard-type enclosure around the cabin. It has not been used in a number of years but is in fair condition, although deterioration will rapidly advance.

South Point Lighthouse (contributing)
IDLCS 102074

The South Point Light was not a full-sized lighthouse per se, but a small battery-powered flashing aid to navigation. It was built in 1937 to replace an earlier light stationed lower in elevation. The 1937 structure was almost doubled in size shortly after it was constructed. The Coast Guard abandoned the light some time before 1987 and it has been sitting unmaintained for at least that time.

The original structure has a flat roof with the small flashing light fixture mounted on top. The wood frame structure measures 7 feet by 7 feet, has 7-inch cove wood siding painted white and rests on a pier foundation. The parts of the house were pre-cut and assembled at the Coast Guard depot on Yerba Buena Island in San Francisco Bay, then disassembled and reassembled on this site. The interior shows the identification markings for each part reading, for example, “RS-1, RS-2 [right side]” or “LS-1, LS-2 [left side].” A door enters from the north side; there are no windows. Sturdy benches in the form of shelves for holding batteries had been built on the west and east walls and another, smaller bench remains on the south wall under a vent.

The addition measures 7 feet by 6 feet and has similar siding and roof. The interior walls are unfinished except for the south wall that was formerly the north exterior wall of the original structure. A workbench and shelves occupy the west side under a window that no longer holds glass. The interior walls have a great deal of historical graffiti dating to the late 1930s. Some record maintenance activities while most seem to be a traditional leaving of the visitor’s name and date; most appear to be Coast Guard personnel. Most of the graffiti is in this later room and dates from 1938 through the 1940s, with more recent additions including visiting boaters and a former superintendent of the park, Bill Ehorn.



The South Point Lighthouse, looking southeast, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The site of the World War II Army camp, 1990. *National Park Service*

On a flat area above the light building, guy wire anchors imbedded in concrete are the only remains of a windmill that powered the light during one phase of its operation (otherwise the light was powered by acetylene, batteries and solar collectors). A road, long unmaintained, leads to the light structure from the Air Force Road above Johnsons Lee.

While appearing sturdy and still standing in such an exposed and windy location, the lighthouse is in poor condition. The roof is deteriorated, glass has broken out of the only window and the building needs paint. The light and a battery appear to be fairly recent in origin and are connected as if ready for operation.

WWII Radar Station Operations Building (contributing to Coastal Defenses)

The former operations site for the radar facility is located at an elevation of about 1,466 about two miles directly north from South Point near the western of the two knolls known as Navy Hill. In 1943, crews constructed a five-room concrete building measuring about 22 feet by 80 feet and then buried it, leaving two entrances and two ventilation shafts. See “Ruins” below for further description and significance.

Vehicle Maintenance Shop and Concrete Enclosure, Johnsons Lee (non-contributing)

This large (2,193 square feet) building was constructed as the Auto Maintenance Shop, building number 147, for the U. S. Air Force’s Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station in 1950. It was used until deactivation in 1963, then saw little maintenance until the National Park Service rehabilitated it in 1987 or 1988 for use as a headquarters for park operations on the island. Since about 1990 it has been used as a storage building and outpost for park researchers. It was determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the later 1980s. Next to the building is a concrete three-sided enclosure, and behind it is a lengthy ditch, apparently to divert erosion from the building site.

The removal of all other signs of the Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station in the 1990s depleted any remaining integrity of the site. The buildings and structures were removed, burned and buried, including the operations sites in the mountains above. The remaining auto maintenance shop does not have enough importance to meet the criteria for National Register status. The building does possess historical interest as the last remaining structure from the base, and has a utilitarian purpose for park operations.

Ruins

WWII Cantonment (potentially contributing as ruin to Coastal Defenses)

During the spring and summer of 1943 the U. S. Army constructed an emergency early warning radar base on Santa Rosa Island. The new technology of radar would prove to be pivotal in the allies’ success in that war, and the island site provided a strategic location for detection of incoming enemy aircraft. The station consisted of a technical site overlooking the ocean near South Point and a cantonment or camp site where the men lived and ate. For the camp the engineers selected a small dry lake bed basin high in the hills near the geographical center of the island, about a mile south of Black Mountain and 2.5 miles



The foundation for an SCR radar tower overlook South Point and the Pacific Ocean, 1998.
Photograph by Dewey Livingston



The Army constructed a concrete operations building and buried it; view to north, 1999.
Photograph by Dewey Livingston

northeast of Soledad Peak on the Standard Oil road. Workmen constructed a .3 mile road down a side hill to the flat site of 2 or 3 acres. They graded the lake bed into a level pad, installed drainage systems and a water supply system composed of one or two dams in upper Water Canyon and a lift system to a water tank which then fed the water by gravity to the camp. Sixteen wood frame buildings were constructed

including seven barracks, a mess hall, a bath house, a motor repair building, a generator building and various sheds and a pit latrine. The camp was active during the war but abandoned by the end of 1945. The Army turned the camp over to Vail & Vickers, who used the buildings for a while, then disassembled them for materials or moved small ones to other locations on the island. The camp site now consists of the road, concrete foundations of at least six buildings, and remains of various utility systems.

An inspection of the site in May 1999 showed at least six foundation structures being either concrete slabs or sets of concrete piers in place, most located along the eastern edge of the basin. The following describes the foundation structures from north to south: a concrete slab measuring 10 feet by 19 feet with a 2-inch pipe exiting to the southeast; concrete piers remaining in place which formed the foundation of a building measuring 20 feet by 40 feet; a three-room shower/lavatory building foundation measuring 20 feet by 24 feet and composed of a concrete slab with raised wall bases anchoring bolts for the former wood frame walls, concrete entrance landings, and numerous cut-off pipes and plugged drains; another 20 feet by 40 feet set of concrete piers; and a large T-shaped concrete slab measuring 44 feet by about 55 feet. Near this is a foundation of a fireplace. Two other concrete slabs remain, the larger measuring 10 feet by 20 feet. Various drainage constructions such as concrete drains and exposed pipes are found in the area.

The most fascinating structure remaining at this site is the flagstaff base, a concrete slab in the shape of a star, measuring 10 feet in diameter. A 4-inch pipe supported the flagstaff, and the builders of the camp inscribed the date and their detachments in the slab:

26 AUG 1943 / 770 / MP BATTALION / CO C / THIRD PLATOON
LAFW / 658 SIGNAL / AW CO / DET SIX⁴⁴⁶

A narrow road leads from the basin out the only drainage exit into Water Canyon. It passes a small dump where various types of debris are seen. The road curves west and down to the watercourses where a dam remains. While two dams appear in the plans for the camp, only one was found after a search of the area. This concrete dam is about 12 feet across and the watercourse has bypassed it in an eroding gully. Above the dam are pipes and a couple of wood plank check dams. Oil wildcatter Louis Scott inhabited the camp circa 1949-1950 and reportedly rehabilitated the water system; some of these works may have been from that time. Downstream of the dam is a heavy concrete foundation for a 5,000-gallon water storage tank composed of six foundation walls of various lengths poured side-by side to form a circular foundation. Some debris from the tank itself remains. A pump and pipeline transported the water up the steep slope from here to the 10,000-gallon water tank near the top of the camp road. Remains of a pipe trestle are found south of the camp basin as the pipe crossed a steep gulch from the 10,000-gallon tank to the camp.

The camp site and its technical site would provide an interesting study to historical archeologists who may be able to determine more about life on this obscure and poorly-documented coastal defense site. It is recommended that a more thorough study of the camp site be made before the area is obliterated from view by encroaching brush.

⁴⁴⁶These inscriptions have provided the only clue as to who occupied the base: the 770th Military Police Battalion, Company C, Third Platoon; and the Los Angeles Air Defense Wing, 658th Signal Corps Aircraft Warning Company, Detachment Six.



The star-shaped flagstaff base at the World War II cantonment can be found in the grass, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Closeup of the inscription in the flagstaff base, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

The Army camp site has integrity as a ruin. Although the buildings are gone, there is adequate evidence to recreate the map of the site and potential exists for archeology and the retrieval of important information about activities on the site. The site is historically significant for its role in the defenses of southern California during the Pacific campaigns of World War II.

WWII Radar Station (potentially contributing to Coastal Defenses)

The former operations site for the radar facility described above is located at an elevation of about 1,466 about two miles directly north from South Point near the western of the two knolls known as Navy Hill. Two roads are evident leading to the site: the paved road (built circa 1950) allowing access today follows closely but has partly destroyed an earlier route considered to be the original road to the WWII site, a ranch road that had provided access to the Piedragosa roundup grounds located some 1.5 miles to the west of this site. The operations site is divided by the later road, with what appears to be a radio operations and defense area on the north side and the radar operations building and radar tower foundation on the south side.

The north site shows a collapsed wooden structure on a curious semi-circular foundation ringed with metal as if it had been a water tank base; however the ruins are those of a small building. Plans showed a radio station located in this vicinity but the exact nature and purpose of the ruined structure is unknown at this time. Examination of the ruined building by park archeologist Don Morris in 1999 revealed that the wood frame building had a gable roof covered in tarpaper, a door and probably no windows. Evidence of telephone wire and insulators may support the theory that this was a radio building. A circular concrete pad and adjacent small concrete box appear to have been the location of a mobile anti-aircraft gun. The pad has no obvious hardware or bolts and is partially buried by eroding earth. The interior space of the concrete box, possibly used for storage of ammunition, measures 5 feet by 2.5 feet by 2 feet high and is lined with one inch planks. Nearby are stubs of two wood utility poles and various galvanized metal guy anchors. It is believed by this author and Morris that these probably date from the Air Force/Navy era in this location, 1950-1963.

The site south of the road had been graded by the Army engineers from a sloping hill to an approximately half-acre level area. Crews constructed a five-room concrete building measuring about 22 feet by 80 feet and then buried it, leaving two entrances and two ventilation shafts. On the outer side of the leveled area, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, stands the concrete foundation of the radar unit, consisting of four solid buttressed posts on a system of eight interconnected foundation pads with chamfered edges each four feet square. The centers of the tops of the posts are eight feet apart forming a square; the top of each is beveled to 13 inches square and contains two bolts imbedded in the concrete. The overall dimension of this structure is about 24 feet square.

The Army radar site has a high level of integrity as a ruin. Although the equipment has been removed the site retains enough fabric from the period of significance to illustrate the workings of a somewhat primitive technology which helped win the war and led to advances in communications and defenses taken for granted today. The site is historically significant for its role in the defenses of southern California during the Pacific campaigns of World War II.



The ruins of Orr's Camp, looking southeast, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Orr's Camp (non-contributing)

Phil Orr of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and his associates worked for 21 years out of this site, 1947-1968. First camping at the site in 1947, beginning in 1948 Orr and Richard S. Finley constructed this quirky and ingenious combination dwelling, mess hall and laboratory out of salvaged materials and plywood. They located the structure in an eroding gully at the edge of a cliff overlooking the Channel between Soledad Beach and Sandy Point on the northwest side of the island. After working out some drainage problems while excavating a roughly 15 foot by 20 foot area they built a wooden building of odd angles to fit in the gulch with the roof level with the grassy ground behind, thus eliminating problems from the wind. The structure was furnished with bunks, tables, shelves, appliances and carpeting. A generator provided lights and a solar-heated shower. Orr built a separate tiny cabin about 20 feet away in its own erosional depression which afforded a picturesque view of the water and island shore. Orr received help from the Vails and their men and used a jeep to travel around the island looking for archeological sites and mammoth bones. A road, made through the grasslands without grading, led from the Pocket Field west of Arlington roundup down the ridge between Cañada Garañon and Cañada Tecolotito to Orr's Camp as it was called by the Vails. Orr ended his annual expeditions in 1968 and the complex has been abandoned since that time.

At the time of this writing Orr's Camp is a ruin of boards, plywood and appliances. The excavation is eroding and much of the structure has moved over the cliff. Stabilization of the buildings would be an impossible task as they retain no structural integrity and any such project would involve drainage work and bank stabilization; it is likely that the structure's ruins are slowing erosion in this location. Although the work of Phil Orr contributed to the scientific understanding of Santa Rosa Island prehistory, his work is not

of general historical significance and the camp does not possess integrity. It is recommended that the site be documented and then allowed to further melt into the landscape.

West End Shack (non-contributing)

A few references exist to a “West End Shack” somewhere on the west end of the island. The U. S. Coast Survey noted an old house on the “west end of the island” but this appeared on their map located near middle Soledad Canyon and no trace exists today. Austin Wright noted it in the 1920s, and Mrs. Woolley referred to a shack moved for use as a cattle shelter. Remains of a shack exist near the top of the cliff about two miles southeast from Sandy Point; the ruins are a pile of old boards strewn about. Their origin is unknown; this could be the structure used as a cattle shelter, or is related to oil exploration on the island. Examination of the site could yield information that could identify the structure’s uses. There is no remaining physical integrity.

Standard Oil Well Site (non-contributing)

The site of the Standard Oil Company well, developed in 1932, is located just off the Main Road below Vail Peak. It is marked by scattered parts, portions of brick and concrete foundations, and varied debris. The site is eroding rapidly, with materials and artifacts disappearing down a canyon. There is no remaining physical integrity.

Signal Oil Well Site at Tecolote (non-contributing)

Signal Oil explored for oil on the island in 1948-49 with no success, but left well casings, a winch, debris and excavations on a ridge overlooking Cañada Tecolotito.

Structures and Small Scale Features (other than fences)

Bechers Bay Pier (non-contributing)

IDLCS 59643

In 2011 NPS completed construction of a new steel pier on the site of the original Bechers Bay pier. The original pier, which had been rebuilt numerous times over the years, was not engineered and inadequate to the park’s needs. The new pier is the same length as the old pier, and approximately two feet wider, and is constructed in the same footprint as the former pier. The height of the new pier has been raised to reduce damage from wave action and storms. The new pier was designed to be similar to the old ranch pier and compatible with the historic character of the ranch.

The old ranch pier at Bechers Bay was one of the most complex and significant structures on the island. The More family had it built around 1872 or 1873 (oral tradition has it that it was built by Santa



The pier at Bechers Bay, view to east/northeast, 1998. The *Vaquero II* is tied up, and the west end of Santa Cruz Island is in the distance. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Barbara pier builder John P. Stearns) and it may have been entirely rebuilt in 1913. The pier underwent major repairs in 1945 undertaken by a contractor for the Army Corps of Engineers. Ranch crews repaired the decking in 1983 with lumber salvaged from the Air Force pier at Johnsons Lee. As of 1984 the pier was described as approximately 572 feet long, with the width varying from 20 feet 3 inches to 37 feet at the end. The random-length decking gave the surface a ragged-at-the-edges appearance. Electricity to the end of the pier provided floodlights for work in the dark. A stiff leg crane was used for hauling large and heavy items (including trucks) out of the boat. An A-frame structure anchored the important cattle chute that measured 2 feet 6 inches by 23 feet 3 inches.

Shortly after purchasing the island, the National Park Service rehabilitated the pier in 1987, almost entirely reconstructing it using steel pilings and pressure treated decking. The decking ends were cut in line and wood railings installed. Metal ladders on the north and south sides of the end of the pier accommodate visitors arriving by boat, all of whom must step from the boat deck onto the ladder and climb to the deck. Cattle shipments ceased in 1998 leaving the cattle chute unused. Park crews removed the stiff leg crane and the A-frame, which remain on the island; vehicles are now transported to the island via landing craft, while the park's crane truck is used to load and unload supplies and equipment on the pier.

Pile Driver (contributing)

A wooden pile driver remains in the yard near the pier. Island residents state that the pile driver was transported here for use in repairing the pier during World War II, and has been used for repairs since that time. It apparently has not been used for at least fifteen years; it was last used for the 1987 reconstruction of the pier by park personnel.

Dip Vat (contributing)

To prevent hoof and mouth disease and heel fly, Vail & Vickers constructed a dip vat, probably in the late 1930s. The reinforced concrete tank is sunken into the ground, the upper edge being only slightly above grade, with a sloping entrance ramp that forced the animals to jump into the full vat and a more gradual exit ramp. A concrete drip pad allowed the chemicals to remain contained and eventually drain back into the vat. Chutes and gates controlled the movement of the cattle through the process. The dip vat is in fair condition, although the wooden elements, having been unused for decades, are in poor condition.

Feed Troughs and Mangers (contributing)

Many troughs and mangers remain in the ranch pens at Bechers Bay. Scattered throughout pens and corrals are approximately 14 steel feed troughs and wooden mangers, all portable and now unused. Wooden mangers remain in the hospital pens that once provided protected feeding for calves and animals placed in isolation. While the island cattle largely relied on natural sources for forage, supplementary feed was required in certain situations. Condensed, fortified feed, often in the form of cottonseed or molasses cakes, was distributed to the animals in and near the Bechers Bay headquarters in long, steel troughs.

Pig Pen (contributing)

Located in the eucalyptus windbreak and attached to the corral fence, this simple yet sturdy pen is made of boards, has not been used for many years and is in poor condition.

Game Slaughter Shed (non-contributing)

This double plywood-and-board structure is located north of the Russ Vail house. It was constructed for the commercial hunting operation in the 1990s and is in fair condition.

Small Scale Features at Main Ranch (contributing and non-contributing)

North of the upper house the ranch residents have set up an impromptu firing range comprised of chairs and a table on a platform, the shooting aimed across Ranch House Canyon into a hillside. The historic matanza tanks at the generator barn are grim reminders of the drought-induced slaughter of sheep during the 1870s. Wooden retaining walls are found opposite the horse barn on the outer side of the road. Behind the bunkhouse is a damaged brick smoker, used by ranch residents for curing meat. At least two remnant concrete water trough aprons, once surrounding redwood troughs, are found, one at the NPS nursery site and the other in the House Trap. The ranch dump, located in a cliff gully southeast of the ranch complex, has been used for decades if not more than a century. A large lumber pile is located on land near the pier awaiting use in pier repairs and other projects, both ranch and NPS-related. Discarded farm

equipment, including plows, tillers, a windmill tower, tractors, wagons, graders and trucks, is scattered about the complex in discrete collections.

Additional More-era features include debris found at the boathouse site north of the pier. An excavated ledge, site of the boathouse itself, boards and metal pieces and a roadway remain.

Outer Island Small Scale Features

Lone fence posts mark the former location of fence lines in at least three locations on the island: at the northern descent of the west Wire Field fence; on the same fence adjacent to Water Canyon roundup; and at the north end of the Old Ranch fence. Other wooden posts can be found scattered around the island, most of which cannot be positively identified. A wooden barrier closes off a small gully near Skunk Point, evidently to keep livestock from falling through, and another barrier is all that remains from a former gate at the Water Canyon Beach access road. Steel pipes are commonly found driven into the ground, especially at mountaintops as locators. USCGS benchmarks, placed during the 20th century, are found in many locations noted on corresponding USGS maps, and a concrete post cadastral dated 1950 can be located off the Johnsons Lee Road.

An older wooden hitching post is located at the China Camp cabin.

At least two borrow pits, one on the southern slope of Black Mountain and the other outside the west fence of House Trap, were used to gather materials for road building in those vicinities. Other borrow pits may exist.

Noncontributing Small Scale Features

Three wind socks on poles mark the location of the airfield. A large wooden letter “R” is found in the grass on the east side of the airstrip as an indicator for planes flying overhead. A large sign at the edge of the airstrip provides information to visitors arriving by plane.

Since 1987 the NPS has added numerous small scale features, all noncontributing, including propane tanks, signs, solar panels, numerous board windbreaks with picnic tables and two outhouses at the campground, and at least seven fire hydrants in the ranch complex.

The U. S. Navy maintains an Extended Area Test System (EATS) station at the summit of Black Mountain. It is comprised of a small data collection and communication unit surrounded by a chain link fence.

The NPS has placed signs in various access points on the island for the benefit of arriving boaters. Two signs are located at Johnsons Lee as well as two informational bulletin boards. Signs are also located at Water Canyon Beach, the Bechers Bay pier and at the entrance to the campground. Small directional signs have been affixed to corral fences leading hikers to the campground.

Roads

Roadways have evolved on Santa Rosa Island from Chumash trails to horse trails to graded dirt roads; in a few locations, paved roads were built to federal standards, both during the period of significance and after. The routes on the island follow a historic pattern that, in turn, follows the geographical necessities of travel around the large island. Much of the acreage is steep and inaccessible while much of the land is fairly level requiring little or no work to create and maintain a track. Many of the roads on the island are either slightly improved versions of 19th century trails or bulldozer roads built by ranch workers or oil companies. Some of these roads feature segments of cut-and-fill although the majority of the roadways follow practical routes that did not require much earth moving. The military road constructed in 1950 is the anomaly, with its wide, paved lanes, engineered curves and tangents, cuts and fills, and extensive drainage works. The variety of the transportation routes on the island reveals much of its history.

Road construction and maintenance duties fell to the employees of Vail & Vickers, with the exception of the military roads while the facilities were active. At the time of this writing, National Park Service maintenance personnel grade the roads on a regular schedule with a Caterpillar tractor.

Smith Highway (contributing) IDLCS 102076

One of the most used and important roads on the island is what is called the Smith Highway which crosses the northern side of the island from Bechers Bay to the west end. The Smith Highway evolved from a sheep trail to an important graded dirt road. Leading from the ranch complex to the Arlington roundup and beyond on the west end, the road is named after C. W. Smith, longtime ranch foreman and dynamite expert. Smith reportedly built much of the road in the 1920s and 1930s, blasting through rocky sections in Lobo Canyon and pulling the roadway in and out of deep ravines with precipitous entries and exits. Apparently the road was improved little by little, as a number of bypasses and traces of older routes are found along the ten-mile length of the road. The Smith Highway followed much of a route dating from the mid-1800s which appeared on Stehman Forney's 1872-1873 topographic map of the island, and was used for sheep and cattle drives across the island for about 150 years until the ranch ended operations in 1998.

The Smith Highway leaves the ranch complex at Bechers Bay from a point adjacent to the barns. Originally the road exited the complex from a location farther south towards the ranch house, where it descended into the creek and followed the creek bed for a short distance. This older route remains but is impassable. After crossing Ranch House Creek, the road ascends the ridge west of the ranch, passing over Nidever Cave. As it ascends the road has been moved to a number of parallel locations as erosion destroyed the routes, leaving an unsightly area of erosion. In 2001 the road was rerouted to the south and the eroded areas rehabilitated. The road reaches an elevation of 450 feet and levels off, passing Carrington Point Road on the right and continuing west/southwest to Lobo Canyon. The road makes a precipitous descent, requiring blasting and rockwork, into the canyon where it crosses and parallels the creek before making another spectacular ascent out of the steep canyon. After making additional dramatic crossings of

Cow Canyon and Cañada Verde, where it passes the Green Valley roundup within the expansive valley, the road heads southwest and then west to cross Soledad Canyon. The alignment descends steeply into Arlington Canyon, where a roundup is located, then cuts up the steep cliffs to the mesa lands. After another steep crossing at Tecolote Canyon, the road passes westerly through the wide, flat lands of the west end. Where the Smith Highway officially ends is unclear. It passes the hard-to-find junction of the minor road to Orr's Camp at the old Pocket Field roundup and the junction of the older, abandoned route to Sandy Point. Here is the logical conclusion of the Smith Highway and the beginning of the Burma Road, which ascends the ridge to the south where it arrives at a gate and junction with the track leading to Sandy Point.

The Smith Highway is kept in fair condition although some sections are poor. There are few, if any, culverts and road maintenance consists largely of seasonal blading. Portions of the road are tracks through grassy meadows while much of the road is graded, cut-and-fill roadway through the canyons, varying in width from eight to ten feet. The road is accessible by four-wheel-drive vehicles.

The Main Road (contributing)
IDLCS 102077 (as Soledad Road)⁴⁴⁷

The first thirty years of Vail & Vickers management of Santa Rosa Island saw few improvements in the road and trail system on the island. Existing 19th century routes apparently served the cattle ranch well, as they had been sensibly laid out following ridgelines and land contours. In 1932, however, Standard Oil Company made agreements with Vail & Vickers to drill for oil near the highest point on the island, a distance of about six miles from the ranch and pier. As this operation would require trucking materials to and from the site and landing, engineers set to work laying out a truck road. Beginning at the bottom of Windmill Canyon, the route ascended the north flank of Black Mountain and followed cattle trails on the ridge lines past Pecho Peaks and Soledad Mountain to the drilling site, located a stone's throw from the unnamed 1,589-foot summit sometimes called Vail Peak. Crews used a steam shovel and blasted through rocky areas with dynamite, their labors resulting in a well-engineered ten-to-twelve-foot roadway, paved with macadam or asphalt.⁴⁴⁸

The Vail family members, old and young alike, took great interest in the road project. Manager N. R. Vail helped design the new road. His daughter recalled that Vail "would have liked very much to be a civil engineer and plan roads. And he was able to do that somewhat on the island. He got a great big kick out of it . . . he would lay out roads to the various watering spots." And foreman C. W. Smith "knew how to set and explode dynamite. So he did that and we were all taken up to watch it. And it was great fun and the hill just rose up a little bit and settled down. We were so disappointed."⁴⁴⁹

While the oil drilling project met no success, the Standard Oil road became one of the most important routes on the island, being used not only by the ranch operation but under official agreements with the U. S. Army, Navy and Air Force during and after World War II. The road acted as a good-quality, all-weather

⁴⁴⁷The name, Main Road, is used after querying Russ Vail, Bill Wallace and E. K. Smith on the nomenclature. While the road has not been officially named, this name is the one mostly used by longtime ranch occupants.

⁴⁴⁸Daily et al, "Geologic Mapping."

⁴⁴⁹Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 9, SCIF.

access to China Camp and Johnsons Lee. It remained in good condition, with few changes, throughout the Vail & Vickers ranching era. Ranch old-timers also refer to it as the Oil Road or Standard Oil Road.

The Main Road leaves the ranch complex at the WWII storehouse and NPS generator building, heading west then west/southwest then south up the canyon and ridge towards the summit of Black Mountain. The road skirts the summit on cuts and fills, passes the Black Mountain roundup corrals and then follows the main island ridgeline in a southwesterly direction, passing the summit of Soledad Mountain and terminating at the junction of the Burma Road, which continues west, and the paved Air Force road that descends in a southerly direction to Johnsons Lee. The Main Road is a well-laid out, cut-and-fill dirt road and is kept maintained by annual grading; its width varies between eight and twelve feet. At one time the road was paved and pieces of asphalt as well as abandoned communications cable continue to surface during grading. The road is in fair condition.

Old Ranch Road (contributing)

The road from the Bechers Bay ranch facilities to Rancho Viejo and East Point dates from before 1872, although it has been graded with modern equipment over the last decades. U. S. Coast Surveyor William Greenwell noted a trail or road in 1860; his successor Stehman Forney in 1873 drew a map showing a road between the old and new ranches. Today this road, maintained by the National Park Service, is a dirt road that alternates between easy driving on flat benches above the shoreline and sudden, sometimes precarious drops into the many canyons that cross the road. No bridges cross the small creeks and a 4-wheel drive vehicle is recommended. The road has been realigned in a few places, such as the crossing at Water Canyon and at the old ranch site.

Old Ranch Road heads southeast from the ranch complex along the terraces fronting Bechers Bay, crossing a number of drainages. At the Southeast Anchorage the road goes inland, cutting off Skunk Point, passing the Old Ranch roundup corrals and rejoining the coast near the old ranch site. Part of the road is washed away at the old ranch by coastal erosion. The roadway continues along the coastal bluffs to terminate at East Point. Mostly, the road is a graded track about ten feet wide with little cut and fill and it is located mostly on level terraces. Past the old ranch site the road tends to be a double track with little evident grading. Old Ranch Road is in fair condition.

Carrington Point Road (contributing)

A roadway extends from the Smith Highway in the eastern Lobo Pasture north and northeast to the very tip of Carrington Point, the northernmost point on the island. The road accessed water systems in the Lobo and Carrington Pastures and the scenic area at the end of the road. Not really a graded road, it is more a vehicle track though open grassland, small gullies and sand dunes. It is relatively level in grade until the steep loop descent to the point itself in which the track heads straight down a steep hillside, loops east on a flat terrace and then ascends an adjacent steep hillside to rejoin the original road. About halfway between the Smith Highway and the point is a spur road track leading about a half mile east to the



The South Road near Ford Point, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



A typical grass-track road on Santa Rosa Island, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Carrington water trough. The road is typical of the less-developed routes on the island and will disappear into the vegetation if not maintained by use. It is in fair condition.

The Water Canyon/South (Wreck) Road (contributing)

Signal Oil built most of the South Road around 1948-1949 to access drilling sites on the south side of the island. This major island road followed a ranch road built shortly before by Diego Cuevas that connected the main ranch and Water Canyon roundup, taking a sometimes-steep ascent up the southeast side of Water Canyon to the divide, then down to The Wreck and on to Johnsons Lee. This road became another of the important access routes to the south side of the island.

The road, averaging eight to ten feet wide, begins about one mile southeast of the ranch house, leaving the Old Ranch road to make a steep and deeply-cut ascent of the ridge southeast of Water Canyon. Heading generally south, the road passes the Water Canyon roundup corrals (reached by a steep, four-wheel-drive-only track) then mounts the high ridge near Clapp Spring. The road descends southerly towards the ocean, passing The Wreck roundup and trap and, after crossing Wreck and Jolla Vieja Canyons, reaches the coast line where it follows some elevation above the water westerly to the remains of the Air Force base, terminating at the old pavement. This road is kept in fair condition although its isolation and drainage/soil conditions appear to pose a challenge to maintenance personnel.

Burma Road (contributing)

The Burma Road, developed in stages between 1932 and 1950, begins near the junction of The Main Road and the Johnsons Lee road, near the summit of Vail Peak. It follows the ridge top, or contours around the side near the top, in a west/northwesterly direction. The road is spectacular, rounding corners on sheer hillsides and surmounting steep hilltops as if a roller coaster. It descends towards Sandy Point, passing the Lepe roundup corrals, and terminates at the end of the Smith Highway near the old Pocket Field roundup. The upper portion features some dramatic cuts into the steep mountainside. The road, averaging eight feet in width, is in fair condition.

China Camp Road, also called Rita's Road (contributing)

In the 1930s, longtime ranch foreman C. W. Smith, with the help of a heavy equipment operator named Barney, built a narrow and dramatic road to China Camp where a sheep trail had been before. Rita's road begins on the ridgeline summit between Acapulco and Whetstone Canyons, off the Burma Road. It immediately follows the narrow spine of the ridge as it descends, sometimes steeply and often dramatically, to the west and south. The road cuts into the hillside as it makes its final steep descent to China Camp, where it ends at the cabin. This lower road cut was reportedly constructed as a bypass in the early 1950s, and another bypass was made at a higher elevation at an unknown date. The road is maintained by the park service with an annual grading and is in fair condition.

Johnsons Lee Road (contributing)

The U. S. Air Force constructed a road in 1950 that fit more the motoring style of the mainland than an isolated island cattle ranch. It was a five-mile roadway built to federal standards, paved to fourteen feet wide with a stripe delineating two lanes of traffic, with metal guard rails where necessary and an engineered drainage plan requiring dozens of culverts. The extant paved road begins at the pier site of the former Air Force Station at Johnsons Lee. Following a relatively easy grade, it makes a circuitous route through the canyon west of the remaining building, crossing the drainage on a large fill section with culvert, then ascends the South Point ridge in a northerly direction until reaching the summit, junction of the Main Road and Burma roads.

The upper half of the new road was built on the route of an older ranch road that followed the ridge spine leading to Piedragosa roundup and beyond. This road was in use as early as 1872, as shown on Forney's map; the 1943 U. S. G. S. topographic map depicts the older road as following the exact route of the later road down to Navy Hill, then veering west to Piedragosa roundup site (adjacent to the survey monument "Grouse 2"), then southwest where it descended to the coast. The 1943 map shows the road ending about 1/2 mile from the shore although aerial photos indicate that it continued.

Most of the pavement remains today, although the asphalt is deteriorating, the drainage failing and the guardrails have been removed and used for corrals around the island. The road surface is in poor condition due to deterioration of the asphalt surface, which is breaking off at the edges, cracking on the surface and potholing. Because the Air Force base has been removed and retains no integrity, the road does not possess significance as a military road; however, it had long been used for the ranching operation and should be maintained as a key route to Johnsons Lee.

Telephone Road (contributing)

When the Air Force provided telephone service to the ranch around 1950, they reconstructed an old road known as the Hunting Road that led from Black Mountain to the ranch area; this came to be called the Telephone Road. The original route appeared on the 1873 map of the island and the 1929 aerial photographs. The eight-foot roadway leaves the old ranch road just south of the ranch and ascends the ridge towards Black Mountain in a southwesterly direction. The road meets The Main Road near the Black Mountain roundup corrals. The road is in poor condition.

Signal Road (contributing)

Signal Oil Company and two partners in 1948-1949 built a number of roads on the island. This one, leading from Soledad Mountain north into Arlington Canyon, accessed one of the drilling sites in that vicinity. It has been called the Signal Road since then, although it has been used as a ranch road since Signal Oil left in 1949. The well-built dirt road, about ten to twelve feet in width, leaves The Main Road immediately east of Soledad Peak, and heads north and then northwest down a ridge. A later spur, the one currently used, reaches the Smith Highway a short distance east of Arlington Canyon; this junction is

indistinct as it occurs in a flat, grassy area. The original road continued westerly into Arlington Canyon then up to the old Arlington roundup site at Smith Highway, then crossed to the northwest to the Signal drilling sites above Cañada Tecolotito; this lower section of the Signal road has been long abandoned and is impassable by vehicles. The road is significant largely for its use by the ranch operation, rather than for its association with the oil exploration. Much of the roadway is cut-and-fill and is in fair condition, although the abandoned portion is in poor condition.

Sierra Pablo Road (contributing)

This route from Rancho Viejo into the mountains of the island may be the oldest on the island. This would have been the most direct route to the island pastures while the original ranch was operating in the 1850s and 1860s. Stehman Forney mapped the road or trail in 1872 and placed a number of survey monuments along it. The road remained in use by Vail & Vickers and is still used for the hunting operation, resources management and ranger patrols. The road is undeveloped but follows the spine of the ridges as wheel tracks to Clapp Spring. The route leaves Old Ranch Road near East Point and ascends the hills called Sierra Pablo heading due west. The road goes up and down numerous steep knolls before reaching Clapp Spring where, for about a quarter mile, it is a graded, maintained road known as the road to Clapp Spring. It reaches the Water Canyon Road and follows that graded road for over half a mile, then continues more than a mile west/northwest (the Water Canyon road makes a sharp turn to the southeast to descend to the Wreck) to meet the Main Road at the summit. This latter portion of the road has been closed to vehicle traffic by the park service. The Sierra Pablo Road is particularly significant for its association with the older and newer ranching operations, having been in use for some 150 years. It is in poor condition. It is recommended that the route be continued in use so as to keep it open from encroaching brush. The route is potentially a historic trail for visitors to the island and could be part of a long loop trail for future backpackers.

Another road/trail joins the Sierra Pablo road from the north at the Old Ranch fence line, according to Forney's survey, forming a cutoff from Skunk Point near the Old Ranch roundup. This old route was supplanted by ranch roads constructed before 1954.

Orr's Camp Road (contributing)

More a track in the grasslands than a road, the route to Phil Orr's scientific camp on the northwest coast of the island is significant as a ranch road. Orr constructed this track in the early 1950s. For a distance it parallels a road graded by Signal Oil in 1948. The road leaves the Smith Highway in a large plain at a seasonal pond. It leads north/northwest, then northwest at a fork to descend to the marine terrace between Cañada Garañon and Fox Gulch. The route is kept open by occasional trips by park staff, but is in poor condition.

South Point Light Road (possibly contributing)

Coast Guard personnel first accessed the South Point Light from the water, having built a trail from a landing. A ten-foot-wide road was graded to the light prior to 1954 through the rocky terrain of the south side. The road leaves the Johnsons Lee Road to ascend a knoll, then descends to the lighthouse for a total length of about one and a half miles. The road has occasionally been bladed and is in fair condition at this time. If the South Point Light is found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the road would be a contributing feature. The road would have little significance to the ranching operation.

Roads at the Main Ranch (contributing)

The main ranch complex is crossed by a maze of dirt roads leading from the pier to the residences. The roadway base is native soil, although a few small patches of macadam remain from the 1932 Standard Oil developments; they traverse level land so cuts and fills are nonexistent except at the bunkhouse and the entrance to the pier. The routes tend to the west side of the corrals and only penetrate them in two places, one entering near the generator barn and one crossing to the field east of the windbreak. A number of circle turnarounds and shortcuts add to the complexity of the road grid. In general, the roadways are about twelve feet wide and in fair condition.

Other Roads

A number of additional graded roads are found on the island, and their significance and integrity vary. All are associated with the ranching operation although some were built by other entities such as oil companies or the military. The roads are dealt with more extensively in the park's cultural landscape inventory. These include: a three-mile dirt road from Navy Hill to the South road, constructed in the late 1940s by Diego Cuevas; a three-mile road from the old ranch roundup to near the Water Canyon roundup, which was built prior to 1929; a road from Southeast Anchorage to near the Water Canyon roundup, which appears in Forney's 1872 work and is now a favored route to the back side of the Torrey Pine forest; a road leading south from the Smith Highway near Lobo Canyon which ascends the south flank of Black Mountain and was built prior to 1954 and may be up to two miles long; a road leading northwest from the Smith Highway to Soledad Beach which appears to be of more recent construction; and the roadways to Sandy Point on the west end, the northern one of which could be considered an extension of the original Smith Highway as discussed above, and the southern appearing to be a more recent and stable route. All of these roads and routes were used by Vail & Vickers for ranching operations, either on horseback or in vehicles, and therefore would contribute to the integrity of the cultural landscape of Santa Rosa Island. Many have been rarely used for some years and their condition is poor. A Cultural Landscape Report could make more detailed distinctions towards classifying these roads.

Some of the most obscure roads discussed in this section are virtually tire tracks through the grassland, usually following the spines of ridges. Many of these are the oldest intact routes on the island, dating from the More era and no doubt previous to that, many having been recorded on Forneys'

topographic maps of the early 1870s. They include roads along the Sierra Pablo and in the old ranch area. While many of these contribute to the significance of the ranching history on the island, preservation under the current conditions would require regular driving of the routes to keep them open, a scenario which is unlikely considering future management goals on the island. Some have already been placed off limits and eventually all will disappear under a layer of vegetation. It would be reasonable to attempt preservation of the oldest routes as hiking trails; these are documented on the 1873 U. S. Coast Survey map and include the above mentioned Sierra Pablo Road.

A full list of roads not described above follows. Contributing: Navy Hill roads; Road to Clapp Spring; Road to Black Mountain summit; Road to Horse Pasture; Road to Water Canyon landing; Road above Lobo Canyon; Road to WWII camp; Road above La Jolla Canyon; Road into Tranquillon Canyon; Road to Skunk Point; Old road to boathouse; Road to Soledad Beach; Road along Arlington fence; Road to Tecolote Canyon; Road to Piedragosa; Road to Las Cruces roundup; Road at upper Torrey pines; Road above Old Ranch House Canyon; Road through Quemada Canyon; Cutoff between Quemada and Old Ranch House Canyons; Road to Sandy Point; Road to Carrington trough; Road to Water Canyon roundup; Ridge road to Quinn's Knob; Pre-1873 routes; Lobo Canyon trail; Carrington Point trail; Campground trail; South Point Lighthouse trail; Stone walkway at upper house; Cattle and Horse Trails. Noncontributing: NPS housing access; NPS maintenance access; Johnsons Lee utility corridor. For descriptions of these roads, see the Santa Rosa Island Level II Cultural Landscape Inventory.

Roundups/Corrals

Remote corrals are to the rancher as computers are to the writer. They can get along without them but they save time and energy and add to the efficiency of the operation. The circulation of livestock on the island depended on the location of roundup grounds and the various construction designs of the corrals. On Santa Rosa Island, two kinds of corral enclosures were used and still exist: the corrals at the ranch complex, which were used for a number of functions including holding, treatment and shipping; and the roundup corrals scattered around the island, where cattle would be herded from the surrounding rangelands into the corral (with the help of a wing fence), separated as necessary and moved to the ranch complex at Bechers Bay for shipment.

The nine remaining roundup corrals are relatively recent in origin, all but four dating from the 1960s; the latter are older corrals renovated around the time the others were built. The roundup corrals are similar in construction and identical in purpose. The cattle are herded to the corral and into a chute that leads into the corral structure; gates at the end of the chute, operated by cowboys, direct the animal to the appropriate pen, i.e. animals to be shipped, animals to be treated, animals to be released back to pasture. The corrals had to be sturdy as the strength of the recalcitrant cattle could break through a weak fence. The corrals were constructed of posts, usually retired utility poles or 8-inch by 8-inch railroad ties, two-by-twelve lumber, and, as an additional structural element, metal road guard rails salvaged from the Air Force roadway on the south side of the island. Salvaged chain link fencing was used in many of the corrals as an alternative to horizontal boards. Because of their sturdy construction, most of the corrals are in good



The shipping pens at the main ranch, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



A horseshoe latch. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

condition despite having been abandoned for a number of years. Vegetation is encroaching in the corrals, especially in the disturbed areas within the enclosures.

A few corrals existed on the island during its time as a sheep ranch, but none of those survive. Also, a number of roundup grounds from the Vail & Vickers operation have been documented, although no structures ever existed in those locations. They include, Piedragosa, La Jolla, Sierra Pablo, Lobo, old Arlington and Pocket Field roundups. These sites have a history but may in time disappear beneath scrub vegetation as the grasslands disappear.

Main Ranch Corrals (contributing)
IDLCS 59645

The extensive corrals at the ranch complex at Bechers Bay performed an important function in the sorting and caring for cattle [photo #5]. They saw most use around the time of shipping, as newly arriving calves could be sorted and penned, and outgoing steers lodged temporarily while being weighed and evaluated. Horses occupied the horse corral adjacent to the horse barn at roundup time.

In most cases, the corrals are constructed of horizontal boards on sturdy posts, sometimes painted white. Their layout is complex, with particular corrals used for various activities such as weighing stock, doctoring, observation, watering and selection. The long pen paralleling the eucalyptus windbreak was used for holding cattle newly brought in for processing. The next pen north is a watering pen, with a large trough centrally located. To the west of the water pen is a multi-use corral adjacent to the generator barn and rarely used for livestock except for passing through. The pens east of the horse barn were the most active at shipping time, with larger pens for holding cattle awaiting processing feeding into smaller pens that funnel the animals into either the scales, squeeze chute, dip vat or shipping pens. A row of six smaller pens connected by a narrow lane is aligned with the land end of the pier. These were used to separate cattle by number and weight for loading onto corresponding pens on the *Vaquero II*. On the opposite side of the windbreak is a series of two hospital pens with water and feed, and at the south side of the windbreak, east side, another hospital pen, also with water and feed. These pens were developed after 1965.

Green Canyon Corral (non-contributing)

The Green Canyon roundup is located in the bottom of Cañada Verde about two miles upstream from the channel. The Smith Highway passes the corral, which is located between the road and the creek. It is L-shaped and measures approximately 174 feet by 151 feet, and has a wing fence. It has three pens and an alley, and is constructed of posts, boards, guard rail and chain link fencing. It is in fair condition but vegetation is choking parts of the corral.



Black Mountain corral, the smallest on the island, 1999. View to west. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Las Cruces corral, view to east, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Arlington Corral (contributing)
IDLCS 102078

The Arlington roundup is located in Arlington Canyon on the Smith Highway. It is one of the oldest corrals on the island but was rebuilt forty years ago. Parts of the corral appear to predate the rebuilding effort of the 1960s. It measures approximately 145 feet by 173 feet and has four pens, an alley and a chute. It is constructed of posts, boards, guardrail and chain link fencing. The barbed wire fence enclosing the Arlington trap runs east and west off the north side of the corral. It is in good condition but vegetation is choking parts of the corral. Erosion of the creek bed threatens the west side of the corrals. The line shack once located here was removed by the park service in 1998.

Lepe Corral (non-contributing)

The Lepe roundup corral, built in the mid-1960s, is located a short distance off the Burma Road on the west end of the island, near the headwaters of Bee Canyon. Lepe refers to an orphaned calf. The L-shaped corral measures approximately 138 feet by 123 feet and has three pens, an alley and a chute, as well as the typical wing fence. It is constructed of posts, boards, guardrail and chain link fencing. Lepe roundup is in poor condition, with deterioration, leaning posts and parts of the fencing falling down.

China Camp Corral (contributing)
IDLCS 102079

Another of the older roundups known to have been rebuilt in the mid-1960s, China Camp is located on the south shore, west of South Point and reached by China Camp (Rita's) Road. It measures approximately 167 feet by 70 feet and is composed of two large pens and two small ones, with a chute between the former. A chain link wing fence extends north from the northeast corner. It is constructed of posts, boards, guardrail and chain link fencing. The China Camp roundup corrals are in fair condition despite their exposed location on the south shore.

The Wreck Corral (contributing)
IDLCS 102080

The Wreck roundup corral is large and perhaps the most complicated of the corrals. It is also one of the original four corrals on the island, although rebuilt in the mid-1960s. It is located on the south side of the island adjacent to the South road between San Agustin and Wreck Canyons. A line shack sits practically in the middle of the corral. The corral measures approximately 154 feet long by 111 to 136 feet wide. It is divided into four pens, a breezeway, a chute and an enclosure for the line shack. A chain-link-and-post wing fence of the northeast corner is about 75 feet long. As the corral is located at a northeastern corner of the Wreck trap, barbed wire fence lines lead off from two corners. It is constructed of posts, boards and guardrail, and is in fair condition.

Black Mountain Corral (non-contributing)

The Black Mountain roundup corral, built in the late 1960s, is located near and immediately south of the summit of that peak on a sharp bend in the Main Road. The corral measures approximately 48 feet by 62 feet with a 37-foot wing fence for directing cattle into the corral. The Black Mountain corral is a single enclosure with no interior divisions, the only one of its kind; it was used for calves only. It is built of creosoted pole posts, chain-link fencing, two-inch by twelve-inch horizontal boards, with the corners braced with metal rods. It is in fair condition.

Old Ranch Corral (non-contributing)

The Old Ranch roundup, built in the mid-1960s, is located on the Old Ranch road near Skunk Point. It is large and L-shaped, measuring approximately 132 feet by 132 feet, and has three pens, a wide entrance “hall,” and a chute, as well as a 48-foot wing fence. It is constructed of heavy posts, boards, chain link fencing, wire and guardrail salvaged from Johnsons Lee; headlight reflectors remain on some of the posts. It is in fair condition.

Las Cruces Corral (contributing)

This is one of the older corrals, originally dating to the 1920s or earlier and rebuilt in the 1960s. It is located in Quemada Canyon on the drift fence, at the junction of the drift fence and the southwest corner of Wire Field. A road, alternately dirt or grass, leads to the corral from the South Road. The corral measures about 84 feet by 96 feet with a 24-foot wing and is built of utility poles, boards, guardrail and chain link fencing. It is roughly square with a lane on the east side. The drift fence connects to the northwest and northeast corners of the corral, and the western Wire Field fence crosses the creek north of the corral. It is in fair condition.

Water Canyon Corral (non-contributing)

The Water Canyon roundup corral, built in the mid-1960s, is located in Water Canyon about 1.5 miles from Bechers Bay. It is reached by the Water Canyon/South road; a short but steep track leads down to the corral from the road. It is a simple rectangular structure measuring approximately 80 feet by 116 feet with two large pens and one small one, as well as the typical wing fence measuring 46 feet. There is no chute in this corral. It is constructed of posts, boards, chain link fencing and guard rail, and is in fair condition.

Piedragosa Roundup

No corral exists here, but Vail & Vickers used this level knoll for rounding up cattle in the southwest side of the island. The roundup ground is located about 2.5 miles northwest of South Point and 1.5 miles northeast of China Camp and is reached by an unimproved road from Navy Hill.

Sierra Pablo Roundup

The exact location of Sierra Pablo roundup is unknown. There was never a corral here. It is located in the vicinity of the junction of the drift fence and the Old Ranch Pasture fence, reportedly southwest from that point. The hills in the area show some knolls and ridges that would accommodate a roundup.

Lobo Roundup

This site, located south of the point where the Smith Highway crosses Lobo Canyon, acted as the eastern roundup point for North Pasture cattle to be placed in the Lobo Pasture and then sent for shipping. It is merely a level grassy area on a low ridge with no corral.

La Jolla Roundup

Until the Wreck Roundup corrals and trap were built, this acted as the roundup point for cattle on the southeast side of the island. It is a grassy, fairly level area adjacent to the South Road, about one mile west from the Wreck.

Pocket Field Roundup

This former roundup ground, used for gathering cattle off the Pocket Field, has not been used for decades. It is located at the foot of a slope, near the junction of the Smith Highway and Phil Orr's road, and is merely a grassy, undefined area.

Old Arlington Roundup

Conflicting information about the Arlington roundup leads to some confusion about this site. The current site with corrals is known to have existed as far back as 1929; the subject old Arlington roundup may have been used as a highland alternative for some years mid-century, possibly in connection with the new Signal Road built past the site in 1948. It is a grassy area located about one-half mile south of the Arlington corral and near the Smith Highway and the junction of the drift fence and the west Arlington Trap fence.



Corral fence and eucalyptus windbreak, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Typical fence line, on South Road, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Fences

IDLCS 59646

Fencing is an integral part of cattle ranching, as cattle can be controlled and distributed around the ranch depending on range conditions. The range fencing on Santa Rosa Island is barbed wire on posts; the

posts are a combination of new and old, ranging from older redwood split posts, to more recent peeled poles and metal posts. Older posts are often reused, and occasionally a piece of driftwood or other scavenged materials make do. The fence lines on the island date back to the More era, with some lines depicted on the 1874 map of the island.

Ranch House, Schoolhouse, Bunkhouse and Foreman's House Enclosures
(contributing)
IDLCS 59640

Enclosing the landscaped yard of the main house, this fence has been in place, with repairs, since at least 1900 and probably earlier. Photographs taken in 1903 clearly show the fence with few differences. The fence is built of sturdy wood posts, connected by a row of five horizontal boards and capped by a board at an angle for decoration and to allow water runoff. A wood gate opens to the ranch road fronting the house, and another gate is found on the south tangent near the outhouse. On the north side of the house yard the fence has been replaced with a tall, solid board fence. The entire perimeter fence is painted white and in good condition. Enclosing a smaller yard at the old schoolhouse is a fence practically identical to the upper house fence. It is also painted white and has gates at the front and back. The bunkhouse fence is practically identical to the upper house fence. It is also painted white and has gates at the front and back. The 1965 foreman's house is enclosed by a fence similar to the other yard fences. A portion of the fence is steel posts with barbed wire, while the back fence is solid boards painted white.

Drift Fence (contributing)

Nineteenth-century ranchers reportedly built the drift fence to keep sheep from "drifting" from one side of the island to the other. It has been maintained as a cattle fence for the entire 20th century, during which time it was entirely rebuilt. The drift fence separates the huge South Pasture from the North Pasture, and the Pocket and Wire Fields. The drift fence runs roughly west-to-east across the entire length of the island, a distance of about 12 miles, from the coast near Bee Rock to Old Ranch Pasture on the east end. The western part of the drift fence was depicted on Forney's 1873 map of the island, with a variation at its western extremity. Now, this west end of the fence is broken, the ranchers having used the natural attributes of a steep gulch as a natural barrier. It is constructed of wood (full-dimension 2x4s, split 4x4s, some telephone poles) and metal posts, barbed wire and occasional boards and H-braces. The varying posts reflect the ongoing maintenance required on a fence like this, with old, split redwood posts, railroad ties, and used lumber; newer materials include peeled posts and metal fence posts. Some parts of the fence are entirely wood posts, indicating an older stretch; these include the fence in Quemada Canyon and in the Bee Canyon area. Four or five strands of barbed wire are attached to the posts with staples, or tied with wire on the metal posts. The drift fence is in good to poor condition, depending upon location. Lack of recent maintenance is having a toll and the fence will continue to deteriorate and eventually collapse.

The following fencing systems are defined by the pastures and fields, which they enclose; because the pastures share fence lines with neighboring pastures, certain fence lines are randomly designated as belonging to only one of the pastures that it abuts.

Old Ranch (contributing)

A two-mile barbed wire fence running north to south encloses the Old Ranch Pasture, effectively cutting off East Point and Skunk Point. The fence line crosses the Sierra Pablo range and Quemada Canyon, ending in Bechers Bay at Southeast Anchorage. The fence is constructed of wood and mostly steel posts with four to five strands of barbed wire. The fence line follows virtually the same route as one recorded by Forney in his 1873 USCS map of the island, with the exception of a Vail & Vickers alteration at the fence line's north end. At that location the former fence, which ran in a continuous tangent north to Southeast Anchorage, was diverted to the east to form a bend around a ridge descending from the west, and returns to the original line near where it crosses the Old Ranch Road. A handful of posts mark the route of the original fence. The Old Ranch Pasture fence, now abandoned and unmaintained, is in fair condition.

Wire Field (contributing)

The Wire Field is enclosed by the Old Ranch fence (described above) on the east, the drift fence (described above) on the south and a one-mile stretch of fence on the west dividing Wire Field from North Pasture. The pasture's name is derived from the fact that this was the first use of barbed wire on the island, built before 1929. The fence section here described runs from Las Cruces Roundup in Quemada Canyon north to the bottom of the South Road at Bechers Bay. At the steep and rocky descent to the bay, the fence line has been altered slightly; old posts from the former route are visible. At another location in the central part of the fence line, the fence has been diverted slightly to the east, avoiding a steep drop into Water Canyon above the Water Canyon Roundup; here, also, a few old fence posts remain marking the former route. The Wire Field fence is similar to the other range fences on the island, with wood and steel posts and four to five strands of barbed wire, and appears to be in fair condition.

Lobo Pasture (contributing)

The Lobo Pasture fence runs roughly up Lobo Canyon and over a ridge to Windmill Canyon, in which it runs until reaching the ranch complex at Bechers Bay, enclosing the southern side of Lobo Pasture. It is about four miles long, in fair condition, and is typical of the other range fences in construction type with wood posts interspersed with steel posts as repair.

Carrington Pasture (contributing)

This fence is about two miles long and effectively cuts off Carrington Point. It runs roughly west-to-east, with the eastern two-thirds acting as the north fence of the Horse Pasture and the west one-third as the

northeast corner of Lobo Pasture. It is typical of the other range fences in construction type, with mostly wood posts, and appears to be in fair condition.

Horse Pasture (contributing)

The Horse Pasture is an almost-square enclosure northwest of the ranch complex. It is enclosed by a typical island fence of wood and steel posts, the north side shared with the Carrington Pasture fence, east with the House Trap, and south and west with Lobo Pasture fence. The west tangent was once burned, leaving wood stubs. It appears to be in fair condition.

Arlington/Pocket (contributing)

As one of the oldest fence lines on the island, this fence runs from the Arlington corner of the drift fence to Soledad Beach, a distance of about one mile. It appeared on Forney's 1873 map in the identical location. It is now a typical island fence of mostly wood posts and is in poor condition with a great deal of wire deterioration and falling posts.

Arlington Trap (contributing)

This is a fenced enclosure on the northwest side of the island where certain numbers of cattle can be "trapped" preliminary to separating in the corral. It is fenced with mostly wood posts, sharing its northeast line with the Arlington fence and its southeast line with the drift fence. It is in fair condition.

Wreck Trap (contributing)

The Wreck trap encloses a section of Ford Point on the south side of the island. It is a typical island fence of barbed wire, deteriorating in some places, and wood posts and is in poor condition.

House Trap (contributing)

The House Trap encloses a level field on the terrace directly north of the ranch complex. Cattle would be brought here before shipping, and the Vails used the trap for other purposes as well. It is a typical island fence of wood and steel posts, and appears to be in fair condition. A newer fence, installed in the 1970s, runs north-to-south near the center of House Trap.

Bechers Bay fields (contributing)

These relatively level fields southeast of the ranch complex, where the Vails planted alfalfa and oat hay for feed, are enclosed by typical island barbed wire fences with both wood and steel posts that remain in fair condition.

Gates (contributing)

Approximately 30 gates have been used on fence lines and even more in corrals across the island. All meetings of roads and fences required a gate, and in some locations a gate was necessary as a cattle path between pastures. The older gates are built of boards, bolted or nailed and hung on steel hinges or pins. Many of these gates remain, although most are in poor condition or discarded. The majority of the gates on the island today are welded galvanized steel on pins or hinges. An occasional wire gate is found; these are comprised of strands of barbed wire stayed with light posts, stretched across the gateway and attached to the gatepost with loops of heavy wire. Smaller gates are found in the yard enclosures and corrals. Conditions of the gates on the ranch range from good to poor.

NPS Exclosures (non-contributing)

Since 1987 the park service has installed exclosure fences in at least five areas. A steel post and barbed wire fence surrounds the shop and nursery area in Windmill Canyon. Two chain link fences enclose the wells and pump house in the floor of Windmill Canyon. A steel post and barbed wire fence surrounds the NPS housing area. A board fence has been built within the large, long corral opposite the upper ranch house for unknown reasons. On East Point, an exclosure fence has been constructed to keep elk and deer out of a natural area.

Water Resources

Water is a precious commodity on a livestock ranch and even more so on an island. While the island has numerous perennial streams, water for domestic and livestock use had to be developed to provide adequate and healthy supplies. Other than a surface supply from Water Canyon, tapped by the Mores in the 1870s, developed sources of water on the island include only a remote spring and a system of wells located near the ranch complex. A survey made in 1984 estimated that 984,959 gallons per day was available from sources on the southeast coast and eastern end of the island.

Vail & Vickers developed most of its cattle watering systems in the vicinity of the main ranch and Carrington Point. On the south side of the island, one small system was developed at Clapp Spring. While the island was well watered by natural sources (perennial streams), these sites needed development because of concentrations of cattle and lack of natural sources.

Windmill Canyon Water System (non-NPS improvements are contributing)

The major source of water for ranch operations is located in the appropriately named Windmill Canyon west of the ranch house. At an unknown date before the 1930s someone drilled or dug a well and installed a windmill and a redwood storage tank. Water from this reliable source fed by gravity the ranch houses, outbuildings and four large troughs in the ranch complex: one near the storage tank, another

downstream on the fence line, another in the water corral near the eucalyptus windbreak, and another in the House Trap north of the bunkhouse. In the 1970s, pipelines were extended to the three hospital pens on the east side of the eucalyptus windbreak. Additional troughs, of more recent vintage and found only in the hospital pens east of the windbreak, are steel tanks eight feet in diameter, resting on wood plank platforms. For some time the Vails used a tractor or old Army vehicle on jacks to pump water from the well. Later the Vails built a pump house. As of 1984, two hand-dug wells, 4x4 to 40 feet, were present; one was active, with a storage tank in place. In the late 1980s the National Park Service replaced and updated the well, windmill and pump system. Water is piped from the sources in Windmill Canyon also to the NPS housing, campground and the main ranch residences.

Water Canyon Pipeline, Main Ranch Reservoir (contributing)

The More family developed a water system in the early 1870s to supply the new ranch complex. A dam in Water Canyon, apparently no longer extant, impounded water that was delivered in riveted iron pipe for a distance of two miles. A circular, rock-lined reservoir at the ranch complex appears to have been fed by this line as well. Margaret Vail Woolley recalled when people piped water from a dam in Water Canyon to the barley field near the ranch house “years ago;” a man at one time attempted a large vegetable garden in the lee of the eucalyptus trees which was watered by that system. Remnants of the original pipeline remain in Water Canyon, and the old reservoir is a landmark near the Russ Vail house, east of the south end of the eucalyptus windbreak. It is about 85 feet in diameter, about five feet deep, and lined with dry-laid stones. Part of the reservoir wall has been destroyed, and vegetation, including a eucalyptus tree, is encroaching.

Main Ranch Diversion Ditch (contributing)

Persons unknown excavated a long ditch at the foot of the slope bounding the grain fields at Bechers Bay, adjacent to the current airstrip. The ditch is approximately a quarter mile long and was designed to divert runoff from the fields. It remains in fair condition, broken at one point by the now-abandoned Telephone Road.

Lobo and Carrington Pastures Pipeline, Troughs and Tank (contributing)

IDLCS 102083

In 1945, the ranchers installed pumps and a pipeline to transport the water to a storage tank and trough in the Lobo Pasture, and another pipeline to a trough in Carrington Pasture.

The large concrete troughs at the ranch complex, Carrington Point (built in 1945) and Clapp Spring (1953, see below) are similar in design. They measure 18 feet in diameter and are constructed of reinforced concrete poured into forms, either circular or octagonal, with a six-foot concrete apron. The ranch troughs



A section of the 1870s-era Water Canyon pipeline, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



An edge of the More-era reservoir at the main ranch, 2000. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

are fed by pipelines, originally of galvanized steel but partly replaced by PVC. The only remaining historic storage tank is located in Lobo Pasture. It is a ten-foot-high concrete tank 20 feet in diameter, poured into forms built over a shorter, older iron tank; the metal has deteriorated but the concrete appears sound. A wooden ladder provides access to the top of the tank.

Clapp Springs (contributing)
IDLCS 102081

Near the top of San Agustin Canyon persons unknown developed a spring that produced a fine and reliable water source. Water from Clapp Springs is taken by a pipe from the source to a concrete watering trough on the Sierra Pablo road. Al Vail and the cowboys built the trough in 1953, leaving the date inscribed in the concrete apron. Vail's sister recalled some aspects of the spring:

We didn't get drinking water from there because it was too far and it was too hard to carry on horseback. But that was the place where the cattle'd eat from various roundups and it was a good stopping place and good resting place because you would shove cattle up out of the canyon there and they'd be tired and you'd be tired and it would be hot and it was a real project to get them there.⁴⁵⁰

No one knows who found and developed the spring. Clapp Springs allegedly got its name from an incident when its pure water cured an old cowboy's venereal disease. True or not, the water seems fine.

The Clapp Spring trough is fed by Clapp Spring, a natural feature collected into an intake that is housed in a small wooden spring house with a deteriorated metal roof. Water feeds by gravity into PVC pipe, with formerly used steel pipe remaining on the site. At one location the pipeline is suspended by a cable as the pipe traverses a steep cliff. The trough is a six-sided, concrete basin with a deteriorating concrete apron. The water system is maintained and in fair condition.

Lobo and Pocket Reservoirs (contributing)

Vail & Vickers supplemented water supply on the range with earthen dams at various locations, creating stock ponds. In Lobo Pasture ranch workers constructed two dams in Cañada Lobo between 1948 and 1954. One, the upper, was constructed of sandy materials and soon failed. The other, larger dam was constructed downstream and retains water to this day. The raw materials were cut from the adjacent bank creating a 100-foot long dam about 30 feet high, with a spillway cut into rocky ground. Nearby in Carrington Pasture, adjacent with the Lobo gate, Diego Cuevas built a small, 60-foot dam to catch runoff in a shallow pool. In the 1950s ranch workers constructed a short-lived earthen dam near Sierra Pablo roundup at the end of the drift fence, but this feature was not located during the July 2001 inventory, nor was another, reportedly located adjacent to Black Rock in the southern part of Bechers Bay. The oldest

⁴⁵⁰Oral history interview with Margaret Vail Woolley, March 10, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, transcript p. 7, SCIF.



The water trough in Lobo Pasture, viewed to north, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The trough at Clapp Spring, view to west, 1999. The spring is located over the shoulder of ridge (beyond the roadway). *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

stock pond on the island (built before 1948) is reportedly the one called Mud Tank in Pocket Field. The dam measures about 90 feet across and 30 feet high; the excavation for materials is adjacent. A railroad tie spillway helps drain overflow while minimizing erosion. The pond was once fenced, although no fence posts remain, and continues to retain water.

Standard Oil Company Water System (not surveyed)

Standard Oil Company constructed a dam to supply water to their drilling operation in 1932. The dam was located deep in Tranquillon Canyon, approximately two miles southwest of the drilling site, and reached by a bulldozed road. A pump transported water up to the high-elevation drill site. The system was short-lived and the dam site is too remote for inventory.

Army Camp Water System (possibly contributing)

The Army Corps of Engineers constructed a water system in 1943 to supply the World War II coastal defenses camp at the head of Water Canyon. The system impounded water behind a concrete catchment dam that was fed by gravity to a large wooden tank. A gasoline pump transported the water up a steep hill to a location well above the camp site, providing adequate pressure by gravity. The large tank's contents traveled by steel pipeline down and across a gully on concrete pylons to the camp site. Ruins of the water system remain in place at the Army camp site (Scott's Camp). The system was reportedly altered by Louis Scott around 1950, and it is not possible to determine what changes he made at that time. The remains include a concrete dam in the upper reaches of Water Canyon, pipelines, ruins of water tanks and excavations for said tanks, and concrete pylon supports for a pipeline crossing over a deeply cut gulch. Portions of the pipeline and various debris from the tanks also remain on the site.

Johnsons Lee Diversion Ditch (non-contributing)

Another diversion ditch is found behind the remaining 1950 motor pool building at Johnsons Lee. The ditch was apparently intended to divert water and erosion emanating from the utility line corridor away from the building complex.

Vegetation

Santa Rosa Island is characterized by its broad expanses of open grassland, thick and rich at lower elevations and sparse on the mountaintops. Brushy areas are interspersed with the grasslands in canyons and bottomlands, while native trees are usually found in disparate groves on the east and north sides of the island. Trees planted by island occupants are only found at the ranch complex on Bechers Bay (with the exception of a single Torrey pine (*Pinus torreyana ssp. insularis*) surviving at a formerly developed site at

Johnsons Lee) and were established as windbreaks and decorative plantings. Vegetation in former agricultural fields has given way to grass and shrubs. Landscaping around buildings is minimal.

In 1873, almost 40 years after the island was settled and ranched, the U. S. Coast Survey produced a detailed topographic map of Santa Rosa Island, based on a two-year field survey by Stehman Forney. The map defined most of the land surface as being grasses. Thick pockets of prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) and groves of woodland were depicted, the latter corresponding generally with today's conditions. The cactus was mostly eliminated during the 1950s and 1960s through the inadvertent migration of cactus-eating insects from a Santa Cruz Island cactus control program. Otherwise, the island's vegetation patterns are remarkably intact when compared with the 1873 conditions.

Some elements of historically-planted vegetation are lost. The fields at Bechers Bay may retain remnants of the crops once proliferating there, although closer scrutiny is needed. A small, enclosed orchard or crop existed on a level area in Green Canyon southwest of the current roundup corral, as documented on the 1873 US Coast Survey map of Santa Rosa Island. No trace of the field could be found in 1999 or 2001; it is now a level, grassy pasture sandwiched between the Smith Highway and Green Canyon creek.

The history of vegetation on the island requires further study. Research continues on the natural conditions of the island in relation to habitat restoration, but historical accounts of botanical conditions through history are rare. Accounts of domestic plantings at the main ranch are few and although the exact date of planting is unknown, these elements should be considered contributing until further research can be completed.

Eucalyptus Windbreak (contributing)

At an unknown date, island owners planted a windbreak of eucalyptus trees west of the ranch complex with the intention of blocking the stiff island offshore winds. Planted in a dense row trending north-to-south with a dogleg heading northeast at an approximately 50-degree angle, the windbreak of blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) encloses a level marine terrace directly south of the pier. It defines circulation patterns between the pier, corrals and routes south from the ranch complex. The windbreak consists of about 225-250 mature trees in a line almost half a mile long. All are bent to an extreme angle by the prevailing westerly wind, which makes them appear to be growing horizontally. There are occasional short breaks in the row, especially on the south end; about 5% of the trees are dead. The windbreak is approximately 100 years old, possibly older. It protected the agricultural fields to its east from the heavy winds blowing down from the hills. Eucalyptus windbreaks are a common element on 19th century coastal California ranches and farms; settlers imported the trees beginning in the 1850s. The condition of the Bechers Bay eucalyptus windbreak is difficult to assess; while the trees are alive and perhaps well, they are extremely wind-blown and appear to be only tolerating the harsh environmental conditions and their longevity is uncertain. The windbreak is an integral feature in the cultural landscape of the ranch, having both utilitarian and scenic functions.

Cypress Trees (contributing)

The Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*), native to the Monterey peninsula on the north-central California coast, is a staple element on historic coastal ranches as windbreaks and decorative trees. The ranch complex at Bechers Bay includes three units of cypress windbreaks at the ranch house, the barn and the bunkhouse.

Early in its history, the ranch house was practically surrounded by the trees; photographs taken in 1903 show already-mature trees at the front of the house and young trees in a line along the north yard fence. Early maps depict the trees as planted in lines along the enclosure fence, although it is unlikely that the front (east) fence featured an entire row. Two trees had been planted directly in front of the house, one on each side of the entry porch. These are estimated to have been planted around 1870 when the house was built. The south tree was removed due to senescence and decay from the inside; the north tree appears to be healthy. Cypress trees of varying age remain around the edge of the yard, including seven mature trees that reflect the original line.

A row of Monterey cypress lines a portion of the road between the ranch house and bunkhouse, paralleling the horse barn to its west and acting as a boundary to the sudden drop-off to the creek below. Depicted in 1903 photographs as a young, straight row, many have died and/or have been removed; and three of the remaining trees are approximately 105 years old. NPS planted several new cypress to replace the dead ones in the row.

The barn row of Monterey cypress trees continues on the west side of the bunkhouse, then turns east to surround the house on the north. Two more trees stand south of the bunkhouse. All are mature trees, remnants of the original dense lines planted before 1900. Some trees may have been damaged or destroyed in the bunkhouse fire of 1969. The remaining trees are generally healthy but old and nearing the end of their lifespan. In general, the Monterey cypress plantings are in poor condition. Healthy volunteer seedlings are found near the creek but are non-historic.

Ranch House Yard (non-contributing)

Enclosed in a perimeter fence, the ranch house yard is landscaped simply with lawn and border plantings. The dates of the plantings are not known, except for the cypress trees. Scrutiny of early photographs suggests that most of the extant plants were installed less than 50 years ago. Trees include invasive athel trees (*Tamarix aphylla*), California pepper (*Schinus molle*) and Monterey cypress on the west elevation: neither the pepper nor tamarisks appear to be flourishing in this location. A total of fifteen healthy jade plants (*Crassula argentea*) are located on the east, south and north elevations of the yards, mostly in four clusters on the northeast corner of the yard. Geraniums (*Pelargonium hortorum*) and an unidentified shrub grow on the east fence near the gate. The entire yard is covered in mowed Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*).

Other Ranch Complex Yards (non-contributing)

Aside from the Monterey cypress described above, the bunkhouse yard includes three mature, wind-beaten eucalyptus on the east elevation and a more recently planted tamarisk grove at the northeast corner of the yard. Jade plants, geraniums in planter boxes and ice plant (*Carpobrotus chilensis*) are found in the yard. All of these plantings except for the older trees date from after 1969. The Bermuda grass lawn on the south (front) yard is mowed and maintained. The schoolhouse yard, enclosed by a board fence, is comprised of a mowed Bermuda grass lawn with iris, geranium and roses (*Rosa sp.*) of undetermined age planted in the south and east portions of the yard. The ranch foreman's house yard is enclosed with a board fence and has a Bermuda grass lawn, Jade plants, bulbs and iris (*Iris sp.*), all planted since 1965. Russ Vail's house yard has a board perimeter fence enclosing a simple layout of mowed Bermuda grass with Jade plants and native shrubs, all planted since 1988. The eucalyptus windbreak forms the back (west) side of the yard.

China Camp (contributing)

Vegetation within the yard fence at the China Camp cabin includes range grasses and a mature pyracantha shrub located on the south elevation of the later cabin. The bush may have been planted during the 1950s, and is healthy.

Open Range Land (non-contributing)

The bulk of the island acreage is grassland used between 1844 and 1998 as grazing pasture. It was originally (beginning in 1844) grazed by cattle but by the 1870s had been almost entirely given over to intensive sheep grazing. This period (circa 1870-1902) has been credited with the near-destruction of the native plant cover of the island and resulting soil erosion. Between 1902 and 1998 the pasture was grazed by cattle in numbers between 2,500 and 6,000 depending on the season and quantity of grass. Ranch operators divided the island into pastures and holding fields, ranging from the South Pasture, which encloses about one-third of the island acreage, to the one-square-mile Horse Pasture and even smaller Arlington, Wreck and House Traps. According to park documents, some areas of sheep-caused 19th century erosion had revegetated to some degree under a lighter cattle-grazing regimen.

During 154 years of grazing activity, the grassland landscape evolved into a system of cropped (grazed) non-native grasses of varying species and density with sparse pockets of native shrubs, largely coyote brush, manzanita, lupine and sage. Elevation and slope affect the nature of the grasslands. For example, forage in the lower-elevation table lands of the Lobo Pasture has traditionally been rich and thick while the grasses on the mountaintops and slopes are short and sparse. Areas of historic-era erosion on slopes have eliminated dozens of acres of grassland, especially on the northwest and southwest portions of the island. Cactus remains on the island but not in the quantities found into the 1950s.

The recent release from grazing has resulted in taller grasses and increase in shrub densities, especially coyote brush. Visually, the change is more noticeable in the gradual disappearance of the vivid

green hills typical of the late winter and springtime, this disappearance due to the remaining dead and dry grasses from the previous season obscuring the new green growth. The pastoral scenes of cattle grazing on bright green grassy hills have been eliminated. In addition, the appearance of low-growing spring wildflowers is reported by longtime island residents as diminishing because of increased competition from uncontrolled non-native grasses and weeds, and native shrubs.

Future management of vegetation on Santa Rosa Island does not include grazing as a tool, although vegetation may be kept mechanically trimmed in the ranch complex and possibly at some of the outlying corrals. The historic grazed landscape is losing integrity and does not contribute to a ranching-period historic district.

Hay Fields (contributing)

The mile-long level marine terrace fronting Bechers Bay invited tillage by the island ranchers and may have been a factor in relocating the ranch complex from Rancho Viejo in 1870. During the Vail & Vickers era, these large fields were annually plowed and planted with first barley, then alfalfa and oat hay. Vegetables and potatoes also were planted inside (east of) the eucalyptus windbreak, but for short periods. Within the last 50 years three cattle enclosures have been constructed and a house built on the western edge of the eucalyptus (central) fields. The fields are bounded by the ocean cliffs to the east and the eucalyptus windbreak and airstrip fence to the west. The fields stretch more than a mile from the Carrington Pasture fence on the north to Water Canyon on the south. The fields have been abandoned for about five years and are covered in high grasses and encroaching coyote brush. The airstrip occupies the south-central part of the former agricultural fields. Fence enclosures remain intact in the same configurations since at least the 1930s. The fields are considered to retain integrity because their distinct physical characteristic (marine shelf location) and boundaries remain evident, although the fields are no longer viable from a vegetation standpoint.

Airstrips

The era of flying small planes to Santa Rosa Island began around 1930. By 1933 an airstrip had been designated on the grain field south of the ranch headquarters. This airstrip was slowly improved as use became more common, but not until 1988 was the strip graded into a good level surface, eliminating a low hump near the center. Other airstrips were used on the island. The Air Force constructed a strip with graders in a short canyon at Johnsons Lee but discontinued its use after a fatal crash. Phil Orr landed on the north side, Sam Wise made landings at China Camp, and the Army Corps of Engineers designated a number of airstrip sites in 1950. Only the Bechers Bay strip has been used consistently and contributes to a historic district. It is well maintained.

Nidever Cave

The cave in which otter hunter George Nidever and his accomplices reportedly stored their gear and hid out from an attack of Aleut hunters remains somewhat intact on a slope across Ranch House Canyon from the barn complex. The cave doubtless has prehistoric associations as well. Sheep shearers were reported living there at times, and a sheepherder named Santiago Quinteros occupied the large sandstone cave for many years in the late 1800s. Quinteros or a predecessor enclosed the entrance with a wooden wall and doorway to create a comfortable dwelling. During the Vail & Vickers era the cave was used by temporary ranch crews and for explosives storage. The cave has partially filled with dirt because of holes that have developed in its ceiling, exacerbated by the construction of the Smith Highway over the top. Jesus Bracamontes recalled that “. . . a tractor used to drive on the road above it, and water ran through it. When there was an oil company here, a man driving a big truck said it would be better to put reinforcing sticks in it below” so Eddie Morales (an old friend of Ed Vail’s) put in braces around 1987. The cave is roughly 20 feet by 30 feet; the ceiling is now between 2 feet and 4 feet high due to siltation. A portion of Santiago’s wooden entrance wall remains (Arthur Woodward found it intact in 1941).

The cave is in severe danger of continued damage or destruction from the road activities above. It has exceptional historic significance as the potential site of the only documented conflict between Aleutian and American otter hunters in 1835. It is recommended that measures be immediately taken to stabilize the cave and stop the erosion. Diverting vehicle traffic from above the cave will inconvenience island managers, but some solution needs to be reached which will end traffic on that portion of the road. The cave should be excavated by qualified archeologists. It may contain layers of three or four cultures, from Chumash to otter hunters to sheep men and hermits.

Sites

Old Ranch

The site of Rancho Viejo or Old Ranch is unquestionably the location of Alpheus Thompson’s first ranch house on the island as evidenced by early maps; nothing remains of the old settlement on the surface but the potential for archeological investigation is great. The site is now largely brushy, and portions near the beach are eroding into a gully. The site has historical significance as the original settlement of Alpheus Thompson dating to 1844 in the Mexican Period. It is recommended that the old ranch site be thoroughly surveyed for resources by archeologists.

Cañada Soledad House & Corral

A small corral was depicted on the 1873 USCS map by Stehman Forney in the vicinity of upper Cañada Soledad near the Smith Highway. A brief field survey could not positively locate the corral although some evidence seems to exist. A building was depicted on a bluff across the gulch to the west;

this site has not been surveyed and it is recommended that a survey be undertaken of both these locations, which may yield information about early sheep ranching on the island.

Vail picnic ground, Lobo Canyon

The Vail family had an informal picnic ground in a pleasant grove of oaks adjacent to the Smith Highway in Lobo Canyon. Ed Vail reportedly constructed the camp in the 1950s. Older low rock walls and a modern picnic table are located there now, and park crews occasionally mow the site. Oak seedlings have been planted to replace fallen trees.

Air Force Station, Johnsons Lee and Soledad, Navy Hill

Although the Air Force and Navy had important installations on Santa Rosa Island that contributed to the defense of the California Coast, practically all evidence has been removed, leaving only a number of graded sites littered with small amounts of broken glass and pieces of wood, concrete and metal. These sites are located at Vail Peak, Soledad Mountain, Navy Hill (two sites) and Johnsons Lee.

The U. S. Air Force constructed a Cold War early warning radar base in 1950 at Johnsons Lee and Vail Peak. The extensive complex of dozens of buildings, infrastructure and roads was mostly removed by NPS during the 1990s although debris is found in most locations. Remaining features include ruins of the concrete pier, a unique base logo formed out of painted rocks arranged on a slope overlooking the pier site, a concrete slab building foundation, cut off poles, guy anchors, culverts, and debris. Farther east, above Officers Beach, is a discarded metal bulldozer blade. The Air Force base was found to be of no historic significance prior to removal of the building complexes in the 1990s.

A set of two Navy and Air Force developments dating to the early 1950s has been removed from the area known as Navy Hill. Located on the Air Force Road between Johnsons Lee and Soledad Peak, the two adjacent knolls (both with an elevation of approximately 1,460 feet) were heavily graded with large areas leveled for buildings. Both the east and west sites featured two adjacent leveled areas for receiving and transmitting operations requiring separation by a short distance. All buildings and structures have been removed from these sites although some debris, hardware and sawed-off utility poles can be found. The separate World War II radar site remains relatively intact on the southwest flank of the lower hill (it was not removed by the Army in 1946 and was not under the jurisdiction of the Navy and Air Force facilities). The Navy and Air Force sites retain no integrity and are not significant.

Abalone Camps and Shipwrecks

Archeological survey of shoreline sites associated with the Chinese abalone industry, known to have been active on the island during the latter half of the 19th century and up to 1913, was undertaken in 2012. Investigations into shipwrecks located on the island have been ongoing.

Summary List of Historic Buildings, Structures and Features

The following structures and features are considered by this author to possess historic significance related to settlement, development, ranching operations and maritime commerce on Santa Rosa Island, and are potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as part of a rural historic district:

Buildings

- Ranch (Upper) House
- Upper House Outhouse
- Horse Barn
- Generator Barn and Matanza Boilers
- Old Schoolhouse/Residence
- Corral Outhouse
- Ranch Outhouse in Windbreak
- Scale House
- Branding Shed
- Rope House
- China Camp Line Shack
- South Point Lighthouse
- WWII Radar Station Operations Bldg

Structures and Small Scale Features

- Pile Driver
- A-Frame
- Cattle chute
- Dip Vat
- Feed Troughs and Mangers
- Pig Pen
- Small Scale Features, Main Ranch and Outer Island

Roads

- Smith Highway
- The Main Road
- Old Ranch Road
- Carrington Point Road
- South (Wreck) Road
- Burma Road
- China Camp (Rita's) Road
- Johnsons Lee Road
- Telephone Road
- Signal Road
- Sierra Pablo Road
- Orr's Camp Road
- South Point Light Road
- Roads at Main Ranch
- Other Ranch-related Roads

Corrals

- Main Ranch Corrals
- Arlington
- China Camp
- The Wreck
- Las Cruces

Roundup Sites

- Piedragosa
- Sierra Pablo
- Lobo
- La Jolla
- Pocket Field
- Old Arlington

Fences

- Ranch House Enclosure
- Schoolhouse Enclosure
- Bunkhouse Enclosure
- Drift Fence
- Old Ranch
- Wire Field
- Lobo Pasture
- Carrington Pasture
- Horse Pasture
- Arlington/Pocket
- Arlington Trap
- Wreck Trap
- House Trap
- Bechers Bay fields
- Gates

Water Resources

- Water Canyon Pipeline (ruin)
- Main Ranch Reservoir
- Main Ranch Diversion Ditch
- Lobo Pasture Tank
- Lobo Pasture Trough
- Carrington Pasture Trough
- Carrington Point Pipeline
- Clapp Springs
- Lobo Reservoir
- Pocket Reservoir
- Standard Oil Company Water System (ruin)
- Army Camp Water System (ruin)

Vegetation

- Eucalyptus Windbreak
- Cypress Trees
- China Camp
- Hay Fields
- Bechers Bay Airstrip

Caves

- Nidever Cave
- Inscription Cave

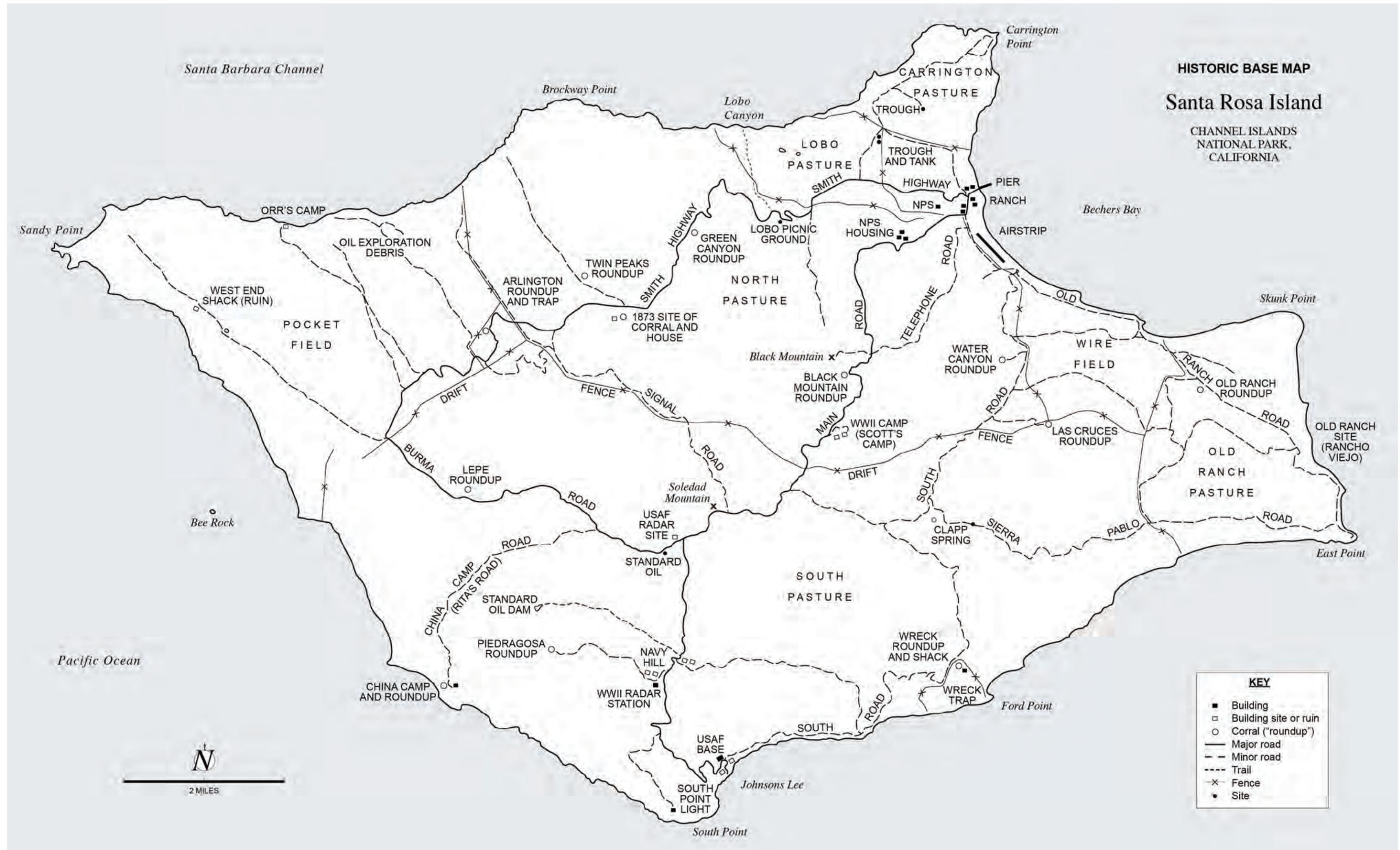
Sites

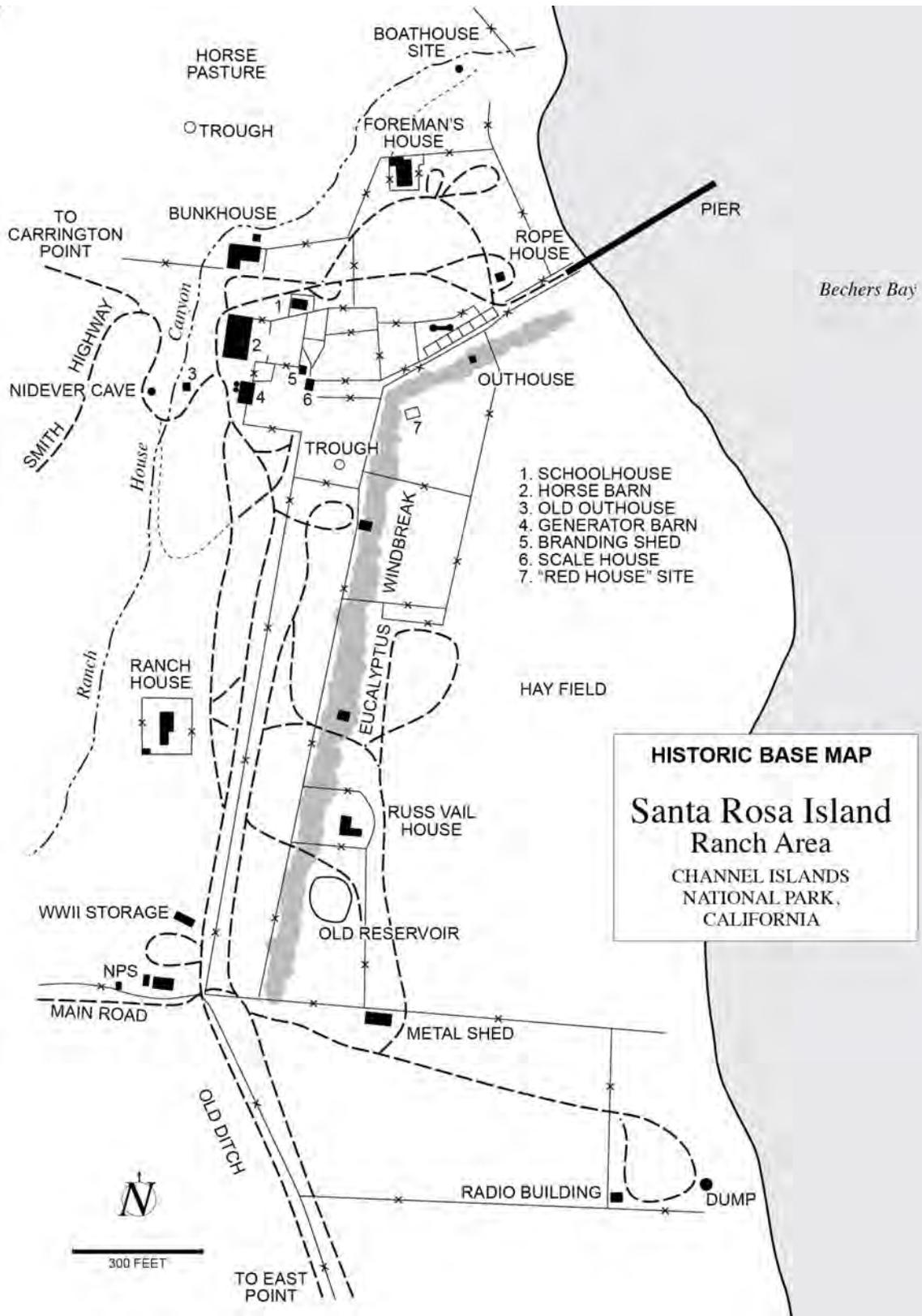
- Old Ranch
- Cañada Soledad House & Corral
- Vail picnic ground, Lobo Canyon
- Abalone Camps

Shipwrecks

It is recommended that, in light of the high level of integrity of the cultural landscape at Santa Rosa Island, post-1955 resources are preserved as part of the Santa Rosa Island Ranching District. This would include such features as roundup corrals built in the 1960s, the foreman's house and bunkhouse, the Wreck line camp, cattle chute, and various small-scale features. Please refer to the Level II Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Santa Rosa Island Ranching District (2001) for more detail.

[blank page]





[blank page]

Section 4

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND



*From the sea, Santa Cruz Island is a jumble of lofty hills and mountains,
with deep gorges and cañons winding in every direction.
Hidden away in the very heart of this island is an ideal ranch,
with a pronounced foreign atmosphere . . .*

Charles Holder, 1910



Physical Description

Santa Cruz Island is the largest of the eight Channel Islands at more than 64,000 acres or 96 square statute miles. Located between Santa Rosa Island on the west and the Anacapas on the east, and 19 miles from the mainland at its closest point, the island is long and sometimes narrow, resembling a scorpion; its length is roughly 24 miles and its width varies from two miles (at the 6-mile-long isthmus) to 6.5 miles abreast of the high point, Picacho Diablo or Diablo Peak (2,470 feet). Three mountain ranges are found on the island, two paralleling the fault-formed Central Valley and the third a short but high (1,581 feet) range, perpendicular to the other ranges and called the Montañon, which essentially divides the bulk of the island from the relatively small eastern end. Of the two former ranges, the northern is the highest and most rugged while the southern range is shorter, lower in elevation (1,523 feet) and generally more moderate in topography. On both the east and west ends of the island one finds relatively flat marine terraces that were favored historically for crop growing.

The Cañada del Medio or Central Valley forms a ruler-straight slash through the center of the island, which continues over a divide into Cañada Christy and ends at the ocean. Looking at a map or aerial view one would expect that the Central Valley drains to the ocean on the southeast side of the island but a low pass prevents this; seismic activity pushed the drainage north through a jagged pass in the northern mountain range to drain into Prisoners Harbor, part of a broad bight that includes Chinese Harbor to the east. Prisoners Harbor acts as the gateway to the island road system and was for many years the only landing with a pier. Scorpion Anchorage on the east end has a short dock and acts as the entryway for the isolated east end. Favored anchorages for boaters include Cueva Valdez, Ladys Harbor, Frys Harbor, Dicks Harbor and Pelican Bay on the north side, Willows Anchorage and Coches Prietos on the south and Smugglers Cove on the east end. In general, the north side features many steep cliffs and deeply cut drainages while the south side is gentler. Cliffs line the east end providing few places to land for access. The tidal zone is rich in marine fauna and flora.

Santa Cruz Island is the most environmentally diverse island in the chain, with vast areas of grassland, coastal scrub, forests and barren lands. The Mediterranean climate coupled with the varied topography produce a number of microclimates across the island. Numerous perennial watercourses provide rich and protected riparian areas while in the higher elevations rocky and barren deserts can be found. The island flora contains many unique species, including federally listed species, but also hosts common mainland trees and plants such as coast live oak and manzanita. Significant among the island vegetation are the island pines (*Pinus muricata*), which grow only in a handful of groves, ironwood (*Lyonothamnus floribundus* ssp. *aspleniifolius*) and flowers such as the blue dick (*Brodiaea* sp.). Introduced plants include eucalyptus, Monterey cypress, stone pine and many herbaceous species and types of grasses.

Only four species of native terrestrial mammals are found on the island as well as about a dozen species of bats. Most well known of these are the small island fox (*Urocyon littoralis*) and island or spotted skunk (*Spilogale gracilis*). Two species of mice live on the island as well. All feral sheep were removed by 2001. One endemic bird species is found on the island: the Santa Cruz Island jay. There are several endemic sub-species as well. Dozens of land bird species nest on Santa Cruz Island including the American kestrel and western flycatcher.

Santa Cruz Island, as the largest and most diverse island of the eight Channel Islands, has a long and varied history that is tied closely to its physical attributes. The Chumash occupied the island for millennia and maintained a number of villages and seasonal settlements. Mariners found shelter in its coves, hunters killed otters and sea life, immigrants grazed livestock and the U. S. military determined the island to be of strategic importance. Today the island's relatively new owners, The Nature Conservancy and the National Park Service, strive to preserve its natural and cultural attributes and to protect the island from further development and exploitation.



Island Scrub-Jay, the one endemic bird species found on Santa Cruz Island. *Photograph by Nora Livingston*

History of Santa Cruz Island

The study area of this report is limited to National Park Service-owned lands on the east end of the island including the isthmus totaling about 15,000 acres; the remaining 49,000 acres are owned by a private organization, The Nature Conservancy. This narrative history by necessity includes the entire island to provide a full context of events. The author does, however, make more detailed observations concerning places and events in the study area and so in many cases offers only abbreviated details on places or events in the non-NPS area of the island such as the Main Ranch, Christy Ranch and Pelican Bay.

Of the eight Channel Islands, Santa Cruz Island has the most complex history. The island hosted the largest population of Island Chumash, and was in fact considered as a potential site of a California mission to serve the Indians of the surrounding islands. Its first legal owner was Andres Castillero, a prominent figure in Mexican Alta California history. Under Castillero's successors, the island was developed as one of the finest sheep ranches in the west, made more distinctive by its location. Frenchman Justinian Caire took full control of Santa Cruz Island from his business partners in the 1880s and developed a famous agricultural operation consisting of sheep, cattle, poultry, vineyards and orchards. Caire's physical developments were unique in the region, as he brought architectural styles and culture from the old country. During the heyday at the Caire ranch before 1900, more than 100 workers, mostly Italian but including French, Americans, Mexican Californians and Indians, labored at the many tasks involved in running a complex island enterprise. Tourists and hunters made the island popular through newspaper and magazine articles, and the riches of the sea were exploited by amateur and professional alike. An extended and complicated series of litigation between family members resulted in the division of the island and the sale of most of it in 1937. For 50 years following the Stanton family ran fine beef cattle on the ranges, while the Gherini family, descendants of Justinian Caire, continued the tradition of sheep raising on the east end. Prehistoric resources, nineteenth and twentieth century architecture and landscapes are the prominent historic features remaining.

Prehistoric Occupancy and First Contacts with Europeans

The prehistory of Santa Cruz Island is linked with the geological and natural history of the islands, as the first inhabitants developed their lifestyles and based their economy on the natural elements available to them. The island's origin is volcanic and the presence of the dramatic Santa Cruz Island Fault which slashed the island in half has raised a number of theories ranging from a cataclysmic event to a joining of land masses over a period of millions of years. Santa Cruz Island took on its present shape as water levels attained a stable elevation. The result is the largest and most diverse island in the chain, with an extensive coastline, perennial creeks, rich vegetation, a mild climate, and numerous protected areas, in essence an ideal habitat for native people.¹

¹Steve Junak, Tina Ayers, Randy Scott, Dieter Wilken and David Young, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1995), pp. 1-2.

The island's occupants developed into a group that would later be called the Chumash, whose major branches lived on the mainland from San Luis Obispo to Malibu. Although the Chumash on Santa Cruz Island may have spoken their own sub-dialect of the Island Chumash language group, dubbed Cruzeño, recent research indicated that the Island Chumash language seemed to be “uniform from island to island,” with slight dialect differences.² Santa Cruz Island proved to be an important part of the overall Chumash economy, as Chumash on the east end of the island made chert bladelets for drilling holes in the shell disc beads that were used as a form of currency.³

Santa Cruz Island supported a number of Chumash towns or settlements. The archeological record, various accounts by early travelers and oral histories only hint at the extent of the culture there. Chumash villagers had no known contact with outsiders until the 16th and early 17th centuries when Cabrillo and other explorers and traders passed the islands. An account of the first sighting of Santa Cruz Island by Cabrillo's party in 1542 described Santa Cruz as having at least six villages: *Niquipos*, *Mazul*, *Xugua*, *Nitel*, *Macamo* and *Nimitapal*. Cabrillo first named the island “San Lucas.” After Cabrillo's death in January of 1543, the exploring party endeavored “to anchor at the Isla de Limun [Santa Cruz Island], which they named ‘San Sebastian.’ They were obliged to weigh anchor again as there was no port there, only the shelter which the islands afforded, and the wind had shifted to one on shore.” The name “Isla de Limun” eventually became accepted as *Limuw* for the Chumash name of the island.⁴

Although at least two exploring parties passed the islands and noted them, only one landed at Santa Cruz Island as far as is known. Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño wrote that on both Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz “the land is bare and sterile, although inhabited by Indians; there are no ports or coves in them in which to take shelter”; Cermeño apparently sailed along the south shore of the island.⁵

Sebastian Vizcaíno sent a man to Santa Cruz Island to see the inhabitants in December of 1602 and wrote in his diary:

The next day the Admiral's ship and frigate came up with us [from Santa Cruz Island]
On being asked what he had found on the island, Ensign Melendez said that there were many Indians, who had told him by signs that upon it there were men who were bearded and clothed like ourselves. Thinking them to be Spaniards, he sent them a note, and eight

²Sally McLendon and John R. Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis for Cultural Affiliation in the Areas Formerly Controlled by Chumash Peoples and Presently Under National Park Service Stewardship* (National Park Service, Hunter College at CUNY, and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1996), p. 35. Park archeologist Don Morris wrote, in a memo containing comments on the first draft of this report, that “at least some linguists consider that Cruzeño and mainland [dialects] were differentiated to the same extent as English and German—in other words, they were actually separate languages.”

³Michael A. Glassow, *An Archaeological Overview of the Northern Channel Islands Including Santa Barbara Island* (Tucson: Western Archaeological Center, National Park Service, 1977), pp. 8-9, 13.

⁴John R. Johnson, *An Ethnohistoric Study of the Island Chumash*, Thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, December 1982, p. 4; Summary attributed to Juan Paez de Castro, in Johnson, pp. 10-11, 13.

⁵Account of Sebastian Rodríguez Zermenyo, quoted in Henry R. Wagner, “The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595” in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 1, April 1924, pp. 17-18.

Indians came to him in a canoe, bearded and clothed in skins of animals, but they could learn nothing more.⁶

The map from Vizcaíno's voyage named Santa Cruz Island "Isla de Gente Barbuda."

The islanders had no recorded contact with foreigners between 1602 and 1769, although it is likely that, considering the amount of traffic passing the islands, a number of unrecorded contacts were made.

Not until the land-and-sea expedition of Portolá in 1769 did Europeans set foot on Santa Cruz Island, as far as is known. Portolá himself was not among them, but members of the supply crew that sailed up the coast alongside the expedition's land route, including Father Juan González Vizcaíno who was aboard the *San Antonio* and kept a journal, landed on Santa Cruz Island. In the journal, Vizcaíno described their visit to *Xaxas* at Prisoners Harbor:

We anchored in a sheltered spot on the north side of the island determined to take on water, etc. The Indians came [in canoes] as before, and they signed to us there was water . . . [The next day] with 9 men I went ashore in the launch to get water from the Island in front of us. I was in the first village with the Indians and (this is) what happened, etc. The Indian women (are) very modest, even the girls.

There was much undertow where we landed. Upon re-embarking in one of the Indian canoes, in which they took me to the launch, I wet my feet somewhat. Because of their affability and good manners, I believe they could be evangelized. Their houses and everything else I observed bears this out.

Father Francisco Palóu wrote an account of Fr. Vizcaíno's visit to *Xaxas*. He wrote that the Chumash welcomed the visitors "with demonstrations of great joy" and offered fish and helped with the water gathering. The newcomers gave them glass beads in return. The missionaries aboard the ship decided to go ashore to visit the village, where "they were well received by the heathen and presented with fish, in return for which the Indians were given some strings of beads." The fathers returned to the ship and soon realized that they had left their staff at the village:

They immediately gave it up as lost, on account of the cross that it carried for it was of iron, and it was known how the Indians coveted this metal. But they were so honest that at daybreak it was discovered that one of the little canoes of the island was coming to the ship, and that one of the heathen was carrying in his hand the staff with the holy cross. Climbing on board he delivered it to the father and after being rewarded returned to the island. For this reason it was called the Island of the Holy Cross (Santa Cruz), and as such it has been known ever since.⁷

The *San Antonio* lifted anchor and sailed east but in the Anacapa Passage encountered wind and so returned to Santa Cruz Island, this time anchoring in Chinese Harbor. Vizcaíno noted the many sea caves in the vicinity while the ship remained at anchor all day and night, and the next morning sailed for the mainland. Returning past the island in January of 1770 the expedition's engineer, Miguel Costansó,

⁶Quoted from Bolton 1963, p. 86, in Johnson, *Island Chumash*, p. 27.

⁷Quoted from Bolton 1926, pp. 17-18, in Johnson, *Island Chumash*, p. 37.

reported that the natives called Santa Cruz Island *Lotolic*. The name Santa Cruz was the one used by Vancouver in his mapping of the coast and has remained in general use.

When a mission was established across the Channel at San Buenaventura in 1782, the Island Chumash were slow to arrive for conversion: only nine were baptized there in its first four years of operation. Of those baptized, most were from the east Santa Cruz Island settlements of *Lu'upsh*, *Swaxil* and *Nanawani*.⁸

The extent of the island towns fascinated later residents and visitors in the region. Amateur and professional archeologists covered the island in search of artifacts and information. One 19th century account, probably exaggerated, described the remains of a Chumash village on Santa Cruz Island: “The town or rancheria of the Indians in its time must have been two miles in length and half a mile wide, covering a point which jutted out into the sea. This area is covered several feet deep with shells and food refuse, mingled with which were stone disks, arrowheads, mortars, pestles, and bone and shell ornaments.”⁹

Mission Era

Spanish rule in California commenced in 1769 as the title to the land, including the Channel Islands, became vested in the King of Spain under the Law of Indies. The arrival of the padres and their missions in the 1770s spelled disastrous change to the Chumash people in general, but the effect on the islands was somewhat delayed. Early in the mission period Viceroy St. Croix instructed Governor Pedro Fages that Indians must not be taken from the islands, but hinted that missions may be established at appropriate island locations. Fages responded with a letter stating that “the Fr. Presidente of the missions and I have agreed that the inhabitants of the islands that form the channel of Santa Barbara should not be removed to the mainland.”¹⁰

In 1804 Father Estevan Tapis reported the desirability of establishing a mission on Santa Cruz Island using neophytes from the mainland to instruct the island residents in religion and farming development. The occupation of the island as a means to stem the increasing illegal hunting and smuggling activities by outsiders also was suggested. In 1805 Tapis wrote in more detail to the Governor:

. . . I suggest the utility that would result from the foundation of a mission at the island called by natives Limú, one of the two in the Channel of Santa Barbara inhabited by Gentiles. The principal convenience would be for the latter; since they being good-natured, and finding themselves in more than ordinary poverty, they would with pleasure embrace Christianity as soon as a mission were founded for them. Thus have many of them assured me, of those with whom I've had the opportunity to talk in more than 11 years that I've served as Missionary in Santa Barbara. The island offers all of the prerequisites for a mission, since according to information from the Island Gentiles and also from some Christian Natives from the same Island, it is abundant in pine, wood, firewood, water and

⁸Johnson, *Island Chumash*, pp. 53-54.

⁹T. H. Thompson and A. A. West, *History of Santa Barbara County, California* (Oakland: Thompson & West, 1883, reprinted 1961 by Howell-North, Berkeley), pp. 255-256.

¹⁰William Henry Ellison, “History of the Santa Cruz Island Grant.” *The Pacific Historical Review*, Volume VI, Number 3, September 1937, p. 272.

other things necessary for a settlement. This island has 14 leagues in length, and 5 in width [an exaggeration]; their rancherias number ten. The number of Gentiles is great: since the Christian [Indians] born on the island say it is true that in the fiestas that are held at it, and to which the Gentiles of Huima, the other inhabited island, attend, there assemble as many or more people as in the Church at Santa Barbara on feast days, the number of those at this mission being around 1800. On Huima almost all the prerequisites for a foundation are lacking; on account of which the natives of its seven rancherias would happily move to Limú after a Mission were founded. Now I consider that the expenditures involved in this foundation would have to be greater than the normal [amount] for the foundations on the mainland, due to the island being located 7 leagues distant from this coast, and it being frequented by foreign ships, attracted by the profits from otter skins which they barter from the natives. But the abundant and flavorful honey which is offered by that country in its having so many Gentiles seems to be sufficient motive to overcome the difficulties that may arise in the undertaking of such a Holy Work.¹¹

Indeed, the hint of smuggling would have brought a response from officials. Gov. Castanares had urged a presidio on Santa Cruz Island, calling the islands “the resort of smugglers.” Governor Arrillaga, probably responding to the anti-contrabandista theme of the Tapis proposal, approved the mission plan in 1805. Within a short time an outbreak of measles caused the death of more than 200 island natives and put a damper on the mission plans.¹² Tapis had written in his report for 1807:

Only with difficulty will these Gentiles abandon their native soil to take to the settled life at La Purisima, Santa Barbara, and San Buenaventura . . . but they say that they will settle in just as soon as a Mission is founded on the aforementioned island [of Limú].

. . . if the Islanders were settled [at a mission], they being extremely superstitious, the Christian education of the settled Indians at the [other] three missions referred to would progress. These latter inevitably have dealings with the former; and having been in the same condition in their gentility, the [Neophytes] are in danger of relapsing into their [spiritual] errors, the Islanders continuing in theirs. In addition to this, if a Mission were established on the island, and the natives settled in, the opportunity would be taken away from the Neophytes to flee to any of the islands, and to die there without the Sacraments, which has happened on enough occasions.

. . . by means of an adequate garrison or guard that be posted at the Mission, there can be prevented the trafficking of foreign ships, which every year return to the two islands for the purpose of trading with the Indians for sea otter pelts . . .

It is to be noted as well that the Gentile and Christian Islanders who previously gave assurances of finding on the island all of the prerequisites for a Mission, later inquiries having been made with them, now differ in their information, especially concerning water sources and good lands, sufficiently moist and irrigable, and in plentiful or adequate amounts for crops. The preceding thus makes it clear that there is still needed a reliable reconnaissance of the island by competent [people], before an attempt is made to carry out the foundation.¹³

¹¹[Father Estevan Tapis to Governor Jose Joaquin de Arrillaga, 1805], SCIF.

¹²Ellison, “*History*,” p. 272-273; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California IV* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1884-1890), p. 640.

¹³“Noticia de las Misiones . . . años 1805 y 1806. Fray Estevan Tapis, Presidente. March 3, 1807.” Translated by David D. Earle, courtesy of SCIF.

At the time Santa Cruz Island supported ten Indian settlements, including three with adult populations between 122 and 145 persons who were reported to be “eager for a mission.” The largest of the Chumash towns on the island was *Swaxil*, located at the later site of Scorpion Ranch on the east end of the island; while Tapis counted 145 persons there in 1805, mission records note that 205 baptisms were performed on residents of *Swaxil* during the mission period. *Xaxas* at Prisoners Harbor was the second largest (population 124 in 1804), while *Liyam*, in the vicinity of Coches Prietos, reportedly acted as the “capital” or the center of the social network of the Santa Cruz Island settlements. Other Chumash towns on the island included *Nanawani* (Smugglers Cove), *Lu’upsh* (Chinese Harbor), *Ch’oloshush* (Christy Ranch), *Shawa*, *L’akayamu*, *L’alale*, *Ch’ishi*, and *Mashchal*. Another town, identified by Juan Estevan Pico in the 1880s, was *Nimatlala* at the site of the Main Ranch; this town had not been noted in mission records. A chief occupied only four of these settlements.¹⁴

The island’s Chumash occupants did have some relations with the mainland mission, although few details are known. Scholars studied the subject in the 1920s and noted that Santa Barbara mission Indians had occasionally traveled to the islands to instruct its inhabitants; according to one historian, in late November of 1814 the “well-versed neophyte” Francisco Jalauehu traveled to Santa Cruz Island to baptize 39 aged or infirm Indians who could not make the journey to Santa Barbara. Every year some islanders traveled to the mainland to join the mission, or sent their children there. Some 250 island Indians were baptized at Mission Santa Barbara. The largest number of conversions occurred between 1814 and 1822 at Santa Barbara, with the last being in 1828. Many baptisms occurred at San Buenaventura between 1813 and 1817, and Santa Ines recorded 121 baptisms before 1816. By the late 1820s the Chumash inhabitants of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands vacated their homelands entirely, most moving to Santa Barbara, Ventura or Santa Ines. Various reports of events of that decade have been passed on: some say that the island was vacant by 1822 and during the revolt against the Santa Barbara Mission in 1824 some Chumash unsuccessfully attempted to resettle Santa Cruz Island; it has also been reported that the earthquake of 1825 frightened islanders to finally leave for the missions, but that report has not been substantiated.¹⁵

The Otter Trade and Coastal Smuggling

The desire for fine fur products in Europe and China provided incentive for British and Russian businessmen to follow upon Captain Cook’s discoveries and commence a hunting industry on the Pacific Coast that changed the face of this part of the world: it would bring hundreds of ambitious men and their employees to an otherwise ignored region, leading to destruction of cultures, decimation of certain natural resources, and the installation of a new exploitive culture.¹⁶

¹⁴McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, pp. 42, 73, 78-89; Bancroft, *History of California II*, pp. 33-34. It is interesting to note that the place name *Xaxas* reportedly means *The Sand*; later owners of the island named the site *La Playa* or *The Beach*.

¹⁵Ellison, “*History*,” p. 273; M. Geiger, *Mission Santa Bárbara* (Santa Barbara: Mission Fathers of California, Santa Barbara, 1965), pp. 30-32; Bruce W. Miller, *Chumash, A Picture of their World* (Los Osos, CA: Sand River Press, 1988), p. 39.

¹⁶Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1941), p. 8 et seq.

By the late 1700s hunters in trading vessels of British and Russian origin plied the waters of California slaughtering marine mammals, the otter being the prime victim. The Chinese especially paid a high price for the fine pelt of the sea otter found in great numbers along the coast and at the Channel Islands. English ships financed by wealthy businessmen and the Crown followed Captain Vancouver's new charts as well as older Spanish ones. The Russian presence on the Alaska coast moved southward to Fort Ross, a permanent coastal encampment north of San Francisco Bay. The Russians owned vessels suitable for the hunt but also contracted with American ship captains; these Russians, Americans and Englishmen usually employed Aleut hunters who had highly desired skills in using small kayak-like boats called baidarkas from which they could surround otters and kill them with spears and, later, guns. Other hunters hired kanaka or Hawaiian boatmen with similar skills; common practice with kanakas would be to shoot otter from shore and have the kanaka swim out to retrieve the dead animal. But the Aleuts gained notoriety for their often-cruel exploits:

Along the California Coast the Aleuts soon carved out a reputation for viciousness, ferocity, and cantankerousness. Not only did they attack the primitive Canalino, but also they reportedly landed on the mainland occasionally and killed horses, cattle, and, sometimes, inhabitants. Often they clashed with other hunters, running them off and appropriating their supplies and furs.¹⁷

Few references specific to Santa Cruz Island have been found, but there is no doubt that hunts occurred there. One historian wrote, "Santa Cruz, along with the other Channel Islands, became known as a notorious base of operations for the illegal otter hunters and for the smugglers who hovered off the California coast seeking to evade Spanish and Mexican customs regulations." Smugglers Cove on the east end of the island likely obtained its name from these activities. George Nidever recalled hunting otter at Santa Cruz and San Miguel Islands in the winter of 1835-1836. He and his accomplices, Allen Light and Isaac Sparks, worked from a base camp at Santa Rosa; the three obtained 60 skins that winter.¹⁸

Mexican Era

Revolution in Mexico brought down the rule of the Spanish King in 1821, a historic event that would soon affect Santa Cruz Island. Devoid of its native occupants and yet unoccupied by newcomers, Santa Cruz Island lay empty for many years, touched only by hunters and occasional maritime travelers. However, in 1830 a series of events occurred that has become steeped in myth and, whatever the facts of the case, has left one of the more evocative names on the land. According to various sources, the Mexican government had taken to sending its criminals to Alta California for caretaking beginning in 1825, but a rising sentiment against the practice made it harder to find places to deposit the convicted men. After a particularly unruly bunch, so the story goes, made life miserable in Santa Barbara they were loaded back

¹⁷John A. Hussey, "A Brief Sketch of the History of Santa Cruz Island, California" (Reprinted from *The Western Explorer*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1961), p. 3; Holland, "Santa Rosa Island," p. 53.

¹⁸Hussey, "A Brief Sketch," p. 3; John Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island: A History of Conflict and Diversity* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1997), p. 34; Ellison, *Life and Adventures*, p. 39.

onto the *María Ester*, which had originated in Acapulco, and taken to Santa Cruz Island's large northern harbor. There they were left, with some livestock and supplies, to fend for themselves. A fire supposedly destroyed much of their provisions and so they built a raft and returned to the mainland. This story emanated from various accounts. Bancroft wrote that the *María Ester* anchored at the island with 31 convicts who had previously arrived in Santa Barbara "naked and very filthy." Captain Guerra "furnished them with clothing, made a speech encouraging them to good conduct, and personally employed 8 to 10." The mission supplied "tools, cattle, hooks and a little grain," and after the fire they arrived at Carpinteria on rafts whereupon 13 of the group presented themselves to the commandante at the Presidio; the account states, "as a rule they became very good people." Duflot de Mofras wrote some 14 years after the fact that the government had attempted to colonize the island with "a group of 40 galley slaves sent up from San Blas." The men ate their grain and cattle then escaped the island in "crude boats built with reeds and planks;" upon reaching the mainland they scattered, with the blessing of local officials. A supposed eyewitness, Doña Augustine de la Guerra de Ord of Santa Barbara, recalled to a historian that the fire could be seen from the mainland but a lack of vessels prevented anyone from the mainland to investigate or help. The prisoners escaped but "were rounded up again, dealt with at the whipping post and distributed under supervision of officers at Santa Barbara and Monterey."¹⁹

A popular history printed in 1883 described Santa Cruz Island as

a penal station, a sort of Botany Bay . . . some dozen or so of cut-throats, thieves and the like, who being transported to the island, and provided with live-stock and provisions, remained sufficiently long to eat up their subsistence, when they constructed a raft and made their way across the narrow channel to the mainland, and became neighbors or guests of the Mission fathers and their peaceful converts. Their actions were not such as to recommend them to their entertainers, however, and the unwilling hosts found immense trouble in providing for their wants, and preventing their ill example from contaminating the Indians.²⁰

Legends persisted about the affair; one story repeated in the press in the 1950s stated that the escaping prisoners included fresh cattle hides in their raft construction that attracted sharks on the voyage back to the mainland, resulting in the death of most of the party. The real facts on this matter are unavailable. Whatever the details, the supposed location of the events became known as Prisoners Harbor, a site that continued to be the center of activity on the island as its one very good harbor and location of the only substantial pier and entryway on the island through its history.²¹

Another account claimed that in the 1880s, during the U. S. Army's suppression of the Apaches in Arizona, General Nelson A. Miles suggested that Santa Cruz Island be used as a penal colony for their charges. At this time, however, the island was in private ownership and the plan would have involved

¹⁹Bancroft, de Mofras and O'Neill quoted in Adelaide LeMert Doran, *Pieces of Eight/Channel Islands: A Bibliographical Guide and Source Book* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1980), p. 149.

²⁰Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256.

²¹Charles Hillinger, *Charles Hillinger's Channel Islands* (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1998), p. 111.

purchase or condemnation of the property, an unlikely scenario given the activities on the island at that time.²²

Andrés Castillero and the Rancho Isla de Santa Cruz

The depredations of the sea otter and potential loss of profit inspired action in Mexico City as the government moved to protect for itself the fragile bounty of the coast and offshore islands. In the Mexican government's attempt to "prevent numerous foreign adventurers from appropriating to themselves important portions of them, whereby they can do much injury to our fisheries, commerce, and interests . . ." it ordered on July 20, 1838 that Alta California's governor Alvarado "proceed with promptness and prudence to grant and distribute lands in the said islands to citizens who desire them . . ." The order stipulated that Carlos and Jose Carrillo be granted an island of their choice, and those two chose Santa Rosa Island. An unnamed island, according to the decree, should be granted to the "worthy" Andrés Castillero, "which he may select nearest to the place where he ought to reside with the troops which are under his orders."²³

Castillero first chose Santa Catalina Island, located off San Pedro, and was so granted by Alvarado but less than two weeks later his representative, Jose Antonio Aguirre, submitted a petition instead for Santa Cruz, having found that former island to lack "all the necessaries for proper improvement of stock or agriculture." Aguirre forwarded Castillero's second choice, Santa Cruz Island, in March of 1839 and on May 22 Governor Alvarado granted the island to Castillero. In return for Castillero's "faithful service," Alvarado granted Santa Cruz Island which was said to be "in extent of eleven square leagues and no more, and has for its boundaries the water's edge." The island did not require a survey, as its boundaries were natural and indisputable. Alvarado also did not include the usual requirement pertaining to construction of a house, mandatory occupation and commencement of an agricultural operation because it had not been stipulated in the original order for the island grants and, in Alvarado's words, "I myself saw no necessity for it."²⁴

By the time he received the island grant Andrés Castillero had forged a notable background in Alta California politics, having brokered a peaceful settlement in Alvarado's revolution of 1836-1838. In response to tightening control from leaders in Mexico City, Alvarado and Jose Castro seized Monterey and declared Alta California a free and sovereign state. Faced with an attack on Los Angeles, interim Governor Nicolas Gutierrez fled to Mexico accompanied by Castillero, a Captain in the provincial military. Lower California's Commandante General Jose Caballero, apparently impressed with the young Captain, appointed Castillero as his secretary. In Monterey Alvarado faced a number of challenges to his unofficial government so, when Castillero appeared at Caballero's behest in Ventura in June of 1837 to attempt a

²²Recounted by Doran in *Pieces of Eight*, p. 149, from an article in the *Santa Barbara News Press* dated January 1939.

²³William Carey Jones, *Report on the Subject of Land Titles in California* as quoted in Doran, *Pieces of Eight*, p. 192; *Transcript of the Proceedings In Case No. 176, Andres Castillero Claimant vs. The United States Defendant For "Island of Santa Cruz,"* 340 SD, p. 13, transcript courtesy of John Gherini.

²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 4, 14-16, 32-33; Ellison, "History," p. 274.

resolution to the political battle between Upper California and the Mexican president, Alvarado was receptive to a deal. While details of the talks have not surfaced, Alvarado took an oath to the new constitution, perhaps encouraged by some words from Castellero concerning Alvarado's future as governor. Castellero returned south and recommended that Alvarado be appointed governor, but Carlos Carrillo was appointed instead. Refusing to give up his hold on Alta California, Alvarado challenged Carrillo in a skirmish in July 1838 and won, although no blood was shed. The government responded by reconsidering Castellero's recommendation and appointed Alvarado as governor in June. These events led to the granting of Santa Cruz Island to Andrés Castellero for his services in quieting the unrest in Alta California.²⁵

Castillero apparently did not gain actual possession of Santa Cruz Island for many years. He kept busy in Mexico until 1845 with official duties for the government as California's representative to the Mexican congress, then as paymaster general for California. Castellero has attained most of his fame for his discovery in 1845 of the New Almaden quicksilver mine near San Jose, in itself an important chapter in California history. That year Castellero wrote to Governor Pio Pico, noting his discovery near San Jose and asking for an order for title and possession of the island, claiming that he had "already purchased the cattle to occupy it" which were waiting for shipment. By the following year Castellero appeared to be familiar with the attributes of the island and concerned about its future in light of political activities in California. In December 1846 an associate wrote to Alexander Forbes, one of Castellero's mining partners, that

Señor Castellero places much value on the Island of Santa Cruz, which is his property. He says it is thirty-two leagues in circumference, with a good harbor, timber and fresh water. He is disposed to sell it rather than have it taken from him by the Yankees. It is distant four leagues from the port of Santa Barbara, and he considers that it would be of much importance to England, should the United States take possession of the California. If you are inclined to purchase, you can inform yourself of all this leisurely.

Forbes, with his partners, did indeed purchase the island from Castellero, but more than ten years later. In 1847 Castellero wrote to Forbes of Forbes' "willingness to place my Island of Santa Cruz under the protection of H. B. Majesty's Government. I thank you . . . for this favor, and to that end I enclose a letter for Sor. Don Antonio Aguirre, a citizen of California, who holds my power of attorney and a document which proves my property." By this time Castellero was back in Mexico and by many accounts never returned. What he meant in the letter is unclear.²⁶

After the entry of California into the United States in 1850 and the formation of the Board of Commissioners, which would ascertain and settle the private land claims in the state, Castellero submitted his petition for confirmation of the 1839 grant to the lands commissioners on April 13, 1852. There followed a supplemental petition by James B. Bolton, which was filed into Castellero's case before the commission. Bolton, through his attorneys at the leading San Francisco law firm Halleck, Peachy & Billings, claimed that he had purchased an undivided one-half interest in the island at a tax sale in 1850.

²⁵Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 39-40. Carrillo and his brother received the land grant for neighboring Santa Rosa Island.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 41; letters reprinted in *Argument of Hon. J. P. Benjamin* [October-November 1860], *The United States vs. Andres Castellero, Claim for the Mine and Lands of New Almaden* (San Francisco: Commercial Steam Book and Job Publishing Establishment, 1860), pp. 12-13, 18, 57, 82.

Bolton presented a deed which stated that on November 20, 1850, Francisco de la Guerra offered a high bid of \$26 at a public sale of the “whole of the south eastern half of the Island of Santa Cruz,” the sale being the result of the failure by the island’s owner to pay a property tax. The deed showed Antonio Maria de la Guerra, Treasurer of Santa Barbara County, as the grantor. Another deed, made in June 1851, transferred the half of the island from Francisco and Conception de la Guerra to Bolton, for a sum of \$130.²⁷

Then, Castellero’s former attorney and agent Aguirre filed a claim for half of the island, stating that Castellero had given him part of the property for his services. By 1854 William E. Barron acted as Castellero’s agent and attorney, as Castellero lived in Mexico City and had rarely, if ever, visited California since about 1847. Former governor Juan B. Alvarado made a deposition in San Francisco on September 25, 1854, on Aguirre’s behalf. Alvarado stated that Castellero had promised one half of the island to Aguirre and that it “was publicly known at the time [1838] that said Aguirre had a half interest” in the island. The Board of Commissioners denied Aguirre’s claim on June 5, 1855, noting that he could offer no written proof of a sale and no evidence that he had indeed taken care of the island. Aguirre’s claim of half ownership could have given rise to the purported sale of half the island for taxes.²⁸

The Commission then offered an opinion on the Castellero case on July 3, 1855, stating that Bolton had “failed to furnish the Board with any proof that the tax sale was conducted under the provisions of the statute of California regulating mode of selling lands for the payment of delinquent taxes, or that the Sheriff who sold the land for taxes was the Sheriff at the time the sale was made, or that the treasurer who executed the deed was the real treasurer at the time of executing the same.” The commission confirmed Castellero’s island grant. The U. S. Attorney General filed an appeal in February of 1856, citing “many errors and imperfections of law and evidence” found in the transcripts of the case, and seeking invalidation of the title which would result in the island becoming the property of the United States.²⁹

The preceding action brought forth an informative deposition from Dr. James Barron Shaw who, in early January of 1857, detailed some of his activities on Santa Cruz Island in the early 1850s. Shaw stated that he first became familiar with the island in early 1850 and became the agent for Castellero in 1851:

I have paid taxes on [the island] since 1851 and have placed cattle, horses and sheep on it; built houses and made canals and cut roads on it . . . At the commencement of 1853 I began to place the stock on it. Since that time I have expended thirty-five thousand dollars. I have given my personal attention to the island as the local agent, both of the original owners, and of the commercial agents of the claimants, who are Bolton, Barron & Co. of San Francisco.³⁰

Shaw claimed that he paid taxes in 1851 of about \$45 and that at present he paid \$373 on an assessed value of \$10,000. He reported that he had never seen Castellero in California as his responsibilities as Captain of the Artillery in the Mexican Army kept him there. Shaw was “in the constant habit of going there and

²⁷340 SD, pp. 1, 4-5, 22, 24; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 46-47.

²⁸340 SD, pp. 26-29, 31-32; Ellison, “History,” p. 276, Hussey; “Brief Sketch,” p. 4.

²⁹340 SD, pp. 37-38, 43-45. The government claimed ownership of the island under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, since the island was not specifically named in that document. This issue remained in occasional contention until as late as 1986.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

remaining several days at a time . . . but I have always had persons living on the Island and taking care of the property.”³¹

The district court handed down a decision on January 14, 1857, confirming the title to the island as “a good and valid one.” Nevertheless, the federal government and other parties continued to challenge the decision and so appealed to the United States Supreme Court in 1859. In its ruling dated March 18, 1861, the Supreme Court affirmed the authority of Alvarado to make the grant and the validity of the documents presented in the case. And so, after almost ten years of legal maneuvering, the island was finally granted to Castellero. Had the decision gone the other way, the history of the island would have been entirely different, as the government could have claimed the island as public domain. The final confirmation of the patent was recorded on November 7, 1864. Following the official survey of the island, the government issued a patent on March 25, 1867. By this time, in fact ten years earlier shortly after the district court decision, Castellero had sold the island to William Barron.³²

Early Ranching and Industry

As early as 1845 Andrés Castellero had noted the potential for livestock grazing on Santa Cruz Island, leading one to believe that there would have been at least a portion of the island in grasslands. The first known livestock on the island, however, were pigs that reportedly went wild soon after their arrival in late 1852. General livestock, including cattle, sheep and horses, did not arrive until the following year. A 19th century history reported on the condition of the island at the cusp of the exploitation era on the island and foretold some of the problems:

The hill-sides in 1850 were covered with oaks, pines, and chaparral; the latter has several times saved the stock from starvation, serving as browsing grounds on the dry seasons.³³

Dr. James Barron Shaw of Santa Barbara, according to his own claims, became Andrés Castellero’s agent for Santa Cruz Island beginning in 1851, the year in which he paid about \$45 in taxes. London-born Shaw arrived in Santa Barbara in 1850 and spent more than two years in residence there. When or where he met Castellero is not known, and his employment on the island appears to actually be under other parties. Around 1852 Shaw visited his friend William Forbes and Eustace Barron, owners of various enterprises in Tepic, Sonora, shareholders in the New Almaden mine and associates of Castellero, and returned to Santa Barbara in May of 1853. Forbes and Isodoro de la Torre, both involved in the New Almaden enterprise, entered an unrecorded agreement with Castellero in February 1850 which gave them possession of the northern half of the island provided that “both señores pledge to protect the island in the best way possible to them and as they are most conveniently able.” A frame house owned by Santa Barbara resident Thomas Jeffries stood at Prisoners Harbor, evidenced by its sale in November of 1852 to Judge

³¹Ibid., pp. 48-51.

³²Ellison, “History,” pp. 277-278; Patents Book A, p. 34, SBCRO. The Supreme Court case was the second that involved Castellero, both having been heard by Justice Nathan Clifford.

³³Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256.

Charles Fernald. What the house was and who built it is a mystery, and the continued management or ownership of the half portion of the island by Forbes and de la Torre has not been documented. Nonetheless, it appears that Forbes, de la Torre and perhaps others controlled the island through much of the 1850s. A tax assessment for the year 1853 recorded the owners as Castellero and Bolton, Barron & Company, with Shaw as their agent and the property valued at \$15,000.³⁴

To further complicate matters, Secretary of the Interior Alexander H. H. Stuart leased Santa Cruz Island for a period of one year to one Alexander G. Abell of San Francisco on June 7, 1852. Abell had approached the Secretary seeking a lease for the apparently unoccupied island. Shoddy research by the Secretary determined that the island was in the public domain under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and, in promotion of “the public interest,” entered into a lease with Abell at his office in Washington, D.C., noting in a report to the Senate that the act was not “obnoxious to the objection of interference with the appropriate powers and duties of Congress.” Stuart neglected to obtain the opinion of the Attorney General, and wrote that he “acted from a conviction that I was doing what would very probably avoid many embarrassing disputes in the future . . . though it may possibly disappoint the cupidity of adventurous speculators.” No doubt Messrs. Abell and Stuart soon found the island to be private property, for the issue did not surface again.³⁵

Dr. Shaw began to develop a ranch on the island in 1853 but first had to evict James Box, a pig farmer who lived in a “little shanty” beginning in December 1852. According to a complaint filed against him in another matter, Box had a “herd of swine . . . under proper keeping and subjection” on the island and used it as collateral for a loan from T. W. More. Upon defaulting on the loan, More sent Martin Kimberly to the island to take possession of the pig herd who found that the “swine had become wild from abandonment and neglect . . . and that the expense of gathering and herding them would be more than the value of the same.” Kimberly caught only about 200 pigs “of all kinds which from their wild and intractable nature escaped soon after from the control of the plaintiff, strayed away, were devoured or stolen and have totally disappeared.” Of the remnant herd on the island, pigs ranged “among the precipitous hills of Santa Cruz, unapproachable, untamable, and daily hunted by the inhabitants of said island as fierce natured and nuisances.” Shaw said that he “requested [Box] to leave, regarding him as an intruder.” Box left the island in October of 1853 and reportedly “absconded from this state” without paying the debt to More.³⁶

Shaw imported cattle, horses and sheep to the island and began to erect corrals and houses for himself and his employees, as well as building “canals” and roads. He reportedly bought 200 ewes from Alpheus Thompson of Santa Rosa Island, which produced a poor grade of wool. In 1854 he bought 1,000 head in Los Angeles and herded them to Santa Barbara for transport to the island. By the end of 1856 Shaw had reportedly spent up to \$35,000 for livestock and improvements (although tax records showed a total values of improvements at much less by 1858). The island ranch reportedly supported 200 acres of grains and

³⁴Doran, *Pieces of Eight*, p. 161; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 42-43; tax records, SBHS. Thomas Jeffries (or Jeffreys) was with George Nidever on a hunting trip to San Nicolas Island in 1852 when the two found the footprints of the lone woman. Jeffries reportedly was paid by the mission fathers previously to go to the island in search of her with no success (Ellison, *Life and Adventures*, pp. 77, 79-80, 122). Nidever called Jeffries a “foreigner.”

³⁵*Report of the Secretary of the Interior . . . in relation to the island of Santa Cruz*, 32d Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. No. 87 [Government Printing Office], courtesy of Mary B. Brock.

³⁶340 SD, Deposition of James Barron Shaw, January 7, 1857, pp. 48-51; California District Court 2nd Judicial District, Thomas Wallace More vs. M. J. Box, n.d., transcript at SCIF.

fruit trees as early as 1857. Shaw's work was reflected in the comment by Harris Newmark who recalled that "most" of the mutton marketed in Los Angeles in the early 1850s came from Santa Cruz Island.³⁷

James Madison Alden, an artist with the U. S. Coast Survey, made a watercolor of the Central Valley in 1855, the earliest known recording of the appearance of the pioneer ranch. A house with a chimney and a porch facing north stands facing the creek to the north, with a small shed and fenced yard behind. On the flats near the creek is a fenced hay field with haystack, and near that what appears to be livestock grazing. People and horses are depicted. The house is no doubt Dr. Shaw's residence. Shaw made a number of improvements in the year following, as a detailed map of 1856 showed more buildings.³⁸

No record has shown the number of occupants of the island during Shaw's early years there, but a government surveyor in 1856 noted not only Dr. Shaw's residence and corrals in the Central Valley but houses at the east and west ends of the island, the east being occupied by a person named Mondran and the west by a man named John. The house on the east end was located in the valley at Scorpion Harbor and the one on the west side sat at an unknown location between the later Christy Ranch and West Point. Eight buildings at the main ranch and two at Prisoners Harbor were mapped. The survey recorded about twelve buildings on the island in these various locations. It is apparent that the pattern of development of the island as a ranch was established in the early to mid-1850s by James Shaw.³⁹

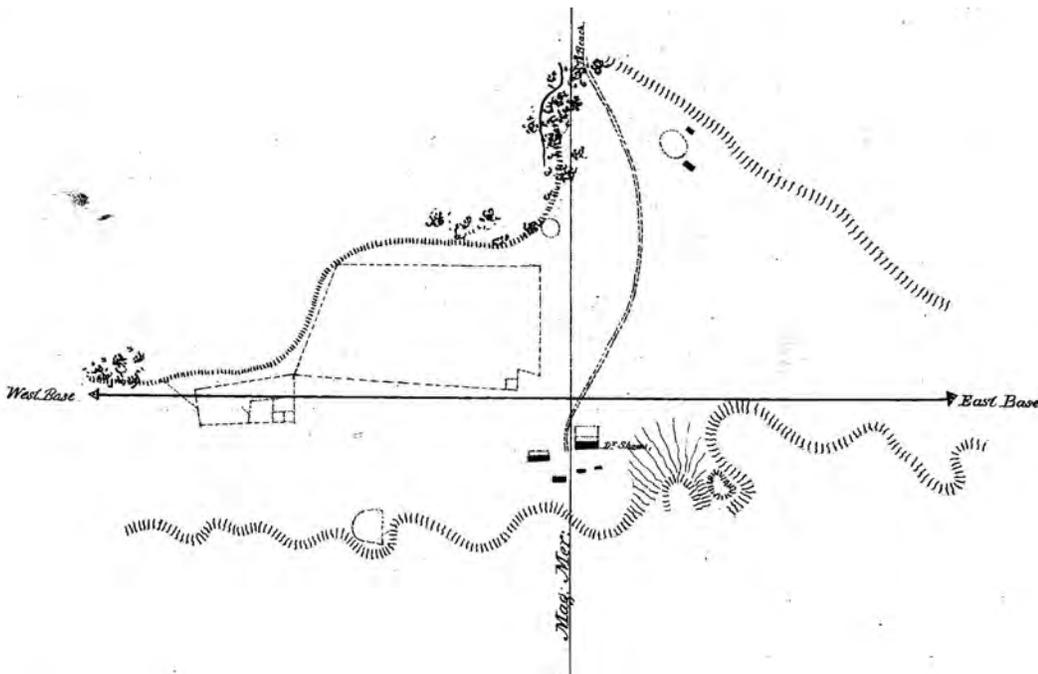
³⁷Ibid.; Earl Warren, Jr., *The Agriculture of Santa Cruz Island* (Thesis, University of California College of Agriculture, Davis, 1952), p. 29; Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913*, edited by Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1916), p. 216.

³⁸Marla Daily and Carey Stanton, "Historical Highlights of Santa Cruz Island" (*La Reata*, Number 5, Fall 1983, Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*), pp. 81-84, 87. Alden (1834-1921) was the nephew of Lt. James Alden of the Coast Survey; the latter hired his artist nephew on the survey to document significant scenes encountered during survey work.

³⁹Record Group 23, U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey, Scientific Records, Descriptions of Stations (GA Series), State of California, Box 150, Book 25716, 941 GA 1856-7 G, NA(CP). Juan Estevan Pico, a Chumash speaker who interviewed former occupants of the island during the 1880s, claimed that "many" Chumash Indians worked at "El Rancho Grande" (either Shaw's ranch [1852-1869] or the Main Ranch owned by Caire and his associates [1869-1880]). See McLendon and Johnson, *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis*, p. 75.



James Madison Alden painted this watercolor of the Central Valley in 1855. Looking west, it shows the first house at what would become the Main Ranch. Compare with the map reproduced below.
Yale Collection of Western Americana, Yale University, copy courtesy of Santa Cruz Island Foundation.



A map made by William Greenwell of the U. S. Coast Survey in 1856 showed the layout of the ranch in the Central Valley of Santa Cruz Island in great detail. *National Archives*

Greenwell of the U. S. Coast Survey Notes Cultural Features

George Davidson of the U. S. Coast Survey first visited Santa Cruz Island in 1852 as part of one of the first surveys of sailing routes along the California coast by the U. S. government. Davidson, an astronomer and geographer was accompanying Lt. Commander James Alden, in charge of the Coast Survey steamer *Active*. Davidson placed an astronomical station (its location determined by astronomical observation and used as a triangulation point for referencing with other points of land) at Prisoners Harbor and produced a chart of the harbor. In 1856 two employees of the Coast Survey laid out many survey signals, being the first to perform a general survey of the island.⁴⁰

On October 11, 1856 William Greenwell of the U. S. Coast Survey and his aide Preston West laid out a baseline in the Central Valley, which would serve as a control for topographic mapping of the island in later years. The baseline was marked by two signals represented by poles covered in white cotton standing over granite monuments on either end. He made a detailed map of the main ranch showing six buildings, two of which were small, at the ranch and two others with a circular corral to the north of the main buildings in the later vicinity of the Caire's chapel. Greenwell identified one of the buildings as being occupied by Dr. Shaw, which had a garden fence around it. A trail led from Dr. Shaw's house in a southerly direction up the spine of the ridge "most bare of vegetation" to the "Shaw" signal, which Greenwell established, on the 13th. A road led to the "Beach" at Prisoners Harbor, and a large fenced field occupied the flat area northwest of the ranch buildings, with a series of enclosures identified as sheep corrals connected to and southwest of it. Another, semicircular corral was tucked into a hollow a short distance west from the ranch houses. Greenwell identified the vegetation surrounding the ranch complex as grassland. No pier stood at Prisoners Harbor but two buildings were drawn on one of Greenwell's sketches near the beach. A trail led from Prisoners Harbor in a southerly direction to Valley Peak and another towards the "High Mountains" to the east (the Montañon). On other areas of the island Greenwell made the following observations:⁴¹

North side:

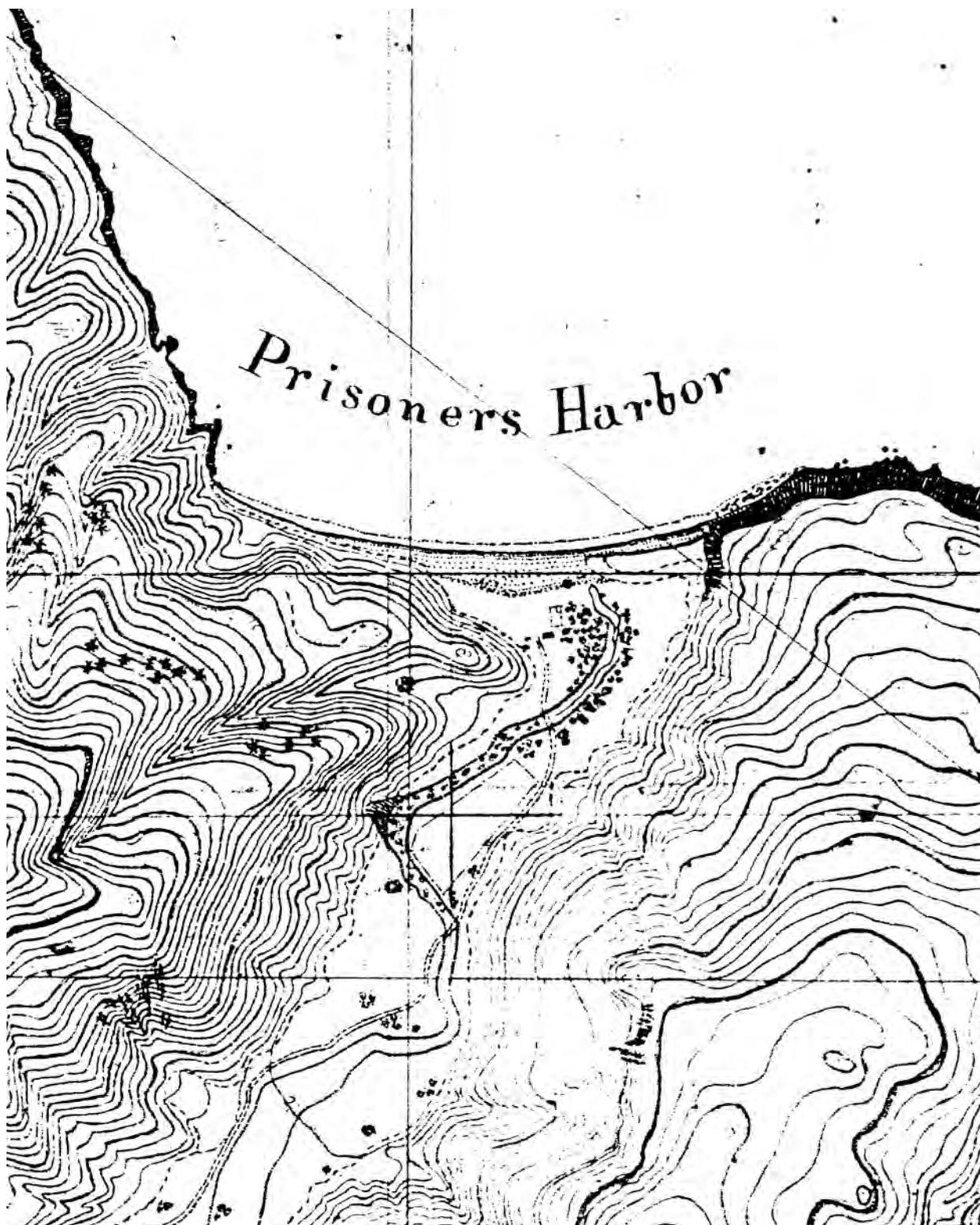
Greenwell used the names Platts Harbor and Prisoners Harbor.

Isthmus:

Greenwell detailed a trail from Dr. Shaw's to "Mondran's" house at Scorpion Harbor, and placed three signals along the trail: Mt. Pleasant, Ridge and High Mount. He sketched the small "laguna" northwest of Mt. Pleasant, which was adjacent to a fork in the trail.

⁴⁰Henry R. Wagner, "George Davidson, Geographer" in *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. XI No. 4, December 1932, pp. 301-302.

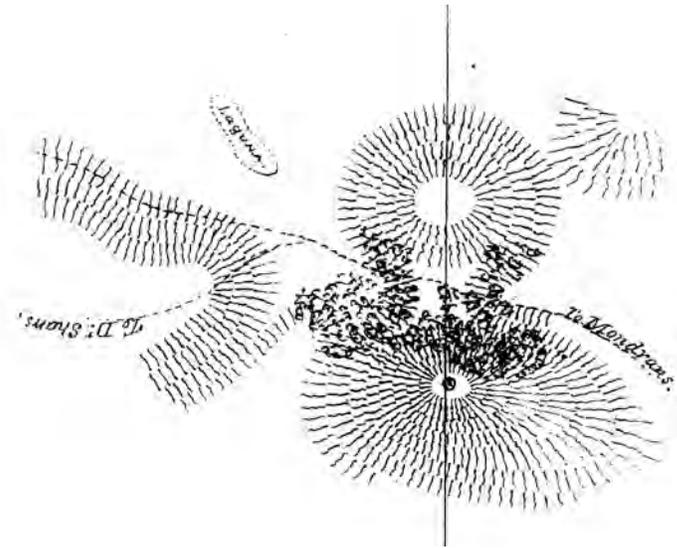
⁴¹Record Group 23, U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey, Scientific Records, Descriptions of Stations (GA Series), State of California, Box 150, Book 25716, 941 GA 1856-7 G, NA(CP).



Detail of the U. S. Coast Survey map of part of Santa Cruz Island, showing Prisoners Harbor in 1856. Note the presence of buildings, road and a pen. *National Archives*

East Side:

Greenwell established a signal he called “Santa Cruz East” at what would later be known as Cavern Point on the bluffs north of Scorpion Ranch. He sketched a road leading from “Mondran’s” house at Scorpion Harbor towards the mesa land at what would later be named Campo Maximo, and a trail from that road to the signal. He also erected a signal in the hills between Scorpion Harbor and Smugglers Cove consisting of a pole standing over a stone with “U. S. C. S.” carved in it (O. H. Tittman replaced the stone marker, which he “cast into the sea so as to not confuse our successors,” with a concrete one with the same letters scratched in the surface around 1876). Greenwell sketched the vegetation in these areas as grassland.



William Greenwell mapped the summit of Mt. Pleasant, and included the route of the trails between the Main Ranch (“Dr. Shaws”), East End (“Mondrans”) and Prisoners Harbor (trail to upper left). Note the “Laguna” which has more recently been called Kloppenberg Lake. *National Archives*

West Side:

Greenwell placed a triangulation signal on the extreme west end of the island, “within a stone’s throw of the ocean,” naming it Santa Cruz West (Primary). The signal consisted of a series of holes drilled in the “coarse granite of which the hill is composed” marked by a 36-foot pole painted black. He noted that a boat could land in a cove south of the signal in moderate weather, or that the station could be reached from Prisoners Harbor, and that a house known as “Johns” stood about two miles southeast of the station at a location where “good water” could be found.

South Side:

Greenwell and West found two caves near Cañada los Alamos on July 9, 1857, one of which contained an old Indian basket. They named the nearby signal “Cave.”

Greenwell’s work not only aided in the mapping of safe routes along the California coast, but also in noting features that would aid future researchers in both natural and cultural resources study. Greenwell’s successor, Stehman Forney, would add even more to the historical record, as detailed below.

William E. Barron Ownership, 1857-1869

Andrés Castellero, having been an absentee owner of the island for almost 20 years, sold the entire island by quitclaim deed to William E. Barron on June 23, 1857. Barron's association with Castellero reached back as far as 1845 when the latter discovered the New Almaden Quicksilver Mine, and around the time of the purchase, Barron's firm was reportedly the commercial agent for Castellero. Barron engaged in a commission business in San Francisco with James R. Bolton (the same who claimed half of the island) known as Bolton, Barron & Co. Barron, or at least his associates, had already exerted influence over island development since 1852 or 1853. Some sources report Barron's ownership commencing in 1852, and others believe that Barron's uncle, Eustace Barron of Tepic, Mexico provided the financial backing for the purchase but wanted title to rest with a California resident. One writer considered that William Barron, "finding the island to be well-adapted to sheep-raising, sent hither an overseer from Mexico to manage affairs.... The new owners took possession in 1852, placing 200 sheep on the island, which have now [1883] grown to immense flocks, sufficient in number for the full capacity of the pasturage which can sustain 40,000 head."⁴²

Barron retained the island superintendent Dr. Shaw, and imported hogs, cattle and horses, which, with the sheep, "were reputed to be of very fine purebred stock for which the island ranch acquired an enviable reputation."⁴³ A newspaper reported that

We have frequently heard of the rare breed of sheep on Santa Cruz Island, but have had no opportunity of seeing a specimen until this week, when we visited the building of Dr. Shaw and were surprised at the sight of a young monster Merino ram—his age being only six months—weight one hundred and two pounds, standing thirty-one inches and covered to the very hoofs with close fine wool—looking to the careless observer as if he had been lately shorn. We are not the best judges of rams, though we are of mutton; but we are convinced we never saw a finer animal, for age, shape, weight, and fineness of wool; he is of the improved French Merino.⁴⁴

Katherine M. Bell, whose uncle by marriage was employed by Barron, Forbes & Co., claimed that the island was "virtually a principality, managed without regard for expenditure;" the company stocked it with "the finest animals in the world—imported, high-pedigreed cattle, horses and mules from Spain," as well as thousands of fine imported sheep. Bell claimed that the company had a fast schooner, the *Eustace*, custom built for island travel and skippered by a Captain Furlong who brought it around the horn for the purpose. The island owners, by offering the best pay and treatment, attracted shearers from all over the county to work there. "In those days," Bell wrote, "Santa Cruz Island was the pride and boast of Santa Barbara."⁴⁵

⁴²Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 54-55.

⁴³Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 29. Dr. James Barron Shaw may have been related to Barron.

⁴⁴*Sacramento Union*, September 29, 1858, quoted in Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 29.

⁴⁵Katherine M. Bell, *Swinging the Censer, Reminiscences of Old Santa Barbara* (Santa Barbara: 1931), pp. 210-213.



William E. Barron. *California Historical Society, FN-35988*

For reasons unknown, less than a year after his purchase Barron advertised the island for sale in May of 1858, as the following appeared in a San Francisco newspaper:

ISLAND FOR SHEEP RAISING

FOR SALE—An island containing about 60,000 acres of land, well watered, and abounding in small valleys of the best pasturage for sheep. There are no wild animals on it which would interfere with the stock. There is a good harbor, and safe anchorage.

The owner is now in the city [San Francisco], and if a party should desire to place Stock on it, an arrangement may be made to do so, by putting the island, to a certain extent, against the Stock furnished. There are about fifty sheep now upon the Island. Apply at 119 Sansome Street.⁴⁶

⁴⁶*Daily Alta California* [San Francisco], May 25, 1858, courtesy of John Gherini.



The left-hand picture of the three-part panorama of the Central Valley taken in 1869. Looking west/northwest at the Main Ranch, cattle pens and the shearing shed can be seen, along with the expanse of the western end of the Central Valley. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation/Santa Barbara Historical Society*

The low number of sheep indicated the likelihood that a sell-off of sheep had recently occurred. The island was not sold and the sales campaign was short-lived. The island ranch continued to garner attention in the press. The *Sacramento Daily Union* published an article in 1859 about sheep in the Santa Barbara area:

Sheep of a much finer quality can be found in this county; and we doubt if anything superior can be found in the State than those owned by Dr. Shaw, on the island of Santa Cruz. Judging from the number of persons who have purchased from the doctor, for the purpose of raising sheep, Santa Barbara County bids fair, in a few years, to be one of the greatest sheep producing sections in the state.⁴⁷

Shaw's sheep herds increased rapidly, from 12,375 in 1860 to 24,371 in 1864 to a reported 30,000 by 1868. Also in 1860 the island supported 166 rodeo cattle, three bulls, 72 cow calves, two oxen, 42 mares, 11 lame horses, 53 colts and two stallions. In 1861 Shaw had Spanish, Merino and Leicester sheep imported from the Balearic Islands and England.⁴⁸

The *Santa Barbara Post* of March 3, 1869, reported that "a number of practical sheepmen who visited the island while it was still under the supervision of Dr. Shaw related that they found the houses and

⁴⁷Article originally in the *Santa Barbara Gazette*, February 3, 1859, reprinted in *The Sacramento Daily Union*, February 14, 1859, courtesy of California Historical Society Library.

⁴⁸Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 29; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 59-60.



The center picture of the three-part panorama of the Central Valley taken in 1869. Looking almost north at the Main Ranch, a large hay stack can be seen, along with cattle and horses. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation/Santa Barbara Historical Society*

buildings to be of first quality, and the arrangement of the sheep yards and shearing sheds to be superior to those found on the mainland.” Shaw also kept and bred “fine” herds of cattle on the island.⁴⁹

William Barron decided again to sell the island in 1869. Dr. Shaw left the island after 16 years as superintendent to help found the Santa Barbara County town of Los Alamos where he operated a sheep ranch stocked with the island breeds. His employees praised him as the man who transformed Santa Cruz Island from a “wilderness” to a quality sheep ranch.⁵⁰

At the end of the Barron ownership, a photographer traveled to the island and took at least ten photographs. Three of these formed a panoramic view taken from the hillside behind the ranch houses looking to the north and west. A fourth picture showed almost 20 vaqueros lined up in front of the

⁴⁹Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256.

⁵⁰Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 60-61.



Right-hand section of the 1869 panorama showing the buildings of the Main Ranch as they appeared that year, looking north. In the distant left is the Cañada del Puerto. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation/Santa Barbara Historical Society*

superintendent's house. These photographs were labeled as having been taken in 1869, and may have been made by the new buyers as part of the transaction of sale.⁵¹

Seen in the right-hand photograph of the panorama, the layout of the three domestic buildings matches the map made by Greenwell some 13 years earlier. The superintendent's house has a shingled gable roof, a shed porch facing north, and a chimney; it is the closest match to the structure seen in the Alden watercolor of 1855. Near it is a two-story residence with a shingled gable roof and a hipped roof addition, or vice-versa; it is possible that the hipped roof section is the original building seen in the Alden picture. A shed-roofed outbuilding, perhaps 25 feet long, lies in the foreground of the photograph, and had been doubled in size on the west end. In the distance a windmill, fenced enclosure with a row of trees at its east end, and the road to Prisoners Harbor, which crosses a bridge over the tributary to the arroyo, are seen. In the farther distance towards the east stand two structures, one of which was or became the home of a beekeeper.

The center photograph in the panorama shows a whitewashed barn of medium size with a drive-through for wagons. It may have been a feed shed, stable, calf shelter or combination of the three. A huge

⁵¹ Ten photographs dated 1869 reside in the collection of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, and other copies are found in the collection of the Santa Barbara Historical Society

haystack sits in the fenced field beyond, and the barnyard is active with vaqueros apparently cutting cattle. The left photo looks northeast up the Central Valley towards the Portezuela. Sturdy-looking corrals of horizontal boards hold cattle and horses in at least four pens. What would be the *trasquila* or shearing shed stands farther in the distance, partially open to the elements. Other structures are seen, such as an open shed and a curious structure from which something is hung. Another large haystack is seen in the distance at the edge of a newly cut hayfield that stretches for perhaps a mile to the east. The hills appear more barren than at present, with occasional groves of large oak trees. No trees line the arroyo. Other than the row of trees by the fence and a tree in the superintendent's front yard, no imported trees can be seen. This appears to be the scene that met the new owners of the island.

Sale of the Island: Santa Cruz Island Company, 1869

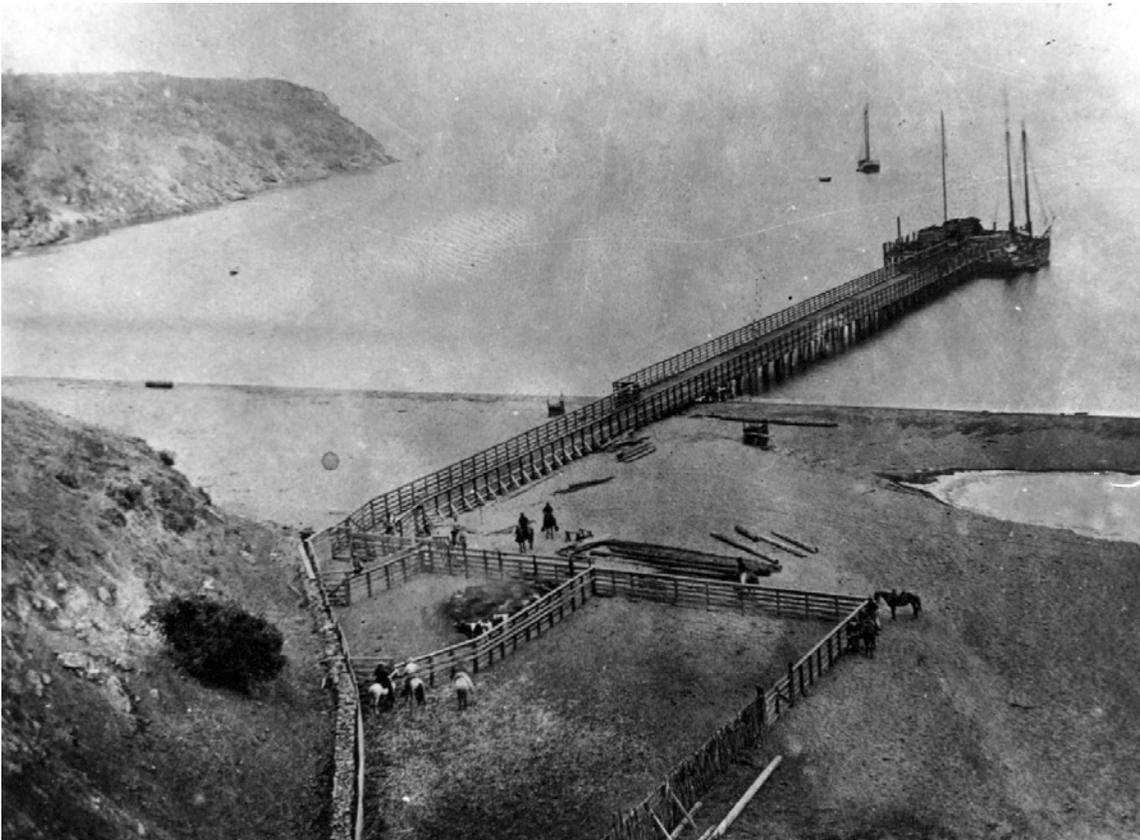
Six of the trustees of a San Francisco French savings bank, La Société Française d'Épargnes et de Prévoyance Mutuelle (The French Mutual Provident Savings and Loan Society or French Bank) and four other San Francisco businessmen purchased the island from William Barron on February 16, 1869. This diverse group of ten was by no means all French, but included men of Italian, Spanish and Irish backgrounds. Justinian Caire, Gustave Mahé, Adrien Gensoul and Alexander Weill had French backgrounds while Giovanni Battista Cerruti and Nicolas Larco were Italian; Irish-rooted American Thomas J. Gallagher joined Camilo Martin who was the city's consul for Spain; also in the group was T. Lemmen Meyer and Pablo Baca. These men immediately filed articles of incorporation as the Santa Cruz Island Company, with the intent of operating a cattle ranch on that island for a period of fifty years. The group conveyed their interest in the island to the corporation on March 29, each receiving ten of a total of 100 shares of stock in the new company; they also bought a lot near the wharf in Santa Barbara for livestock handling. In September the bank's directors paid Barron \$50,000 and assumed the balance of the mortgage.⁵²

Gustave Mahé was the director/manager of the French Bank, as it was known, from its inception in 1860 to 1878 when the bank failed and he committed suicide. Camilo Martin, in addition to his diplomatic responsibilities for Spain, was employed as assistant manager of the London and San Francisco Bank, Ltd. Alexander Weill, a trustee of the French Bank, was an importer of foreign and domestic dry goods for the well-known hardware business Lazard Frères & Company, which he later converted into an investment

⁵²Jeanne Caire quoted in Helen Caire, *Santa Cruz Island: History and Recollections of an Old California Rancho* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1993), p. 59; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 76-77; L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, [August] 26, 1973, SBMNH #0900. These men and the others founded La Société Française d'Épargnes et de Prévoyance Mutuelle in 1860. The records of the bank, which failed in 1878, were reportedly destroyed in the 1906 fire and earthquake, as were early records of the Santa Cruz Island Company. In writing about sheep operations in the West, Charles Wayland Towne reported that Justinian Caire had acted as manager of Santa Cruz Island beginning in 1865 and had since purchased an interest in the island. This is the only account of such a managership, is not probable, and cannot be confirmed. Towne, *Shepherd's Empire*, p. 209. A newspaper article dated July 1869 reported that the new owner of the island was T. Lemmen Meyer & Co. of San Francisco, who in reality was only one of the partners; the article raises the question whether Meyer was at first a senior investor in the island (*Santa Barbara Press*, July 24, 1869 p. 1).



Vaqueros line up in front of the *mayordomo's* Central Valley residence in 1869, presumably in preparation for a *corrida*. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation/Santa Barbara Historical Society*



This photograph, dated 1869, shows the pier at Prisoners Harbor at the time that Dr. Shaw had left the island and the Santa Cruz Island Company was beginning to develop facilities there. A small number of cows can be seen in the corral. Although otherwise sturdily constructed, a portion of the corral, seen in the center foreground, is constructed of tree branches and supported by two braces. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation/Santa Barbara Historical Society*

banking firm. Prominent San Francisco businessman Nicolas (Nicholas, Nicolo) Larco, native of Genoa and a neighbor and friend to the Caire family in San Francisco, was a long-time importer of provisions and coffee, and owned a shipping line between San Francisco and Mexico; he was also a trustee of the French Bank. Grenoble-born Adrien Gensoul also was a trustee of the French Bank and an importer of books and stationery. Justinian Caire also acted as a trustee of the French Bank, and his life will be the focus of much of this study. The remaining four investors were not trustees of the bank: T. Lemmen Meyer of Menlo Park was an importer and commission merchant; Giovanni Battista Cerruti was San Francisco's consul for Italy; Thomas J. Gallagher, born in Michigan, was an attorney and represented the French Bank in numerous cases; and Pablo Baca owned a wholesale butcher business (specializing in sheep) with offices on Kearny Street.⁵³

Mahé acted as president of the Santa Cruz Island Company. Stockholders relied on reports from their secretary, Marc DeKirwan, who reportedly made occasional visits, for news of conditions and events on the island. New island superintendent J. B. Joyaux, who replaced Dr. Shaw in 1869, handled the day-to-day operations of the island ranch and presumably communicated with company representatives regularly.⁵⁴

Ranching on Santa Cruz Island, 1869-1880

The partners in the French Bank apparently did not go to the island but left the operation to Joyaux and a number of employees. The company built what was apparently the first pier at Prisoners Harbor. In May of 1869 a newspaper reported that the schooner *T. G. Sanborn* under Captain Chase, owned by "new company" owners of Santa Cruz Island, brought "a load of piles for the wharf" on the island. A news article the following July noted that a 200-foot wharf had been recently constructed by the new owners: "The wharf is so constructed that on one side the cars take the bales of wool to the vessel, and on the other, cattle and sheep are driven to the steamer's deck with perfect ease and safety." The writer predicted that Santa Cruz Island would become "an occasional stopping place of the steamers passing up and down." A photograph of the pier taken in 1869 showed a new and sturdy-looking structure with horizontal board fences running the length of it leading from a triangular-shaped series of corrals near the slope of the hill. A visiting steamer captain noted "a fine wharf and ranch house, and a pretty little harbor" in 1872.⁵⁵

The July 1869 article also noted that some 30,000 sheep grazed on the island at that time, and that "fine stock has been taken and will be kept there in addition. The products of the Island are increasing so fast under the present management, that it has found necessary to furnish steam transportation to market."

⁵³L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, July 26, 1973, SBMNH #0900.

⁵⁴Delphine Caire, "First Visit to Santa Cruz Island, 1880" (Excerpt from the Memoirs (1933) of Delphine Adelaide Caire), p. 1.

⁵⁵*Santa Barbara Post*, May 5, 1869, SCIF; *Santa Barbara Press*, July 24, 1869 p. 1; photograph dated 1869 in collection of Santa Barbara Historical Society; *San Luis Obispo Tribune*, April 27, 1872, quoted in James T. Lima, *Historic Study, Prisoners Harbor Landing Site, Santa Cruz Island, California* (Point Mugu: Naval Air Weapons Station, 1994), p. 5.

The Santa Cruz Island Company commenced the improvement and diversification of the island industries and made history in the process.⁵⁶

Soon the Santa Cruz Island Company garnered national publicity, as the *New York Times* featured the island sheep ranch in an article about California ranching published in 1874. Calling the operation “A Grand Californian Sheep Rancho,” the writer offered the information to “possibly be of some benefit to Eastern sheep-masters”:

The Island of Santa Cruz, one of the Santa Barbara group, was purchased by the [Santa Cruz Island] Company as a field of operation . . . The buildings and improvements of all sorts, located on five different points of the island, are valued as from \$30,000 to \$40,000, exclusive of steam tallow works erected two years ago at an expense of about \$6,000. The wharf at Prisoners Harbor, recently restored, has cost the company no less than \$10,000. The fences all over the island represent a prime cost, since the purchase by the present owners, of about \$6,000. The schooner and surf boats have cost not less than \$6,000; and the stock of wagons, saddles, agricultural implements, etc., may be valued at about \$2,500. There are now running at liberty over the island flocks of Spanish Merino sheep, numbering between 40,000 and 45,000 head, worth, according to the season of the year—that is to say, with or without wool on—from \$2 to \$3.50 each, and representing an aggregate value of \$150,000. Besides these

IMMENSE FLOCKS

There is a stud of about 125 saddle and draft horses and mules, some breeding mares with colts, and a fine stallion of the Morgan blood, representing a value of \$10,000 or \$12,000; about thirty head of fine tame Devon cattle, including bull, milch cows, and their increase for the use of the island, valued all together at about \$1,200 or \$1,500; and finally, perhaps, 150 head of cattle running wild in the valleys and on the mountains, and affording, whenever desired, an extra supply of fresh beef for the use of the permanent residents on the island.

How this splendid property will “pan out” in the future, in the shape of dividends to the stockholders . . . may best be judged after an examination of the results of the past year’s operations. The cash receipts and earnings of the company, from the sales of live stock, sheep, sheep-skins, wool, and from sundry other sources, reached \$76,000.07, and the net profits, after paying all expenses, amounted to \$48,000.08 leaving the company with no outstanding debts or obligations whatever. A splendid result, that carries its own lesson with it. After all, is it not the true “golden fleece” to be found on the back of the patient sheep?⁵⁷

The article claimed that the company expended up to \$70,000 in improvements and owned livestock valued at \$177,000. Interesting to note are the existence of the tallow works, the new fencing, and the profit figures. The ranch would experience some hard times within a few years.

As the *New York Times* article pointed out, the Santa Cruz Island Company made decisive steps to expand the sheep business after purchasing the island. In 1872 the successful More brothers of Santa Barbara and Santa Rosa Island had reportedly bought 20,000 head of sheep from the island’s owners for \$70,000 and transported them to the mainland by the vessel *Senator*. A government mapmaker noted in 1874 that the island was capable of feeding 50,000 sheep but did not mention an actual count on the island.

⁵⁶*Santa Barbara Press*, July 24, 1869 p. 1.

⁵⁷*New York Times*, January 24, 1874, Manuscript Collection HM 19355, Scrapbook “Blank Book for Guadalupe Island,” Huntington Library.

The herd numbers no doubt increased during the early 1870s, while a drought beginning in 1875 resulted in a series of matanzas, where sheep that could not be fed would be killed, skinned and reduced for the fat: 12,000 sheep were processed in matanzas in 1875, and 25,000 in 1877, activities resulting “from lack of feed.” This problem would have caused some stress in the San Francisco office and may have resulted in members of the partnership selling out.⁵⁸

A report of island conditions in 1876 by J. T. Rothrock of the U. S. Geological Survey offered some interesting information during the time of the drought and matanzas:

Santa Cruz Island is almost wholly given up to sheep-raising. It is estimated that in the spring of 1875 there were not less than 60,000 head of them on the island. In June, 15,000 of them were killed for the hide and tallow alone; the offal being carted down to the shore and cast into the water attracting immense numbers of fish to the spot.

The writer expressed some horror at the range conditions during this drought:

On the grounds most visited by the herds of sheep, all vegetation, save a sagebrush, *cactecs* and the *erodium* or storksbill, had been entirely swept away. The grass had gone completely, and such plants of the island floras as sheep would eat, it was with difficulty that I could even get a decent botanical specimen . . .

In fact, pasture had become so thin that the sheep at the time of my visit were wandering in very small bands that they might the more readily find food. Even the sage-brush was disappearing, as year after year the sheep had eaten away at its leaves and younger shoots, until there was not left sufficient of the more green, succulent tissues to elaborate the sap . . . It is impossible to conceive a more dreary waste than was here produced as the result of over-pasturage.⁵⁹

Island ranching continued, however, as sheep shearing continued and the drought subsided. The company’s schooner *Star of Freedom* transported supplies and laborers between Prisoners Harbor, Santa Barbara and San Francisco. A newspaper reported on September 2, 1878 of the schooner delivering shearers to the island for the seasonal shearing activity.⁶⁰

The U. S. Coast Survey Maps Santa Cruz Island, 1873-1875

As noted previously, the U. S. Coast Survey’s mapping projects on the Pacific Coast not only improved conditions and safety for those involved in maritime commerce, but also provided detailed descriptions and maps that would aid researchers for years to come. Stehman Forney produced detailed

⁵⁸Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256; unidentified newspaper article at SCIF.

⁵⁹J. T. Rothrock, Appendix JJ #H5 in George M. Wheeler, *Report Upon the United States Geological Surveys West of the One-Hundredth Meridian, in Charge of Capt. George M. Wheeler, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Vol. I, Geographical Report* (Washington: 1889).

⁶⁰Unidentified newspaper article at SCIF.

maps of portions of Santa Cruz Island that were used later by the island owners, and his field notes proved important to this history study.

Stehman Forney, a sub-assistant topographer with the U. S. Coast Survey, was assigned to map the Channel Islands during the course of the 1870s. He began work at San Miguel Island in 1871 then moved on for a year's work at Santa Rosa Island. After completing the topographic survey of Santa Rosa Forney's superior in Washington, U. S. Coast Survey Superintendent Benjamin Peirce, ordered him on February 25, 1873 to resume work on the islands, continuing eastward. After receiving instructions from Davidson, Forney organized a survey party in Santa Barbara in September and sailed for Santa Cruz Island where he set up camp in a cove on the west end.⁶¹

Forney's work on Santa Cruz Island would complete topographical work done previously. George Davidson, who would become Forney's supervisor twenty years later, had placed an astronomical triangulation station at Prisoners Harbor in 1852. William Greenwell and William Johnson had surveyed portions of the island in the later 1850s and 1861 and Johnson produced topographic maps that featured large blank spaces. Forney's task would be to survey the remainder of the island and match up to Johnson's work. In places he found error with Johnson's survey but in general they matched up quite well considering the technology used: a plane table transit, rods and chains, executed by a crew of five men working out of shacks and tents. His crew consisted of Jose Espinosa (whom Forney termed a "native Californian"), Charles Freeman (son of a leading physician at Santa Barbara), William Dixon and John Farrell.⁶²

Forney reported that October (from "U. S. Coast Survey Camp, West End of Santa Cruz Island") on his progress on the east end but mixed the data with that of Santa Rosa Island. He asked for the services of a schooner to aid in the topographical work, having relied on the Navy steamer *Hassler* for most of his travel around the islands, and noted that, after two years work on the islands constantly interrupted by poor weather, the period from October to May would provide the best weather for accomplishing a survey in the area. Following his own advice, Forney and his crew successfully surveyed much of the west end during that fall but ran into weather problems during the winter.⁶³

By May of 1874 Forney had completed most of the triangulation and much topographical work on the west end, and wrote to Washington urging completion of the triangulation between the Channel Islands before continuing the topography surveys.

⁶¹Memorandum of General Instructions from the Superintendent to Sub-Assistant Stehman Forney, February 25, 1873, in RG 23, Entry 22, Superintendent's File 1866-1910, Assistants 1866-75, Box 355 E-F, NA(CP). Despite the lowly sounding name, a sub-assistant typically led a field party of surveyors and/or hydrographers on charting expeditions. An assistant often ran the regional office, in this case San Francisco, or continued as a field man but with higher pay.

⁶²Forney wrote a recommendation for his survey party members when the project ended: "It will be to the advantage of any person, wishing to visit the stations mentioned in this book, to employ either of the three following men as guides. They worked in the party of Mr. Forney, and either of them know how to reach all of the signals on Santa Cruz Island. They may be found at Santa Barbara. Their names are as follows Jose Espinosa (native Californian) Charles Freeman (son of Dr. Freeman, a leading physician at Santa Barbara), William Dixon (American).

⁶³Stehman Forney to Benjamin Peirce, October 31, 1873, in *Ibid*.

His appropriation exhausted, Forney disbanded his survey party and returned to Santa Barbara where he could work on the topographic map. That July he forwarded a tracing of his topography sheet of the “West End, Santa Cruz Island.”⁶⁴

Forney fell under criticism over his work on the island a number of times, first for missing equipment, again for the use of a schooner and saddle horses while working on the island, and finally for spending too much time on details in the mapping. He had to defend his monthly hiring of a schooner and the use of horses, which he had procured from the island’s manager, claiming them as essential for completion of the work.⁶⁵

While in San Francisco for the summer, Forney visited the office of the Santa Cruz Island Company, reporting to Washington that the name of the secretary of the company was Marc De Kirwan. While in that city he produced a sketch, scale of 1/100,000, showing his work between November 1, 1873 and September 15, 1874.⁶⁶

Forney filed a progress report from Santa Cruz Island on September 16, 1874. He repeated his weather woes, noting that “owing to the unusual amount of rain during the winter months together with the prevailing fogs and winds, the work did not make the same progress of the previous seasons on San Miguel and Santa Rosa Islands.” After disbanding his crew in May he went to San Francisco and Santa Barbara to work on records and took one month off. He organized his second Santa Cruz Island party on the 25th of August and set out to the field, from where he was writing the report. The crew worked on north and south sides of the island “to connect with the work of sub assistant Johnson. All of the work executed by Mr. Johnson covers the best parts of the island leaving the topography yet to be completed, on the most inaccessible parts of the island, and a great deal of country over which the work has to be carried out is exceedingly rough and difficult to get at.”⁶⁷

Forney had not completed the Santa Rosa Island/Santa Cruz Island triangulation for lack of transport. While he somewhat regularly procured the use of one of the islands’ private schooners for transportation to and from the mainland, the needs for triangulation work were more specific, requiring a boat set to the task for a number of days in the right weather conditions.

He made a description of landings and harbors on the island:

On the north side of the island, about midway, there is a passable anchorage from the northwest winds, this is known as Prisoner’s Harbor and is the best protection from southeast gales in this vicinity. On the south side of the northwest point of the island, is an excellent anchorage in a small cove open to the south, it is well-protected from the northwest winds, large vessels can anchor close under the point of rocks on the west side of the cove, in 9 fathoms sandy bottom, this anchorage has no name but was called by Commander P. C. Johnson Forney’s Cove. On the south side of the island, 1-1/2 miles from the southwest point of the island, there is a good landing for small boats, during the summer months vessels can anchor close in shore and discharge with safety, this is called Posa Landing. Also “Lagoon Landing” “2 miles off the south side of the eastern end of the island is an anchorage in 9 fathoms over a bottom of broken shells. At the southeast

⁶⁴Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, May 23 and July 3, 1874, in *Ibid.*

⁶⁵Stehman Forney to Mr. C. B. Patterson, August 16, 1874, in *Ibid.*

⁶⁶Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, August 23 and September 16, 1874, in *Ibid.*

⁶⁷Progress Report November 1, 1873 to September 15, 1874, Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, September 16, 1874, in *Ibid.*

part of the island there is an anchorage for small vessels, in a small cove open to the south. This is called Smugglers Cove.

. . . an anchorage open to the northwest but well protected from the southeast gales, this is known as Chinese Harbor.

. . . on the north side of the island from Prisoners Harbor to the extreme northwest point there are but few places where a boat landing can be effected, the shore of the island being high and bold. All along the south side of the island there are places where boats can land, situated from eight to ten miles apart.

Forney noted a small landing on the north side of the island called “Platts or Dicks Harbor.”

Forney struggled with a limited appropriation for his work, a smaller-than-usual crew of five men, and lack of adequate equipment for the difficulty of the job. Likely the Coast Survey had decided that the topography and charting of the mainland coast held a higher priority. In October of 1874 Assistant George Davidson, from his office in San Francisco, cut a man from Forney’s crew. Forney wrote to Washington complaining of the situation, claiming that “. . . my party was somewhat crippled by having my estimate cut down one man, by Ass’t George Davidson. One man more or less in a large complement of men is a small consideration, but one man less in a party of five, makes a great difference in prosecuting topography through a rough country, while I worked two telemeter rods last season, I can work but one this . . .”⁶⁸

Forney also requested an additional plane table to ease operations on the island’s rough terrain: “If you were on the ground you would see that it is very difficult to transport instruments over the country I am now working in . . .”

It was only today that I lost a horse, he slipped, fell down into a deep Cañon, broke his back and I was obliged to shoot him on the spot.

I have called your attention to the above facts for this reason, that all the officers in charge of parties in this coast (old and young) excepting myself, are furnished with two plane tables, a full complement of men, together with one and sometimes two aids, as they are furnished with ample means for prosecuting work and receive the credit and reputation of sending in large amounts of field work. I respectfully request that I may have the same facilities furnished me in order that I may be able to send in a larger amount of work.

Due to bad weather, Forney proposed to disband his survey party until February 1, 1875, leaving one man who would be paid \$30 per month “to look after the camp equipage and Coast Survey property which I propose to leave on the island, well stored and secured in the house that my party is now living in.” As for the weather, Forney said that “about every ten years there comes a very very wet season, it is just eleven years since the last flood visited this country . . .” Patterson approved the proposal by telegram, and the party disbanded, just as the weather cleared. Forney left for San Francisco to work in the office. Ironically, weather during December turned out to be “fine working weather.” The party resumed work in the field in early February 1875.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, October 31, 1874, in *Ibid.*

⁶⁹Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, November 6 and December 4, 1874, and January 2 and February 2, 1875, in *Ibid.*

After examining Forney's work in progress, Superintendent Patterson felt that Forney had been spending too much time on details beyond the scope of the task. In a letter dated January 25, 1875, Patterson reminded Forney of the instructions issued by George Davidson in early 1871 when the islands project began: "the topography of the islands will be expected as a scale of 1/20,000, and the curves put in for each 40 feet of vertical height, except around the harbors where you will use 20 feet curves, subsidiary curves of 20 feet will be put in where the nature of the surface demands it. The usual margin of one mile will be executed in detail, but the topography of the hills and of the interior to this margin will be executed with sufficient generalization to give the main features of the surface. In this generalization the contours will be drawn in blue, and aspect [?] note to that effect made on the sheets." Forney responded, perhaps sheepishly:

I fully agree with you, that too much time and money has been and would be expended by continuing the topographical survey of the islands, with the same minute detail that I have heretofore observed. Now that I have your instructions in this matter, I will cheerfully pursue the plan sketched in your letter, and in future waste no more time in the precise mapping of topographical features in a locality like this.⁷⁰

On February 1, 1875 Forney organized his survey party and worked eastward on the island from the Punta Diablo triangulation station to connect with previous surveyor Johnson's work at Platt's Harbor triangulation station, commencing again at Johnson's work on the shoreline at Chinese Harbor. He then moved around using triangulation to various points, thereby connecting with Johnson's work. The work was difficult and the terrain rugged. "Owing to the scarcity of fresh water on the north and south shores of the island, I was obliged to establish temporary camps (consisting of two shelter tents) near small springs in the interior of the island, having to pack everything on the backs of mules." He had some problems making a smooth connection with the earlier survey.

Forney continued to ask for more manpower, including a skilled aide. He recommended John R. Farrell who had been working with him on the islands (the Farrell station is no doubt named for this man). Forney expected to complete the topographic survey of Santa Cruz Island by June 30th, even though hampered by wind and fog that cut his working days. During this time the party sent its mail by the *Hassler*, and throughout the survey period the crew had procured the island company's vessel, probably the *Star of Freedom*, for travel.⁷¹

On June 25, 1875, Forney wrote that he had completed the Santa Cruz Island survey. "My camp equipage is safely stored on Santa Cruz Island, and left in charge of the superintendent of the island [J. B. Joyaux], who resides on the island." He left the horses turned out to pasture. Forney stated his desire to complete the triangulation work between the islands, which he had started in 1871 but had been unable to do because of a lack of boat transportation.⁷²

Forney's last report from the island for the period November 1, 1874 to June 30, 1875 was extensive.⁷³ He provided a description of Santa Cruz Island as 24 1/2 miles long, average width of 4

⁷⁰Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, February 13, 1875, in Ibid.

⁷¹Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, April 1, May 14, June 1, and July 14, 1875, in Ibid.

⁷²Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, June 25, 1875, in Ibid.

⁷³Annual Report, Santa Cruz Island, November 1, 1874 to June 30, 1875, in Ibid.

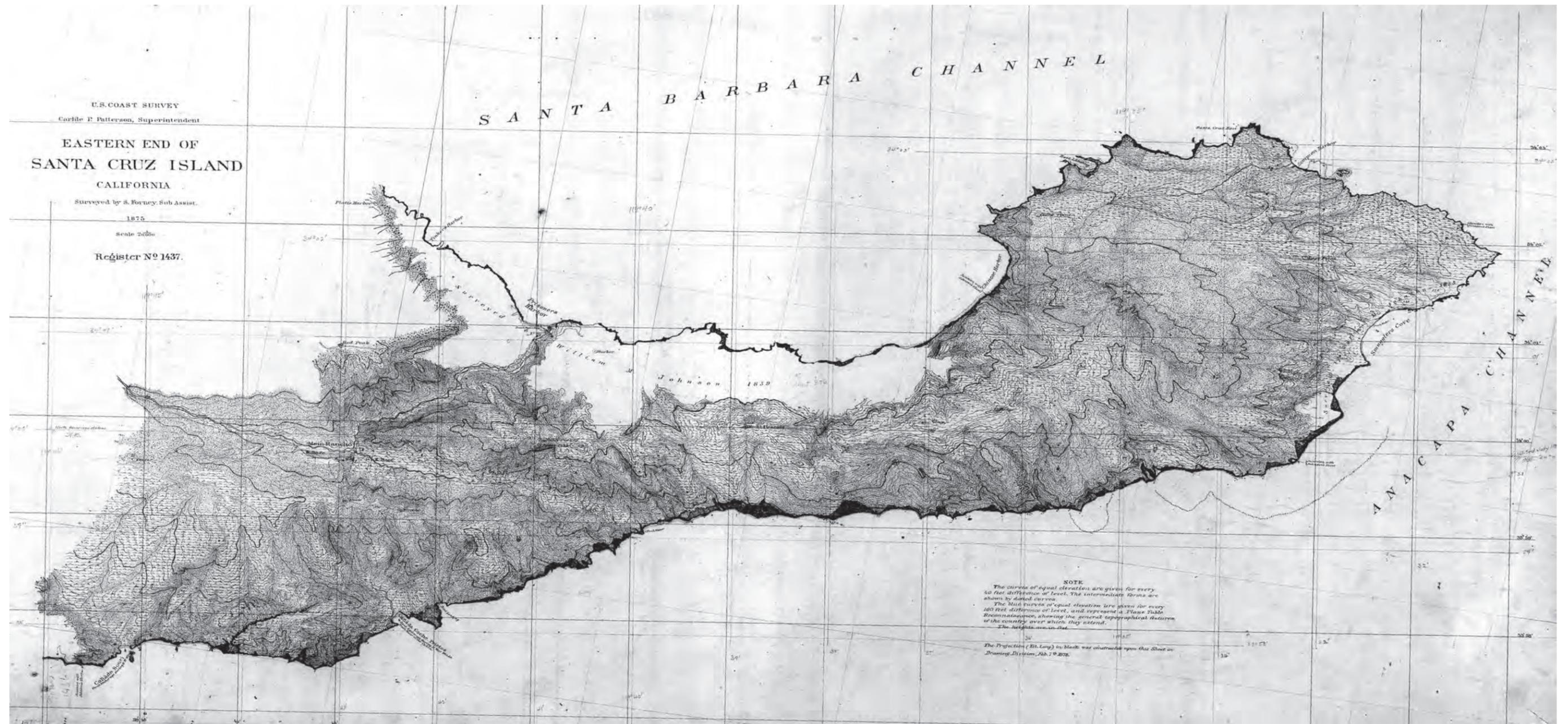
miles, shoreline length 72 1/2 miles, highest point Devil's Peak at an elevation of 2,410 feet. He had searched for and found most of the older survey stations and signals, but could not find an important one located in the huge Indian mound at Prisoners Harbor:

I made a thorough search for the astronomical station, established by Assistant George Davidson at Prisoners Harbor April 1852, but failed to find it. The shell mound on which the station is supposed to be located is so prominent and well-defined, that the position of the station as shown on the sketch accompanying the description could hardly be mistaken from the changes that have taken place in the shifting of the banks of the pond at the base of the mound, it is evident that the part of the mound on which the station was located has been washed away, by the winter freshets. My re-survey of this locality shows that the eastern bank of the pond has shifted 40 meters to the eastward, the sand beach has also mud at 20 meters since the survey of Mr. Johnson in 1859. I dug over the entire surface of the mound, but failed to find any traces of the station marks.

Otherwise, Forney recovered all of the triangulation points left by William Greenwell in 1856 except East Point and Ridge. He suggested a detailed survey of the sea benches on the northwest and northeast ends of the island. On the interior, considered less important for mariners, he sketched contours from plane table locations varying from one to two thousand meters apart.

Forney described aspects of the island that have become interesting and important historical descriptions. In addition to describing the topography and vegetation of the island, he estimated that 50,000 sheep could be grazed on the island and noted the availability of water, including springs in the Aguaje on the east end. He noted buildings and wells, and commented on the "extensive tanks for extracting tallow from the carcasses of sheep" located at Prisoners Harbor. Forney also wrote of the "small gray fox which exists in great numbers" on the island, and of a 60-foot mine seeking gold-bearing quartz. As he had on Santa Rosa Island, Forney brought to light the "great numbers of old shell mounds and Indian graves . . . some of them on the top of the highest mountain peaks." He wrote, "I mention these facts, thinking they may interest persons engaged in ethnological researches." Subsequent to Forney's report, amateur and professional archeologists caused unprecedented damage to the prehistoric resources of the island.

Forney noted anchorages, such as Coches Prietos (name originating from the canyon behind), one at Cañada Los Alamos (no name for anchorage); he described Potato Harbor (not so-named by Forney) as a good landing but not a good anchorage for sailing vessels. His appraisal of Scorpion Harbor included warnings about adverse conditions there during southeast gales, which had resulted in the destruction of two schooners there.



Forney's 1875 survey of eastern Santa Cruz Island.

Forney expressed his appreciation for the “many acts of kindness, and privileges extended to myself and party during my survey of this island, by the proprietors, all of which facilitated and advanced the work under my charge.” Forney furnished the Santa Cruz Island Company secretary Marc De Kirwan a tracing of the “shoreline, mountain tops, roads, trails and fences,” which would no doubt aid in planning land uses and development on the island. He reluctantly discharged John Farrell, writing that “I regret very much having to part with him.” Forney complained again about being the only one in the Coast Survey without assistance in the office: “My office work will naturally be behind that of my brother officers. I will consequently have the reputation at the office in Washington, of being slow and negligent.”⁷⁴

Cultural Features Noted by Stehman Forney, 1873-1875

Main Ranch:

Forney found a well defined trail to the earlier survey signal (“Shaw,” established by Greenwell in 1856) on the hill behind Dr. Shaw’s house, which was “known at present as the main ranch, or superintendent’s house” and was occupied by Mr. J. B. Joyaux, the present superintendent of the island.⁷⁵

Forney mapped three cultivated fields adjacent to the structures at the main ranch and one up the valley to the east, and two buildings in the vicinity of the later chapel across the creek. He defined the road to Prisoners Harbor and its many creek crossings.

A fence traversed the hills east from the main ranch to a point south of Valley Peak where it joined a fence running from near Prisoners Harbor to the vicinity of Blue Banks on the south shore.

North Shore:

Forney described the Prisoners Harbor astronomical triangulation station placed by Davidson in 1852 “on the shell bank to the east of the freshwater pond, and at the very edge of some very large geranium bushes.” He couldn’t find the signal and placed a new one. A series of fenced fields, three structures and a pier stood at the harbor.

The name Frys Harbor existed as of 1874.⁷⁶

East End:

Forney updated the description of Santa Cruz East Station (Primary), located on what today is called Cavern Point;

⁷⁴Stehman Forney to C. P. Patterson, July 1 and August 7, 1875, in *Ibid.* See Appendix for Excerpts from Forney’s correspondence regarding Santa Cruz Island.

⁷⁵Information from examination of field sketches and descriptions found in RG 23, Records of the USCS, Scientific Records, Description of Stations (GA Series), 941 GA 1871-77 through 941 GA 1871-72 F, State of California, Box 148, Book 25467 (sketches) and Box 143, Book G-13078 Part 3 (descriptions), p. 5, NA(CP).

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 36, 43.

Mondran's place "known at present as the East end ranch" [he spells it Mondrari's], featuring at least three buildings, fenced enclosures and a corral;

Forney named Dixon Station after William Dixon of the survey party;

Describing East Point triangulation station (established by Greenwell in 1857 and updated by Forney in 1875): "From Mondrari's or east end ranch house follow up this cañon by the road until you reach the scrub oak on the mountain [provides a] good view of [the station]" In the time since the station had been established by Greenwell a fence had been built in the vicinity, running from Scorpion Harbor up the creek, then south and east over the hills to Smugglers Cove (most of this fence line remained in use on the island until 1999 and is extant as of this writing);

High Mountain [changed to High Mount in a 1904 edition] triangulation station Signal: 12' redwood 2x3, 4 2x3 braces (2 from old signal), stones piled around brace. Station: is a redwood stub 2x3. Buried even with surface, then secured by 4 redwood stubs [about] 2' at approximately EWNS—Copper tack in the top of each stub. Greenwell described how to reach the station in 1857: "Start from Scorpion harbor, from here a trail leads up the mountain . . . to the main ranch. Keep this trail, it is the only one that leads from Scorpion Harbor to the main ranch, and can be easily followed." He noted that the signal is on top of the mountain, right on the trail.⁷⁷

On the map Forney drew the settlement at Scorpion, fences enclosing areas on the north shore and San Pedro Point, a cultivated field at Campo Maximo, and roads to the Main Ranch, Potato Harbor and Smugglers Cove and beyond.

West End:

West triangulation base, established by Greenwell in 1856: "Sub-assistant Forney made a thorough search for it, but no vestige of the station could be found. An old resident of the island informed him that some years ago an Indian dug up the monument (supposing it to have been placed there by some of his peoples), and took it to Santa Barbara. Mr. Forney made inquiries to trace the person who had removed the stone monument, but as near as he could find out, the man had died, and the monument could not be found;"

A wagon road led from the main ranch to the west end ranch house, and from that ranch house up the hills to "Devil's Peak";

Route from west end ranch to Devil's Peak station: follow valley east as far as the Barley Field where the valley forks, go left up 1/2 mile . . . to a ridge on your left leading towards the mountains on the north side of the valley, follow this ridge or spur to the top of the main ridge. Looking west you will see a flat and the remains of an old corral—but go east to the highest point on the island . . .;

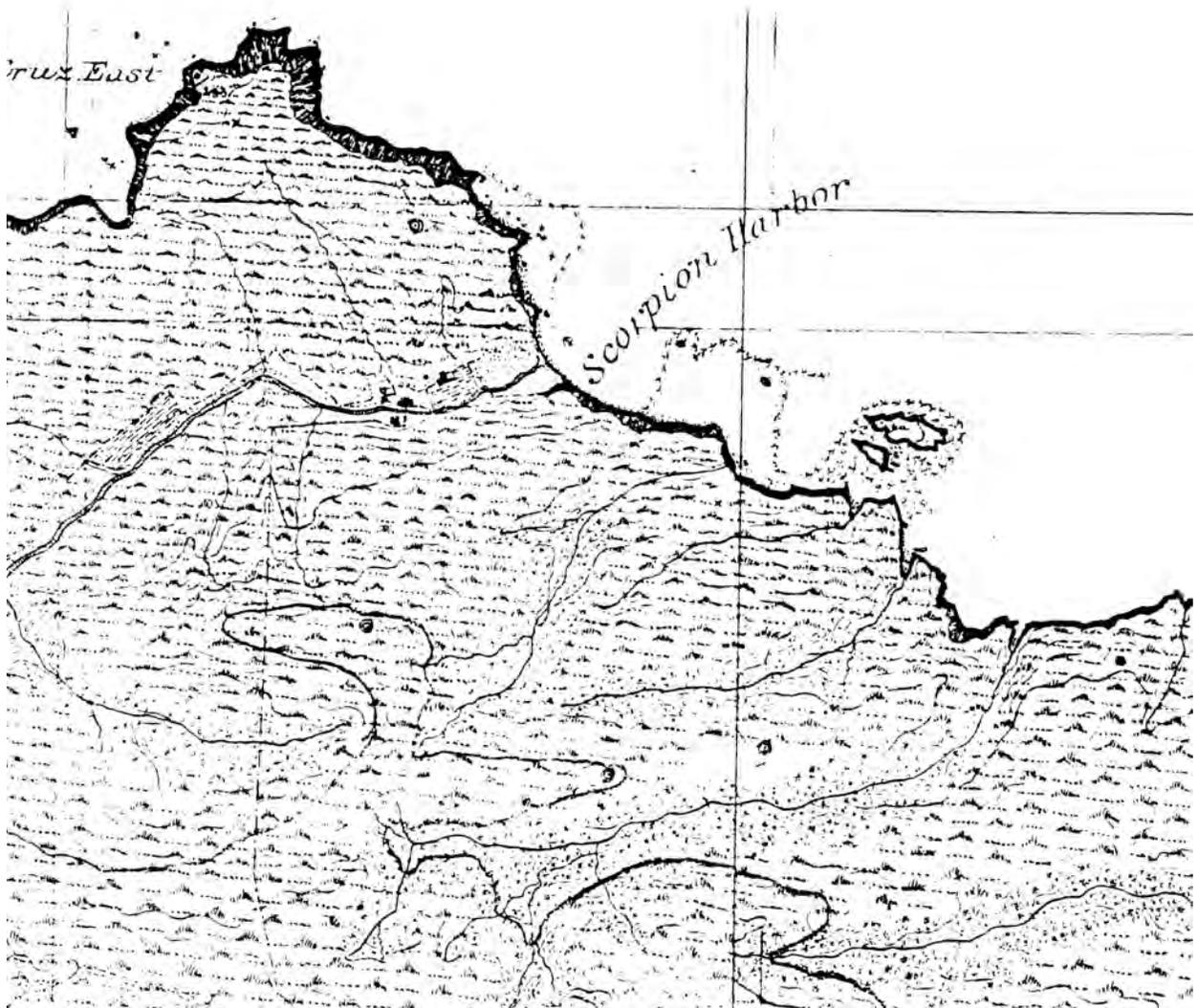
John's Station marked by five stone bottles buried upside down with only the bottoms showing, in the shape of a compass;

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 22, 27, 34, 65. A survey marker remains at Cavern Point, and some fences and road routes remain, although altered over time.

Forney made official the name Forney's Cove in 1874 (as it had been known recently by Commander P. C. Johnson) and marked a series of corrals and a road to West and Fraser Points, the road continues east into the mountains at Mesa and Toro Stations;

“To find Black Pt. triangulation station, follow the trail from west end ranch to Forney's Cove”;

West end house bench mark: Forney mounted a copper plate on the northwest corner of the west end ranch house which read, “U.S. Coast Survey Benchmark / This mark is 102.8 feet above the high water mark.” Forney drew two buildings and two corrals at the ranch, and a flagstaff that acted as a station (Forney may have constructed the flag staff).⁷⁸



Detail of Stehman Forney's map of the eastern portion of Santa Cruz Island, showing developments at Scorpion Harbor. *National Archives*

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 4, 11, 25-26, 31, 39, 47, 51.

The Caire Era, 1880-1937

The major era of development on Santa Cruz Island, which created the historic landscape pattern that remains today, began with a successful French immigrant's vision of a European-styled settlement of diverse operations including vineyards and wine making, production of wool and meat, and fruit orchards and fields of grain, all under the management and labor of Frenchmen, Italians and Hispanic Californians. The picturesque landscape drafted by this man, his family and his employees was and is a unique and fascinating facet in the history of California and the United States. The legacy of Justinian Caire lives on at Santa Cruz Island through the carefully thought-out ranch complexes, the groves of ornamental and productive trees, the extensive masonry work in the waterways and the road system. Caire descendants remain living in California and many are active in the preservation of the history of the island.



Portrait of Justinian Caire. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

Biography of Justinian Caire

Justinian Caire was born on December 3, 1827 at Briançon in the High Alps of France, the youngest in a large family. Beginning at age 19 he trained in Genoa, Italy for a career as a hardware merchant. Following the worldwide rush for gold in California, Caire and his friend Claude Long immigrated to San Francisco, arriving aboard the *Aurelie* on March 19 or 29, 1851. The two quickly established a commercial house, Caire and Long, specializing in mining implements, chemicals and fine European wares. The business suffered setbacks as a fire destroyed much of San Francisco about six weeks after their arrival, their store being consumed in the conflagration. The family enjoyed telling the story that, learning from this experience, Caire dug a basement protected with sheet metal under his new store earning him the name “crazy Frenchman;” a subsequent fire, during which he quickly deposited his goods into the pit, saved the business.⁷⁹

In 1854 Caire returned to Europe to marry his Italian fiancée, Maria Candida Cristina Sara Molfino of Genoa; the 23-year-old bride used her longtime nickname Albina and was known by that name throughout her life. The couple returned to San Francisco where they settled and started a family.⁸⁰ In 1857, Caire and his older brother Adrien started another, similar business, Caire Brothers. Adrien Caire lived in Paris and acted as the European supplier for the business, which was located at 142 Washington Street. After about ten years the business moved to 530-532 Washington Street, and eventually took the name Justinian Caire Company. Caire also joined a group of men in 1860 to establish a bank, La Société Française d'Épargnes et de Prévoyance Mutuelle, as noted earlier. Caire's business successes enabled him to slowly buy out the shares of the other stockholders in the Santa Cruz Island Company, and thereby allow him to create what he must have been thinking about for many years: an efficient, productive and beautiful island rancho.⁸¹

Establishment of the Caire Ranch

According to his granddaughter Helen Caire and other relatives, Justinian Caire became the sole owner of the Santa Cruz Island Company, and hence the island itself, in 1887. No records apparently exist to confirm this as most burned in the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906; other sources claim 1880 as the date. It is known that over the years between 1873 and 1890 Caire acquired a number of shares in the company, owning 17 shares and holding another 35 by proxy in 1881 until attaining full ownership.

⁷⁹Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 63-67, 73-74; oral history interview with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

⁸⁰“Family Papers, Caire-Molfino, Caire-Suich, Suich-Corvin, translated and annotated by L. A. Jeanne Caire, Easter, 1972,” typescript courtesy of Mary B. Brock. Another family story, told by Vivienne Caire Chiles, told that the new Mrs. Caire refused to learn English upon seeing the crude conditions in San Francisco (she mistrusted wood frame buildings and longed for sturdy masonry), but relented after some years when it became clear to her that this would be their permanent home

⁸¹Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 73-74; Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, “Santa Cruz Island,” in *Noticias*, Vol. V, No. 3, Fall 1959; L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, July 26, 1973, SBMNH #0900. The Caires had nine children; see Appendix for a Caire family genealogy.

One family member reported that Caire had backed two of the investors and then received their shares when they couldn't meet obligations, and that Mahé's suicide led to ownership of another share. Some accounts state that A. P. More, owner of neighboring Santa Rosa Island, held a thirty percent interest in the island in the 1880s. The directors of the Santa Cruz Island Company likely attempted to raise capital for development of the ranch and, when faced with economic reversals such as the drought of 1875-1877 and the subsequent fall of the wool market, shares may have been available at discounted prices. Also, the French Bank failed during the 1870s, eliminating some of the original investors (Gallagher, Baca, Larco and Cerruti) and adding shares to Justinian Caire's portfolio. Whatever the facts of the matter, Justinian Caire traveled to the island for the first time in the spring of 1880 with an eye to take control of the island operation.⁸²

Justinian Caire's eldest daughter Delphine (born 1856) wrote an account of her first visit to the island in 1880. In it she reveals that her father had not set foot on the island previous to that date—a time in which he owned a stake in the island for at least eleven years. Caire also brought his son Arthur, whose “presence would be useful for drawing up plans, etc., as he had studied surveying as well as chemistry at the University of California.” The two younger Caires traveled on a Pacific Mail Steamship Company vessel from San Francisco to Santa Barbara where they were met by superintendent Joyaux and his ten-year-old daughter Clothilde. The two families crossed the channel on the *Star of Freedom* and traveled to the central ranch complex. Joyaux provided the Caires with rustic accommodations: two cots in a room in the superintendent's house for the men, and a bed in the Casa del Mayordomo for 24-year-old Delphine.

The visitors spent the next several days inspecting the island. Miss Caire described the conditions on the island as “quite primitive,” finding no running water in the houses and the roads and trails poor. An employee hauled water from the creek to the ranch buildings in a cask placed on a wheelbarrow. The inefficiency of the operation amused the writer, as she described the poor fellow losing half his cargo on the bumpy, uphill journey from arroyo to the buildings and having to repeat the trip several times. “It is hard to believe, but as soon as my father had pipes and taps placed at different places, this water carrier quit his employment with the Company. One would have thought he missed playing the role of a beast of burden.”

Miss Caire described the buildings at the main ranch as an “embryo hamlet.” Two adobe houses, both one story, sheltered the superintendent and the mayordomo. The superintendent's house had a “little garden enclosed by a simple wooden fence.” A long wood frame structure sat behind the superintendent's house, which the Caires would turn into a dining room. West of these three buildings stood a kitchen, a “men's messhall” and an undisclosed number of bunkhouses. Even farther west the ranch structures such as shearing sheds, stables, wagon sheds and corrals were situated. Across the creek and to the east stood two small buildings, one of which had been occupied by a beekeeper.

⁸²Helene Caire to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, March 11, 1947, SBMNH #0900; Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, “Santa Cruz Island,” p. 4; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 79; Jeanne Caire, “Evolution of Title to Santa Cruz Island Beginning February 16, 1869,” and her Memorandum dated April 22, 1974, courtesy of Mary B. Brock; e-mail from Marla Daily [president of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation] to Ann Huston, July 15, 2002. New investors in the Santa Cruz Island Company by 1873 were J. W. Delaveaga, G. B. Germbe and H. Ohlmeyer. Justinian Caire's granddaughter Helen Caire (1905-) spelled her name Helene in various correspondence and is so cited here. In the text, her name is spelled Helen in order to not confuse her with her aunt, Justinian Caire's fourth daughter Helene A. Caire (1867-1929).

Of the landscape Miss Caire noted the difference in the early state of the vegetation and creek to the condition in the time when she wrote her account more than fifty years later: “. . . its present [1933] natural beauty does not come up to that of the past.”

The bed of the stream that skirts the Main Ranch on its way from Picacho Diablo was much narrower than it is today; mountain slopes were heavily wooded and centuries-old oaks were numerous. In the course of years, rains have accomplished their ruinous work, carrying off a great amount of topsoil, the innumerable trails cut by sharp sheep trotters having been a contributing factor in such devastation. Also to be reckoned with was the negligence or ineptitude of some of the first superintendents who had not restricted deforestation. If wood were needed to heat kitchen ovens, one of those incompetent overseers would send his workmen to the creek to cut wood, without bothering to add any specific directions as to how the job should be done. As a result, many a patriarchal tree fell to the axe of untrained woodcutters. In addition, during the great sheep roundups of the shearing season, in order to keep the sheep from scattering, the vaqueros were accustomed to massing branches as walls to form a corridor for the sheep. In the absence of responsible control, the building of such fences was often at the cost of trees that proper pruning might have saved.

The Caires met all of the island's occupants, all employees of the Santa Cruz Island Company. Besides Joyaux (and probably his family), the mayordomo or foreman of the ranch Ramón Ayala lived on the island full time. The schooner captain Charles Burtis, with his wife and son, lived in a house at Prisoners Harbor. Caire remarked that Mrs. Burtis “was reputed to excel in drying the cows placed at her disposal by milking them insufficiently.” A member of the schooner crew known only as Mac doubled as a carpenter on the island. John Griffin “was an expert driver who saved us from more than one risky situation.” Two brothers named Espérance, probably Barbareños, took care of the garden and orchard and hauled the water. The ranch residents knew the Chinese ranch cook as John Lee:

This scion of the Celestial Empire was noted for being remarkably clean as to both his kitchen and his person, and he prepared highly appetizing meals. As is the way with his countrymen, he tolerated no intrusion into his domain. When the Barbareños who came to the island seemingly famished, would gather in front of his kitchen and one of them, hoping to hasten dinner, would cry out: “*Toca la campana, John Lee,*” he would chase them away, saying again and again: “*Tienes muchas lenguas.*” And they minded him.

Justinian and Arthur Caire apparently traveled to the out ranches both east and west during their inspection visit, and made maps of certain areas. “I went with Arthur on his surveying trips and held the rod,” wrote Delphine, “raising or lowering it according to the signals he gave me. May I not claim some credit for the plans that were drawn up at that time?” Delphine did not reach the entire distance to Scorpion Ranch, but wrote of the journeys in that direction. Driven in an English charabanc to Campo de Mielquieres on the isthmus, Caire wondered “how we ever reached the spot without accident.”

A short distance beyond the Rancho del Sur, there was no wagon road, and the gradient of the mountain we were climbing was such that our vehicle could easily have tipped over. A horseman, traveling high above us, insured against the vehicle swerving by means of a stout belt strapped to our carriage, the end of which was would around the pommel of his saddle.

At Campo de Mielquieres, “a field strewn with myriad wild flowers of every hue,” mayordomo Ayala cooked lamb carne asada on a spit over an improvised fire. The guests continued on horseback “over an extremely rough trail, and occasionally over ground devoid of any trail” as they crossed the Montañon. As Delphine Caire didn’t make the entire journey to Scorpion, she left no impression of that place. She wrote of a trip to the west, by way of El Camino del Carro del Oeste, a signed route later abandoned by the Caires. The road had been recently repaired, and ended at an area of “steep country covered with dry slippery grass” whereupon the guests walked to complete their journey.⁸³

With maps in hand (surveys made by his son and, no doubt, the copy of Forney’s island survey), Caire set to work planning and creating a rancho of incredible proportions for the day, with nine outpost ranches reporting to the central one, all producing numerous products of high quality and fashioning a landscape reminiscent of his own homeland, as his granddaughter Helen Caire wrote to a later owner of the island:

Its topography reminded him, on a reduced scale, of course, of his beloved French Alps, and it is perhaps for that reason that he adapted to its development, which he carried on in his lifetime, the masonry and architecture of the French Alps country and the Mediterranean basin in general. He was, as beautiful stone walls and great numbers of exotic trees testify, a pioneer in soil conservation in an age when only scientists have a thought to such matters. Diversified ranching was his answer to the peculiar problems posed by the island.⁸⁴

The size of the island required the creation of transportation and communication systems, and sites would be carefully selected for the establishment of settlements, planting of crops and dispersal of livestock. Caire took notice of soil quality, water availability, erosion threats, vegetation conditions; he also looked at the island with an artist’s eye, building structures with old world charm and planting trees and shrubs in picturesque and practical locations. Each ranch site acted as a satellite to the great Main Ranch, which was the heart of the vast and diverse ranch operation.⁸⁵

The Main Ranch

The person or persons who chose the location of the first ranch house in the Central Valley around 1850 did so with a good eye for practicality. Sheltered by the high hills to the south, in good view of the entrance road in Cañada del Puerto from Prisoners Harbor and surrounded by flat, fertile land, this first settlement was at the geographic center of the island. During the following decades a ranch complex grew and it was on this pattern that Justinian Caire chose to further enhance and use as his base of operations.

⁸³ Caire, “First Visit,” pp. 1-6.

⁸⁴ Helene Caire to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, March 11, 1947, SBMNH #0900.

⁸⁵ Justinian Caire regularly visited the island with his family after 1880. For instance, in August 1892 he wrote to his brother, “I have been here three months with [wife and two daughters], partly to breathe the country air, but also, in large part, to oversee, direct, modify, improve, innovate, etc., etc.” (letter, Justinian Caire to his brother, August 18, 1892, translated through the auspices of SCIF and courtesy of Mary B. Brock).

Calling it Rancho del Medio for its central location on the island, Caire designed the ranch on the template created by the early settlers but added his old-world-flavored yet up-to-date vision.

Caire retained the general layout of houses and ranching areas. He expanded and improved the residences and eating areas. Workers enlarged the old one-and-a-half story, gable-roofed Casa del Mayordomo into a two-story, Mediterranean style residence with a hipped roof and porch facing the north for the superintendent. The Shaw-era superintendent's house became La Casa del Dueño, or owner's residence, and received a second story with hipped roof and porch. Caire's granddaughter Maria Rossi Gherini recalled the house:

The family house had three rooms upstairs all with French doors opening on the balcony and on the rear of the house was an outside stairway. Downstairs in the center of the house was a sitting room and in each corner of the house was a bedroom opening into it, as well as on the outer porch. In the lower rear near the foot of the stairway was a small bathroom, with cold running water. As occasion required, hot water from the outer kitchen could be brought in to take off the chill; I can still visualize the tall, green-spruted containers which served the purpose.⁸⁶

Later, this building became structurally unsound and was replaced with a U-shaped wood frame house.⁸⁷

A wood frame kitchen sat behind the two main residences. The Caires remodeled this building into an office. Behind it, against the south bank of the valley and cut into the slope, Caire had constructed a long building from rubble rock and mortar in 1887 to serve as a dining room and kitchen, later to be called the comedor. A stairway led to the owner's residence. On the north of the houses across the road a small laundry building, garden house and seed house were constructed, as well as an elaborate windmill that pumped water for the ranch from a well at that site.⁸⁸

To the west of this complex of residences and their outbuildings Caire had an adobe bunk house of three rooms built near the site of a former ranch shed. Farther to the west, where a shearing shed and corrals had long stood, a utilitarian complex of ranch buildings rose. Closest to the residences and facing the main road towards the west, a large brick-faced horse barn was built before 1888, with wings stretching in either direction for saddle shop and tack room, blacksmith and carpenter shops and tool storage. This barn sheltered dozens of horses for use on the ranch and had a living area for the stable man upstairs. Farther down the avenue a brick dairy barn accommodated a milking parlor for cows and a room for

⁸⁶Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 6.

⁸⁷Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 65-66.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 66; Marla Daily and Carey Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island: A Brief History of Its Buildings" (typescript, 1981), p. 8.



The Main Ranch as it appeared in the 1880s or 1890s, looking south. The buildings are, from left to right: Casa del Dueño (Caire residence); office in back, left of windmill; Casa del Mayordomo (superintendent's house); comedor (dining room/kitchen); bunkhouse. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*



Casa del Dueño, the Caire family's house at the Main Ranch was decorated with fancy wrought iron work (photo circa 1900). *Santa Barbara Historical Society*

stallions on the west side. South of the dairy barn the *trasquila*, or shearing shed, probably remained from the earlier days, and a covered sheep corral was added. On a south slope of the foothills near the *trasquila*, Caire constructed in 1890 a *matanza* of two stories, the lower masonry part for slaughtering sheep and the upper, wood frame story a bunk house reached by an exterior stairway with wrought iron work typical of the finer island buildings. Corrals for sheep and cattle filled the area between the horse barn, dairy barn and *matanza*.⁸⁹

Northeast of the residences, and across a small drainage, the old apiary was raised onto a new lower floor constructed of stone rubble in 1885. This small building served as the first winery, later called *Cantina Vieja* or old winery. The other old building adjacent to it disappeared at an unknown date. As the wine operations grew, Caire constructed two massive winery buildings east of the ranch complex. The larger, and lower one, was built in 1890 and used as the cellar to store casks of wine. The smaller but still very large winery building, where grapes were crushed and the first parts of the wine making process occurred, was constructed on the slope immediately above at an unknown date.⁹⁰

An extensive water system evolved to serve the complex. Caire had numerous springs developed with reservoirs and pipelines for domestic use and irrigation. The Pato system was located east of the ranch complex in the *Matanza Potrero*; it included a reservoir that fed the kitchen residence, garden faucets and the new winery. A reservoir was constructed on the hill behind the new winery. The Gallina system crossed the creek with suspension cables and supplied garden faucets and a storage tank. The Cistern system supplied the vegetable garden and was eliminated in 1911. The Dindo system supplied the stable, *trasquila*, *matanza* and other ranch faucets. The old windmill system pumped from a well to the main house, superintendent's house, kitchen and dining room and dormitory; it was modified in 1911 and 1914 when the new frame residence was constructed. A hot water system served the kitchen, superintendent's dining room and bathroom, and a washstand at the "barracks." A spring near the creek below the ranch complex was sometimes used by employees for fresh drinking water, carried in a pitcher. Numerous reservoirs provided water for irrigation in the vineyards and fields of the Central Valley.⁹¹

Justinian Caire hired dozens of skilled laborers and craftsmen to accomplish his building plans. Most structures appear to have been built in the later 1880s, leading one to believe that he spent many years in planning and perhaps raising capital. For materials, the ranch established two brick kilns, one at the Main Ranch and the other at Prisoners Harbor. Using clay from sources on the island, laborers produced good bricks in great quantity, constructing at least five substantial buildings from the locally made bricks. According to Helen Caire, the kilns doubled as lime kilns for producing the important mortar ingredient. Low-fire (called "adobe" by family members) bricks, made by "skillful Californio and Mexican hands,"

⁸⁹Daily and Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island," pp. 10-13; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 63; Clifford McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island: The Ranching Recollections of Clifford McElrath* (Santa Barbara: The Caractacus Corporation [for the Santa Barbara Historical Society], 1993), p. 6. The construction dates of the stable and dairy barns are usually noted as 1888, because the date plaques are located on portions of the facades that were expanded from the original buildings to add roof height; the plaques may actually denote the date of the alteration of an older building.

⁹⁰Daily and Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 9; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 76.

⁹¹[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 340-343, SCIF; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 7.



Justinian Caire, accompanied by either wife Albina or daughter Delphine, on a ride at the Main Ranch. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

were used in some construction. Lumber had to be imported from the mainland, likely San Francisco, as no millable timber of any quality existed on the island.⁹²

Caire ordered extensive landscaping around the residences, favoring roses. The gardens were surrounded by decorative wrought iron fences produced by craftsmen in the island blacksmith shop. Caire's employees planted windbreaks of eucalyptus west and southeast of the ranch buildings, and planted gardens and orchards nearby. Helen Caire wrote:

While preserving the native flora, the Caire family from earliest days introduced many trees besides the blue gums, Monterey pines and cypresses . . . : English walnut, almond, peach, apricot, fig, orange and lemon trees, oleanders, pepper trees, acacias, locusts, and

⁹²Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 65.

Italian stone pines. Of the last listed, a tree we especially loved was the pine. Planted by my grandmother [Albina Caire] from a seed in the residence enclosure, it grew to a tremendous height and spread. The bench of laths built around it periodically was enlarged as the trunk expanded. On summer evenings it was a fine place to gather, chat and sing, always ending with the old French song, “Bon soir, mes amis, bon soir . . .,” which our friends, too, liked to learn.⁹³

Justinian Caire’s daughter Delphine kept a nursery of seedlings in a large lath house from which she created picturesque groves on various places on the island. Helen Caire wrote of the family’s use of the house gardens, where later generations “happily tended my grandmother’s gardens so that the living room vases were always filled with roses and annuals we had planted. The sweet scent of Castilian roses pervaded the living room.”⁹⁴

The Chapel of the Holy Cross

North of the ranch houses and near the old apiary, Caire had a small but finely crafted chapel built in 1891. Caire’s daughter Delphine, who wrote a lengthy letter detailing the history of the chapel, felt that her father had long desired to build a chapel for the workers on the island and was inspired to the location by the presence of the old apiary in its scenic setting. Caire attempted to obtain approval from the bishop in Los Angeles for a chapel on his land but the bishop, apparently misunderstanding the geography of the island, requested that the parcel and a right-of-way be deeded to the Church. The matter was cleared up and construction began. Delphine Caire wrote:

Practically all the building materials were produced on the Island itself. The bricks, from island clay, were baked by an expert Frenchman; the stone, quarried there, was worked by a very able Italian stonemason, while the lime used was burnt in a kiln which is still in existence. Even the wrought iron railing in the interior which, so to speak, separates the sanctuary from the nave, was the work of an Italian blacksmith, master of his craft.⁹⁵

Caire set the chapel in a vineyard. The brick building featured sandstone quoins with crosses carved in bas-relief. A simple bell tower stood on the shingled gable roof. Ogival portals for the door and windows were lined in sandstone; over the door a craftsman carved the letters D. O. M. (Deo optimo maximo, To God, the almighty) as seen in Italian churches. The interior featured a concrete floor with an embossed cross, a cove ceiling decorated with gold stars over a pale blue background. A simple but beautiful altar, “of which the tabernacle is surmounted by a large ebony-hued cross,” was separated from the small

⁹³*Ibid.*, pp. 66, 82.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁹⁵Delphine A. Caire to Father Charles Philipps, November 23, 1936, quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 178.



The chapel at the Main Ranch with garlands decorating the façade. Note the vineyard in the background.
Santa Barbara Historical Society

congregation of 25 to 30 people by a wrought iron altar rail. The Caires planted several trees around the chapel, including stone pine, palm and acacia.⁹⁶

With the chapel ready for mass, Arthur Caire sought a priest to travel to the island for services, or as Delphine Caire wrote, “to preach a Mission to our men.” Father Genna, a Sicilian, was selected and, with sacred items borrowed from San Francisco area churches, arrived on the island for a ten-day stay to consecrate the chapel and provide religious services for the island workers. The Caire family apparently worried about the reception the laborers would give to the Father but, as Delphine Caire wrote,

He knew how to deal with these humble tillers of the soil, and my mother with exquisite tact paved the way to a better understanding between the shepherd and the flock. Exercising what I think may be called a feature of Catholic Action, she visited the men at their meals and urged them to follow the Mission which was given solely for their benefit.⁹⁷

⁹⁶Ibid.; Daily and Stanton, “Santa Cruz Island,” p. 9; Marla Daily, Ed. *Chapel of the Holy Cross 1891-1991 Santa Cruz Island*, Occasional Paper Number 5 (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1991), pp. 16-17, 92-95.

⁹⁷Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 180.

The Caire family participated in mass daily, but “after sunset, the chapel was closed to all but the ranch hands: sermons and prayers were intended for them exclusively.” On the last day of Father Genna’s visit, a cross that had been carried in a procession was placed in the vineyard.

No priest visited the island for many years, but in the early 1900s a group of clergymen camping on the island celebrated mass. Clifford McElrath claimed that around 1920 the family used the chapel for services once a year, bringing a “padre” from Santa Barbara and inviting ranch employees. After Albina Caire’s death in 1924 the holy accoutrements of the altar were returned to San Francisco and the chapel saw little use. The Frederic and Arthur Caire families held Christmas services in the chapel in 1929, but not until the 1960s did the chapel become revitalized by Dr. Carey Stanton, a story for a later part of this report.⁹⁸

The Main Ranch During the Early 20th Century

Writer Charles Holder visited the Island in the 1890s while Justinian Caire was still alive, arriving at Prisoners Harbor and, with Caire’s permission, touring the ranch. He and his companions were met by a horse-drawn “trap filled with ladies and children.” They commenced the ride to the Main Ranch:

Seated in the trap, with our host holding the reins, we turned into the gorge, which in winter is the bed of a rushing torrent that often fills the cañon from side to side, while the lateral cañons and other streams sweep down, adding to the mass of boulders. The road, now comparatively smooth, followed this bed, and presently took us into a delightful region, winding through lofty live oaks and beneath great sycamores and cottonwoods. At every turn some new and striking bit of scenery appeared. All the attractive spots had names. One was Ravenswood, while others bore liquid Spanish or Italian legends peculiarly appropriate and suggestive.⁹⁹

Leaving the confines of the canyon Holder’s party abruptly entered the Central Valley where he was impressed by the smells and scenes of flowers and vineyards, finding the valley “a gem in the very heart of the island, surrounded by high mountains, invisible and unsuspected from the not far distant sea.” Holder described the European flavor of the ranch layout and buildings, which he wrote “have a decidedly foreign air. In front of each is a small, old-fashioned garden, with narrow winding walks, filled with fragrant, old-fashioned plants.” He noted a large vegetable garden for the ranch residents and workers that yielded produce every month of the year. The “sumptuous lunch” he enjoyed was, excepting the champagne and flour, entirely ranch-produced. “We were shown the great bakery with its rows of Italian bread; the cook shop, with its four or five Venetian cooks . . .” In the men’s dining room, to Holder’s amusement, someone had posted signs in Italian, “Do not throw bread upon the floor;” “Eat your soup; it is nutritious food;” “Do not criticize your neighbor at meals;” and “Do not talk loud,” among others.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 165-174, 182-183; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 7.

⁹⁹Holder, *The Channel Islands*, pp. 260-261.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 262-264.

Of the working areas at the ranch, Holder recorded “the great corrals for the horses, the shops for the wagon-makers, blacksmiths, tool-makers, etc.; for nearly everything used on the ranch is made here, even the ornamental iron railings.” A “peculiar” sundial, decorated by some of the workers, stood over the big stable.

Holder, whose chronicles of the islands in the 1890s and early 1900s informed the world of the unique American Channel Islands, found Santa Cruz Island to have a “peculiar charm,” and with weather “so perfect that one almost regrets that the island is private property, and that it is not thrown open to the world like Santa Catalina.”¹⁰¹

Following Justinian Caire’s death the Main Ranch saw few changes as his sons Arthur and Frederic continued the sheep, cattle and vineyard operations, not to mention the hardware business in San Francisco. The old masonry owner’s house became unsafe and was replaced by a large one-story wood frame residence, with eight bedrooms for the use of family members and servants during their summer stays on the island. The house, built in 1914, was roughly H-shaped with bedrooms on the side flanking a central living room. The family ate in a dining room, while the company employees ate in the comedor. For a period the Caires maintained a “Pee-Wee Golf” course in the yard as was fashionable for the day, and kept a garden. In June and July of 1918 a new wood frame bunk house, similar to one built on the east end of the island earlier, was constructed west of the adobe bunk house, this one equipped with an annex room for reading, showers and toilets.¹⁰²

Agricultural consultant Leslie Symmes described the Main Ranch in his 1922 report on the island, finding that the complex consisted of buildings new and old. The new included the one-story owners’ residence and wood frame bunkhouse. Symmes noted that the Italian laborers resided in the adobe residence while the “Spanish” workers lived in the newer frame bunkhouse. He observed the “old stone basement and frame building” near the chapel that at the time was used for seasonal labor housing. By this time the winery buildings were, according to Symmes, “formerly used.” Of the older buildings, only the superintendent’s house was recommended for repair, leaving the impression that the Main Ranch had been better maintained than other areas of the island.¹⁰³

Prisoners Harbor

Justinian Caire realized the importance of Prisoners Harbor as the only good landing for goods and set to work improving the small area known as La Playa (the beach) as the entrance gate to his island enterprises. The Santa Cruz Island Company’s well-built pier already existed by the time Caire began his development projects in the mid-1880s. To maintain this valuable asset Caire planted eucalyptus groves in the Cañada del Puerto for use as pilings when the need arose; he also purchased a pile driver. The pier

¹⁰¹Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁰²S.C.I.C. Letter Book, entries June 18 and July 23, 1918, SCIF; *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, p. 158; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 5; oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

¹⁰³Symmes & Associates, *Report on Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, California* (Typescript, May 1922), pp. 51-53.

served as the lifeline for products coming and going from the island. The company schooner *Star of Freedom* and its successor, *Santa Cruz*, plied the waters of the channel and the California coast, to anchor at its home mooring off the pier. A lookout cabin, situated on the knoll above the harbor and reportedly predating the Caire ownership, provided a vantage point from which a watchman could spy incoming boats and relay the news by telephone to the Main Ranch. Margaret Holden Eaton recalled that early in the century the French watchman regularly provided her fisherman husband with a large cup of fresh milk. A sign posted on the pier warned visitors away unless bearing a letter of permission.¹⁰⁴

Stehman Forney of the U. S. Coast Survey had described the developments at Prisoners Harbor while mapping the island in 1875:

. . . there is a well of fresh water, but it is not so good as that in the pond, when not impregnated with salt. The improvements at Prisoners Harbor consist of a substantial wharf 515 feet in length, one dwelling house, extensive tanks for extracting tallow from the carcasses of sheep, this method is resorted to when there is no market for them, in order to dispose of the increase on the island, they generally kill from fifteen to twenty thousand sheep in one season's operation.¹⁰⁵

The existing six-room adobe house at La Playa, constructed some time between 1857 and 1873 (but probably during the time of Barron's ownership), was enlarged and remodeled by Caire's craftsmen into an elegant, ten-room residence. The workmen raised the hipped roof about five feet to create a full second story and eliminated the dormer windows and hipped porch roof. The house was almost doubled in size with an addition on the front with a matching hipped roof beside the original one, and an ell was extended further toward the Cañada. The building was accessed by stairways both inside and out. A wood frame addition was eventually tacked onto that (or may have preceded the rear rubble stone addition, as a "shadow" left when the frame portion was removed in 1960 indicated it may have been the older structure). A second-story balcony with island-made fancy wrought iron rail faced the channel, and small decorative balconies in the same wrought iron pattern adorned the side windows and French doors framed in brick on the upper story. An exterior stairway provided access to the rear rooms of the house. A garden stretched in front of the house surrounded by more fancy wrought iron work. Helen Caire recalled: "In summertime the bushes at La Playa grew almost as high as the wrought-iron railed porch across the second story: old Paul Neyron roses which gave generous, fragrant bouquets in spring and summer. There were also hybrid teas, Dorothy Perkins and other roses." According to another granddaughter, Maria Rossi, the house at Prisoners was "for the use of anyone wanting to remain overnight, either before leaving the island or on arrival. Actually, I don't think it was much occupied at the time."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 61; Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 260; Margaret Holden Eaton, *Diary of a Sea Captain's Wife: Tales of Santa Cruz Island*. Janice Timbrook, Editor (Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftin, Publishers, 1980), p. 37.

¹⁰⁵Annual Report, Santa Cruz Island, November 1, 1874 to June 30, 1875, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP).

¹⁰⁶Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 66; Daily and Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island," pp. 20-21; Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 6; "Prisoners Harbor—Residence," three sheets of plans, no date, courtesy of Mary B. Brock; oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.



An early scene at La Playa, Prisoners Harbor, prior to the remodeling of the ranch house there. Sheep are gathered in the sand. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



The house and kitchen at Prisoners Harbor as they appeared in 1903, almost two decades after remodeling. The gable-roofed kitchen building replaced two sheds. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

A separate kitchen building stood near the house for many years. It appeared in an 1869 photograph as a white building, roughly fifteen by ten feet with board and batten siding. The Caires retained this building and placed another shed, unpainted, nearby. Later the structure was either replaced or remodeled into a more substantial gable-roofed building. An outhouse stood behind the complex of sheds near the creek. A well and windmill stood near the kitchen. A bridge across the creek led to the field, eucalyptus grove and a barn. The barn, which stood at the bottom of the hill on the east side of the valley, was used to store hay and alfalfa brought from the Campo Avuelo, Las Peras, Segunda and Tercero fields to the east. Photographs showed it with large rolling doors, a dormer with an opening, probably for loading hay with a Jackson's fork, and a low vent cupola on the gable roof.¹⁰⁷

The entire area at the mouth of the Cañada del Puerto was landscaped with grasses and trees planted in rows. Workers straightened the creek with the aid of stone retaining walls, diminishing the lagoon that had wandered through the area for eons. Laborers planted more eucalyptus trees in a row behind the warehouse and sheep pens, and stone pines near the foot of the pier. And so Justinian Caire molded the rugged but picturesque Prisoners Harbor into a welcoming scene for guests and workers disembarking the schooner. In some old photographs the site appears as a park with its large areas of green open space, trees growing in well-chosen places, and the stately Mediterranean residence with its carefully tended rose garden.

Activities at Prisoners Harbor included shipping the wares of the island, receiving goods and materials for island use, and the welcoming of visitors. Guests could stay in the house at La Playa; apparently the watchman lived in a separate dwelling.

Many facilities were needed for the shipping business. In 1887 Caire constructed a brick-faced, rubble and concrete double warehouse in which to store wool and wine awaiting shipment. A small-gauge rail system had been laid from a point behind the residence to the end of the pier, passing the loading doors of the warehouse, where goods could be loaded or unloaded from long, wide flatcars and carts. Incoming goods could be either unloaded into the warehouse or loaded onto wagons behind the house for the three-mile trip to the Main Ranch. Jeanne Caire recalled that

Every engineer to whom I mentioned the narrow Decazeville track looked pleased. I suppose the U. S. mining outfits imported these tracks and cars from France, where they were manufactured to serve in the coal fields of the Aveyron of which Decazeville is center. The name showed on each cross tie: DECAZEVILLE.¹⁰⁸

Maria Rossi Gherini related a story, unconfirmed, that her grandfather built the warehouse in response to a low wool market at the time; he stored the wool there until the prices rose.¹⁰⁹

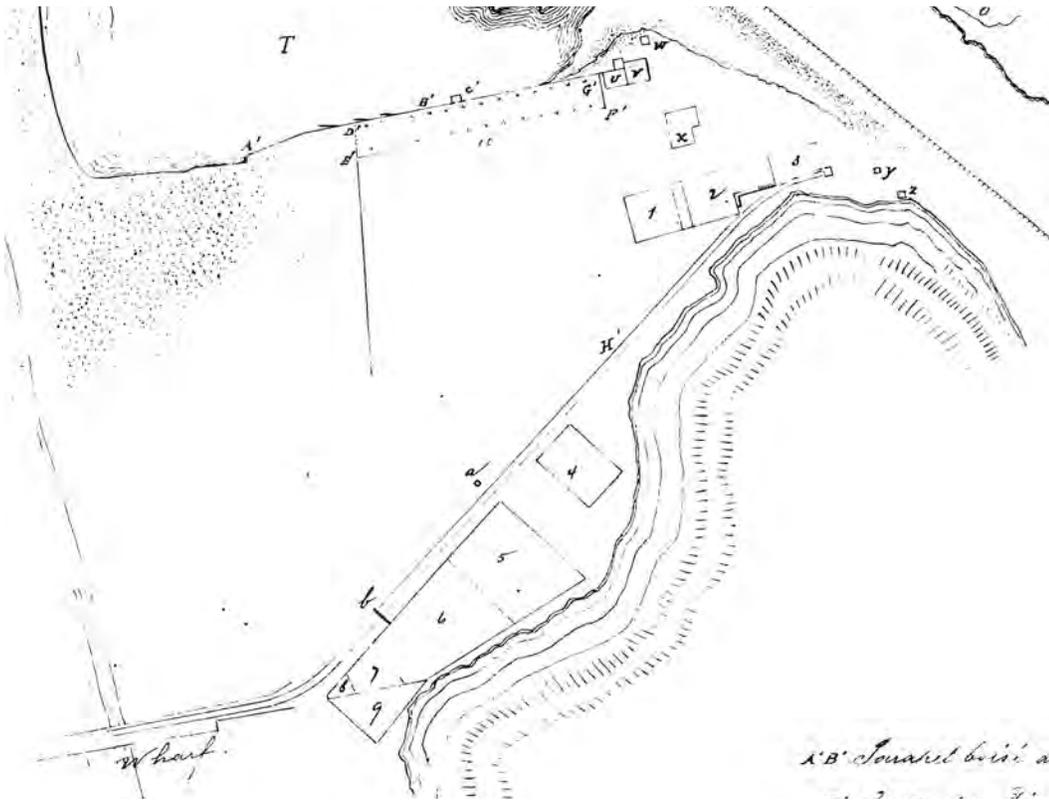
¹⁰⁷Photographs found in the collections of the Santa Barbara Historical Society and the Santa Cruz Island Foundation; Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book #3, October 12, 1920, SCIF.

¹⁰⁸Jeanne Caire quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 68. Vivian Caire Chiles recalled that the rail system was also used to haul the family's luggage to and from the schooner, well into the 1920s.

¹⁰⁹Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 8.



The warehouse at Prisoners Harbor, circa 1900. Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire



A Santa Cruz Island Company map made of Prisoners Harbor in 1892, showing buildings, pens and the pier. At the top left is the "laguna." Santa Cruz Island Foundation

Old maps produced by the Santa Cruz Island Company revealed a number of interesting details and plans. Map No. 7, made some time before 1887, notes an adobe warehouse located where the dwelling house was known to be, suggesting that the Caires used the old house as a warehouse at the time the map was drawn. The map details additions to the old warehouse that correspond with the known redesign of the house, but places the additions at the front and back of the existing building rather than at the rear as has been reported. The plan calls for an office in a front room addition as well as a hall and stairs and a “principal room,” and a small kitchen. A frame addition to the warehouse is drawn in the place where indeed a frame addition would be placed.

The map showed a location for a proposed new warehouse which was subsequently built as recommended, although fill needed to be brought to the site from a hillside borrow pit located east towards the creek; a low area in front of the proposed warehouse had to be filled as well to accommodate a railway system for transporting goods to and from the pier. Apparently a bridge spanned this low area at the time. The text on the map spoke of warehouses being “so much needed at the port while developping [sic] ranches east and west of said port.” The writer, addressing the labor of moving fill from point W to point A (locations on the Caire maps were typically keyed to letters of the alphabet), noted that “wheelbarrows are probably a slow process; would Mr. Bassette study a more speedy way to do the work? For instance, could we not use the railway track itself to a certain extent . . .?” The map also showed plans for running a water pipe from a pump at the rear of the old warehouse to the kitchen and pier, and plotted the railway line from a location beyond the old warehouse to the end of the pier. A subsequent map, Number 8, showed the warehouse to be built, of two rooms with the railway track passing in front of it. The map also depicts a fisherman’s house on the beach west of the pier.¹¹⁰

By 1892 the Prisoners Harbor facilities appeared to have been completed. A map made that year showed the railway leading from a point behind the residence to the end of the pier. The warehouse and expanded residence, as well as the kitchen were depicted, and a matanza sat across the creek that had been channelized. A large vegetable garden lay upstream from the improvements, and a “plantation of pepper” appeared next to the remaining landlocked lagoon. Two pumps, on either side of the creek, provided water for the facilities. The map showed a small sacatera, two pollajos (chicken houses) and a “cage du dinde” (turkey cage). Justinian Caire had that year begun implementation of a poultry raising enterprise, apparently centered at Prisoners Harbor and making use of the tidal lagoon as a means of disposing of the poultry wastes.¹¹¹

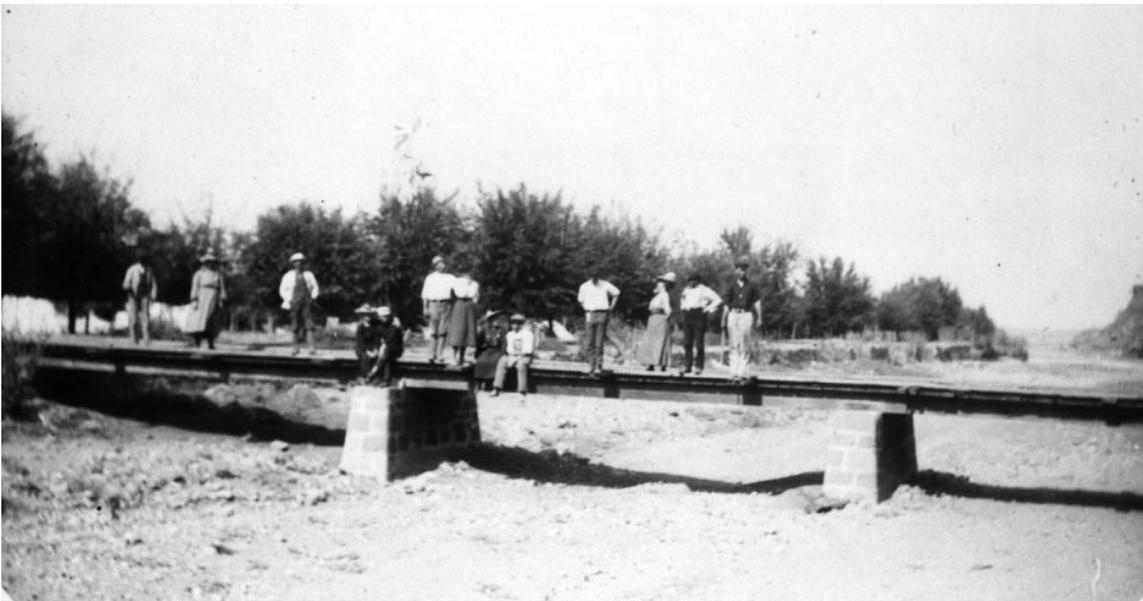
Santa Cruz Island Company managers contemplated the establishment in Santa Barbara of “an agency for the disposal of the products of their large property,” as a newspaper reported in early 1896, apparently as a way to offset losses due to decreasing wool prices. Island products enjoyed a “high reputation for quality,” according to the reporter, who wrote that the store “will be open everyday of the year and the people of this city and vicinity would always find cattle, horses, fowl, vegetables, etc., etc. They would also find sheep—either alive or in the shape of dressed meat at the very lowest market prices.” According to ranch reports, this enterprise would require the installation of a commercial slaughterhouse at Prisoners

¹¹⁰SCIC Maps No. 7 and 8, SCIF.

¹¹¹SCIC Map No, 87 dated January 1892, SCIF; letter, Justinian Caire to his brother, August 18, 1892, translated through the auspices of SCIF and courtesy of Mary B. Brock.



The house and outbuildings at La Playa before 1903, looking south. The tidal lagoon is in the foreground. The house had been remodeled but early outbuildings remained. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



The bridge over Cañada del Puerto in 1903. In the background, the stone wall on the west creek bank is visible. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

Harbor. The fresh meat would be transported to the proposed store by schooner. Disposal of offal from the slaughterhouse, from a projected 400 sheep a month at first, would be taken care of by nature, according to the anonymous employee:

A spot has been selected on the beach where every high tide would carry away what might remain of the result of the slaughterhouse combined with the hog pen. We would take care that neither the eyes nor the nostrils of the most sensitive or ticklish guests should be in any way offended; we have all facilities for doing so owing to the abundance of water we have at our disposal at La Playa.

The slaughterhouse and town store project never materialized.¹¹²

Prisoners Harbor had its own post office for eight years. The Post Office Department commissioned Arthur J. Caire as postmaster of La Playa on March 28, 1895. On May 2 of that year Arthur Caire received a letter from the postmaster in Santa Barbara detailing the next steps in getting the island office running:

There is at this office some supplies for your post office, including mail keys and a pouch. If you have no time to call for them you should appoint someone as your assistant who must take the oath required. Then another party must be appointed as mail carrier and likewise would take the oath. I enclose you one of each of the blank forms.

When this has been done, I can then turn over the supplies to you, or the assistant, and your post office can be properly established.

Will also be pleased to give you any information you may desire.¹¹³

The post office itself may have been located in the family house at La Playa. The island post office, apparently the only official one on the northern Channel Islands, was discontinued on June 30, 1903.¹¹⁴

On December 4, 1903 a storm left the pier “badly shaken” and washed away the derrick that had apparently been in use replacing old pilings; shortly before the storm 28 piles had been driven. A new derrick was readied by the following March and by April pile driving had resumed. The ledger report of the incident included the measurements of the pier at that time: 582 feet long; 24 feet wide at the shore; 49 feet wide at the end, with a 96-foot-long dogleg on the east side; and a distance of 1,056 feet from the end of the pier to the end of the tracks, a location at the door of wooden structure behind the masonry residence at Prisoners.

The same ledger noted tree plantings at the harbor. In February of 1904 laborers planted 39 pine trees on the west side of the pier, and 51 “sundries” on the east side; four years later, in 1908, 500 eucalyptus (“gum”) trees were planted at Rincon Papal upstream from the harbor.¹¹⁵

The low ridge directly to the east of the harbor, reached by a trail that continued to the east end, had adequate land for cultivation. The Company developed at least three grain fields which marched up the hill

¹¹²“Vineyard Report, Santa Cruz Island,” p. 89, SBMNH # 0921; Santa Barbara *Daily News*, February 24, 1896, SCIF.

¹¹³Geo. E. Sawyers, P.M. to Mr. A. J. Caire, P.M. La Playa, Cal., May 2, 1895, reproduced in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 69.

¹¹⁴Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 68.

¹¹⁵[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 295-296, 337, SCIF.



This view of Cañada del Puerto and the residence at Prisoners Harbor, taken circa 1900-1920 and looking south, shows a mowed field adjacent to the east bank of the creek, and the distinct tangent of a stone retaining wall on the west bank. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



Shearing sheep on the pier at Prisoners Harbor, circa 1900. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

in a southerly direction and were named, in order: Campo Primero, Campo Segunda and Campo Tercero (first, second, third). Hay and alfalfa grown in these fields were watched over by the resident at Prisoners Harbor, and the crops stored in the barn there to feed livestock awaiting shipment and at the Main Ranch.¹¹⁶

The Santa Cruz Island Company had a map produced by George Derrickson in April of 1918, which detailed improvements at Prisoners Harbor. The 475-foot pier had an approximately 55-foot pier-head directed west on which the “tram road” terminated. The other end of the rails ended past the magazine. Livestock scales stood immediately west of the magazine. A foreman’s house, formerly the kitchen, stood across from the residence with the storeroom attached to the rear. Across the bridge over the creek stood an implement shed, a stable, and a chicken yard with two chicken sheds. One shed, probably another chicken shed, had been moved to the Main Ranch in April of 1919, according to a notation on the map. Fencing and corrals criss-crossed the areas between the pier and the creek. The map showed an extensive bulkhead made of piles (presumably eucalyptus) that ran about 1,000 feet along the beach on either side of the pier, and a 750-foot retaining wall in the creek. A heart-shaped lagoon remained near the mouth of the creek, apparently cut off from both the creek and harbor.¹¹⁷

The old pier showed signs of age after 50 years of use. In September of 1920 the island superintendent Clifford McElrath wrote to his superiors in San Francisco:

The wharf at Prisoner’s Harbor as you know is in very bad shape. If not repaired this fall it will probably wash out or fall. With our equipment a crew of at least 10 men will be needed, counting those needed to cut piles and haul them to the beach. What with wool to haul, walnuts to gather, and the fall plowing to attend to we have not enough men to keep up with the routine work let alone repair the wharf. I am therefore writing to Santa Barbara and San Pedro to see if I can get in touch with some pile driver outfit and ask them for an estimate or bid on driving the needed piles. We can then compare it with our own estimated expense and see whether it would not pay to get in an outside outfit.¹¹⁸

The ranch was experiencing a labor shortage at the time as disgruntled workers left the island looking for new opportunities. McElrath put men to work cutting piles “so as to have a few ready at any rate;” by October 65 had been stockpiled. He hired Joe Bermudez, a carpenter who had worked on the pier previously, to come to the island and do carpentry jobs at various ranches until the pier was ready for work. “I am at present paying him two dollars a day,” wrote McElrath, “but told him we would do better for him if we put him in charge of the wharf work.” With the pier in need of “practically all new decking” McElrath ordered an old barge that had gone ashore at Smugglers Cove to be broken up for decking materials. He also investigated the possibility of renting a steam pile driver in Santa Barbara, “as the greatest drawback to the machine at P. H. is the time consumed in raising the hammer by horse power.” McElrath wrote to C. W. Smith, superintendent at Santa Rosa Island which had a substantial pier, asking to borrow an engine and winch for the pile driver.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶[Map of] “Potrero Norte” March 1919, SCIF.

¹¹⁷“Plat Showing Location of Buildings, Sheds, Fences, etc at Prisoner’s Harbor, April 1918,” SBMNH #2625.

¹¹⁸Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book #3, September 27, 1920, SCIF.

¹¹⁹Ibid., October 3, 12 and 26, 1920.



Vaqueros herding sheep at La Playa, Prisoners Harbor. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*



Santa Cruz Island Company vaqueros cooking carne asada at Prisoners Harbor. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

In November Bermudez began work on the pier using the horse-powered pile driver. McElrath wrote to the company of his reluctance to use the old pile driver in fear of “labor troubles as some of the men are seemingly awed by the size of the job.” Unable to estimate the quantity of lumber needed until the decking could be pulled up, he promised to be frugal, including shipping the salvaged barge lumber from Smugglers Ranch: “We will use everything that we possibly can. Many of the spikes [existing on the pier] can, I think, be used over again.”¹²⁰

Meanwhile, McElrath reported on cattle and feed concerns at the ranch. Noting that beef cows at the Main Ranch were short of feed, he wrote, “If I can get the hay hauled out of the fields at P. H. I will put them down there,” presumably in pens or the immediate surrounding hills. At the time, the fresh-water lagoon at La Playa provided water for the cattle. He listed the feed crops prepared at the fields above the harbor: Elephant Grass growing in Campo Avuelo and alfalfa in Las Peras; 2 sacks of seed disked in Segunda; and 4 sacks in Tercero.¹²¹

The large house at Prisoners Harbor fell out of use by the ‘teens, perhaps because of dampness or difficulty in maintenance. Only the wood frame section at the rear was used, as a bedroom for the caretaker. This caretaker continued to make use of the kitchen building for cooking and eating. The lookout was no longer used by the 1920s. The railway system to the pier was eventually dismantled, the job being taken by trucks.¹²² Leslie Symmes reported on the facilities in 1922, and found the area generally in better shape than the rest of the improvements on the island:

The principal improvements at Prisoners Harbor, consist of the wharf, 475 feet long, of eucalyptus piles, in fair condition; good livestock corrals and scales; a good brick warehouse with cement floor and an old two-story, 10 room residence (not used) of brick and adobe construction with plastered exterior, with frame addition on the rear used for storage and sleeping quarters; a small frame house used for kitchen and dining room of the care-taker; small barn and sheds.¹²³

The water system, however, needed upgrading including cleaning of the well and replacement of the aging windmill and pipes. The telephone line, constructed in the 1880s, was found to be in operating condition. Symmes noted “several small fields in the bottoms and on the hills to the east” that were fenced.¹²⁴

The U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey produced a new map of the coast of Santa Cruz Island in 1934 that depicted improvements at Prisoners Harbor in great detail. Cañada del Puerto, designated a dry creek bed on the map, passed a grain field and a cultivated field as it reached the marshy area at the beach, now somewhat reduced in size for the expanding needs of the ranch. The barn and another, smaller building appear on the east side of the creek, with a roadway leading up to the hayfields on the hill to the east. A bridge leads across the creek bed to the large house and its small outbuilding, formerly the kitchen; a “small water tank” was located on the hill above the house, and a windmill still stood northeast of the kitchen. In front of the house’s fenced garden a grassy area with trees occupied the flats behind the beach sands. A

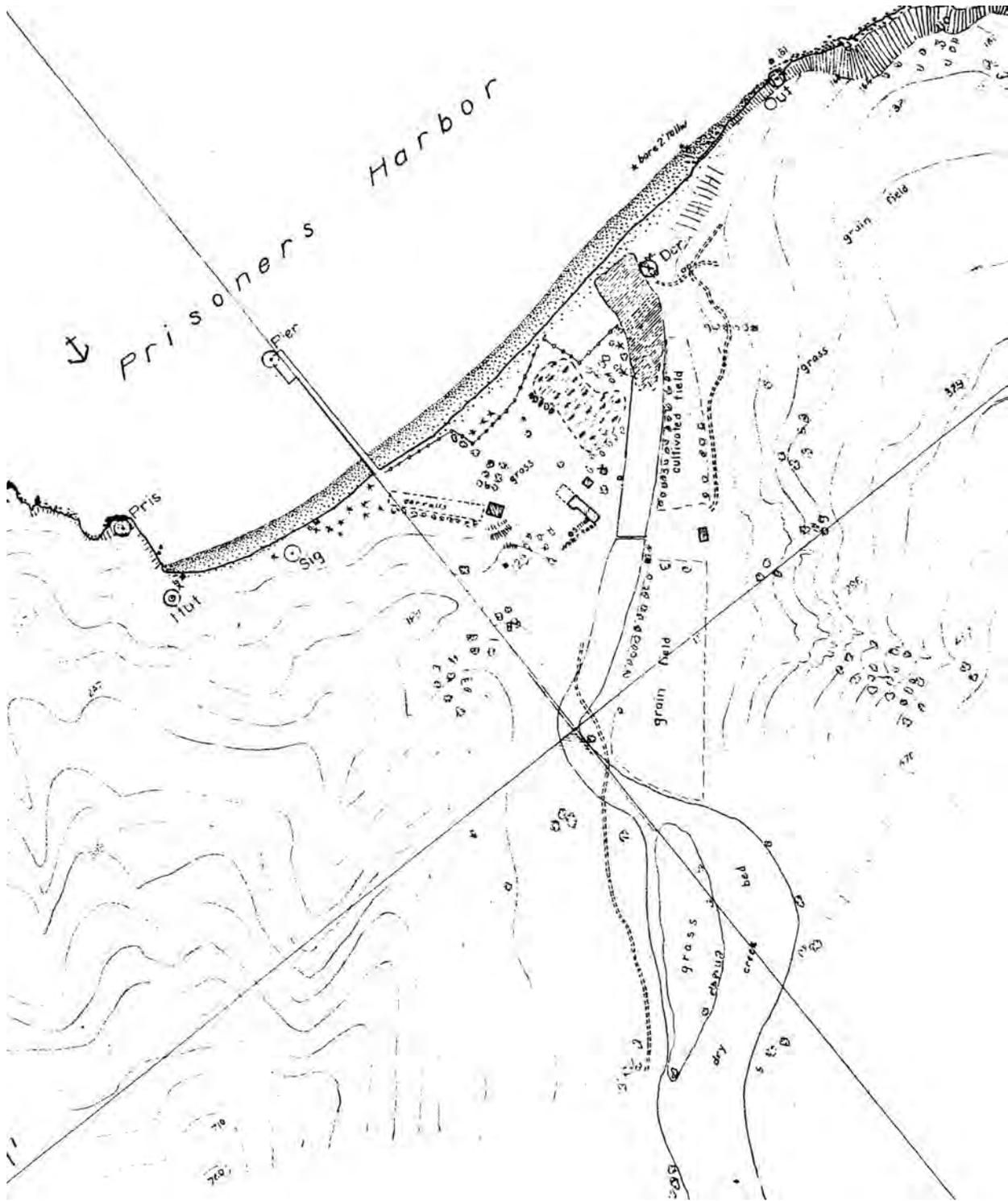
¹²⁰Ibid., November 1 and 8, 1920. Joe Bermudez left an inscription in the form of graffiti in the warehouse.

¹²¹Ibid., September 5 and 20, 1920; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 7.

¹²²Oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

¹²³Symmes, *Report*, p. 50.

¹²⁴Ibid., pp. 50, 57.



Detail of a map produced by the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey in 1934. *National Archives*

fence ran the length of the beach from the pier to the creek, bending here and there. The magazine and lookout house appeared, and between the magazine and the pier a long set of corrals stood. The pier, with a benchmark “Pier” at its end, jutted into the harbor with a dock at its end. An unidentified hut stood at the far west end of the beach (adjacent to it a benchmark named “Hut” was placed).¹²⁵

Justinian Caire’s granddaughter, Vivienne Caire Chiles, recalled the family’s arrival at Prisoners Harbor in the ‘teens, 1920s and 1930s. They disembarked from the schooner directly onto the pier, to be greeted by an employee named Manini. Boaters in smaller vessels used a ladder to climb to the pier. The western part of the cove at Prisoners Harbor was popular as a swimming spot for the family, who had a changing shack on the beach.¹²⁶

Prisoners Harbor acted as the gateway to the extensive developments and commerce at Santa Cruz Island. Its facilities were of the utmost importance to the island’s owners, as the shipping facility, entry point for visitors and warehouse location. Its significance to the island history is considerable.

Out Ranches

The sheer size of Santa Cruz Island required establishment of nine satellite ranch sites spread across the island. At least two of these had existed previous to Justinian Caire’s ownership: the West Ranch, later called Christy Ranch, and the East Ranch at Scorpion Harbor. Also, a house and other structures including a pier existed at Prisoners Harbor. Caire improved all three of these sites, and established others at the far west end, at Pozo Canyon, at Buena Vista and Portezuela on the new road to the west end, in the valley to the east of the Main Ranch towards the south shore, and at Smugglers Cove on the east end. A contemporary history published in 1883 noted that “The island is divided into six departments, each under its own administration, responsible to the Governor, J. B. Joyaux [sic].” Among these would be Christy, Scorpion, Prisoners Harbor, and two others, possibly Portezuela and Sur. Of the nine out ranches in existence by 1890, only two, Christy and Scorpion, continued to be used regularly into the mid-20th century.¹²⁷

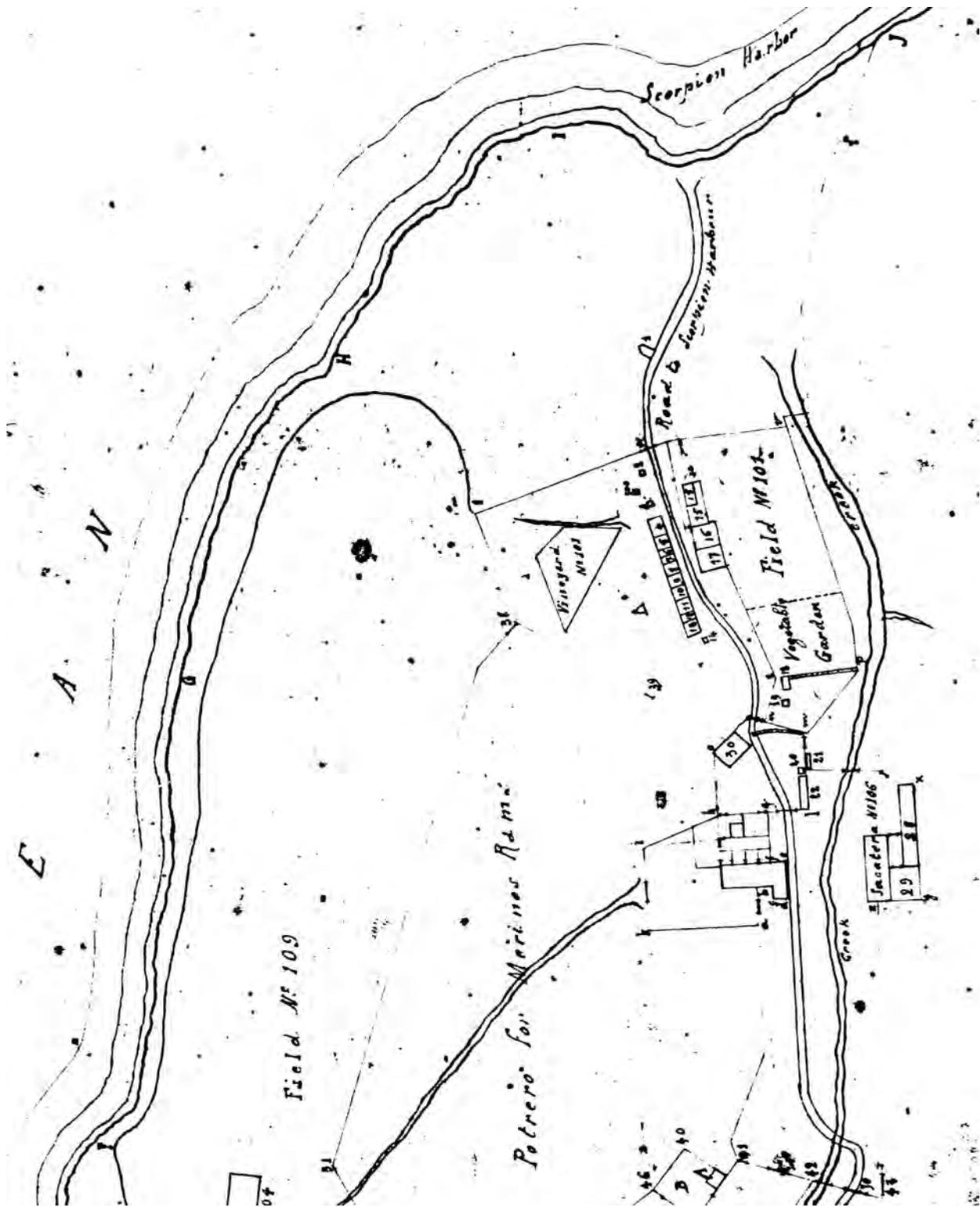
By May 1922 only the out ranches at Christy and Scorpion operated, with a “camp and caretaker” located at Prisoners Harbor. All three locations had telephone connections with the main ranch. Buildings remained at Smugglers, Portezuela and Rancho Nuevo on the west end but were rarely, if ever, used. The Symmes Report of 1922 provided descriptions of the buildings on the island including the out ranches, and made recommendations for repairs and improvements. Overall, Symmes found the island’s buildings “old, but substantially built” and in need of “considerable” repairs. A history and description of the Santa Cruz Island out ranches follows, with greater detail given to those in the geographic area of this study: Scorpion and Smugglers ranches.¹²⁸

¹²⁵“Prisoners Harbor to Twin Harbors,” U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Topographic Survey No. 4908, April 1934, RG 23, NA(CP).

¹²⁶Oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

¹²⁷Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256.

¹²⁸Symmes, *Report*, pp. 17, 49.



Detail of an 1885 Santa Cruz Island Company map of Scorpion Ranch. Courtesy of John Gherini

Scorpion Ranch

Justinian Caire's great-grandson Pier Gherini described with a mariner's eye the physical qualities of the harbor at Scorpion, located at the extreme northeast end of Santa Cruz Island:

Scorpion faces to the Northeast and is in the lee of some rather steep bluffs. It is a deep water harbor, with a rocky beach. As a result of its location, it is sheltered from the prevailing Northwest winds and is exposed only to the Easterly winds. The strong Northeasters which come infrequently, but with great violence and velocity, were the principal concern.¹²⁹

From the days of Dr. Shaw's sheep ranch, Scorpion Harbor had been a settlement representing the fertile east end of the island. The Santa Cruz Island Company made use of the east end and its few buildings, and had a tilled field near Potato Harbor. Stehman Forney of the U. S. Coast Survey had described at Scorpion, in 1875, the "ranch house, corrals, shearing shed, two small fields under cultivation, and a well of brackish water"¹³⁰ Justinian Caire chose to continue use of the East Ranch, a decision reflecting Caire's common sense as Scorpion Harbor provided an anchorage, a valley floor with enough room for development, and surrounding farm and rangelands of reasonable quality. Scorpion Valley drains to the east, and while the valley itself generally has steep sides the terraces and hills above afforded fine locations for campos and potreros. With at least one house and some outbuildings already in place from the Shaw or Joyaux eras and an established trail to the Main Ranch, Caire and his employees set to work to construct a well-organized and picturesque small ranch.

The east end of the island was destined to become the breadbasket of Santa Cruz Island. Caire focused much of the island grain farming operations here while continuing to graze sheep and cattle. Much of the acreage was cleared of rocks and brush to be tilled for crops such as hay, alfalfa and barley. Men spent months hauling stones out of the fields and piling them in stacks at scattered locations.

Over the years the name of the location changed, being noted as Rancho del Este in the records of the Santa Cruz Island Company in the 1870s and early 1880s, and Scorpion Station for a time during the mid-1890s; Scorpion Ranch, a name generally in use since the mid-1880s, was the one that stuck. The origin of the name has not been determined but dates to well before Caire's occupation of the island. One can only speculate that the person applying the name saw a scorpion (or perhaps was stung by one) or felt the valley or landforms reminded that person of the small creature.¹³¹

Between 1880 and 1885 the initial development of Scorpion Ranch occurred. The existing house was retained as were a number of older fence lines in the hills. Construction of a pier was evidently never attempted until the 1930s. An early map, drawn circa 1876-1880 with French text, depicted the original house and two outbuildings with adjacent gardens and a field (*champ*), all fenced. A short distance up the

¹²⁹Pier Gherini, "Island Rancho" in *Noticias*, Vol. XII, Winter 1966, pp. 14-20. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, p. 14.

¹³⁰Annual Report, Santa Cruz Island, November 1, 1874 to June 30, 1875, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP).

¹³¹Payroll Ledger, S.C.I.C., 1893-1901, SCIF. George Kanakoff of the Los Angeles Museum's Channel Islands Biological Survey noted the presence of scorpions on the island in 1941.

valley stood extensive sheep pens, a *trasquila* and two or three other buildings. A larger field occupied part of the upper valley and the map outlines planned improvements of various buildings including a kitchen, barn, pigsty and a slaughterhouse at the beach. This map indicated a lagoon between the beach and the house field and notes a future project of filling the low parts with earth.¹³²

By the end of 1885 the ranch had been developed into a busy and well-equipped colony. A map dated December 1885 detailed the improvements in the valley. A road led from the harbor past a cave used for storing dairy products to a gate through which one entered the residential and shop area of the ranch. The old residence remained with its garden and chicken yards. Across the road had been built a long line of small buildings, or one long building with ten rooms in a row (the accuracy of the draftsman cannot be determined in this case). From east to west, the rooms were: carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, bake oven, tool shed, bakery, granary, provision room, general store, *matanza* and butcher shop. East of these stood a wood shed, a structure that may have been an outhouse, and a cave for potato storage. On the west side of the building row stood a tallow oven or furnace. South of the residence, between it and the creek, a field labeled No. 101 was fenced, and a large vegetable garden with a gardener's store and well on the west side. In the wide area west of the residence and shops area stood the sheep corrals and ranching area. The corrals were divided up into numerous large ("grand corral") and small pens with gates, all carefully laid out for efficient operation during shearing and slaughter. Buildings in the area included a wagon shed, and across the creek a *sacatera* (hay barn) numbered 106 that had been built in 1878, and a stable. Curiously, a *trasquila* is not shown on the map but this must have been an oversight. Another map, undated but from a similar time, denoted a "*trasquila* house" with adjacent segregating corrals. Farther up the valley were the hog pens and sheds, a well, windmill, water tank and a concrete reservoir that fed the residence and a number of troughs located in the valley.¹³³

The Santa Cruz Island Company developed fields in the uplands for both hay crops (*campo*) and sheep grazing (*potrero*). Roads led to these areas, usually following the drainages, and fences surrounded the hay fields to prevent entry by sheep, cattle or pigs. Each field was numbered, for instance, Field No. 109 covered the relatively flat terrace at Cavern Point, and Fields No. 101, 102 and 103 lay in the bottom land of Scorpion Valley. Carpenters constructed hay barns or *sacateras* in many of the fields: *Sacatera* No. 104, built in 1886 was located in Field No. 109, etc. *Potreros* in the immediate vicinity of Scorpion Harbor were the small *Potrero* for Merino Rams above the sheep corrals and the large *Potrero Llano*, which covered much of the land from Scorpion out to San Pedro Point.

In early 1885 the superintendent planted 500 Mataro grape vines in an experimental plot on a steep slope behind the adobe house, but Justinian Caire was reportedly skeptical of the potential for success and discouraged any further plantings there. Workers terraced a steep slope behind the old ranch house into a triangular plot. The foreman reported in his diary that the vines were planted on January 13, 1885, and the men spent at least five days building a fence around the new vineyard.¹³⁴

¹³²"Plan de la petite valle'e du Rancho Est, du Scorpion Harbor—Ile de Santa Cruz" no date (circa 1876-1880), collection of John Gherini.

¹³³"Map No. 4 [undated]" and "Map No. 22/Dec. 85," collection of John Gherini.

¹³⁴L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, December 22, 1973, SBMNH #0900; unidentified document circa 1886 and transcript of "Diary for 1885," courtesy of John Gherini.

The diary also shows numerous other activities during the year 1885. The men built sheep shelters, an “overhead to shade dogs” and a small shelter for pigs, and constructed fences around the pigpen, chicken yard (where “prize chickens” were kept) and sheep-slaughtering area. They built two barns, paved the stalls in the stable, put gravel in the corrals and planted potatoes, corn, beans, and acacia trees. In April three men worked for four days enlarging the “old house” once occupied by Mondran, and they also enlarged one of the storage caves. Ranch workers built a number of roads in 1885, including the first road to Smugglers Ranch which followed the road up Scorpion Valley towards the Main Ranch but split off before the main road began its ascent up the ridge, heading up its own grade towards the southeast for Smugglers Cove. Another new road was built to reach the fields near a new barn located to the northwest, and another that went to the barn itself. Workers also spent time on the routine assignments such as slaughtering lambs, bagging wool and stripping the skin off of dead sheep. Routines of the haying operations included plowing, seeding, and harvesting which involved cutting the hay, gathering it into rows and then shocks, then hauling it in wagons to the sacateras for storage as loose hay. As an example, planting in Holy Cross field (Campo Cruce) required 40 sacks of seed.

Excerpts from the Foreman’s Diary for 1885, translated by Pier Gherini in 1985

Each day the Scorpion Ranch foreman sent six to eight men to Smugglers Ranch to work, leaving an average of nine men at Scorpion. Trips to the Main Ranch and back could be done in a day overland, although in many instances men went to spend a night or two there. The diaries implied that the men walked to their job sites rather than rode. Tasks performed in the first months of 1885 included:

- work on road to mountain
- bring hay from field of the casa
- A. Pietro [a carpenter] and A. Lino make bread
- travel to main ranch and back in one day
- check fences
- take hay, milk and veal to Smugglers
- work on woodpile, cut wood
- install picket posts in vineyard
- work in vegetable garden
- work on sheep fences
- “make posts for the vineyard at the mountain”
- bring hay from the mountain
- B. Bosio smeared with tar the pigs
- put gravel in corral
- work on corral fences

Six days of shearing time between March 23 and 28, 1885 progressed as follows: shearers removed 800 fleeces on the first day while the men rounded up another 200 sheep. The next day 600 head were rounded up and by the third day 1,200 animals had been shorn. The last roundup occurred on the fourth

day and 400 sheep got shorn. The last two days were the most prolific with 1,800 shorn one day and 1,500 the next, as well as tying the wool fleeces and sacking the wool. The men also castrated 1,084 lambs.

Work during April and May:

- continued work on Smugglers Road.
- “Today [Sunday] was a day of rest. The men cleaned out their rooms. At 5 p.m. Mr. Caire arrived.”
- B. Marini takes Caire to Smugglers; work on water troughs.
- three men work on enlarging old house [spent four days at this]
- three men enlarge old cave
- stack wool
- Caire returns to Main Ranch
- cut hay with mower
- “B. Marini piles hay at the mountain with the machine”
- men pile hay by hand in the places the machine cannot reach
- Chinese cook arrives
- shell beans
- work on haystack
- start new road to the fields
- pick beans
- “cover the potatoes in the field by the windmill”
- jobs at the house
- heifer calf born
- all hands to hay “except Chinaman who does the cooking”

June and July:

- work on new road to sacatera
- carpentry
- dig potatoes
- hay work
- Company president and his family arrive
- Supt. L. Blanchard there
- repair floor of shearing shed
- rake Campo del Molino [windmill field]
- work on road
- part of fence at Campo Della Croce
- make fence posts from mountain
- pick up stones in fields
- new fence at campo avenin
- pump water

August through December:

- Signor Federico Caire visits
- netted fence in new field
- pumping water
- begin street to field with sacatera
- spade the vineyard
- Sundays clean house
- check water supply, wells contains 4 feet & 3 1/2 of water

- pick corn
- work at forge
- travel to Santa Barbara
- fix pump at the house
- shoe horses
- enlarge house
- rainy day, men take day off
- work on “cave of the milk”
- fix fence holding horses.
- work on road to main ranch
- “Today there arrived from the main Ranch a man with his maps.”
- fix wall of the house
- fence for eucalyptus & planting
- everyone works on Christmas Day
- seeding

Activities at Scorpion Ranch, 1886-1918

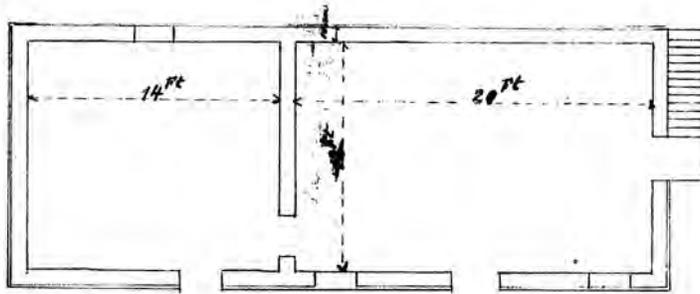
The next year, 1886, crews built another barn, this one at Campo Grande. Work began on March 19, with the roof installed in October. Work of an unknown nature occurred on the roof of the milk cellar, probably the “dairy cave” noted on maps of the era. They also built a wall around the barn built the previous year, and built a second sheep shelter and fences around the new wheat fields and the eucalyptus grove. Planting that year included more potatoes, corn and beans, and the foreman noted a day of fox hunting. Standard tasks such as shearing sheep and transporting the wool, and harvesting and baling hay, took up time of the workers. The diary noted the presence of the “Il signor Presidente” and his wife in October; whether this is the superintendent of the island or Justinian Caire is unknown. The schooner (“la goleta”) served Scorpion Harbor at the time. Many of the hay barns or sacateras were constructed in 1885-1886. A list was kept by company clerk outlining the construction of the east end barns:

<u>No.</u>	<u>location</u>	<u>date</u>
106	near stable	1878
102	campo 107	--
103	campo 107	1886
104	campo 109	1886
105	campo 108	1886
107	campo 107	1886 ¹³⁵

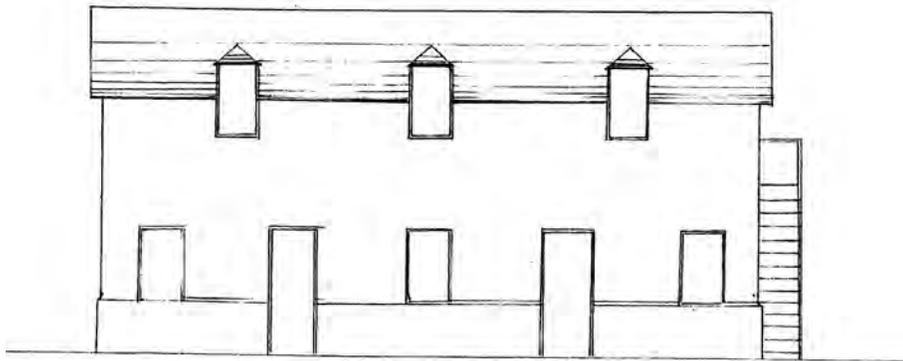
The Santa Cruz Island Company constructed a large and permanent masonry building at Scorpion Ranch to serve and house the employees. While no definite evidence has been found to pinpoint an exact construction date, a plan for the house was dated 1886 and a foreman’s diary entry dated November 11,

¹³⁵Unidentified document circa 1886, courtesy of John Gherini.

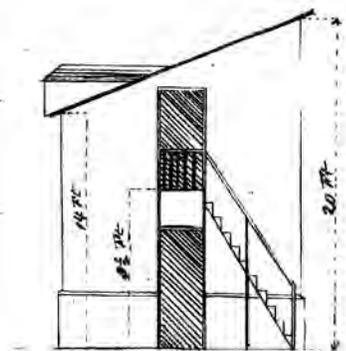
Scorpion Ranch *Cuisine et Salle à manger*
Projetées 1886 — (Construites)



Plan



Facade Sud



Facade Est

Two drawings, dated 1886, show the original roof and floor plan for the masonry building at Scorpion Ranch. Note the absence of the bakery, and the dormers that were later removed while the roof pitch was changed. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

1887 noted “work on building attic in new house,” leading one to determine the construction date as late 1886 or early 1887 (the structure did not appear on a detailed map of the buildings at Scorpion dated December 1885). The structure was similar to those two-story masonry buildings constructed at the Main Ranch and Christy Ranch. First plans showed only two rooms downstairs, a kitchen and dining room, but a bakery was added on the west side with its own entry door, causing a loss in symmetry of the façade as originally planned. As built, the Scorpion building had three rooms downstairs and two upstairs, the latter reached by a steep exterior stairway located on the east end of the house. Its thick walls were constructed of a combination of low fire brick, local stone and lime mortar. It had a shed roof, which was raised at the south elevation in late 1887 to enlarge the upstairs rooms and decrease the slope of the roof; the lifting of the roof in this manner required framing and shingling a wedge of wall space creating a curious look to the building. This vertical addition included the upper parts of the three windows facing the creek, which were originally dormers protruding from the steeper pitched roof.¹³⁶

The prominent road to Smugglers Ranch now in existence was the second developed road to that location. The first, built in 1885, ascended the steep hills west of the ranch complex, while the new one left the valley at the horse stables and corrals. A map dated August 1886 showed the later route sketched in as a dotted line, connecting with the established road in the Potrero Llano above Scorpion Valley. The new road was in place by 1892. Its construction required a great deal of rock cutting and dry stone masonry in its ascent from the Scorpion valley floor to the mesa lands to the south. High rock retaining walls, necessary due to the steepness of the terrain, were visible from the ranch and by approaching boats.¹³⁷

Handwritten diaries have survived covering many years of the operations at Scorpion Ranch. The following lists provide additional details of activities at the east end between 1887 and 1900:

1887:

- widen road to field 107 (Campo Maximo)
- stone work on barn in field 110 and barn 108
- build dry wall in Marina grazing field
- hoe and till eucalyptus
- plant pumpkins
- corn in field 101
- cut alfalfa
- tear out mustard
- pick beans

1888:

- raise roofs of barns 103, 104, 106
- telephone work
- weed eucalyptus
- till vineyards
- hoe potatoes
- plant eucalyptus and corn
- cut mustard
- pick beans in field 104
- fire in Llano grazing field [June 10]

¹³⁶“Scorpion Ranch Cuisine et Salle a’ manger, Projetées 1886—(Construites—), collection of Mary B. Brock.

¹³⁷“Map No. 63” dated August 1886 and “Map No. 92,” Scorpion Ranch, Febbys 1892, courtesy of John Gherini.

1889:

- stones to barn 108 and 106
- reinforce barns 102 and 103 and add stonework
- begin build wall at stream foundation laid
- fence around alfalfa field
- stones broken down to build well at the stable
- telephone work
- plant eucalyptus
- clear part of field 107 to plant potatoes
- plant vineyards along garden fence
- plant potatoes, beans, corn
- cut alfalfa
- pick prickly pears
- hoe potatoes
- kill three pigs to make salami
- collect stones at beach to bring to Main Ranch

The monthly report for September 1889 showed 14 men working at Scorpion Ranch, as compared to ten at Smugglers, eight at West Ranch (Christy), eight at Portezuela and 70 at the Main Ranch. East end foreman A. Perini supervised the following labors at Scorpion that month:

- 118 days general work
- 33 days fences
- 11 days shearing
- 4 days haying
- 17 1/2 days construction and improvements
- 5 days planting and cleaning [vegetables]
- 28 days filling ground preparatory to building
- 12 days water works
- 26 days clearing land
- 3 days roads
- 1 day garden
- 4 days planting eucalyptus etc.

Men spent a great deal of time clearing land in late 1889 at Scorpion, no doubt preparing hay and alfalfa fields. The large number of September days spent filling ground would indicate that the bottom lands in Scorpion Valley required filling and leveling before certain buildings could be constructed or fields established.¹³⁸

May of 1890 saw 14 men at Scorpion with most labor expended in general work and haying. The men cleared land and planted crops but also spent 45 man-days at rest. A small number of days were spent in construction or roadwork. In August 1891 men spent most of their days constructing dry walls in the creek and drainages (119 days) and 59 days on the water works. The long section of wall in Scorpion Valley was apparently constructed during this summer of 1891.¹³⁹

The diaries continue:

¹³⁸Payroll Book 2, September 1889-April 1893, September and December 1889, SCIF.

¹³⁹Ibid., May 1890 and August 1891.

1890:

- build wall
- remove cactus
- prop up eucalyptus fallen in wind
- plant eucalyptus, corn and potatoes
- burn cactus
- bring butter and cheese to Main Ranch
- Mr. and Mrs. Caire visit for two days
- pack wool

1892:

- much rock wall building, some in January, intensive work in June, July through November, with eight to thirteen men at work on any given day, “working at the rock,” hauling it to the site, and building the wall after clearing out the stream
- cut prickly pears
- plant potatoes, corn, beans
- tear out mustard
- J. J. and Miss Caire visit

A map dated February 1892 depicted the improvements in the valley by that point in time. The creek had been channelized efficiently all the way to the beach, leaving a buffer zone at the location of the seasonal lagoon, and the new road to Smugglers was in place. The mapmaker labeled the new two-story adobe building as “Forno, cucina, salle a manger & dormitorio” (bakery, kitchen, dining room & dormitory) and the older house a residence. The row of connected rooms off the west end of the adobe was labeled in this instance as warehouses, butcher shop and dormitories. A forge and water closet stood at the foot of the barranca east of the adobe, and the dairy cave towards the beach was depicted. *Trasquila* and corrals, “*scuderia*” (stable) and pump and windmill stood west of the residences, and the upper well appears. An “observatory” had been placed on the hill above and to the east of the *trasquila* and corrals. The map is the last of the extensive series of surveys executed by the Santa Cruz Island Company and probably depicts Scorpion Ranch at its point of highest development during the Caire era.¹⁴⁰

In May of 1893 the Santa Cruz Island Company employed 46 men at the Main Ranch, 10 at Christy, 9 at Scorpion and five at Smugglers. A breakdown of work performed at Scorpion Ranch that month under foreman S. Bosco:

- 42 days planting, cleaning [vegetables] etc.
- 73 1/2 days haying
- 5 days horse breaking
- 54 [general work]

¹⁴⁰Map No. 92, Scorpion Ranch, Febbys 1892, courtesy of John Gherini.

10 days clearing land for cultivation
 12 days roads and highways
 1 day gardening¹⁴¹

Total work performed at Scorpion that month amounted to 236.5 hours for which \$157.58 was paid for labor. In the following months the crews also worked on fences (16 days in August), dry walls (63 days in August), planting eucalyptus and other trees, construction and improvements, plowing, vineyards, and construction of phone lines. A. Perini was the foreman at Scorpion during later 1893 and 1894. Staffing jumped at Scorpion in April of 1894 as shearing occurred. During this period it appeared from the records in the company ledgers that Scorpion was the most active of the out ranches, with Christy almost as busy at times but left unstaffed from October 1893 through February 1894, and Smugglers as a smaller, seasonal operation.¹⁴²

Between December 9 and 18, 1895, one Fred Lux visited Scorpion Ranch and produced a handwritten report to the owners. The report is quoted in full:

On the descend [sic] nearing Scorpion I find a good deal of dry wood, which with a small rigged sleigh could easily be hauled to the house. I also observe that the gum tree groves are badly choked with limbs that should be cut, it would not only improve the tree but would make fire wood for a long period. In riding through the plowed field it looked as if the seeding was well done. The men in the field were leveling ravines to make it passable for horses. Much of this work, done by the men with pick and shovel, ought to be done with the plow and scraper. Examined the fence around Campo Granda [sic] which seemed in fairly good condition, but will soon require to be strengthened, as the rust has in part destroyed the iron bars.

At the Tresquila [sic], at Scorpion I find sixteen sacks of wool, also a lot of pelts that should be sent to La Playa. I suggest that the haypress which is out in the yard, be placed under cover (this has since been done). I examined the ground, at south east cor[ner] of the Beach and find that at no time of the year, does the water from the ocean rise that high making it perfectly safe for ware-house should one be needed.

The water conveniences are ample, without increasing the pumping facilities at extra expense. It may at times require a little pumping, but the cook, and the man that does the milking (Passamonti) ought when required perform that work.

The plowing is progressing favorably and the repairs done by the blacksmith answered a good purpose.

Dec. 10th Took the trail along the ocean from Scorpion to Smuggler. The sheep on the potrero look better than the feed would indicate. The horses seem to be doing very well It is a pity that water cannot be obtained in some of these fields. I looked at a place where it may be possible to find water at a short depth—it would be worth the trying at least.

Two of the Sacrataries [sic] at Smuggler are full and one, one fourth full. Every thing appeared in about the same condition as last year, excepting that the barn has been braced on the inside with heavy poles, which makes it firm against the wind.

The same suggestion was made here to Perrini [sic] to keep the cart and tools out of the sun and rain as was made to him about the wagons at Scorpion.

The wagons at Scorpion need painting to keep them in repair. A shed could be constructed out of the lumber from the blown down Sacrataries [sic] for the shelter of the wagons near the creek in the yard north of the tresquila [sic]. In addition to sharpening the plow points the blacksmith pointed picks and crowbars, oar locks for the small boat and an

¹⁴¹Payroll Ledger, S.C.I.C., 1893-1901, May 1893, SCIF.

¹⁴²Ibid., August 1893 through February 1894.

oval hinge for the bow of the launch to hold the rope in place when going to and from the Schooner.

Plowing the field steadily, outside of the interruption, when Perrini [sic] thought he sighted the Schooner, which was making direct for Scorpion harbor. Not to delay the Captain when he arrived a load of hay was brought to the beach but to our great disgust it did not prove to be her.

Dec. 12 Plowing and work in the field continued. The blacksmith today was employed shoeing horses and sharpening drills and plow points.

[Dec.] 13 Went to Smuggler with the blacksmith to get the little coal that was there to be able to finish the odd jobs that were required to be done in addition to the constant attention to keep plow points in repair.

[Dec.] 15th 17th & 18th Hauled hay to barn and manure in field, shelled corn, repaired stable and cleaned yards. On the afternoon of the 18th returned to Main Ranch.¹⁴³

Of interest in the narrative is the reference to leveling the gullies (presumably at Campo Grande), spreading manure in the fields and the use of coal by the blacksmith. The report illustrated the importance of the blacksmith in the island operations.

The Santa Cruz Island Company foreman diaries continue:

1898:

—January plant barley in fields 21, 22, 26

—prune & hoe olive trees

—plant & hoe corn

—prune, plow & hoe vineyards

—two bags walnuts shipped, along with 10 pigs, 109 bales of wool and two gallons of wine

—“steamboat” left Smugglers with 109 bales hay, 14 walnut plants for Main Ranch

—“I surprised some individuals shooting at the sheep in the Llano field. As soon as I arrived on the site, they fled quickly and I was unable to obtain any further information.”

[June 24]

—Goleta brings Spaniards in April, plus Caire and visitors

—load bricks onto Goleta

—“steamboat” brought 2 bags of flour five pounds each, a little coffee, a case of pasta and a bag of salt; in December it brought flour, redwood telephone poles, ten 1x12 boards of redwood, four poles for doors, six locks for doors, 1 sack of potatoes, 1 package of coffee, one bag of rice

1900:

—100 bales of hay to Main Ranch in January

—plant walnut trees

—hoe & plow vineyards, corn

—receive 400 fencepost

—60 bulls loaded onto boat for distribution onto island

—the butcher Mr. Sherman takes nine oxen

—schooner leaves for La Playa with 70 sacks of flour

¹⁴³“Dec 9th/95 Report of observation, of Fred Lux during stay at Scorpion dating from the 9th of Dec to 18th” courtesy of John Gherini.

Ledgers showed a program of tree planting early in the century. In February of 1904 workers planted 30 cypress trees at Scorpion, and the following year planted pines, eucalyptus, cypress and pepper trees at Potrero Llano. In 1908 the workers planted 100 gum trees, 200 pines and 80 cypress in Potrero Llano; some of the pines were planted in Campo Toros.¹⁴⁴

Lobster fishermen Ira Eaton and Eugenio “Jenny” Larco operated as partners at Scorpion Harbor in the winter of 1909-1910. Mrs. Eaton and their daughter Vera accompanied the men. They brought their provisions, fishing gear, building materials and 50 chickens. Mrs. Eaton described entering the bay to see her future home site: “to the right was a space of about a hundred feet long and twenty-five feet wide. This was to be our camping place.” They erected a canvas tent with a wood floor and redwood plank walls, equipped with their wood stove. Before building camp, Mrs. Eaton made a meal on the beach consisting of “fish fried in olive oil, stewed tomatoes, French bread, and pure cold water from the spring at Dicks harbor.”

Mrs. Eaton described the living quarters for the season:

A red cotton ingrain rug from a second-hand store gave the white tent a cheerful look. Under the rug I spread quite a few newspapers to help keep out the cold. With the tarpaulin over it and a coal oil stove inside, the tent would be warm enough in the winter. What better home could anyone want? We had no kitchen, but just cooked and ate in the open. Jenny’s tent was set up about ten feet away from ours, for the camping space was small. The chickens were turned loose by the hill across the creek.¹⁴⁵

Mrs. Eaton cooked and cleaned, and tended the chickens. The men brought water from a pump in the fig orchard at the ranch, or from a horse trough for washing. Mrs. Eaton was disgusted to find the place overrun with mice. Early in their stay the cook at Scorpion Ranch named Bourago brought fresh milk and mutton; the men had given the ranch hands crawfish. Mrs. Eaton baked bread. Eaton and Larco built a kitchen cabin out of driftwood from Chinese Harbor. It was eight by ten feet, no windows or floor, and a door made of a gunnysack stretched across a frame. Stacked apple boxes acted as shelves. The men helped at the ranch repairing various items in exchange for mutton.

Mrs. Eaton wrote of the method of transporting goods to and from Scorpion Harbor, a location without a pier for most of its useful period as a ranch:

About once a month the company’s schooner, the *Santa Cruz*, came down from Prisoners Harbor to bring a new supply of wine and groceries to the Scorpion Ranch. There would be five or six barrels of wine, many boxes of macaroni, sacks of flour, and grain for the horses. The freight was unloaded onto a pontoon, and a heavy rope run from the schooner to a deadman on the beach. Then the captain and two of the crew . . . would get onto the pontoon and bring it ashore, guiding themselves by the rope, while the straw boss, with a team of husky, light grey horses, dragged the pontoon up to the water’s edge. The ranch hands would unload the supplies into a low sled with iron runners underneath. It had no

¹⁴⁴[unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 104, 295.

¹⁴⁵Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 135-137.



A visitor poses with bread baked at Scorpion Ranch in 1905. This is the only known photograph showing the bread baked on the island. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

side boards or seat; the driver just stood on the sled and held the reins. With much hollering of “Whoa, Bill” and “Get up, Bill” the horses were started on their way up to the ranch where the sled was unloaded.

Eaton had the schooner captain to lunch regularly trading news and eating crawfish cioppino.¹⁴⁶

Mrs. Eaton and Vera often found shade in the fig orchard at the ranch. It was a hot, dry year and the two found numerous dead sheep in the hills. They adopted two orphaned lambs (naming them Rue and Rube). They got two pigs from the ranch and built a pigpen. The ranch had a pigpen with four wild hogs; Bourago hired Eaton to shoot ravens, which ate the pigs’ corn feed. The ranch cooks used a small hillside cave to store wine and cheese, and occasionally fresh meat.¹⁴⁷

Mrs. Eaton recalled the bread baked by Bourago in the Scorpion bread oven: “The loaf was a foot long, and not round like American loaves but flat. It had a wonderful thick crust all around it . . . I never tasted any bread so good. The cook had to bake quite a lot of bread every week to feed the seven men at the ranch.” She left a detailed account of bread baking at Scorpion Ranch in 1909:

A small room at the end was a bakery; it was used only to store the flour and to bake the bread and to keep it after baking. In this room [were] two deep bread troughs made of sugar pine, as white as milk. The sponge had been mixed into the dough the night before. The cook cut a chunk off this mass of dough, and started kneading it, explaining as he worked that this was the way they made bread over in Brittany, France, where he was born. Next he molded the loaf and placed it on a clean, coarse sack, and then drew up part of the sack to form a sort of support, instead of putting the bread into bake pans to raise. He molded twenty-five loaves in this way. He said he always saved a piece of dough and threw it back into the flour trough to start his yeast for the next baking. At five o’clock in the morning he had started the fire in the large oven; its four sides were made of white brick and it had a large iron door. I had never seen an oven like that before. He filled the top oven with wood, and what large pieces he put in! Closing the door, he said he would ring the dinner bell to let me know when he was ready to bake.

I went back to camp, and an hour later heard the bell. In a few minutes I was again at the bakery door waiting. Bourago opened the oven door and shoveled all the coals out into a tub on the floor. Then he set one loaf on the end of a four-foot spatula and raised it into the piping-hot oven. When his twenty-five loaves were all in the oven he said he would leave them there one hour or longer, until they were done. In another hour he rang the bell again, and I went to watch the last performance. By the time all the loaves were taken out, put on the bread board, and covered with more clean sacks, it was eleven o’clock.

Mrs. Eaton provided a short biography of Bourago: he had come to work at the Main Ranch as a harness maker and shoemaker, even mending the Caire family’s shoes. He replaced the baker at the Main Ranch, then moved to Scorpion when the cook died around 1903. Besides cooking and baking bread, Bourago made cheese and butter.

The “straw bosses” (foremen) from the out ranches reported to the Main Ranch every two weeks to tell of progress at the ranches and receive orders for future work. Mrs. Eaton once saw the Scorpion

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 140-141, 144.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 143-146, 152.

foreman take surplus butter to the Main Ranch on horseback in his saddlebag, the “wonderful roll of yellow butter” wrapped in fine salt sacks and newspaper.¹⁴⁸

The Santa Cruz Island Company constructed a frame house at Scorpion Ranch in 1914 or thereabouts, on the site of the original house dating to the 1850s (it was at least 40 years old at the time and may have been 60 years old if it indeed was Mondran’s house noted by surveyor Greenwell in 1856). Plans dated October 10, 1904, showed a two-story masonry house with gable roof, a hipped-roof porch on the south side and a wood-framed shed addition on the north side. Like the 1886 masonry building, a steep stairway provided access to the upper story and the walls were of thick masonry construction with splayed window and door openings. The 1904 plan called for reducing the size of the building by eliminating the second story; it is not known whether this work was accomplished. Archeological evidence suggests that a flood damaged or destroyed the old house which had been built on a stone foundation with concrete-floored additions. The new house was built on the exact location as the old, the builders placing the concrete piers for the foundation in line with the older foundation. The attractive but simple board-and-batten house had six bedrooms and a small common room, with an entry room on the north and a covered porch on the south facing the creek and hills. Ranch records record the house as being built in 1914, although some sources point to a 1918 date. The map made under Superintendent Swain’s supervision in March of 1918 appears to show the new house in place, distinguished by the south-facing porch. A journal entry of August 2, 1918 notes that carpenters were being sent to Scorpion for a project, expressing the need to balance carpentry work with shingling on the island as shinglers had been brought over and were working at Main Ranch on the superintendent’s house and the new men’s bunkhouse at the time; the writer said that a Mr. Avery expects to be through at Scorpion soon, the nature of his task unknown. The 1918 map called the building a residence; four years later an agricultural appraiser called it the owner’s residence; it has been known as the bunkhouse for many years.¹⁴⁹

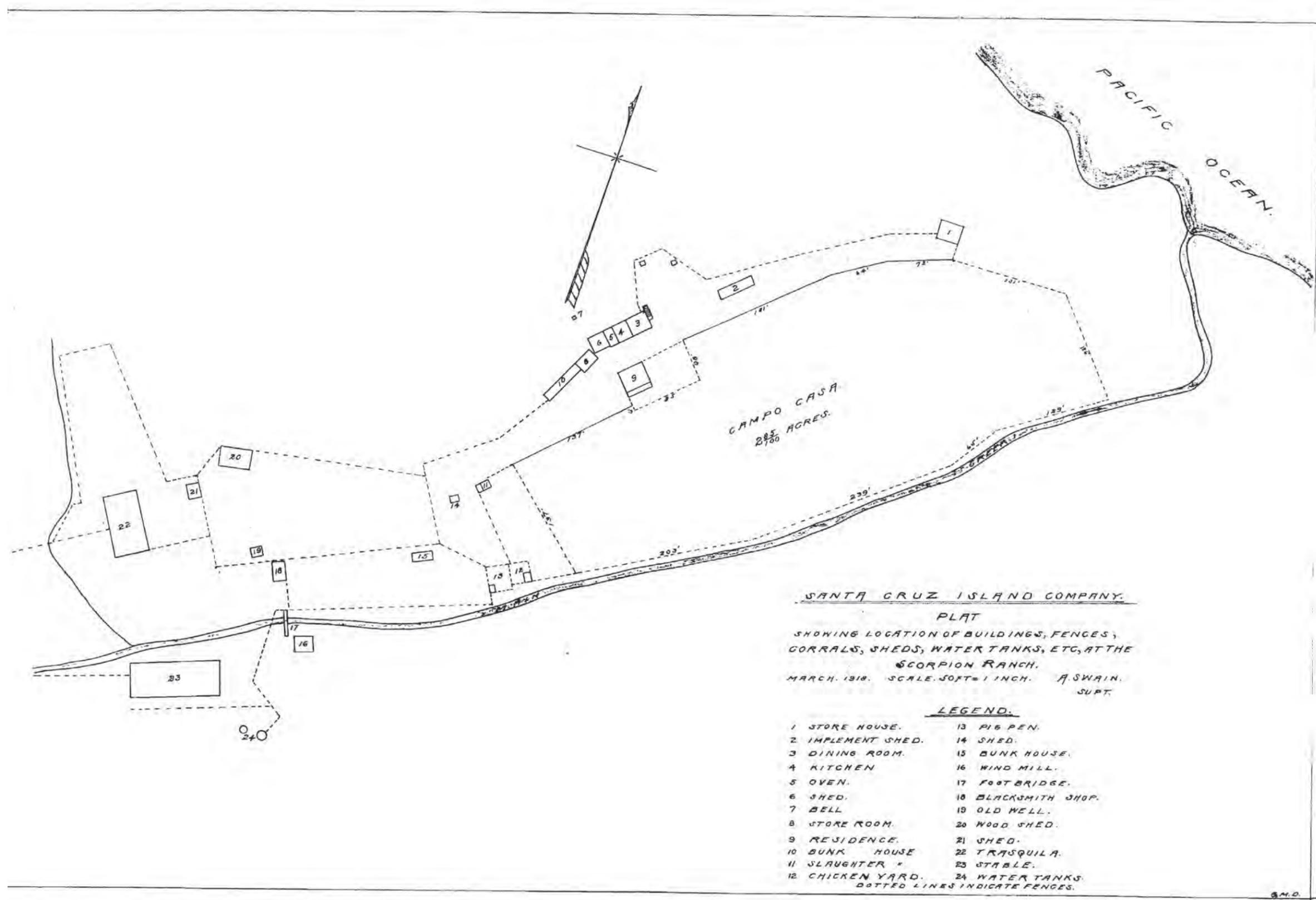
Maps Depict Structures in 1918

The Santa Cruz Island Company focused some effort on Scorpion Ranch in the late ‘teens and early 1920s. Superintendent Swain had a series of survey maps produced of the ranch and its fields, which were used to plan and document improvements.

Santa Cruz Island Company commissioned a survey of ranch buildings and fields while Alanson Swain acted as superintendent. In March of 1918 surveyor George M. Derrickson produced plats of the east end facilities. At Scorpion Ranch the plat accurately depicted all buildings, fences and water systems in place at that time. The only structures south of the creek were the large old stable, two water tanks at the toe of the hill adjacent to the Smugglers road, and a windmill. A bridge crossed the creek to the shearing pens, dominated by the large *trasquila*; a smaller shed stood in the sheep corral near the former building. A medium-sized wood shed stood at the foot of a slope west of the corral, and south of it was the “old well”

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 146-148.

¹⁴⁹“Scorpion Ranch Residence” and accompanying sheets, October 10, 1904, collection of Mary B. Brock; “Plat Showing Location of Buildings, Fences, Corrals, Water Tanks, Etc., at the Scorpion Ranch,” March 1918, courtesy of John Gherini.



Swain's map of Scorpion Ranch in 1918. Courtesy of John Gherini.

and a blacksmith shop, located near the bridge. A bunkhouse stood about 150 feet east of the blacksmith shop, and beyond that towards the cove stood the pig and chicken enclosures, each with sheds, an unidentified shed and a small slaughterhouse. The Campo Casa or house field stretched from this vicinity almost to the beach. The residential area consisted of seven buildings or structures. The old two-story masonry building, denoted on the plat as a dining room-kitchen-oven, had an attached shed on its west side. A storeroom stood at an angle west of the shed, and an elongated bunkhouse stretched off the storeroom farther west (once a row of rooms including a butcher shop and store rooms). Across the lane stood the relatively new frame residence. Behind this complex on the hill to the north stood the bell used to call workers to dinner. Tucked in the drainage east of the adobe stood two small unidentified structures, no doubt the outhouse and perhaps another or the storage cave. An implement shed, possibly the old forge building seen on earlier maps, was located 100 feet east of the adobe, and a store house measuring about 25 feet square stood near the beach. The plat did not show the dairy cave.¹⁵⁰

Four other plats were made at the same time of fields adjacent to Scorpion Ranch. The plat of Campo Maximo (later called Campo Grande) showed a “new barn” and noted that of almost 96 acres, 77.28 acres were tillable and 18.55 barren; none of the three other barns (old nos. 102, 103 and 107) were drawn, indicating that they must have been removed by that time. The plat of Campo Cruce noted its 26 acres with no sign of the old sacatera although it existed at the time; Campo Alfalfa measured 23.65 acres including a 1.36-acre eucalyptus grove. Campo Toros, with an old barn drawn, consisted of 66.58 acres and did not include the “bad lands” at Cavern Point, location of the Coast Survey signal. In June of 1919 a plat was produced of the 134.19-acre Potrero Vallata east of the ranch complex. It showed the “wagon road” to Campo Maximo, the barn in Alfalfa Field (upper Scorpion Valley) and the concrete water reservoir, well and hot air pump upstream from the ranch complex.¹⁵¹

The Santa Cruz Island Company constructed a new barn with stone foundation in the Campo Grande shortly before 1918. Located central to the field on a flat mesa, the barn measured 44 feet by 66 feet and was used to store hay from that field. During haying in October of 1920 the superintendent reported that “the new barn in the Campo Grande is full to the ridge pole . . .” and continued, reporting on the other barns at the ranch,

the barn in the alfalfa field is half full of baled hay and the rest partly filled with alfalfa, the barn at the ranch is nearly filled and will be this week, and there will be enough in the Campo La Cruce to fill the old barn there. This will leave half of the Campo Grande which we will make into a stack on the site of the old sacatera which was torn or blown down in that field.¹⁵²

In the same communication the superintendent asked for permission to obtain materials to repair the old barn at Campo Cruce, an activity that would require about 1,500 shakes, 400 lineal feet of 1 x 6 and 30 fence posts. By the following week, all hay had been gathered and stored in the barns and the hay cutters

¹⁵⁰“Plat,” March 1918, courtesy of John Gherini.

¹⁵¹Plats of: Campo Maximo, Campo Cruce, Campo Alfalfa, Campo Toros, all dated March 1918, and Potrero Vallata, June 1919, courtesy of John Gherini.

¹⁵²Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book #3, October 12, 1920, SCIF.

left, “leaving only Batlemeni, Zucconi and Borro at the ranch.” A carpenter, Joe Bermudez, worked at the ranch repairing the old barn at Campo Los Toros and constructing a roof on the concrete reservoir.¹⁵³

In June of 1919 the hired surveyor drew up plans for roofing the old open reservoir at Scorpion. The reservoir’s location at the foot of a steep side hill made it vulnerable to falling rocks and debris. Superintendent McElrath proposed to commence the roofing project in a letter to his superiors in March of 1920, and noted that the concrete needed repairs as well. He estimated the need for 328 feet of 1 x 6 lumber for the roof and 300 shakes. The Scorpion Ranch foreman ordered a load of lumber and shakes to be delivered on the *Santa Cruz* in May of 1920. The lumber list read as follows:

6	2 x 4x 1	end studs
16	2 x 4 x 16	front studs
20	2 x 4 x 14	rafter studs
6	2 x 4 x 14	plates
24	2 x 12 x 16	side boards
41	1 x 6 x 16	roof
6	2 x 4 x 12	fish plates
300		shakes for roof

Work apparently began shortly after but stalled through September. Joe Bermudez worked on the reservoir roof in October and apparently finished the job in November of 1920 when he returned to Prisoners Harbor to repair the pier.¹⁵⁴

Scorpion Ranch, 1920-1926

The records of the Santa Cruz Island Company provided a detailed account of activities at Scorpion Ranch in 1920. The following paragraphs break down the activities by type:

Sheep:

- “The Merino stock was turned loose at Scorpion and has completely mixed with the wild sheep until all of the sheep at that end of the island carry a large percentage of Merino blood. There are probably no pure bred.” (December 1919)
- water being pumped for cattle and sheep (May 1920)
- “. . . have shorn approximately 2,000 sheep. There were practically no lambs and few wethers. The rest of the sheep are in good condition.” (July)
- “most lambs dropped in December and January died, not as many sheep as usual”
- wool from Scorpion Ranch stored at Prisoners Harbor (September)
- dry weather cause sheep to come down for water (October)

Cattle:

- 12 head of range cattle on east end (January)
- good pasturage in the canyons, foreman will put “about fifty old cows over there” for fattening “so that we can get rid of them” (April)

¹⁵³Ibid., and October 19 and November 1, 1920.

¹⁵⁴[Plans for] Scorpion Reservoir, June 1919, courtesy of John Gherini; Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book #3, entries for March 1, April 26, September 13, November 11 etc., 1920, SCIF.

- two steers, 177 old cows, three weaned calves (June)
- water being pumped for cattle & sheep (June)
- superintendent “parted about 90 fat cows which the men will bring to the Sur Ranch tomorrow for immediate sale and about 100 we took to Aguaje . . . It is of utmost importance that we have a good reliable water supply out there as with this years crop of stubble etc. we should send out fat cattle all fall at the rate of about a load a week or as long as we have cattle which we desire to sell” (July)
- pumping water for the cattle, brought from El Aguaje (September)
- Superintendent McElrath went to Scorpion to mark cattle with a V in the left ear: to be sold in spring (October)
- moved 100 head to Scorpion, leaving no cattle but bulls on the west end, “as I want to let that region rest this year and re-seed itself” (November)

Hay and grains:

- plowing hay fields, keeping track of plantings (December 1919)
- hay seeded at Campo la Cruce and Campo Maximo (January 1920)
- 178.45 acres of barley seeded(121 sacks) and oats (4 sacks) (February)
- ”hay very good and they will cut a full crop. The Campo Maximo is very badly infested with mustard” (April)
- “At Scorpion it is very difficult to haul loose hay down from the hills;” the writer suggested baling the hay (April)
- schooner brought a hay press to Scorpion, returned to Prisoners Harbor with wool (September)
- all hands at Scorpion for haying; about 1,300 bales at Campo la Cruce; men will rig a Jackson fork to put loose hay in the barn at Campo Maximo (September)
- “Haying is still in progress at Scorpion. The baled hay from Campo la Cruce is being hauled down to the barn, the sacatera in the Campo Grande is full to the top, the men are rigging the Jackson fork to build stacks in the open and according to the foreman only about one half of the hay has so far been taken care of.” (October)
- all hay stacked, only Batlemeni, Zucconi and Borro left at ranch (October)

Superintendent McElrath laid out his plans for the 1921 hay crop: Campo Maximo 16 sacks, disked; Campo Cruce 6 sacks, disked; Campo Toros 65 sacks, plowed and sown. In what was probably a labor-saving move, ranch managers ordered that the fields at Scorpion be left to volunteer, or grow wild for a season without disking or planting. The superintendent responded that “the Campo Los Toros was only disked last year and the yield was much lighter than in the other fields. Would it not be better to let Batlemeni plow and plant this field allowing the others to volunteer?” McElrath’s suggestion was taken, showing that a dialogue between the management in San Francisco and the island superintendent could be open and productive.¹⁵⁵

Fences and Pastures:

- men working on fences (December 1919)
- fence at Potrero Llano being repaired, taking more than eight weeks of labor (January 1920)
- barbed wire being ordered (November)

Water:

- water being pumped for cattle & sheep (May)

¹⁵⁵S.C.I.C. Letter Book, entries of September 20 and November 1, 1920, SCIF.

—“The hot air engine over there will not pump any longer” so the foreman removed the livestock to the Sur and Aguaje (July)

—air pump not working, men have to hand pump a couple of hours a day for sheep and horses (July)

Labor:

—the foreman threatened to quit, no one to take his place (April)

The island ranch experienced labor difficulties that year, as six men quit and more threatened to. “This leaves us very short handed, wrote the superintendent. “We must get hold of more men if we are to get the vineyard hoed this year.”

Agricultural inspector Leslie Symmes visited Scorpion Ranch in 1922 and produced a short report on its condition at that time. The improvements at Scorpion in 1922 consisted of two houses, a horse barn, two hay barns, shearing sheds and corrals, two wells and a cement reservoir. Of the two-story stone and adobe house, Symmes reported that laborers occupied the upper story, and intimated that the bake oven was in operation (McElrath had written that the bakeries at the out ranches operated as of 1920). The owners and superintendent used the frame house.

Of the outbuildings, Symmes found the old horse barn to be in poor condition but the two shingle-roofed 65-foot by 45-foot hay barns to be in good condition. Presumably he spoke of the barns away from the ranch complex, probably the one up the valley in Alfalfa Field and the newer one at Campo Maximo. The shearing sheds and corrals he found to be “old but in fair condition.”

Symmes noted the roads leading to the fields in the hills in either direction of the ranch complex, and observed the fencing systems in the pastures and fields and the rock retaining wall in the creek. The old concrete reservoir provided water to the kitchen, corrals and troughs by a pipeline. The telephone line was operational at this time, although the extension to Smugglers had been abandoned.¹⁵⁶

When the island was partitioned amongst the Caire family members, Santa Barbara surveyor Frank Flournoy produced a map of the island in 1925 that showed cultivated fields. The map indicated ten fields: five at Scorpion (Campo Maximo, a portion of Potrero Vallata, Campos Cruce and Toros), one at Smugglers (the olive groves) and four in flat areas of the Potrero Llano. This was the last map made while the east end was under the management of Arthur and Frederic Caire; the next year Ambrose Gherini and his wife, the granddaughter of Justinian Caire, would assume operation of Scorpion Ranch.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶Symmes, *Report*, pp. 55-58; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁵⁷Flournoy map, #Z-2 2430B SBHS.

Smugglers Ranch

The establishment of a small out ranch at Smugglers Cove might well have been the work of Justinian Caire. The cove, with its small but protected valley backed by steep and rugged hills, is located on the east end of the island south of San Pedro Point, a distance of about three miles south-southeast of Scorpion Ranch. Unlike Scorpion, no building or activity had been recorded there prior to the mid-1880s. As work commenced on projects on the east end around 1884 an average of five men were sent daily to work at new enterprises at Smugglers from the home base at the East Ranch, later called Scorpion Ranch. For the first years, there may have been no lodging or buildings at the ranch at all. Early work ledgers note that men were daily sent to Smugglers from the East Ranch and don't indicate overnight stays. A house and outbuildings were constructed around 1885, but not until a masonry building was built in 1889-1890 did the ranch appear to become a permanent settlement, and even then the place did not remain settled full-time for long.

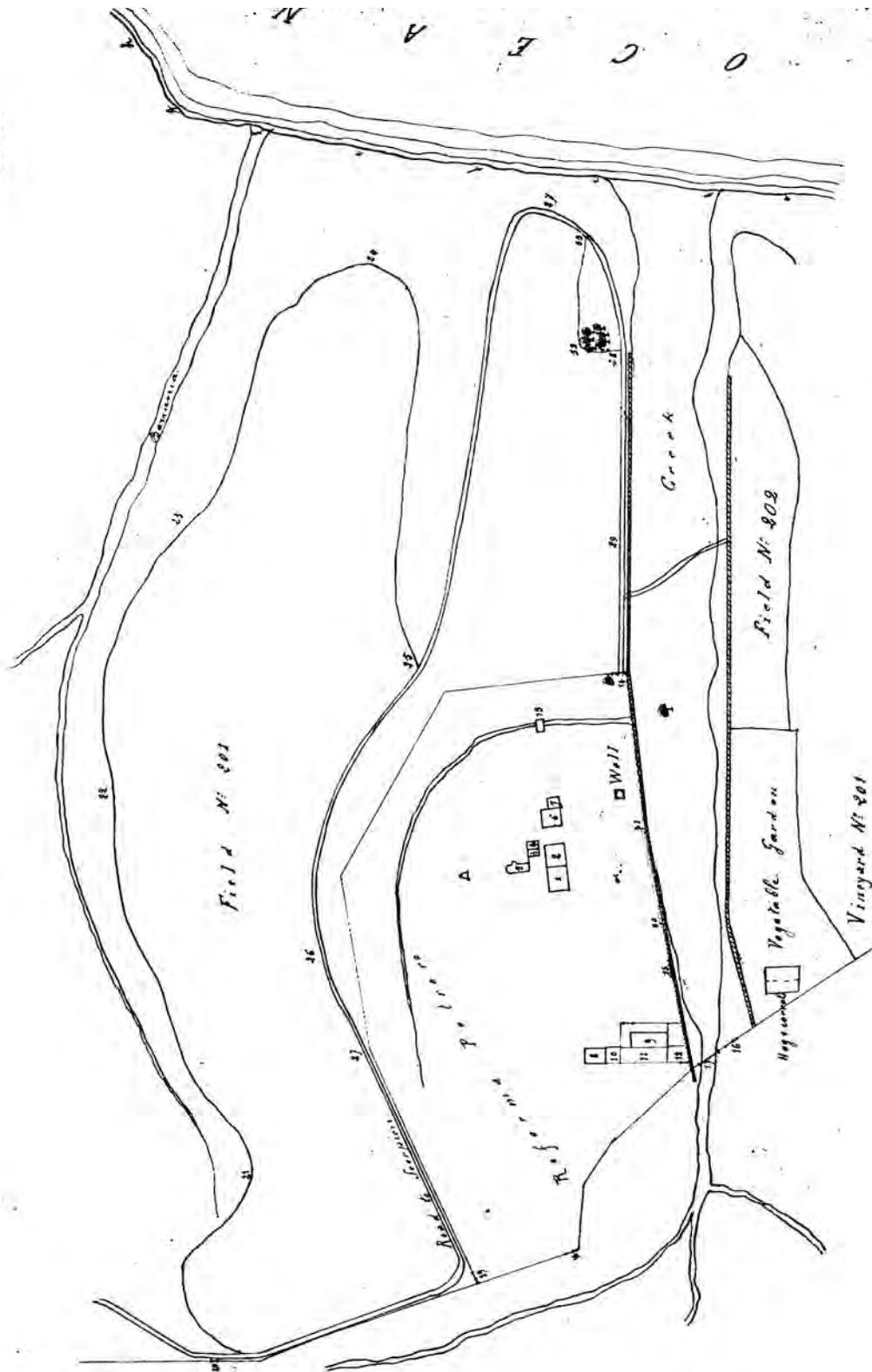
At first Smugglers Cove acted as a site of orchards and grape vines. Justinian Caire noticed the temperate climate at Smugglers Cove and supported experimentation with various vines and trees. In December 1884 island managers transported 2,000 cuttings of *Rupestris* grapes, with the plan that they would be grafted with cuttings originating in Sicily the following year, the object being to eventually produce a Marsala wine. Whether the Sicilian cuttings ever came to the island is unknown.¹⁵⁸

Three maps of Smugglers Ranch dated December 1885 showed the foundation of development in the small valley. Fields had been laid out on both sides of the valley, with a vegetable garden with hog pens in the flats south of the creek and a vineyard (designated No. 201) climbing the hill behind. Another vineyard was being prepared adjacent to the one already planted. A field, probably for grains, stretched almost to the beach from the vegetable garden and was designated No. 202, and another (No. 204) covered the narrow ridge to the south. An area was set aside for the planting of a fruit orchard. Larger fields, designated numbers 201 and 203, occupied the relatively level lands in the direction of San Pedro Point. The Reforma Potrero was a small grazing field, partly steep in terrain, sloping to and including the site of the first buildings at Smugglers.¹⁵⁹

The buildings consisted of a gable-roofed stable and corrals, a "cool shed," a two-room residence, a small shed-roofed building for provisions and a bake oven, a small two-room building with a "cookery" and a room for the foreman, a "water closet" outhouse positioned over the small drainage east of the buildings, and a well. A large cave pierced the steep hillside behind the two-room house. A road approached from the north, making a hairpin turn above the cove to lead into the valley. The well was a wonder of masonry work, with skillfully laid stones forming the vertical walls and a series of protruding flat stones forming a stairway to the bottom of the well in a spiral. The map depicted rock walls lining the creek to prevent flooding, although photographic evidence showed that the major work of drywall masonry adjacent to the building complex did not occur until after 1889. The map also showed a row of trees lining the creek in front of the houses and west of the well.

¹⁵⁸L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, December 22, 1973, SBMNH #0900.

¹⁵⁹[S.C.I.C.] Map Nos. 28, 30 and 34, courtesy of John Gherini.



Detail of an 1885 Santa Cruz Island Company map of Smugglers Ranch. The masonry residence has yet to be built, but the general layout of this out ranch has been established. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

The company had a map made (with French text) of scheduled improvements at Smugglers that year which would include a warehouse, a dining room and kitchen, a cow shed and chicken house, tack room, tool shed and another cave, possibly for storing dairy products. By September 1886 only one of these buildings had been added, directly east of the bakery. It was 23.5 feet long and 13.5 feet deep with a shed roof, painted white, and was used as a smithy and carpenter shop, although the plans drawn earlier had designated it as a warehouse.¹⁶⁰

A foreman's diary for 1887 told of activities at Smugglers Ranch that year. Workers planted vineyards, olives and eucalyptus in January and February, and later planted plums, walnut and orange trees. Figs and chestnuts had been planted previously, and more figs were planted on March 30, 1887. A garden of corn and beans was tended adjacent to the ranch house. The olive orchard apparently took up the most time and labor for the year 1887. One to three men spent at least twenty days planting olive trees in February and March, and then numerous days were spent cultivating and irrigating the trees from the spring through the fall. In December, more olive trees were planted.

The monthly report for September 1889 showed ten men working at Smugglers Ranch. East end foreman A. Perini supervised the following labors there:

- 52 1/2 days construction
- 42 days general
- 5 days fences
- 101 days clearing
- 3 days ploughing
- 1 day fruit trees
- 6 days water works
- 1 day [helping at] Scorpion

Men spent a great deal of time clearing land in late 1889 at Smugglers as they had at Scorpion, no doubt preparing hay and alfalfa fields by removing stones and shrubs. The many days of construction indicate work on a new two-story house at Smugglers Ranch. Payroll for the month of September at Smugglers amounted to \$174.50. In December a great deal of labor went into clearing land and tending fruit trees.¹⁶¹

Santa Cruz Island Company workers built the house at Smugglers in 1889, perhaps being finished in 1890. W. A. Goodyear visited Smugglers Cove in 1889 or 1890 and reported the construction of a new house, "as yet unfinished," with cornerstones exhibiting small impressions suggesting fossil leaves. He also noted the "young plantation of fig and olive trees, and a vineyard."¹⁶²

Construction of the house required cutting back the steep and rocky hillside in order to place the house at the farthest north part of the yard as possible. Island owners planned a larger house at first, as the excavation extends farther westward than needed and the masons left stones protruding out of the west end wall to anchor an additional wing. The house was built of stone and adobe with thick walls on a stone and mortar foundation. The two-story residence had a shingled hipped roof, although the west side showed the

¹⁶⁰[S.C.I.C.] Map Nos. 68 and 68a dated 1886, courtesy of John Gherini.

¹⁶¹Payroll Book 2, September 1889-April 1893, September and December 1889, SCIF.

¹⁶²W. A. Goodyear, "Santa Cruz Island" in California Division of Mines and Geology, State Mining Bureau *Annual Reports*, Vol. IX, 1890, pp. 155-170.



The masonry ranch house at Smugglers Cove was built during 1889-1890, and is shown in a practically new state in this photograph. Next to it stands an older wood frame residence, which was later removed. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



Justinian Caire's laborers constructed numerous stone walls in creek drainages to stem erosion and to protect buildings and improvements. Portions of this wall at Smugglers Cove remains. Note the horse barn, windmill and house at left rear. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*

plan for additional floor space as it was cut off as a gable. Two brick chimneys with arched tops exited the roof. The house measured 21 feet by 40 feet and had three rooms on the bottom floor each with a door, and three above, reached by a stairway behind the house and each with their own doors; the easternmost room was at a lower elevation than the other two, probably allowed by the presence of the bake oven below. The three bottom rooms served as a dining room, kitchen and bake oven, similar to the house at Scorpion. Workers slept upstairs.

The exterior of the house was, as with other Caire buildings, reminiscent of European architecture. Carefully dressed quoins decorated the corners, left unpainted, while the remainder of the house was painted white. Six-over-six double-hung windows, five in the front and painted a dark color, gave a quaint appearance, and the builders incised a sundial in the stucco over the central door in front. A plate with the date of construction “1889” was placed above the door within the sundial.¹⁶³

Next to the new masonry residence stood a wood frame building with a gable roof and shiplap siding, painted a dark color. This building predated the masonry structure by four to five years, and was no doubt the original residence depicted in the December, 1885 maps. Seen in an early photograph taken after the adobe had been built, the building appears to be used as a bunkhouse; it was gone by 1918. Other photographs taken about the same time showed the new masonry structure with the stable, water tank, windmill, bakery and smithy/carpenter shop, which looked identical to the one at Scorpion Ranch.¹⁶⁴

May of 1890 saw the following labor at Smugglers:

- 48 days clearing land
- 64 days haying
- 13 days planting
- 57 days general work
- 4 days vineyard
- 7 days fruit trees
- 24 days rest

Records for August of 1891 showed extensive labor in clearing fields, as well as 29 days filling land for building, although what buildings had been planned is not known.¹⁶⁵

In May of 1893 the Santa Cruz Island Company employed five men at Smugglers Ranch. A breakdown of work performed at the ranch that month under foreman A. Perini:

- 8 days [unspecified]
- 6 days planting, cleaning [vegetables] etc.
- 29 days haying
- 13 days fruit trees
- 3 days shipping livestock
- 4 days roads and highways
- 30 days dry walls, creeks¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ The stone slab date plaque also has “MdAP” carved in it, possibly initials of one or some of the workers.

¹⁶⁴Photographs courtesy of the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., May 1890 and August 1891.

¹⁶⁶Payroll Ledger, S.C.I.C., 1893-1901, May 1893, SCIF.

The work on the dry walls in the creek may have been construction of the walls directly in front of the ranch buildings. Photographs of the new masonry building exist showing the house in place with the creek work undone. Another photograph shows the house and outbuildings with freshly completed grading and a lengthy dry wall in place. The photographs prove that the walls had not been built at the time they were depicted on maps dating 1885 and 1886, and in fact had not been constructed until after the large house was built in late 1889.¹⁶⁷

Smugglers Ranch acted as an outpost of Scorpion Ranch, in turn an outpost of the Main Ranch. The Santa Cruz Island Company expended a great deal of effort and money in the development of the ranch but evidently found its operation to be unnecessary or inefficient. At the height of its development, Smugglers Ranch had three residences, a bakery, a barn of fair size and a blacksmith shop, a water system, a vineyard and vegetable garden, and orchards of walnuts, olives and other fruit. Hay fields covered the hills north of the ranch, where a sacatera stood for storing the hay. South of the ranch, the large Aguaje Pasture stretched to Sandstone Point, wild but good pasture for sheep and cattle and fed by a reliable water supply. A good road led to the ranch from Scorpion Valley. All this, but Smugglers Ranch did not succeed; some time around the turn of the century, probably after, the ranch was more or less abandoned. The olive orchard had no doubt not been large enough to make a profit, nor the other fruits and nuts growing in the valley. The vineyard was not enlarged. Perhaps the ranch was built as an experiment and did not pass the test.

By 1909 Smugglers Ranch was either operated seasonally or mostly abandoned, as Margaret Holden Eaton recalled traveling to the ranch that year with a Caire employee to start the pump so the cattle in that section would have water. “We rode up the long steep wagon road that ran alongside the high bluff, up the hill, and over the hay fields to Smugglers Cove. After a great deal of tinkering and hammering, the cook got the pump started.” Bourago reportedly went to Smugglers every two days to tend the pumps. Almost ten years later, in June of 1918, the superintendent reported that it was “necessary to keep a man pumping all day at Smugglers.” The ranch appears to have been relegated to the role of watering station for southeast end cattle and sheep.¹⁶⁸

A plat map of Smugglers Ranch made in January of 1919 showed a full complex of buildings remaining there. The adobe residence was noted as dining room-kitchen-bake oven (the oven being in the easternmost room on the ground floor) with stairways on the rear of the building. The plat showed a “wine cave” measuring 12 feet by 24 feet deep behind and to the east of the adobe, the same cave depicted in 1885 and 1886. Continuing east, at the foot of the slope, stood a seven-foot by sixteen-foot wood shed (the former cook/foreman’s house), a ten-foot by eleven-foot tool house (the former bakery) and the old blacksmith shop measuring 14 feet by 24 feet. A well and pump stood north of the wagon road, and a barn measuring 20 feet by 46 feet with a small shed stood in the west edge of the complex. The plat noted the rock retaining wall in the creek, a series of water troughs near the well, a eucalyptus grove on the creek and the northern olive grove. The wagon road to Scorpion Ranch followed its current alignment but, rather than

¹⁶⁷Photographs courtesy of John Gherini, Santa Barbara Historical Society and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

¹⁶⁸Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 148-149; Letters, S.C.I.C., June 12, 1918, SBMNH #0923.

turning in towards the house, continued along the creek to an indefinite end by the barn. The surveyor did not indicate whether the ranch was in use at the time of the mapping.¹⁶⁹

Leslie Symmes visited Smugglers Ranch in 1922 but found it had been abandoned for “some years.” He noted the “well built, two story stone house, a good well and cement troughs.” The olive orchard retained “quite a few thrifty trees,” and Symmes noted the “old road” connecting Smugglers with Scorpion Ranch. The telephone extension to Smugglers had been abandoned, leaving only a number of poles to mark the way. By the time the Gherini family took possession of the ranch in 1926, the buildings at Smugglers Ranch had been abandoned for at least five years and perhaps up to twenty.¹⁷⁰

Campo China or China Ranch

China Ranch was depicted on a Santa Cruz Island Company map dated March 1886 and again on Map No. 73 dated July 1890, but it is not known whether the ranch was developed or to what extent. The former map showed a handful of improvements in the area within the watershed of Cañada del Sanjon Hondo: the trails from the Main Ranch and Prisoners Harbor converged into one labeled “to Eastern Department;” a sheep or cattle pen was located in the upper hills at Cañada de la Sorria; a fence with gates to accommodate the upper trail to the east end appeared near the ridge line running in an east-west direction; and a water trough stood close to the harbor. The latter map of 1890 showed a house with an apparently outdoor “table for dining” which overlooked Chinese Harbor. A pipeline stretched from a reservoir or spring (apparently in the Cañada de la Calera) in a westerly direction, going through a reducer, to troughs on the hill above the house. An “old pipe” continued off the map towards the west. Evidently the “old pipe” depicted had been replaced by the water source from the opposite direction. A fence descended the hillside to the house site, separating Potrero del Norte to the west from the pastures above Chinese Harbor.¹⁷¹

The location never appeared in a S.C.I.C. payroll book as a ranch site, although labor there was occasionally recorded. For instance, Campo Chino was noted as location of “ranch work” in 1898.¹⁷²

A Santa Cruz Island Company ledger recorded the installation of a water system on the isthmus in Potrero Norte in October of 1908. Laborers laid a 1.5-inch pipe from the spring in Agua del Muro to “the low land of easy access to cattle.” The men transported troughs from across the island at Las Sauces Potrero and Portezuela, and used old pipe from the Domestic Field in the Central Valley.¹⁷³

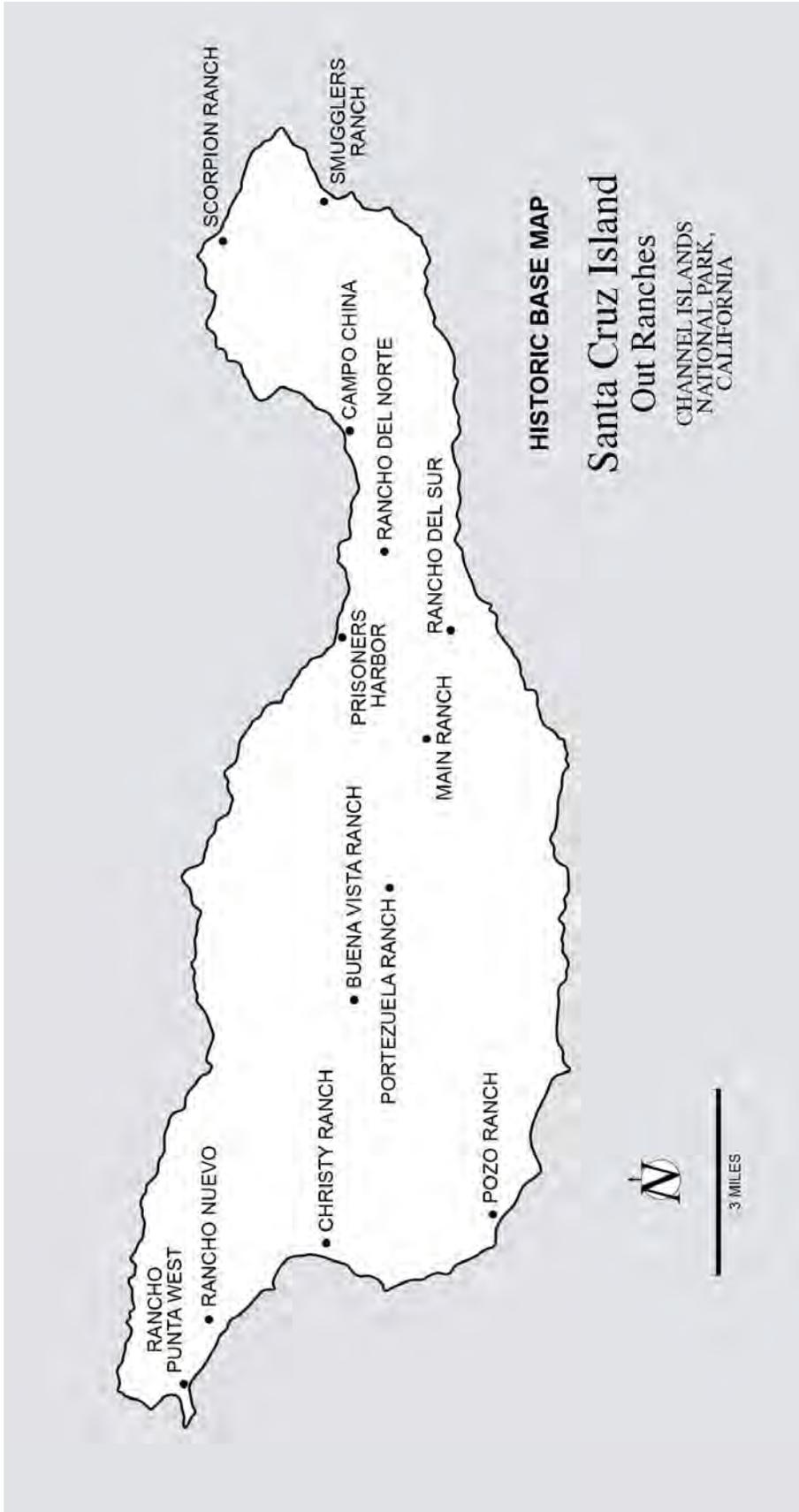
¹⁶⁹Plat Showing Buildings, Etc. at Smugglers Ranch, January 1919, courtesy of John Gherini.

¹⁷⁰Symmes, *Report*, pp. 56-58.

¹⁷¹SCIC Map No. 54 dated March 1886, and Map No. 73 dated July 1890, SCIF.

¹⁷²Payroll Ledger, S.C.I.C., 1893-1901, SCIF.

¹⁷³[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 343, SCIF.



Out Ranches Outside of the Study Area

Campo Punta West:

Caire probably found some corrals at West Point which had been noted by Stehman Forney during his topographic survey of the west end in 1873. Caire made improvements here, developing a small out ranch that he called Punta West. A Santa Cruz Island Company map dated 1890 showed the small ranch complex located fronting the beach at Forney's Cove. It depicted a ranch house, foreman's quarters and storeroom, sheep corrals, hog pen, pump, reservoir, stable and two hay barns or sacateras. Two fenced hay fields surrounded the improvements. A "Wagon Road To West Ranch" led southeasterly and a telephone line extended from the ranch house towards the east into the higher elevations of the coastal hills. The map labeled an area on the north side of Fraser Point as asphaltum deposits. In 1898 a company ledger entry referred to the ranch as "Forney," and around that time Charles Holder visited the cove, noting "an old ranch house or shearing station with a telephone to the main ranch down the island." Little else is known of this ranch, and by 1919 only a hay barn remained. By that time, the Santa Cruz Island Company had developed Rancho Nuevo about two miles east of Punta West, reportedly to remove the improvements from the vandalism-prone location on the beach at Forneys Cove which was a popular anchorage for fishermen and pleasure boaters.¹⁷⁴

Rancho Nuevo was reportedly constructed out of lumber salvaged from Punta West. It contained a two-story ranch house, stable, chicken house and barn, all laid out in a rectangular fenced enclosure with the buildings acting as corners. This ranch was also apparently short-lived, and was found to be "in a great state of disrepair" by the new owners in 1937.¹⁷⁵

Christy Ranch:

The west end of the Central Valley broadens to where it meets the ocean. The surroundings are grassy, wide plateaus with comparatively gentle hills to the north and south. Caire found at the West Ranch at least one house and some corrals which had been noted by Stehman Forney during his topographic survey of the west end in 1873. He had the ranch developed into one of the two major out ranches of the Santa Cruz Island Company. Called at first Rancho del Oeste or West Ranch, it eventually took the name Christy (occasionally recorded as Christi) Ranch, possibly in honor of his wife Albina, one of whose middle names was Christina, or their daughter Marie Christian Caire, who died as a baby in 1873.¹⁷⁶

The old house, built in or before 1864 and known later as the Casa Vieja or Casa la Cruz, acted as the centerpiece of the ranch, although a larger residence was built south of the creek before 1890. A map dated 1886 depicted the older ranch house, a stable and a chicken coop. By 1890, when another map had been produced, the ranch had been developed to its fullest extent known, with the second residence and a store house across the creek, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, stables, saddle and harness room, storage shed,

¹⁷⁴SCIC Map No. 48 dated June 1890, SCIF; Payroll Ledger, S.C.I.C., 1893-1901, SCIF; Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 273.; Daily and Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island," pp. 13-14.

¹⁷⁵Daily and Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 14.

¹⁷⁶"Western End of Santa Cruz Island, California, Surveyed by S. Forney, Sub Assist. 1874-'75." NA(CP); Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 80, 93.



The oldest building on Santa Cruz Island, Casa Vieja has stood at Christy Ranch on the west end of the island since before 1864. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*



The masonry building at Christy Ranch is almost identical with the one at Smugglers Ranch, although the floor plan is reversed. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*



This wood frame building at Christy Ranch is similar to buildings at Scorpion (the blacksmith shop) and Smugglers. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*

hay barns, a well and a windmill with storage tank, and a complement of sheep corrals, hog pens and horse corrals. Ranch workers had developed vegetable gardens, corn and hay fields, and a wagon road passed through on the way to Punta West. The new residence on the south side of the creek was of a similar design to the two-story residences constructed at Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches at about the same time.¹⁷⁷

In May of 1918 the Santa Cruz Island Company had another map produced by George M. Derrickson of Christy (spelled Christi on the map) Ranch, which showed the changes and improvements that had been accomplished since the map of 1890 had been made. It showed additional features including a shearing shed, wood shed, meat storeroom, milk room, wine room, bunkhouses, chicken houses, and various improvements. The map depicted a bunkhouse standing north of the old, circa 1864, adobe bunkhouse. Overall, the improvements at Christy Ranch rivaled those at Scorpion in quantity and utility.¹⁷⁸

A visitor to Christy Ranch in April of 1919 reported that the foreman was American, living there with his wife, mother or mother-in-law, and two hands. The women cooked for the men.¹⁷⁹

Leslie Symmes visited the Christy Ranch in 1922 and found the two-story adobe house, an adobe meat and store house, the old adobe bunk house, a horse barn, two hay barns and shearing sheds, an

¹⁷⁷Daily and Stanton, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 15.

¹⁷⁸Plat Showing Location of Buildings, Sheds, Corrals, Water Tanks and Fences at the Christi Ranch, May 1918, SBMNH #2571.

¹⁷⁹William Oberlin Dawson, "Diary Kept While on Santa Cruz Island" (1919), SBMNH #0863, quoted in *A Step Back in Time*, p. 159.

implement shed with a saddle room and forge, and corrals. Like Scorpion Ranch, the two-story house had a dining room, kitchen and bake oven with upstairs bedrooms reached by an outdoor stairway. Symmes found the Christy Ranch complex old and in need of repair. He noted that the Casa la Cruz was “one of the oldest buildings on the island, said to have been built in 1864.” It needed repairs but “considering its age and lack of maintenance, is well preserved.” The shearing sheds and implement shed were found to be “in a dilapidated condition,” but the cattle handling facilities had been kept up. He described the fairly new hay barn at Barley Canyon as “well built.” The telephone line worked, although the extension to Pozo had been abandoned, leaving only a number of poles to mark the way.¹⁸⁰

The families of Frederic and Arthur Caire occasionally traveled to Christy Ranch to stay the night in the two-story house. As late as the 1920s, men and a cook lived there full time, in the old house that was used as a bunkhouse.¹⁸¹

Poso Ranch:

A Santa Cruz Island Company map dated February 1886 depicted improvements on Poso (Pozo) Canyon on the southwest shore of the island. An “old field” lay in the valley close to the harbor, while upstream a complex including corrals and a shearing shed was drawn. All of the bottomlands were noted as being cultivated. Whether these were plans or actual improvements is not known.¹⁸²

Buena Vista:

Not a true out ranch, Buena Vista consisted of a cabin built in the 1880s or 1890s while the road to West Ranch was being constructed. Located near the top of the pass or Centinela, it reportedly housed road workers and later vaqueros who found it a convenient stopping place between the Main Ranch and the west end. According to Carey Stanton, the cabin was of “flimsy” construction of posts and shake siding “and not much else. The building itself was one long shelter through which the wind could blow freely.”¹⁸³

Portezuela Ranch:

Located at the southern edge of a picturesque and productive upper extension of the Central Valley west of the Main Ranch, Portezuela was developed in 1885 by the Santa Cruz Island Company. An early map depicted a house, kitchen, stables and a well, with corrals, holding pens and newly cleared fields in the vicinity. By 1890 the ranch had grown and featured a new house, stables, three barns for hay, a wood shed, and a hog or sheep pen. A vegetable garden and a vineyard appeared on the map as well, watered by a pump near the creek. A U-shaped bend in the creek had been bypassed in 1885 in order to expand cropland, an activity that required the construction of stone empiements as retaining walls. Large hayfields, fenced in 1885 and 1886, lay east and west of the building complex and a “road to the Main Ranch” ended a short distance west of the house.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰Symmes, *Report*, pp. 54-55, 57-58.

¹⁸¹Oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

¹⁸²SCIC Map No. 46 dated February 1886, SCIF.

¹⁸³Daily and Stanton, “Santa Cruz Island,” pp. 16-17.

¹⁸⁴SCIC Map No. 38 dated January 1886 and two maps labeled No. 23, one dated June 1890, SCIF.

The adobe and rubble main house looked similar to those at Scorpion, Smugglers and Christy Ranches and was built at about the same time. A long building partially built into the hillside acted as a dining room, kitchen and carpenter shop, and consisted of an adobe walled section and a log cabin (which came first remains a mystery). An outhouse made of adobe occupied a spot up the tributary creek. This ranch likely acted as a hay production facility and a midway point for corridas and cattle drives.¹⁸⁵

Rancho Sur:

A small out ranch located only about two miles east of the main ranch towards Valley Anchorage, Rancho Sur consisted of a wood frame dormitory moved from the Main Ranch, a building constructed in 1891 that housed a kitchen, dining room and storeroom, a stable, and “lavatories with a bell next to them.” The exact use of this out ranch is unknown. It was out of use by 1937.¹⁸⁶

Leslie Symmes visited these out ranches in 1922, finding them to have been abandoned “for some years.” At the Sur Ranch he found the old house and barn in poor condition, but with “productive” areas nearby fenced. At Portezuela he found only “an old cabin, part adobe and part logs, and an old barn.” He noted that the cabin was occasionally used as a camp because of its central location on the road to Christy Ranch. The old frame house and sheds near Forney’s Cove showed signs of abandonment.¹⁸⁷

The Caire family enjoyed riding horses out to the Sur, where a barbecue had been set up and a trail provided access to the beach. The house stood at the site until some time past 1937.¹⁸⁸

Vineyards and Winery

Early in his stewardship of Santa Cruz Island, Justinian Caire became interested in experimenting with the growing of wine grapes. At the time, viticulture enjoyed popularity as part of “a boom that had been carrying California along on a heady swell of expansion.” The devastating effect of a pest called *Phylloxera vastatrix* in Europe created an opportunity in California, which had the right climate and soil conditions for grape growing. Caire tested the soils of the island and noted the peculiarities of the weather and found that the island’s valleys would support the cultivation of wine grapes. Around 1884 Caire’s workers laid out the first vineyards on the island. Caire’s employees planted the first vineyards in January of 1885 at the Main Ranch, East (Scorpion) Ranch and at the undeveloped Smugglers Cove. Laborers spent part of the previous year laying out the vineyards and preparing the soil. The first plantings occurred on the Main Ranch at the Mission and Apiary fields, the latter so named because of the former beekeeping operation in the building adjacent to the vineyard.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵Daily and Stanton, “Santa Cruz Island,” pp. 17-18.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁸⁷Symmes, *Report*, p. 57.

¹⁸⁸Oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

¹⁸⁹Thomas Pinney, *The Wine of Santa Cruz Island* (Santa Barbara: The Santa Cruz Island Foundation and Los Angeles: The Zamorano Club, 1994), pp. 25-26; L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, December 22, 1973, SBMNH #0900. Pinney’s book offers a detailed account of the wine industry on the island.

That first year company records listed vine stock, reportedly imported as cuttings from France, of Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Sirah, Malbec, Cantal Mataro, Barbera, and Hock for the reds, and Muscat Frontignan, Chablis and Riesling as whites. Later the vineyards included Zinfandel, and many of the red wines were generically labeled as Burgundy. Vineyards eventually stretched both east and west from the Main Ranch, reaching up the hillsides until it became too steep, covering a reported 600 acres of valley land. The vineyards on the east end were small and apparently did not succeed.¹⁹⁰

“Vineyards were set out from vine cuttings shipped in the eighteen-eighties and eighteen-nineties,” wrote Caire’s granddaughter Jeanne Caire, “and varieties chosen which responded best to the soil and weather conditions of the Island.” Charles Lefranc, an old acquaintance of Justinian Caire’s, owned a vineyard in Saratoga for which he imported vine cuttings from France. Caire reportedly purchased some of the original vines planted on the island from Lefranc (and Charles Krug), which led to this interesting observation from Jeanne Caire:

A strange thing . . . was that when we had exhausted our cellar of Island red wines, before the big distillery bought the Paul Masson winery, when sipping the Cabernet Sauvignon produced in that hilly region, I would suddenly seem to be tasting our Island wine . . . let me hasten to add that Lefranc’s successor in interest was Paul Masson, who married Louise Lefranc.¹⁹¹

The ranch had a nursery where cuttings of the favored and experimental varieties were started. A vineyardist recorded in a ledger the number of cuttings planted between March 17 and 22, 1904: Zinfandel 1,800; Barbera 1,000; Malbec 600; Cabernet Franc 2,000; Trousseau 1,200; Carignan 1,400; Burgundy 2,000; total cuttings planted 16,000.¹⁹²

Vineyard workers tended to be Italian and often possessed appropriate skills previous to arriving on the island. Pruning occurred in the late winter with the height of that activity in March. As years went by, the vines needed special care or replacement; at times whole plats of vines would be removed and replaced by another type. The middle of September through October was the time of the vintage, a busy period with additional workers when the grapes were picked and crushed. The Cellarmaster was usually French; for instance, Leon Valadie worked for Caire as a vineyardist and wine maker from 1895 to 1898, being paid \$30 per month the first year and \$40 the last. Later, Italian wine makers were employed (for instance, Giovanni Fanucchi succeeded Valadie in 1898, and a Mr. Galli acted as the wine maker in 1916). When the grapes ripened in the fall, called the vintage season, additional workers arrived on the company schooner to pick grapes and work in the winery.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 73.

¹⁹¹L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, December 12 and 22, 1973, SBMNH #0900. There is some debate as to whether cuttings would be imported from France during the Phylloxera infestation.

¹⁹²[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 211, SCIF.

¹⁹³Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 75; winery notes courtesy of John Gherini.

Vintage

The ripening of the grapes, its timing largely determined by weather conditions, brought a great deal of activity to the island with its increased labor requirements. Workers made their ways down the rows of vines, loading the grapes into large wooden boxes and then onto *carros* or large wagons that transported the fruit and deposited it at the winery. Helen Caire recalled how “the lavishly stained boxes, filled with mounds of grape clusters over which hovered yellow jackets, were emptied to fill the ravenous maw of the crusher. Then, empty, the boxes were carted off to be refilled.”¹⁹⁴

For about five years the grapes were crushed and processed in a small winery building, perhaps as a test to ensure that island wine making could produce a sufficient quality product and be a profitable venture. At first, Caire had the former apiary near the Main Ranch bridge raised onto a new masonry structure with a cement floor, making it into a small, two-story building that would act as the winery. Even in its new use, the Caire family referred to the building as the Bee House. When the potential for success had been determined around 1890, the company began to construct much larger facilities for handling the wine making process. With confidence of a paying operation, Caire had a complex of two large winery buildings constructed between 1890 and 1892 east of the Main Ranch buildings. The massive brick buildings faced the north, with large double doors opening to the Camino del Este.¹⁹⁵

Apparently the first large-scale vintage didn’t occur until 1892, the year the large winery buildings were completed. Some 40 men worked in the winery under a Mr. Groezinger that fall. Helen Caire described the use of the new winery buildings:

The upper winery stood on a low hillside directly behind and above the lower building, the cellar. During the vintage the usual quiet of the upper winery was shattered by the engine of the grape crusher. It stood on a platform reached by a stairway. The juice was funneled down into gigantic vats. A wide plank was laid across the full tanks. A workman holding a long-handled plunger walked along the board to stir the must. A few days later it was funneled down by gravity to the fermentation cellar. There were also, of course, the slatted white wine presses.

The wine aged in huge oak casks that lined the floors of the cellar. Being built into a hillside excavation, the room stayed cool and dark.¹⁹⁶

By the turn of the century, the varieties on Santa Cruz Island wines were remarkably diverse for a small business. For instance, the 1904 crop consisted of Zinfandel, Burgundy, Grenache, Mataro, Trousseau and Carignan, all reds; and the whites Burger, Riesling, Bordelais, Sauvignon and Muscat. In 1905 the vintners added small amounts of Barbera and Cabernet. The wine maker also produced Piquette (1500 gallons in 1905), which was a watered-down red wine for daily use by island laborers. Management made an inventory of wine on hand at the end of every year.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 76.

¹⁹⁵L. A. Jeanne Caire to Carey Stanton, December 22, 1973, SBMNH #0900.

¹⁹⁶Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 76, 79.

¹⁹⁷[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 59, SCIF.

In the years following 1905 the amount of wine in the winery fluctuated, depending on sales, quality and production. The 1907 vintage produced 22,887 gallons; that year the vintner did not produce any Burgundy, Carignan, Cabernet, Beaujolais or Riesling. Production rose the following year (81,394 gallons) and increased to 217,540 gallons in 1911, dipped to 59,044 in 1915 and rose again to 169,757 in 1917.

The firm apparently sold off its entire wine inventory as implementation of the Volstead Act approached; between September and November of 1919, 41,000 gallons were sold to Federspiel and Company.¹⁹⁸

Shipping and Marketing

When properly aged, the island wine was decanted into smaller barrels and sold for distribution or bottling on the mainland. Arthur Caire designed an ornate label bearing the Santa Cruz Island Company seal, which featured engravings of grape vines, sheep and wool, and the schooner *Santa Cruz* in full sail. The company marketed its Zinfandels and Chablis with labels reading:

Island View
Burgundy [Zinfandel] Wine
Bottled by Miratti & Giorgi
Santa Barbara, California

or

Famous Santa Cruz Island Wine
withdrawn from tax paid package
1 gallon
Bottled by Miratti & Giorgi
Santa Barbara, California¹⁹⁹

The wine of the island enjoyed a fine reputation and won prizes for its quality and unique characteristics. The Santa Cruz Island Company sold its wines to a variety of buyers ranging from large wine dealers in Los Angeles and San Francisco to individual fishermen at the pier. For instance, Dematteis and Constantino of Los Angeles bought 5,277 gallons of Zinfandel in 1902, while Mr. Castagnola bought wine at La Playa, providing his own demijohn; apparently, passing ships and boats could call at Prisoners Harbor and buy small quantities of wine. A fisherman named Marincovich bought 49 gallons of Claret for \$12.25 in 1893. Occupants of neighboring islands purchased wine from Santa Cruz. Mrs. Raffour of the Raffour House in Santa Barbara not only bought Claret but lambs and poultry in 1894. A large customer at the turn of the century, the Edward Germain Wine Company of Los Angeles, bought about 7,000 gallons of various vintages in barrels and puncheons in 1903. In the 'teens, wholesale wine merchant Ciocca, Lombardi and Company of San Francisco was one of the largest customers. Francesco Miratti and P.

¹⁹⁸Notes in files of John Gherini. See Appendix for more data on the winery operations.

¹⁹⁹Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 79-80; labels on display at Santa Cruz Island Foundation office.

Manent of Santa Barbara made regular purchases, Miratti being one of the Santa Cruz Island Company's bottlers on the mainland. The company sold wine as far as Alaska and Cuba, according to records.²⁰⁰

The company shipped its wine in 168-gallon puncheons, 50-gallon barrels, and casks, demijohns, kegs and cases. The barrels would be filled at the winery, transported to Prisoners Harbor and stored in the brick warehouse until ready for shipment. Apparently the watchman at the harbor had responsibility for sales to passing boats. Much wine was shipped on the *Santa Cruz*, while other shipments would be picked up by coastal steamers for transport to other coastal ports. The company added a deposit for the valuable containers that would be returned when convenient.

Apparently the Caires acted as agents and wholesalers for their own wine. Prices fluctuated at turn of the century, as Zinfandels ranged from 17 cents a gallon for an 1895 vintage in 1899 to 35 cents for an 1897 vintage in 1902.

Prohibition and Beyond

The winery operated until Prohibition: voters passed the Volstead Act in 1919 and as a result, the winery went out of business. The last shipment of wine, being 20,904 gallons of Zinfandel in 60 puncheons and 199 barrels, left the island on November 9, 1919 aboard the *Lassen*, bound for San Francisco. But the grapes could continue to be sold, and so the Caires remained in the vineyard business. Workers tended the vines, performing sulphur treatments and continuing to keep an eye out for hogs that regularly invaded the vineyards. Damage by wild hogs caused a dramatic drop in vineyard production in 1920 (58 tons harvested as opposed to 1,376 tons in 1919) as Superintendent McElrath reported: "The chief cause was wild hogs. I hunted and trapped but their numbers seemed to grow right along. I believe that the large hay crop attracted them in the first place."²⁰¹

With the end of winery operations the ranch superintendent had the fermenting room prepared for what was no doubt hoped to be a temporary abandonment. Crews cleaned the crusher, and used lime to clean the tanks; to keep the tanks from drying out, McElrath suggested filling them with water that could be used for irrigation. McElrath also wrote to his superiors asking what to do with a small quantity of wine stored in demijohns in the bonded winery. He suggested removal of the now-illegal product to the Cantina Vieja for safety.²⁰²

A labor shortage in 1920 led McElrath to recommend renting the vineyards to a man named Ardino, who bought all of the harvest at the time. That year Ardino and his crew of up to 20 men harvested 34 tons of grapes, sledding the grapes out of the vineyard to a Republic truck that transported the full grape boxes to Prisoners Harbor. Ardino paid 50 cents per meal for his men while they were on the island. Whether the company ever actually rented the vineyard is not known.²⁰³

²⁰⁰Notes in files of John Gherini; S.C.I.C. Book D, pp. 297, 312, 315; Superintendent's Report, November 1917, Letters, SBMNH #0922; Vineyard Report, Santa Cruz Island, SBMNH # 0921.

²⁰¹Letters, June 21 and October 3, 1920, SCIF; Vineyard Report, Santa Cruz Island, SBMNH # 0921.

²⁰²Letters, August 5, 21 and 30, 1920, SCIF.

²⁰³Letters, September 27, 1920, SCIF.

Agricultural engineer Leslie Symmes reported on the island operations in the spring of 1922. He found 187 acres of vineyards in the rolling lowlands of the Central Valley although 37 acres were not producing at the time. Most of the vineyards were located east of the Main Ranch although the Burgundy and Mission “districts” lay to the west. While noting the production of Burgundy, Mataro, Burger, Moscato and Grenache, Symmes found that the Zinfandel was the “most extensively grown and appear[s] to be exceptionally well suited to the island conditions.” He found numerous blanks or missing vines in all the vine districts, with some “solid blocks” of dead or removed vines.

Some replanting has been done this year [1922], but otherwise the vines are of bearing age with a large proportion of old, but productive vines. The majority of the vines are low headed and planted in rows, 7 feet apart, with 7 feet between vines in the row. A small area was replanted this year, 18 feet between rows and 7 feet apart.

Symmes found some of the old vines had been placed in the more labor-intensive areas of the upper slopes, and with a smaller work force had been abandoned. He felt that the land generally provided a good crop of grapes and that the production could be doubled with additional plantings and irrigation.²⁰⁴

Caire employee Red Craine, who began working on the island in 1930, recalled that during the last years of prohibition the Caires sold their grape crops to the Commercial Transfer Company in Santa Barbara, operated by Pete Georgi and Angelo Miratti. The firm paid for the grapes on the vine, and hired the island workers to pick and ship them. According to Craine, the Commercial Transfer Company received about 1,400 boxes of grapes per schooner load at Stearns Wharf.²⁰⁵

Some wine making occurred after Prohibition was lifted in 1933, but not enough to resurrect the great days of vintage on Santa Cruz Island. Many considered the quality to be poor compared with the heyday of the Santa Cruz vintage. Red Craine recalled that the Caires “hired a couple of old Italian fellows there, but they weren’t the vintners that they used to have in the old days. The quality of the wine—it had too much acid content, and people just wouldn’t buy it.”²⁰⁶

The wine industry on Santa Cruz Island, lasting about 50 years, provided the island’s owners with diversification and additional income. It no doubt produced its share of headaches as well, as winemaking was an inexact science at the time and markets fluctuated as they do today. But winemaking era on the island was significant in illustrating the ambitions and energy of Justinian Caire and his employees, and the presence of vineyards and the winery added to the distinct European flavor of the island during the Caire years.

²⁰⁴Symmes, *Report*, pp. 67-69.

²⁰⁵Interview with Roger P. [Red] Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 9.

²⁰⁶*Ibid.*, p. 11.

Sheep Industry

The newly formed Santa Cruz Island Company bought a large island in 1869 with a flourishing and somewhat well known California sheep ranch on it. That company continued to operate the ranch with few changes for more than ten years. The emergence of Justinian Caire as the principal owner brought on a phase of development of the island sheep industry leading to improvements in the flocks and, to a lesser extent, the general way the ranch was operated. The island's topography and natural resources dictated most of how the ranch could be run, and these factors led to an operation that would and could change little as the decades passed. For 57 years Justinian Caire and his grown children ran the sheep ranch based on Caire's original design, with few changes or innovations following his active participation that ended with his death in 1897.

The stories of the lively *corridas* (or roundups) manned by old California vaqueros, shearing and shipping large quantities of wool and the overall flavor of the ranch life has been recorded by Justinian Caire's granddaughter Helen Caire in a book, *Santa Cruz Island, A History and Recollections of an Old California Rancho*. The following narrative relies heavily on Miss Caire's book, as it is a well-written first-hand account of the last decades of this most interesting and unique island sheep ranch.

Flocks

William Barron's sheep herds on the island had reportedly been fine breeds from England and Spain, the latter being Merinos. The Santa Cruz Island Company probably retained these sheep but also imported purebred Rambouillet Merino sheep that they had found to be "best adapted to the island climate and rugged topography." Frederic Caire wrote:

The flocks were free from all disease. Anthrax, scabies, foot-and-mouth disease were unknown on Santa Cruz. When new sheep were brought to the island, they were first quarantined for observation on the mainland and properly disinfected. Upon arrival at the island, they were kept at quarantine for a sufficient interval, dipped and disinfected several times before being allowed to mix with the flocks.²⁰⁷

The company used the old Spanish names for the various sheep classifications such as *hembras*, *capones* and *toros de marcos*.²⁰⁸

The Santa Cruz Island Company operated its sheep ranch quite differently from most mainland ranches: no herding occurred, instead the sheep roamed freely in the vast mountainous pastures of the island. Typically, herding by full-time shepherds offered protection from various dangers and usually offered a better quality of wool and general health, as the sheep stayed in one area with no fear of molestation. On Santa Cruz Island, the large flocks roamed miles into the hardly-accessible canyons and mountainsides, with hundreds becoming wild and rarely seen. This posed a problem to those rounding

²⁰⁷Frederic Caire, March 13, 1940 quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 101.

²⁰⁸[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 285, SCIF.

them up, forcing the continued use of the traditions dating from early California, where no fences held the livestock and hardy men and horses scoured the rugged mountains and valleys in lively corridas or roundups. This system was one in which it was taken for granted that many sheep would be left behind to become truly wild.²⁰⁹

Charles Holder, after visiting the island in the 1890s, wrote of “a most ingenious method” of moving and controlling sheep:

The horsemen take out with them three white goats, which, when a flock of sheep is discovered, are released. The latter join them at once, and the goats turn and lead them in the direction of the corral, the sheep following blindly. When one flock of sheep is secured, the goats are taken to another, and in this way they save the herders much trouble.²¹⁰

Holder’s account is curious, one of only two noting goats and herding. The island was long known for its “wild” operation wherein sheep ran at will on the island only to be collected in the lively corridas. A similar method of using goats as shepherds had been reported a decade earlier at Santa Rosa Island. Later island superintendent (1919-1920) Clifford McElrath reported that two old goats remained as of 1920, the last of the herders; he said that the now-wild goats interfered with the ranch operations by herding sheep “into rough, inaccessible country” during corridas.²¹¹

The island ranch continued to be run as a semi-wild sheep operation without herders, where the sheep ran over the island on their own until being rounded up in a sudden and hectic “corrida.” The lack of control of the sheep’s reproductive habits caused problems in breeding and herd counts, while untended sheep were more vulnerable to predators both animal and human; many lambs were lost in the corridas for their inability to keep up with the running flock. As techniques of animal husbandry advanced in the country in the new century, the ranch operators at Santa Cruz Island considered changing their methods of sheep raising. Superintendent Alanson Swain advanced the idea of changing to a herding operation in April of 1918, noting the lack of adequate increase in sheep numbers during the year and the problems with the corridas. Swain described his proposal in this long letter to the Caire brothers written in May 1918:

Our idea in herding is to follow the methods used in other sections. To begin with we believe that it would be advisable to take the sheep in the Pot. Llano [on the east end] and put two good men with them and herd them for two or three months in that one section. At the end of that time they would be in shape to take to any part of the Island. In herding them through the Pot. Sur it is reasonable to suppose that a good many of the wild sheep would go along with them. As fast as the flock increased beyond the capacity of two men, put an additional two men to herding the increase until such time as all the sheep on the island are in herded flocks. It would be advisable to put up corrals in various districts to hold the sheep at night, but this work could be done as the necessity arose and after experience had shown the most advantageous places to put them, so that the expense would not come all at one time. If it turned out that the wild sheep did not follow along with the herded ones, it would be necessary only to make a corrido in a certain district to gather the sheep and then put the men to herding them. The actual expenses of herding

²⁰⁹Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 71.

²¹⁰Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 264.

²¹¹McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 23.

them will be apparently a good deal greater than by our present methods, but will really prove to be less: The loss of sheep from ravens, wild hogs and fishermen will be materially reduced . . . and the losses of lambs and ewes by excessive running will be entirely eliminated; the time of lambing can be regulated so that it does not interfere with shearing; the number of rams can be properly regulated so that the increase in the flock will show as high as in other places and last, but not least, by the proper selection of rams the quantity and quality of wool can be greatly improved. All of these factors are impossible to control at this time.²¹²

The management did not pursue the idea. The corrida continued until the last days of the sheep operation.

The Santa Cruz Island Company and the Caire family continued to work at improving the herds, finding at times the quality to be poorer than before. The owners purchased new stock occasionally as in March of 1917 when the Company obtained 25 two-year-old Merino rams and fifteen yearlings at \$15.00 per head from F. A. Mecham's Live Oak Farm in Petaluma, California. The sheep arrived in Santa Barbara on the train and were transported to the island on the schooner.²¹³

Claims of the island sheep being disease-free may not have held true as the years passed. In 1920 a foreman reported that 60 to 70 sheep coming down to Scorpion Ranch for water may have had scabies and were ordered to corral them so Superintendent Swain could inspect them. Swain told the foreman to kill suspicious cases, which resulted in about 20 head being slaughtered for meat. Swain wrote that "stringent measures" would be needed to stave off an outbreak, and that it would be necessary to construct dipping vats at the three ranches and possibly Prisoners Harbor. Frederic Caire wrote in the late 1930s of the ranch being equipped with dipping facilities, leading one to believe that Swain's recommendations were taken. However, the scabies outbreak recorded apparently did not expand.²¹⁴

Private agricultural inspector Leslie Symmes evaluated the island's sheep in 1922:

Sheep are the most important livestock and are in general a good type of smooth Merino, with some showing traces of Leicester and New Mexican blood.

They are essentially a wool type and wool has been the principal product, although some have been sold each year to local buyers for lamb and mutton.

The animals are generally healthy, without any of the common sheep diseases, such as scabies, liverflukes or head worms evident, or having been reported. In this respect the island enjoys a much desired immunity which can be easily maintained. They are hardy and well adapted to the island conditions.

The sheep are not herded as is the common practice on the mainland, but range free over the island.²¹⁵

As of 1922 corridas occurred only once a year, in the spring. "As many sheep as possible are rounded up and driven to the different ranches for shearing and sale," wrote McElrath. Results vary depending on how many were gathered (the average was 20,000 to 30,000, the largest number was over 50,000 in 1890. In 1921, 11,231 were brought in and 9,356 shorn, reflecting only about 50% of the sheep known to be on the island). The wool was found to be of average quality with annual losses in the clip abnormal. These

²¹²Report, May 5, 1918, in Letters, February 26, 1918-December 1919, SBMNH #0923.

²¹³Invoices May 1914, B52 March 5, 1917, SCIF.

²¹⁴Reports, October 12 and 31, 1918, in Letters, February 26, 1918-December 1919, SBMNH #0923.

²¹⁵Symmes, *Report*, pp. 59-60.

conditions were blamed on the operation of the ranch, where the free ranging sheep had little protection or care.

Rams ran with the sheep uncontrolled, resulting in a large proportion of long-tailed wild bucks or *coludos*. “Considering the fact that under this system breeding cannot be controlled, and that practically no new blood has been introduced for a number of years, the sheep generally are of good type and show the good breeding and blood of the original stock to a remarkable degree.” Symmes concluded, “The island is well suited to the raising of sheep, and is capable of producing good wool, lamb and mutton and a normal lamb crop under the ordinary system of sheep management.”²¹⁶

Arthur and Frederic Caire continued to operate the island sheep ranch until the family sold most of the island in 1937. In fact, the sheep business dominated the island activities during the Caires’ final decade.

Corridas

To gather the sheep on a 62,000-acre island of high rugged mountains cut with barrancas and strewn with brush was not an easy task. The corrida, or roundup, required *vaqueros* (horsemen) who not only had great skills in the saddle, but knew the island and its hazards well. The Caires, their predecessors and successors alike, hired as vaqueros mostly local mainlanders descended from the Mexican Californios of the first half of the 19th century. Charles Holder wrote of how “. . . the fearless Barbareños, mounted on native horses, ride over the most perilous places.”²¹⁷ Most had come to the island seasonally for many years, some (or their fathers) likely having worked for Dr. Shaw or Mr. Joyaux. The corrida would be, along with the vintage season, the busiest and most colorful of activities on the island. Helen Caire remembered the men and wrote a fine essay about them. She recalled how they looked:

The vaquero’s get-up consisted of a blue shirt and jeans, a knife in a leather sheath stuck in his belt, and a worn old hat. He would knot a red or blue cotton bandana around his neck. The vaquero’s tools were a good horse and a reata, a rawhide lariat coiled and tied near the saddle horn.

The vaqueros arrived on the schooner *Santa Cruz* at Prisoners Harbor. Most of them would step on the wharf clean-shaved or perhaps with a mustache, but as time went on, many let their whiskers grow. This gave certain ones a wild look, but to a few others a rather patriarchal appearance.²¹⁸

The Santa Cruz Island Company hired vaqueros at shearing time in the spring and fall. Some were hired at a young age, many being the sons and grandsons of island vaqueros, and many appeared to be brothers. Most returned to the island year after year as their traditional activity and livelihood. Payroll records name many of them and their pay. For instance, the spring 1893 corrida and shearing, taking place in March and April, employed nineteen vaqueros: Vincente Lugo, Salomon Lopez, Augustin Valenzuela, Abelino Garcia, Jose Lugo, Jose Patricinio Cota, Anastacio Flores, Jose Jesus Ruiz, Jose Espinosa,

²¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 60-62.

²¹⁷Holder, *Channel Islands*, pp. 263-264.

²¹⁸Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 85-86.

Francisco Ayala, Pedro Garcia, Ramoncito Ayala, Jose Ayala, Pedro Lugo, Jesus Lopez and Mario Lugo. Ramon Ayala was their mayordomo; the men were paid \$36 plus fichas if they sheared. Occasionally a non-Barbareño joined the vaqueros: the 1891 payroll ledger recorded Alberto Scudelazzi among the ranks during the roundup.²¹⁹

Helen Caire wrote about three of the veteran island vaqueros whom she had known in the 1920s and 1930s. Jose Espinosa, called El Viejo or the Old One in later years, was an expert roper, hunter (he used only a reata and a knife) and somewhat of a medicine man. He was later mayordomo. “He kept aloof from the other vaqueros and spoke in a friendly way to only a few. A slave driver on the corridas, the men so feared him that they would blame each other for the loss of sheep when he accused them. The mayordomo would lash the whole gang of vaqueros “with the valor of his tongue,” and on one occasion he actually did flay a man with his chirrión (a short rawhide quirt)—behavior not approved by the Caires.” Letters from the superintendent to the Caires spoke of the alienation Espinosa caused during a corrida season in 1918. But he was one of the legendary vaqueros on the island, as was his younger brother Juan, called Cuate. Jose Espinosa died at age 82 in 1926.²²⁰

Caire wrote of Cuate (whose name meant twin; his sibling had died as a baby) as an average vaquero but fine storyteller. The Caire grandchildren spent many hours with Cuate riding in the hills. He also had a talent for breaking horses. Caire remembered Pedro Garcia for his talents with a guitar and as a fine dancer despite his age. She wrote a romantic account of a moment experienced while the men were at rest:

One evening during the roundup, when a clear full moon was shining westward over the eucalyptus windbreak and flooding the Cañada del Medio with a silvery light, the vaqueros were sitting on a bench in front of the adobe bunk-house. Pedro was strumming his guitar and singing long-remembered Spanish ditties with several other voices chiming in pleasantly. In the warm evening the age-old songs were carried on the quiet air to the soft twang of the guitar.²²¹

The *Santa Cruz* picked up vaqueros at an appointed day and time at Stearns Wharf in Santa Barbara. Caire wrote how some would have been drinking to celebrate the beginning of roundup time on the islands, perhaps the island manager would have to scour the bars in search of missing employees. Upon arrival at Prisoners Harbor the vaqueros traveled to the main ranch on a wagon (later a truck) where they settled into a bunk house and claimed their equipment: saddles, bridles, spurs, reata, chirrión, and knife, as well as being assigned a horse.

Before dawn the vaqueros ate breakfast in the island mess hall and then reported to the stable where they readied their mounts. When they had quieted their excited horses, Helen Caire wrote how they

trot up to form a circle around the mayordomo, who gives them their posts for the roundup. He points east, west, north or south in his explanations. Few instructions are needed as the vaqueros are old hands and usually take the same posts every year.²²²

²¹⁹S.C.I.C. Book D, pp. 342-351, 381, SCIF.

²²⁰Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 86-89; Reports, April 27 and May 13, 1918, in Letters, February 26, 1918-December 1919, SBMNH #0923.

²²¹Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 94-95.

²²²*Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

The vaqueros rode out in groups towards the different areas of the island, first on roads then on trails leading deeper into the sheep ranges. As a group progressed, single riders began to drop off to their appointed posts, to wait for the call of the lead man or the advancing sheep. The lead man traveled the farthest, as the vaquero who started the roundup. When ready, he shouted: he and his men had surrounded a band of sheep and, with “whoops, cries and cracks of chirrións,” closed in on the sheep. The experienced horses followed the sheep and cut them off when they tried to break.

Hour upon hour the pursuit and driving continue, up one cañada and down another, across one ridge to a farther one. More and more sheep join the band, the semi-circle of vaqueros behind them always increasing and closing in. The ranges, usually lying in a great spell of silence, echo with the voices of the men, hoofbeats, cracks of chirrións, rushing trotters and the bleating of sheep.²²³

Red Craine, noting that the sheep were mostly wild, recalled that the roundups in the 1930s were “almost like going out and trying to round up a bunch of deer! You would get 500 started down a canyon . . . and they broke on us! You would lose them all after working all day—it would break your heart.”²²⁴

Eventually the vaqueros herded the sheep into a punta manga or wing fence made of piled brush which funneled the herd into a tighter group and towards the corral, be that at the Main Ranch, Christy or Scorpion where shearing was done. At some point the vaqueros took a break of about an hour at a place where the sheep could be held such as Portezuela. At certain places the ranch cook brought a meal for the tired riders. Caire wrote of the men typically cooking a lamb or two on a wood fire during the lunch break: “Soon arises that peculiarly savory scent of carne asada cooked outdoors, an irresistible scent to a hungry group that has worked hard.” The lamb’s brains were shared among those who wanted, and the vaqueros had time for a short siesta before heading out again.

As the throng approached the ranch where the shearing was to take place, some men rode ahead to open gates. According to Miss Caire and as reported by Charles Holder, goats once helped herd the sheep across the barnyard to the corrals, or to Prisoners Harbor during shipping time. Once in the corrals the men took care of their horses, ate dinner and prepared for shearing the following day.²²⁵

Island management experienced a shortage of vaqueros in June 1918 as the war depleted the stock of available men. Roundups of such a large number of sheep required a large force of men to drive them into the Main Ranch and the out ranches. The owners eventually reduced the roundup schedule to one a year, a decision that only added to the number of wild sheep roaming uncontrolled on the island.²²⁶

²²³*Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

²²⁴Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 15.

²²⁵Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 106-108.

²²⁶Report, June 2, 1918, in Letters, February 26, 1918-December 1919, SBMNH #0923.

Shearing

The men who had participated in the roundup in most cases also continued on as shearers at the *trasquila* or shearing. The *trasquila* occurred twice a year, in the spring and fall, until around the turn of the century when a spring-only shearing occurred as the number of sheep was reduced on the island.²²⁷

Two structures stood adjacent to the sheep corrals that served as the shelters for shearing activities: the shearing shed and the weighing and packing shed. At the out ranches these functions were apparently combined in one barn-like structure. At the Main Ranch, the Santa Cruz Island Company had constructed the large shearing shed, appearing as a wide cow barn with open sides. The weighing and packing shed, evidently dating from the Barron ownership of the island before 1869, was a long shed with vertical board siding sitting on a brick foundation.

Men herded the sheep into the covered corral for holding immediately before the shearing. The sheep then were moved into a long corridor alongside the shearing shed and locked in, and gates on rollers divided the captive sheep into pens. One by one the sheep were moved from the pens to the shearing area where a shearer dropped it to the floor on its back and begin the shearing process. Well-sharpened clippers snipped the fleece from bottom to top, the shearer careful not to cut the skin. When the sheep was bare it would be moved into another corral where men would separate those being shipped for slaughter and those to be returned to the range.²²⁸

Each fleece was counted to the account of its shearer. Helen Caire described the process:

. . . the mayordomo perches himself in the high seat built in the narrow space joining the two sections of the shearing shed. Across his knees is a wooden shelf with a number of slits in its broad surface. Into them he slips small metal disks, *fichas*, about the size of a penny, stamped with a cross for Santa Cruz mounted on a hill signifying the island, with the company's initials, "S. C. I. Co.," curved above it. Passed from hand to hand for over sixty years, the disks are worn thin.

When a *vaquero* has shorn a sheep, he wraps the fleece into a bundle, tosses it on one of the broad shelves flanking each side of the seat, and takes a *ficha* to keep tab on the number of sheep he has shorn. At the end of each day's shearing, the *vaqueros* form a long queue in the office. The *fichas* of each are taken and recorded into his account. In addition to his wages, the *vaquero's* record of *fichas* adds to his pay.²²⁹

The shearer, after taking his *ficha*, sharpened his shears and grabbed another animal. A good shearer could remove more than a hundred fleeces weighing fifteen to twenty pounds apiece in a day. Caire wrote that the ranch tried out shearing machines but the shearers, at least the old-timers, preferred the hand shears and continued the old way.²³⁰

In the shearing shed the men spoke little but livened the tedium with singing and occasional bragging or arguing over whose fleece was heavier or some such game. All stayed busy throughout the day, as their wage depended on their productivity.

²²⁷Frederic Caire quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 101.

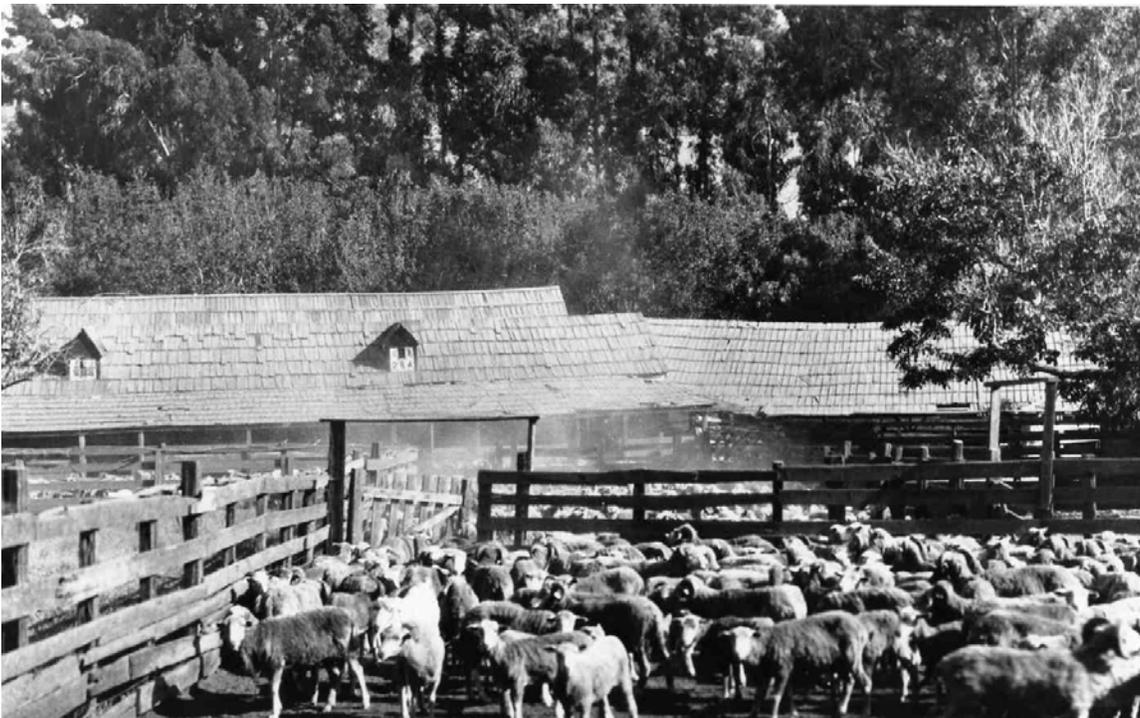
²²⁸Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 110.

²²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 112.

²³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.



Sheep move through the wing from Aguaje pasture at Smugglers Ranch in 1939. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



Sheared sheep are let out into a pen outside the trasquila, or shearing shed at the Main Ranch. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

A vaquero tied up the fleeces left on the shelf with a piece of twine and moved them to the packing area. Another man placed a long burlap sack into a ten-foot-high skeleton structure in which the sack hung, affixed firmly at the top by a strong hoop. The first man threw tied fleeces up into the sack, and when enough had been so deposited, the packer stepped down deep into the sack, hanging onto a rope, and began to stomp down the fleeces. The packer emerged on the rope and more fleeces were added, repeating this until the massive sack was full. The men removed the stuffed wool sack from the scaffold and sewed the end shut with a curved needle and heavy thread. The sack was then weighed, marked with a stencil reading, “S.C.I.Co.” and numbered. The weight and number of the sack was recorded in a ledger.

At appropriate times the backlog of wool sacks piling up in the shearing shed would be taken by wagon to the warehouse at Prisoners Harbor to await shipment to mainland markets. The men kept busy until the last sheep was bare, then checked in their equipment and headed back to Santa Barbara on the *Santa Cruz*. Helen Caire wrote that the vaqueros “went next to San Julian, the well-known old California rancho” located near Lompoc, north of Santa Barbara.²³¹

Occasionally the island wool, traditionally known on the markets as fine, experienced dips in quality, one of the drawbacks of the non-herding policy in force on the ranch. The superintendent reported a clip of poorly graded wool in 1918 and wrote of the issue of mixing lamb’s wool with first clip to improve it, but having a lack of expertise to so improve the overall quality of the year’s clip. Swain spoke of the need for an experienced man to grade the wool into several classes before packing so that the best wool could be marketed at higher prices.²³²

The wild nature of the island sheep made it impossible to round up all for shearing. Thousands of sheep probably never saw the clippers during their lifetime. The numbers of sheep sheared fluctuated depending not only on stocking numbers but also on the success of the corrida. The spring shearing in 1907 produced 20,706 fleeces. The 1908 to 1911 spring shearing ranged from 18,065 to 24,714; in 1913 the numbers dropped to 5,181 and in the next three years rose to only 8,289. In 1918 the spring shearing of 13,666 sheep produced 64,143.25 pounds of wool in 175 sacks averaging 366.53 pounds each. By 1923 the numbers returned to 18,685. The superintendent kept detailed records of the shearing activities: he produced tables that noted the number of each kind of sheep (hembras, capones, toros de marcos etc.); where they were from (Rinconada, Potrero Norte, El Pozo, etc.); and statistics on castration and separation of wethers and ewes for sale. The areas with the highest number of sheep sheared tended to be Potrero Llano on the east end and Potrero Norte on the isthmus.²³³

Meat, Marketing & Transport

Island sheep provided not only wool but also meat in the form of lamb and mutton, to markets in Santa Barbara and elsewhere. Slaughter occurred on the island only for its own use, while sheep, usually shorn beforehand, were transported on the hoof to Santa Barbara, Los Angeles or San Francisco. Prior to the

²³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 114-116, 119.

²³²Reports, October 20, 1918, in Letters, February 26, 1918-December 1919, SBMNH #0923.

²³³[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 285-294; 300-301, SCIF.



Loading sheep onto the schooner at Prisoners Harbor in 1905. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California*

construction of wharves along the mainland coast in the early 1870s, sheep had to be lightered ashore at Santa Barbara. Frederic Caire wrote,

After Los Angeles had established stockyards, livestock was shipped directly to Santa Barbara and from there trucked to Los Angeles, or shipped directly to the southern city by way of the port of San Pedro. Throughout the years, the wool was shipped the same way as livestock, for ultimate delivery in Boston or Philadelphia, where its quality was well-known to buyers.²³⁴

The Santa Cruz Island Company sold wool and meat through agents on the mainland, usually at Santa Barbara. For instance, in 1881, the company sold 14,500 sheep to Merry, Faul & Company, whose agent was W. M. Tucker. The article reporting this transaction noted that another 45,000 head of sheep remained on the island. “The sheep are in extra fine condition, and are pronounced to be the best mutton taken to the city this season. The lambing season was very successful, and the increase is unusually great. Feed on the island is in excellent condition, and with the assistance of the present rain will be splendid.”²³⁵

The following year in June, with 1882 shearing finished, island superintendent J. B. Joyaux was quoted as saying, “The sheep are in fine condition and 12,000 have been sold. They will be transferred to San Francisco in installments, 1,000 at a time. The steamer *Bonita* will stop at the island June 3 to take the first 1,000.”²³⁶

In the 1880s through 1905 the company made many sales to Santa Barbara butchers Sherman & Ealand. In 1894, for example, eight shipments were made to them between April 24 and July 27, consisting of: 413 lambs @ \$1; 436 ewes @ \$1.50; 133 wethers @ \$1.50; 217 unspecified sheep @ \$1.50 for total of \$1,641. Also late in the year (November to January) the island managers shipped ducks (\$5./doz), geese (\$9./doz), turkeys (\$17.55-21.06/doz) and chickens (\$4.50/doz) to Sherman & Ealand.²³⁷

In June 1912 the company had a contract with Dunn & Company for 5,000 sheep, and in 1920 sheep were often sold to N. F. Gehl Packing Company, including lambs, ewes, wethers and coludos; in that case, Vail & Vickers’ cattle boat from Santa Rosa Island, *Vaquero*, would pick them up for transport to the mainland.²³⁸

The island schooners *Star of Freedom* and *Santa Cruz* provided standard transport for the sheep to points on the coast, but numerous other steamers and schooners such as the *Humboldt* and the *Celilo* called at the island for sheep products as well. Boats also called at Scorpion Harbor for loads of wool and livestock, although the sometimes-tricky situation there, with no pier, a rocky beach and swells, required products to be transported to the schooner in a skiff. At least one time the ranch hands had to transport wool overland on a very difficult journey to Prisoners Harbor rather than on the schooner, as it had to stand far off the shore and required extra rope which at the time was not available.²³⁹

²³⁴Frederic Caire quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 116.

²³⁵*The Weekly Press* [Santa Barbara], March 12, 1881, SCIF.

²³⁶Unidentified news clipping dated June 2, 1882, SCIF.

²³⁷Ledger “S.C.I.C. D 1890-” p. 296, SCIF. Messrs. Sherman and Ealand enjoyed a 30-year partnership in the butcher business, with contracts in the Channels Islands going back to at least 1878.

²³⁸Ledger, “Santa Cruz Island July 1911,” p. 117; Letter Book #3, June 14, 1920, SCIF.

²³⁹Letter Book #3, September 13, 1920, SCIF.



Santa Cruz loaded with sheep for transport to market. Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire

Shipments to Santa Barbara often showed up in newspaper reports, for example:

The Santa Cruz Island schooner, Captain George Nidever, came in from the island yesterday with a cargo of 13,000 pounds of the fall wool clip. A cargo brought in Tuesday amounted to 25,000 pounds. Captain Nidever stated that there were several cargoes yet to be brought over. The fall clip is the smaller one of the year and the spring shearing is expected to double the present output.²⁴⁰

Wool and meat shipment on the *Santa Cruz* continued under the Caires until 1937, and further continued under the following owners.

Dairy Cows and Cattle

While the proprietors of Santa Cruz Island raised sheep and produced wine for the bulk of their income, the island ranch also supported herds of cattle and a small number of dairy cows. From the dairy cows ranch workers produced milk, cream and butter for island use; the cattle constituted a small commercial beef operation although beef did find its way into the islanders' diet, no doubt a pleasant change from the ever-present mutton. Cattle had been imported to the island at some time during the Barron ownership. Helen Caire wrote that her father "exterminated" the cattle left over from the Barron years and imported Durham cattle at an undetermined date. The favored cattle regions on the island were Christy Ranch, Potrero Norte and the east end, particularly the Aguaje pasture.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰Santa Barbara *News-Press* article dated January 13, 1910 as quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 118.

²⁴¹Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 71.

Santa Cruz Island Company records have not provided much information on the cattle operations previous to 1900. In 1903 the company imported 302 heifers of undetermined breed on the boat *Pasadena*, consisting of 99 head between 15 and 24 months old and 203 head between five and nine months old. The writer noted “some younger ones suffered from the transition from the milk diet [having been separated from their mothers] to the dry food diet. Some of the older unused to sheep ground, broke their backs on the [Potrero Norte] barrancas. Some died after arrival.” In 1904 three Durham bulls about two years old were landed at Scorpion Ranch. Ranch records noted that on May 7, 101 heifers were driven to Scorpion and the three Durham bulls put with them the same day. The ranchers cut 31 young male calves from the Scorpion herd, as well as two young bulls 18 months old because they were “vicious.” On December 17 five bulls arrived from Santa Barbara for an unknown destination on the island. The next year one of those bulls fell into a barranca near Cañada de L’Ofara and died. Records showed that on September 24, 1905, ranchers branded 77 young calves from the new stock at Scorpion; the brand consisted of an S and a cross, enclosed in a circle. That year ten cows died from falls and 17 from other causes.²⁴²

The Santa Cruz Island Company branded all their cattle although branding laws had not yet been enacted. The brand mentioned previously was supplemented with other designs and styles. When the Bureau of Identification enacted branding laws in 1917, the company registered the island brand on April 17, 1918, being an S+ on the left hip of calves. The management had its young bulls castrated except for those needed for increases. The favored island cattle ranges were at Scorpion and the east end, Potrero Norte and Christy Ranch.²⁴³

In 1910 the Caires imported six head of shorthorns, including five bulls, from the Howard Cattle Company in Newman, northern California. Ranchers continued to have trouble with cattle falling off cliffs at Potrero Norte; four calves died there in 1910. As of the end of 1910 the ranch supported:

- 16 bulls
- 523 cows
- 296 heifers
- 205 steers over two years old
- 74 male calves under one year old
- 98 female calves under one year old
- 53 head reported dead for various reasons during the year

In 1911 the island vaqueros received three thoroughbred Durham bulls and five thoroughbred heifers. At the end of 1911 the count stood at:

- 24 steers over four years old
- 96 steers over three years old
- 203 steers over two years old
- 152 steers over one year old
- 292 cows over four years old

²⁴²[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 56-57, SCIF. The brand noted here had been impressed on a cabinet door in the Scorpion Ranch blacksmith shop, which was destroyed in 1997. Park archeologist Don Morris photographed the brand mark before the destruction.

²⁴³[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 62-64; Letters, April 28, 1918, SCIF; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 72.

150 cows over three years old
125 cows over two years old
128 cows over one year old
101 male calves under one year old
74 female calves under one year old
14 bulls of three years and over
4 bulls of one year and under
40 milk cows
67 head of cattle died that year

Records noted that between 1912 and 1916 the thoroughbred cattle bought in 1911 had produced 17 calves. In August of 1912, 45 island steers, of total weight 31,540 pounds, and 78 cows and calves (44,150 pounds) were sold to Hobson Brothers; at that time, the island supported 1,366 head of cattle, cows and calves.²⁴⁴

Helen Caire wrote that in later years the S.C.I.C. decided to cross shorthorns with Herefords. “At the time my father discussed the small head of the Durham breed and deplored the heaviness of the Whiteface, a shipping problem, but southern California is subject to drought, and Herefords will forage farther than Shorthorns.” Caire wrote of the peculiar island range conditions:

The salt-laden winds from the Santa Barbara Channel and the Pacific Ocean seasoned the forage so that the meat had the particular flavor of the pré-salé meat of sheep that fed in the salty meadows of Brittany and Biscay coasts. Besides the saline-seasoned pastures, sometimes the livestock wandered along a beach, using the salt-coated rocks as natural salt-licks. A young foreman for about three years, Clifford McElrath, inexperienced in island ways, insisted the cattle must have salt licks. My father [Frederic Caire], somewhat amused and exasperated, gave in. As he well anticipated, not one bovine or sheep tongue stretched out for any of the salt.²⁴⁵

Ranch managers commonly let cattle into the newly mowed fields to clean up the alfalfa after cutting.²⁴⁶ Dry years wreaked havoc on the cattle herds, as evidenced in this letter from superintendent Swain in May of 1918:

We are moving the cattle from the west end and dividing them into small bunches along the north and south sides of the Island. There are some few that give promise of being fat enough for the butcher in the course of the next month or six weeks, but the major part of them are in rather poor shape and we will be very fortunate to keep them alive through the rest of the year. We would advise selling all that is at all fat—whether calves, heifers, cows or steers. The cattle on the east end are in better shape, but the feed there is becoming short wherever there is any water and it is only a matter of a month or two before it will become necessary to move the cattle from there. There is some feed at the Melqueros [sic], but the wild sheep are feeding very heavily in this district.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 66, 79, 80, 82-83, 89, 277, SCIF.

²⁴⁵Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 71-72.

²⁴⁶Letters, October 26, 1918, SBMNH #0923.

²⁴⁷Ibid., May 20, 1918.

Not only droughts and the dangerous barrancas posed a problem for the herds, but also heavy weather could result in mortality. Sudden storms in early 1918 resulted in the loss of four cows, a heifer and a steer on west end. After the 1918 drought the ranch didn't have enough cattle to sell in large loads; the mainland butcher only bought in lots of two or three carloads.²⁴⁸

Arthur Caire hired a man in March of 1919 to be solely in charge of the cattle, or the "cattle boss." Clifford McElrath soon advanced to become superintendent and paid more attention to the cattle operation on the island. In early 1920 he counted 633 head of cattle on island, considering it a low count, including 12 head of semi-wild range cattle at Scorpion. Later that year he wrote of the need for water in feeding areas, which would help in the process of fattening the herd for sale. In August McElrath sold 20 cows including Jerseys, which were a dairy breed.²⁴⁹

The cattle were, as with all island commodities, shipped on the schooner *Santa Cruz* either on the regular runs or on special trips. McElrath wrote:

The difficulty about sending cattle by the regular weekly trip is that [cattle buyer] Troup wants to look the cattle over before buying and while he might trust me to select them for him I don't like to leave it to him to set the price after the cattle have been landed in Santa Barbara. Mr. Troup has agreed however to select the two loads at a time from now on and let me send them a week apart. This will save one trip of the schooner.²⁵⁰

McElrath took care to maintain the pastures to reduce overgrazing, a difficult feat with the presence of wild sheep. In August of 1920 he wrote to his San Francisco superiors of a dilemma at Scorpion Ranch where his intentions to fatten and sell 90 culled cows on crop stubble would have to be put on hold if it rained as the cattle would damage the soil in wet conditions. He determined to rush the cattle to Scorpion to feed before the rains. The next month he wrote of the price of cattle being poor, so he would delay a sale and move the salable culls from the Main Ranch to Potrero Norte where feed was good, then to Scorpion where there was an abundance of dry feed. He later noted that the island cattle were in good condition, and he had moved practically all of the stock to the east part of the island, leaving only bulls at the west end "as I want to let that region rest this year and re-seed itself."²⁵¹

William Oberlin Dawson, visiting the island to gather bird eggs for his father's museum in the spring of 1919, wrote a journal in which he described aspects of a cattle drive from the Main Ranch to Prisoners Harbor:

This morning the boat went over with a load of bulls. They drove 15 of them down to the Harbor day before yesterday. We were behind them coming down the river, and once in a while one of them would get mad and with a bellow he would charge into another one. When one started, more started, and in about 2 minutes the whole lot would be bellowing at a most blood-curdling rate. There were only four men on horseback to drive the whole herd with 8 steers besides. It must take an awful cool nerve to handle 15 bulls. They get

²⁴⁸Ibid., February 26, 1918 and April 25, 1919.

²⁴⁹McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 1-2; reports dated January 5, July 10 and August 6, 1920 in Letter Book #3, SCIF.

²⁵⁰Ibid., August 16, 1920.

²⁵¹Ibid., August 30, September 13 and November 8, 1920.



Vaqueros roping a calf at Christy Ranch, circa 1900. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

very touchy in the sun, and if they all got really mad those men wouldn't have a show except in ignominious retreat. Yet, when they all got to bellowing and charging around the worst, one of the men would ride right in among them and yell to try to quiet them. I think they took 10 of them on the boat, and had a hard time at that.²⁵²

Leslie Symmes, in 1922, found the island cattle to be “a good Shorthorn type” with some others including “stunted individuals.” He counted 787 head: 412 range cows, eight bulls, 145 two to four-year-old steers, 114 yearlings and 116 calves; all ran in competition with the sheep in the various potreros and ranges. He felt that the bulls were “of little or no service” and recommended adding young bulls into the mix. He found no disease, although some older cows suffered from lumpy jaw. Symmes noted that, despite the competition with sheep over feed, the island produced good three-year-old steers ranging in weight from 1,000 to 1,150 pounds.²⁵³

From early in Justinian Caire's regime the island supported a small number of dairy cows for production of butter, cheese, cream and milk for the island uses. Caire built a fine but small brick dairy barn at the Main Ranch, and cows were also milked at out ranches. The occupants of Scorpion Ranch outfitted a natural cave, which they subsequently enlarged, into a dairy storage room that kept cool for long-term storage of butter and cheese. In 1920 McElrath asked his superiors for a stone butter churn to replace the older wooden one, because the men were failing to properly scald the churn while cleaning it, resulting in “odors and flavor problems.” McElrath wrote to UC Dairy Division for advice on problems

²⁵²Dawson, “Diary,” SBMNH #0863.

²⁵³Symmes, *Report*, pp. 62-63.

with milk curdling that year as well. An old employee named Abuelino took care of the cows at the Main Ranch during the 1920s, as well as horses and the slaughterhouse.²⁵⁴

The Santa Cruz Island Company cattle operation fluctuated in scope and did not appear to be a major focus of the island economy. However, its significance lies in its part in the diverse ventures by the Caire family where livestock and farming provided income and livelihood for the family and its employees. In a sense, the presence of cattle on the ranch predetermined the activities of the Stanton era, in which cattle were the sole commodities of most of the island.

Poultry

While it is known that for many years the ranch supported a small number of poultry for domestic uses, Justinian Caire wrote in 1892 of his resolution to “raise poultry on a large scale.” By August of that year his men were occupied in the construction of a poultry run accommodating 500 hens, 1,000 ducks, 200 geese and 200 turkeys. He wrote, “For the ducks and geese we have two large ponds where the water renews itself constantly; a duck pen constructed on the edge of one of them makes taking care of them easy.” The site of these pens was not noted, however an early map of Prisoners Harbor depicted turkey pens at the edge of the lagoon at La Playa, a location cleansed daily by the tides. The irrigation systems at



Poultry at Prisoners Harbor, circa 1900. The poultry house is in the rear, with what appears to be the large midden in the background. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

²⁵⁴Reports dated June 6 and September 3, 1920 in Letter Book #3, SCIF; oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

the Main Ranch were named for poultry (Pato, Gallina, etc.), indicating that poultry played an important part in the layout of infrastructure. A business ledger detailed the sale of poultry off the island in late 1894, noting the sale of ducks (\$5 per dozen), geese (\$9 per dozen), turkeys (\$17.55 to \$21.06 per dozen) and chickens (\$4.50 per dozen). The company sold a large number of eggs in the early 1890s. Otherwise, chickens were kept at the Main Ranch and many out ranches for island use, although one employee complained that in the 1930s, he never got to eat the eggs as they were reserved for the Caire family.²⁵⁵

Horses

According to Helen Caire, horses owned by Barron remained on the island and their progeny made up much if not the entire Caire herd. The Santa Cruz Island Company ranch workers used horses extensively, for rounding up sheep and cattle, making patrols, and transporting visitors and island residents. Draft horses performed the heavy work, and the ranch had a number of wagons, carts and an English char à banc carriage supposedly left over from the Barron days.²⁵⁶

The Company kept records on horse husbandry that detailed a careful breeding program. For instance, in 1893 recorded sires included MacMahon, Billy and Barney; dams included Modesta, Kate and Sallie; the family or others named some island horses Libertad, Minnie, Favorita, Reina, Guerida and the like. These were no doubt the saddle horses, used for traveling on the island and recreational uses of the family and visitors. A large stable of working saddle horses for the corridas were needed at roundup time. The large size of the brick stable at the Main Ranch, and the sizable horse barns at Christy and Scorpion Ranches as well as a smaller one at Smugglers Ranch, indicated the importance of the horse herd on the island.²⁵⁷

The company used draft horses for field work, largely tilling and cutting grain crops and laying out new vineyards. In 1914 the ranch owners bought a Percheron stallion named Newark Loyalty from a ranch in Newark, California that was shipped on the Southern Pacific rails to Santa Barbara. Six years later the stallion was still at work, as a report mentioned that mares were being kept in Potrerita for holding while mating with Newark Loyalty in 1920.²⁵⁸

The ranch management purchased horses from mainland ranches with an eye on improving the stock and keeping good horses for the unique and difficult island roundups. Letters from the superintendent McElrath tell of looking at horses at Rancho San Julian near Lompoc, and of bringing horses from the mainland two months later. Newly arrived horses as well as young colts born on the island were given the island brand.²⁵⁹

At the time of the Symmes report in 1922, 97 horses lived on the island. About two-thirds were saddle horses, mostly from Arizona, “small but wiry and well adapted to the work for which they are used,”

²⁵⁵Letter, Justinian Caire to his brother, August 18, 1892, translated through the auspices of SCIF and courtesy of Mary B. Brock; Ledger “S.C.I.C. D 1890-” p. 296, and S.C.I.C. map of Prisoners Harbor, SCIF; interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini.

²⁵⁶Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 72.

²⁵⁷Ledger, “Horses & Mares,” pp. 120 et seq., SCIF.

²⁵⁸Invoices, May 1914, and letters, B79 July 18, 1917, and August 16, 1920, SCIF.

²⁵⁹Letters, March 22, 1919, August 16 and October 12, 1920, SCIF.

namely corridas in the rugged landscape of the island. Workhorses, including Percheron stallions, were found to be healthy. About twenty head of saddle horses had been retired. Symmes also noted a “few” Shetland ponies. A company ledger recorded an undetermined number of draft horses and 15 draft mares as of 1931.²⁶⁰

Pigs and Hogs

Helen Caire wrote also about the hogs of the island, such a fixture on that place as they were. Other accounts place wild and domestic pigs on the island at early dates. Caire felt that the typical wild hogs on the island were of two types, and speculated on their origin. The type noted as “razor-backed, high on its legs, with a long snout, lean hind quarters, straight tail and usually pinto—spotted black and white,” she identified of Spanish or Mexican in origin. The once domesticated type, usually black, was in Caire’s opinion “almost certainly” left over from Captain Kimberly’s pigs abandoned by J. M. Box in the early 1850s.

A newspaper reported in 1869, the year Caire and his partners bought the island:

Wild hogs are so numerous that they have become a great nuisance, and the owners of the Island are willing that Lux & Miller or any other man should shoot them, butcher them, corral them, clean them out any way they please, free of charge. As there are many steep places thereabouts, what fun it would be for the Gaderene demons to hunt there a week.²⁶¹

The article recorded the fact that pigs caused problems on the island at an early date. Procreating unchecked, the wild pigs of the island rapidly reproduced and became a menace to people and a destructive force to the rangeland and crops. The Caire’s vineyards were especially vulnerable although they had been carefully fenced. The pigs found corn and other vegetables tasty and did not hold back in their pursuit of such delicacies. They rooted in the pastures causing erosion and loss of rootstock and acorns.

Aware of the destruction caused by the hogs, island residents made it a habit, sport and job of killing them whenever the occasion arose. For many years Justinian Caire and his sons offered a bounty on hogs, requiring the production of the pig’s nose to collect. Pig hunting could be dangerous, as boars were often aggressive and seemingly fearless. Some vaqueros roped a hog as a prelude to killing it, but most hunters used rifles and had the help of a dog or two. Harry Sheldon, a naturalist, hunted hogs during his expeditions to the island, reportedly killing 165 wild hogs.²⁶²

Members of the Caire family, accompanied by a vaquero, kept an eye out for the wild hogs; the boys in the family and the vaqueros did most of the killing. The hunt often resulted in an impromptu barbecue where the pig was roasted on a wood fire not far from where it had been downed. The island sang with pig stories, some of legendary giant hogs or of impossible feats in bringing down the vicious animals. But of

²⁶⁰Ledger, “Horses & Mares,” p. 112, SCIF; Symmes, *Report*, pp. 63-64.

²⁶¹*Santa Barbara Press*, July 24, 1869 p. 1. Lux and Miller (doing business as Miller & Lux) had the largest livestock business in California during much of the late 1800s.

²⁶²Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 121, 125.

the island's many traditions, pig hunting was a constant way of life and necessary activity in keeping the health of the island and its industries in check.

The superintendent's reports to superiors in San Francisco often noted hog damage, and the island caretakers kept watch on numbers and damage. For instance, in early 1920 Superintendent McElrath reported that there were practically no wild hogs in vicinity of Scorpion, and not many at Smugglers. That summer he noted that wild hogs were damaging the hay crops and getting into the Central Valley vineyards, making holes in the fences and ruining about 50 tons of grapes. McElrath and his assistant Mr. Brown hunted every night with a 30-30 rifle and tended a hog trap in which they caught one a night for a period. McElrath estimated crop damage that year as follows: the grape crop fell from 137 tons the previous year to 58.06 tons, and the hay crop dropped by 25%.²⁶³

Ranch workers kept domestic pigs, for eating purposes, in pens at the main ranch and some of the out ranches. Records show that the Santa Cruz Island Company shipped four large purebred Yorkshire hogs (at \$45 each) to the island from Modesto on February 14, 1917. The invoice names the swine Topsy, Girl, Babe and Miss. Wild hogs' entry into the vineyards caused trouble for the management but on at least one occasion the domestic pigs got into some trouble themselves. In a story told by Helen Caire, the domestic Duroc Jersies escaped from their pen and ate the fermenting residue at the winery, the whole lot of them becoming amusingly drunk: "[My father] described and mimicked the drunken antics of the various hogs and their human counterparts—the quarrelsome ones squealing and biting; the swaying, sleepy ones with eyes almost closed; the reeling ones weaving around on tipsy trotters; one or two sullen sots off by themselves; the mumbly ones grunting in befuddlement."²⁶⁴

The agriculture inspector Symmes in 1922 recorded the presence of a few Yorkshire purebred hogs, and "a considerable number of wild hogs, but these latter are more of a liability than an asset under the present conditions . . . Wild hogs are numerous on the island and cause considerable damage to hay crops and to grapes in the vineyards. Symmes recommended that by improving the fencing the problems could be practically eliminated: ". . . owing to the fact that barbed wire is not used, it offers but little barrier to wild hogs. By adding two and three strands of barbed wire, the fences, most of them, could be made hog-tight and serviceable, as is done in the Burgundy vineyard."²⁶⁵

Crops and Farming

Of all the Channel Islands, Santa Cruz appeared to be the most fertile and gained attention for its prospects. A popular local history book published in 1883 noted that "the pear, apple, cherry, plum, peach, fig, pomegranate, orange and lemon flourish here . . ." and that barley and grains do well. The Caires exploited the island's fertility and planted numerous types of fruit trees and crops, both for harvest and sale and for livestock feed. In the vicinity of the Main Ranch, Prisoners Harbor, Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches, laborers planted walnuts, figs, olives and peach trees, while tilling and planting the relatively flat

²⁶³Reports dated February 9, July 10, August 16, September 13 and October 3, 1920 in Letter Book #3, SCIF.

²⁶⁴S.C.I.C. Book of Invoices, April 2, 1914 to February 23, 1918, Invoice B44, SCIF; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 81.

²⁶⁵Symmes, *Report*, pp. 58-59, 64-65.

lands in the hills with barley and alfalfa. These pursuits kept teams of men busy for many years on the island.²⁶⁶

Ranch ledgers, for the years available, provide exquisite detail about crops and crop experiments. For instance, in 1909 workers planted potatoes at Campo Pomona at Sur Ranch, Campo Alto, Potrero Norte (an area that only yielded a half sack), and Walnut Field. They also planted horse beans (resulting in a good crop), corn (good in some locations, poor elsewhere), kaffir corn (sown too late so a failure), soybeans (poor), sunflowers (good), mangel-wurzels (excellent in Sur Nuevo), and canabs; cattle invaded the latter two crops. The next year the workers sowed the above-mentioned crops and also lima beans, carrots, wheat, rutabaga, peas, cow peas, squash (in the Dining Room Tract at the Main Ranch) and beets (which were eaten by crows and sheep). These experiments, taking place in many locations on the island, elicited the comment in the ledger that “too much scattering of crops is not economical.”²⁶⁷

The Santa Cruz Island Company imported their fruit trees as young trees, and ordered seed for vegetable and feed crops. In 1917, for instance, a mainland company shipped three trees each of cherry, apple, peach, prune, orange, pear, apricot and two of nectarine. Seeds shipped to the island included squash, celery, radish, lettuce, chicory root, dandelion, prickly spinach, mangel-wurzels and peas.²⁶⁸

Walnut orchards had been planted at the Main Ranch and at Smugglers Ranch and were regularly harvested and shipped in used grain sacks. In 1918 Russians hired for the task picked the walnuts; the trees had been pruned earlier which resulted in an increase in walnut production. The walnut trees on the east end produced income for the island owners into the 1940s.²⁶⁹

Feed crops such as alfalfa and oats provided needed nutrition to the island livestock. Laborers spent time smoothing barrancas and clearing stones from fields to prepare reasonably level areas on the island for grain crops. The east end produced much of the feed crops on the island, although fields were found to a limited extent in the Central Valley and west end. Areas were divided off and fenced, being designated as numbered fields and later named as a *campo* or field, such as Campo Maximo. Early in the 1880s the east end was producing large quantities of hay and storing the cut crop in numerous large *sacateras* or hay barns. On the west end a barn was located as far out as Forney’s Cove near Fraser Point.²⁷⁰

During the late ‘teens ranch employees sowed large amounts of barley and oats across the island: 275 sacks sown in 1916-17; 210 sacks in 1917-18; and 140 sacks in 1918-19. The superintendent reported that four horses were hauling barley seed to Christy where men stood by ready to begin sowing; he noted that alfalfa was only good in moist bottom land, and proposed planting white sweet clover (*Melilotua albus*) for both hay and pasture, a crop that required little preparation.²⁷¹

All plowing, sowing, harvesting and transporting the feed crops was done by manual labor. By the late ‘teens the superintendent, Alanson Swain, discussed the purchase of a tractor with the management in San Francisco, urging action before plowing which was looming. The distinctive island soils required some research into plow types and tractor specifications. The superintendent noted that only two kinds of plows

²⁶⁶Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 255-256.

²⁶⁷[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, pp. 71-73, SCIF.

²⁶⁸Entries of March 6 and 7, 1917. S.C.I.C. Book of Invoices, April 2, 1914 to February 23, 1918, SCIF.

²⁶⁹S.C.I.C. Letter B101, November 1917, October 31 and December 5, 1918, SCIF.

²⁷⁰[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 101, SCIF.

²⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 107; Letter, October 26, 1916, SCIF.

will handle dry adobe soil, a disc plow and the old Stockton gang, and that moldboard plows were no good. Relative to tractors in the island's adobe soil, more power was required to pull the implements, and adobe can only be plowed when dry. Swain suggested purchase of a Waterloo Boy (made by a company recently bought by John Deere) with a guarantee that the plow sold would be satisfactory in the dry adobe. Swain wrote that a disc plow does good work in very hard ground and with less draft, and added that the island operation needed a good gang plow, a heavy roller and pulverizer, an Acme harrow and a grain drill, and eventually a binder and a thresher.

Swain didn't get his tractor right away, and the hay was cut, raked and shocked by hand and horsepower as usual. He wrote, "We are plowing Campo Avuelo with the idea of planting corn, peas and potatoes; there is an abundance of moisture and there is no reason why we should not get a fair crop." Alfalfa was in its second cutting at Scorpion; Swain complained that the Climax hay press needed repairs but there was no mechanic on the island. Each out ranch with crops was equipped with the necessary tools and machinery such as disc harrows and hay rakes for the planting and harvests, and the labor forces moved around the island as the seasons changed.²⁷²

The Santa Cruz Island Company purchased a tractor in July of 1918 but its delivery to the east end, lacking a pier, posed some problems. The superintendent wrote of his solution:

We will be able to build a raft out of heavy timbers and get the tractor ashore at Scorpion. Our plan is to take 3 pieces of 12 x 12, cross these with 2 pieces of 6 x 6 and then floor over with 2 x 12 planking. The Capt. wants to make a pontoon out of wine barrels, but this does not seem necessary.²⁷³

Mostly the hay crops were grown as dry-farmed crops, relying on natural moisture. This posed problems in dry years as the 1919 hay crop at Scorpion lost at least a third of its volume due to a dry winter. Ranch management discussed irrigation of certain hay fields in the Central Valley; superintendent Swain wrote of the need to level Campo Nuevo if was to be planted in alfalfa (considered a good prospect), then given a trial irrigation. Pests and diseases posed a threat as well. Superintendent McElrath inquired of the State Commissioner of Horticulture in 1920 about procuring a colony of Australian ladybirds to control "cottony cushiony scale." He noted, "many of the trees, bushes and even alfalfa plants are sadly infected."²⁷⁴

Leslie Symmes found the bulk of the crop growing as of 1922 in the Central Valley, being mostly grapes with a small amount of hay production. Hay growing mostly occurred at Christy and Scorpion Ranches. Symmes found that of 822 acres adapted to hay crops on the island, only 278 acres were in production that year. He noted that

In earlier times it is evident that the production of hay was an important operation and that considerable was produced is apparent. The remains of a number of old hay barns in both

²⁷²Letters, April 23, 27, 28 and June 18, 1918, and September 3, 1920.

²⁷³Ibid., July 25, 1918. The tractor was in service by August of 1918; partial remains of the tractor are preserved at Scorpion Ranch, as are numerous other farming implements saved by the Gherini family.

²⁷⁴Letters, March 22, 1919, October 3, 1920, Clifford McElrath to State Commissioner of Horticulture, January 1, 1920, in S.C.I.C. Letter Book #3, SCIF.

the east and west ends of the island indicate that much land, now pasture, was then cultivated.

He suggested that increased hay production could provide “excellent pasture” on the stubble after harvest “and the aftermath of burr clover and alfileria with which practically all fields are well seeded.”

A reserve hay supply is desirable on any livestock property and the policy of the former times undoubtedly had much to do with the greater carrying capacity of the island.

Symmes’ remarks indicate that the island would be vulnerable to overgrazing without increased feed production or a reduction in head counts of sheep and cattle.

The 60 acres of alfalfa on the island in 1922 were mostly in small plots across the island. Symmes felt that irrigation could improve the crop and that the older fields at Christy, the Sur and Scorpion Ranches could be improved with cultivation and reseeded. Depending on the conditions, the fields yielded two to four cuttings per year and Symmes wrote that, with limestone soil and the lack of gophers, squirrels and rabbits, alfalfa grew “exceptionally well” on the island: “The general soil and climatic conditions seem to be particularly well adapted to alfalfa growth and volunteer plants are numerous.” He recommended the use of irrigation and increase in alfalfa production, which “would prove of considerable benefit to the general operations.”²⁷⁵

Pasture Feed

Studies have been made to determine the original vegetative cover of Santa Cruz Island prior to the arrival of domesticated livestock, showing changes brought by grazing and farming. Fossil evidence and sedimentation analyses have identified numerous plant species as well as changes in plant species from the Pleistocene to the present. The first to bring sheep and horses to the island found it to be an appropriate environment for stock raising, and soon proved it as the numbers of stock grew to the tens of thousands. Early owners and managers eventually allowed the island to be overgrazed, as much of the original ground cover was stripped from the hills by an excess of starving sheep. Justinian Caire evidently sought to reverse the destructive practices through systems of control and range management, and had maps made to plan the location of pastures and cultivated fields. Little has been recorded of Caire’s efforts other than certain erosion control activities and careful counts of livestock.

The Santa Cruz Island Company’s records begin to address range conditions in the late ‘teens, concurrent with the statewide enlightenment towards scientific range management techniques. The University of California and other institutions had been studying the subject and began a system of statewide advisory bodies with farm advisors traveling the countryside to share the wealth of knowledge, especially as regarded range conditions, soil erosion, livestock health and vegetation management.

Santa Cruz Island Company island superintendent Alanson Swain appeared to have some knowledge of the new thinking, and his successor Clifford McElrath certainly did. A dry period in 1918 elicited

²⁷⁵Symmes, *Report*, pp. 66, 70-73.

reports from the island of range conditions and spurred discussion on improvements. Swain wrote in the spring of 1918 of the dry conditions following a heavy rain period: “The feed question on the island is fast becoming serious and from the present outlook the stock will be starving before July. There is actually less feed than before the rains; the dry grass having been beaten down and spoiled, while the new grass is drying up without seeding. The entire West End of the island . . . is devoid of feed, what green feed there is being less than an inch high and fast drying up . . .” Swain responded by devising a redistribution of livestock on the island and the sale of many; he was on the right track, but still acted to protect the bottom line. “We would recommend that all the sheep gathered on the west end be sold—they are the poorest wool bearers we have—and that end of the island be restocked with sheep from Scorpion and the Potrero Norte. This will prevent a total loss on the investment and if we play the game right should show a profit.” But as the drought continued through the next year, in March 1919, Swain recommended removing “a large number” of sheep from the island.²⁷⁶

Swain’s successor McElrath noted the drought and that the island continued to be overstocked with animals near starvation. He inspected the pastures and found that “the pasturage from one end of the island to the other consists almost entirely of alfileria. This is of course excellent feed while green, but when it dries up it withers, blows away and crumbles.” McElrath suggested planting elephant grass for feed at Christy and Scorpion Ranches, and the following month plots were planted at the Main Ranch and Sur Ranch, and still proposed for Scorpion. By June he reported that the elephant grass was doing well all over the island. McElrath began a program of range improvement, as once he wrote of allowing the west end to “rest this year and re-seed itself.”²⁷⁷

Fields and Pastures

Pasturage provided feed for the livestock of a ranch and, hence, was perhaps the most valuable commodity in such an operation. Range management has been practiced for centuries on various levels, although only in the last century have the sciences pervaded the discipline. Sheep have traditionally had more intensive impacts on range conditions with their wide-ranging palate and propensity for cropping vegetation close to the ground. Cattle, unless crowded into a pasture, tend to limit their intake to palatable grasses, yet their weight and mass tend to have its own effects on rangeland. In essence, any grazing livestock needs to be monitored in their feeding habits and needs, and the condition of the range is paramount to the salable condition of the livestock commodity.

Justinian Caire and his family took action to stem erosion, to seed pastures with nutritious feed and to restrict grazing when the range became poor. Before Caire became directly involved in the ranch operation in 1880, overstocking and drought had led to the slaughter of thousands of sheep in matanzas, one way, although out of the ordinary on the mainland, to control livestock numbers. A number of locations on the island showed early evidence of overgrazing as slopes once covered by chaparral and brush and even good grasses became barren areas of erosion and rocky instability.

²⁷⁶Letters, April 23, 1918 and March 22, 1919.

²⁷⁷Letters, March 8, 15 and 23, June 28, November 11, 1920, in S.C.I.C. Letter Book #3, SCIF.

The Caires dealt with some of the early problems by establishing potreros or fenced range across the island where stock numbers and intensity of grazing could be controlled. Ranging from small holding areas or traps to larger potreros of more than a thousand acres, each enclosure had a name and usually a specific purpose. However, vast unfenced ranges made up the bulk of the island grazing land, where control was more difficult and the wild sheep thrived.

An early map of the isthmus and east end of the island, dated about 1880, showed Potrerito del Rancho Mayor in the Central Valley immediately east of the Main Ranch; this would later be divided and largely planted with vineyards although portions were used for horses. By 1919 a Potrero Matanza had been established within the old Potrerito. Potrero de Capones Grandes lay east of Prisoners Harbor covering the area later referred to as Potrero Norte. A Bolsa del Potrero (additional or left-over field) lay west of the Montañon Canyon, and Potrerito del Este, an old field fenced since at least the early 1870s, covered the bench lands between Potato and Scorpion Harbors. The old map depicted fences enclosing the pastures, many of which appear to be brush fences made of piled cuttings called *Reparos*.²⁷⁸

Caire spent some years improving this system, as did his heirs. By 1919 the island's potreros were fully fenced and distinguished from the *campos* or cultivated fields. Superintendent Swain mapped the Potrero Norte in March of 1919, detailing a fencing system and water resources, trails and drainages. The Potrero Norte measured slightly over 2,500 acres of the north-facing pasturelands between Prisoners and Chinese Harbors.²⁷⁹

In 1922 Leslie Symmes estimated 9,000 acres in use as “closed range” or fenced potreros, 1,050 acres of fenced cultivated fields and vineyards with the remainder open range. He described the potreros as “more or less open, rolling grass land, cut by depressions, canyons, or barrancas,” with 2,000 acres “steep, rocky or heavily covered with brush or cactus.” Even in those conditions, Symmes found “considerable” feed in those areas for sheep. The open range consisted mostly of grassland with cactus patches and forested areas; other parts varied from barren and rocky areas of steep topography to “small patches of fertile bottom land as in Pozo and Laguna [canyons].” He estimated these areas to have been enclosed by 60 miles of fencing.²⁸⁰

In 1922 Symmes listed the various pastures as follows:

Potrero Norte

Potrero Norte covered about 2,500 acres of the area called the isthmus, being the narrow part of the island stretching between Prisoners Harbor and the Montañon. Overall, Symmes noted its utility as a “very good” winter range for cattle, it being covered with alfileria, burr clover, wild oats, foxtail and bronco grass. Livestock received water from a spring-fed trough adjacent to the source in Cañada del Muro in the Lake Pasture. Natural sources included the stream at Cañada Agua and “several lagunitas or small craters which hold rain water through the winter and spring.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁸Unnamed, undated map copy at Santa Cruz Island Foundation.

²⁷⁹“Potrero Norte” March 1919, SCIF.

²⁸⁰Symmes, *Report*, p. 18, 58.

²⁸¹Symmes, *Report*, pp. 19-20.

Llano, Mediano and Smugglers Potreros

On the east end of the island Symmes noted three potreros, which he lumped together for description as they were contiguous. Llano lay immediately southeast of Scorpion Canyon, Smugglers immediately northwest of that named canyon, with Mediano between the two. Symmes estimated their size together at 1,260 acres, rocky but “well-covered” with feed with “practically no trees or brush.” He noted the past hay-growing activity but praised the current use as pasture:

Due to its southern and eastern exposure and the fact that frost is almost unknown, the feed comes very early in this region, making an ideal range to fatten livestock for an early market.²⁸²

The only negative noted by Symmes was the lack of year-round water in the potreros, causing livestock to travel to Scorpion for well water. He recommended revitalizing the well at Smugglers to improve the situation.

Potrero Vallata

Symmes inspected 134-acre Potrero Vallata in 1922 and exclaimed of its “exceptionally good crop” of burr clover with a profusion of alfileria and wild oats, notwithstanding its thin, adobe soil.²⁸³

Other Island Potreros (not in the study area)

Potrero Blue Banks, located southwest of Rancho Sur, was a steep, 372-acre enclosure vulnerable to overgrazing, noted as good early spring pasture for sheep or cattle.

Potrero Matanza, 385 acres on the slopes of Valley Peak north of Rancho Sur, was used as of 1922 during the corridas as a trap for sheep gathered in the Pinos Chicos (Pelican Pines) and Las Rinconadas areas. Occasionally, the owners kept sheep to be sold in the Potrero Matanza. The terrain was reported as steep, rocky, rough and brushy with little water, “better suited to sheep than cattle.”

Potrero Portezuela of 150 acres was located about three miles east of the Main Ranch at the top of the grade also named Portezuela. The area was composed of several “cuchillos, flats and canyons” and fed by a number of small springs. An out ranch was located here. Ranch managers used it as of 1922 as a trap for sheep gathered from the Cueva Valdez and Punta Diablo ranges. Symmes considered it well suited for fattening or holding cattle for sale.

Potreros Opuesto and Juntado were located east of Christy Ranch, on the north side of La Cañada la Cuesta on the west end. Together covering 432 acres of hilly land with the standard brushy canyons crossing it, the pasture was watered by springs, one of which had been captured in a pipe that fed a trough.²⁸⁴

²⁸²*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

²⁸³*Ibid.*, p. 22.

²⁸⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 22-25.

Of Potrero las Sauces, Helen Caire recalled, “When we rode there, sweet-scented clover brushed our stirrups.”²⁸⁵ The 1,090-acre Potrero las Sauces was a mostly grassy valley consisting of most of the Cañada Las Sauces on the west end, south of Christy Ranch. It featured good bottomland that, while crossed by deep barrancas, had been planted at least in 1922 with sweet clover. The perennial Sauces creek provided water.

Potrero Forney’s was “a potrero in name only,” according to Symmes in 1922, “as there is practically nothing left of the fence except posts.” Its 531 acres stretched from near Christy Ranch to Forney’s Cove and West Point, including the old Campo la Punta. A number of small springs provided water for livestock.²⁸⁶

Fencing

The fencing of potreros and campos became an urgent task when Justinian Caire took over management of the island in 1880. Previous maps showed little fencing on the island although the west and east ends had been fenced. Maps made for the Santa Cruz Island Company in the 1880s and 1890s showed extensive fencing near the out ranches and early records report men working on fences regularly. After the turn of the century, company reports revealed two methods of fencing in use. In 1904 fencing at Potrero Forneys was described as wood posts with wire at top and bottom, 8-inch wire mesh between, 10-inch clearance from the ground, for a total height of 44 inches; a fence project at Sur Ranch required 321 posts, nine wire rolls and 149 days of labor. In 1905 laborers cut brush and piled it in rows as sheep control fencing, called punta manga or reparos, in Potrero Matanza and Sur Field east of the Main Ranch. These wing fences were evidently in use as early as 1880 if not earlier, and as late as 1920. Former superintendent McElrath provided the following description:

The punta mangas were built of brush piled in a windrow. They might be from a few hundred feet to half a mile long. They had to be repaired before each day’s corrida because, with cattle walking over them and using them for scratchers and wild hogs pushing their way right through them, they didn’t last long.²⁸⁷

A news report noted in 1911 that “the *Santa Cruz* had a load of several thousand feet of lumber for a big new barn there [probably Christy Ranch]. Besides this building there is an immense amount of fencing and other improvements being made on the island.”²⁸⁸

In 1922 Symmes reported some 60 miles of fencing on the island enclosing campos and potreros, in need of “considerable repair.” He described the fence materials as “smooth wire fence composed of 6, 7 and 8 strands,” and recommended adding two or three strands of barbed wire to contain the problematic wild hogs.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁵Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 71.

²⁸⁶Symmes, *Report*, pp. 26-28.

²⁸⁷[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 101, SCIF; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 25.

²⁸⁸Santa Barbara *Independent*, August 7, 1911, SCIF.

²⁸⁹Symmes, *Report*, pp. 58-59.

Red Craine, who worked for the island's owners from 1930 to 1951, recalled building fence lines on the west end and then "along the main backbone of the island, the main ridge of the island, from right up behind China Harbor clear over to the Gherini property." It is unlikely that much fence building was undertaken in the 1930s as the future of the island ownership had become cloudy.²⁹⁰



A sturdy wood-and-wire fence at the Main Ranch, circa 1900. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

²⁹⁰Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 10-11.

Water Resources

Justinian Caire and his ranch managers well understood the need for reliable water resources on this large island. The health of the livestock depended on adequate water and distribution, and the vineyards and other crops could not survive without irrigation. Employees of the Santa Cruz Island Company devised a number of water systems on the island, including wells at most out ranches and at the Main Ranch, and reservoirs with pipe lines feeding the buildings by gravity. Most buildings had running water and wooden or concrete troughs in the fields served the cattle and sheep. These systems are described elsewhere in more detail.²⁹¹

The Symmes Report of 1922 dealt with water resources on the island, noting water sources and development and making recommendations for improvements. Symmes found that most of the island livestock relied on undeveloped springs, perennial streams and a handful of natural ponds and rocky basins in drainages, with few developed water sources. Of the latter he found water piped from springs in Cañada del Muro to troughs in the Potrero Norte and a pipeline on the west end. Otherwise, only the wells at the Main Ranch, Prisoners Harbor, Scorpion and Smugglers provided reliable water supplies, and the Smugglers well was unused and apparently abandoned at the time.

On the isthmus and east end, Symmes noted undeveloped but important water sources only at the Mielquieres range and the Cañada del Aguaje. The Aguaje had springs and perennial streams, however the distance between those sources and the well at Scorpion left a gap that, if closed by revitalizing the Smugglers well, could improve stocking levels in that region. The south side between Aguaje and Rancho Sur had no water.

Symmes considered Santa Cruz to be the “best watered” of all the islands but lacking in adequate development for any expansion of activities. Of the east end he reported that wells provided the only developed water supply and the good stream at Aguaje provided the only surface water. He recommended construction of small reservoirs in the canyons above Scorpion and southeast to Smugglers.

Of the wells at the out ranches on the east end, he noted that Smugglers well was a good one but lacked lifting equipment and storage tanks. At the time, the abandoned hot air pump and cement troughs remained at the site. He reported that the Scorpion house well had a working windmill and pump and a storage tank above, but that the water was brackish. The upper well was “equipped with a 3 H. P. gas engine and Gould double suction pump which pumped the water to the concrete 26,600 gallon reservoir. This well provided “a fair supply of good water” that served the house and troughs in the corrals, but an “increased flow is desirable and could be obtained from these wells if cleaned and developed.”

At Prisoners Harbor, Symmes examined the well, windmill and storage tank on the hillside. He wrote that the “supply and quality of the water is good if the well was cleaned,” and observed that everything was old and in need of repair or replacement.

Symmes also examined the water supplies at Christy and the Main Ranch; of the latter he found a good supply but in need of cleaning and repair for greater efficiency. The overall message of Symmes’ evaluation of the water development on the island was one of underutilized and neglected systems in need of

²⁹¹Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 70-71.



Ambrose Gherini, husband of Justinian Caire's granddaughter Maria Rossi, inspects the creek above Scorpion Ranch in the 1930s. Note the stone retaining wall behind him. The lower NPS campground is now situated in the eucalyptus grove in the background. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

attention and upgrading. While he made no detailed recommendations, he laid clear foundations for improvements, few of which apparently were made until later owners arrived.²⁹²

Water system improvements on the isthmus and east end apparently did not occur until the 1950s. The arrival of the Navy and its modern facility brought the isthmus into the 20th century, as the military made surveys and developed water sources at two locations, Prisoners Harbor and above China Harbor.

On the east end, the Gherinis made a few attempts to upgrade their water systems. Their crews constructed an earthen dam in a gulch at San Pedro Point in 1951 that suffered regular storm damage until a heavy rainstorm in February of 1954 washed it out. An oil company drilled a well above Smugglers Canyon beginning in 1964 and hit not oil but water. The Union Oil Company, in need of water for its drilling operation at Cavern Point four years later, laid a substantial pipeline from the older well site across Scorpion Canyon to the new site, and constructed a reservoir on the Buck Pasture above Scorpion to hold wastewater and mud from the drilling operation. Water was also provided for domestic use to the Gherini family. The well, sections of pipeline and dry reservoir remain.

The Gherinis replaced the old wooden windmill at the house well in August 1975 with a modern steel Aermotor model. The ranch managers and tenants kept the well clean and maintained until the National Park Service took over responsibility. The upper well was abandoned and replaced by a new well in 1998, in compliance with Santa Barbara County health regulations. An old pump house, possibly dating from

²⁹²Symmes, *Report*, pp. 20, 28-30, 45-46, 50.

before 1930, was removed at that time. The long-abandoned concrete reservoir built under order of the Caires slowly deteriorated, with the roof falling in by the 1990s. At Smugglers, the Gherinis and their tenants had rehabilitated the well. A metal Aermotor windmill (installed in 1971 to replace an older wooden one) and pump carried water to the house and troughs. The National Park Service abandoned the old well and its pumping system after the drilling of a new well. Its masonry work, with unique protruding stair steps, remain as an excellent example of the ingenuity used by the Caire's immigrant craftsmen in construction during the 1880s.²⁹³

Masonry Walls in Creeks and Drainages

In the interests of flood and erosion control, the Santa Cruz Island Company commenced a program of creek diversions and rock wall construction as a way to stem damage to fields and structures and to make more efficient use of bottom lands. Beginning in the early 1880s and continuing until at least 1906, the company expended tremendous man-hours reshaping the creek beds, building rock retaining walls and installing check dams in smaller creeks and drainages. These works in the creeks within the study area are described elsewhere in this study.

While much of the work was accomplished in the 1880s and 1890s, projects continued into the 20th century. As an example, ledger entries for the period between December 3 and December 15, 1903, record the following works in which men built 11 large dry-laid stone walls and a score of small ones:

- creek work along La Playa Creek [Cañada de la Puerto] on both sides, dry walls in every canyon
- creek work at Potrero Norte with stumps of fence posts
- creek repair and wall below garden alongside road [Main Ranch]
- total 147.5 days of labor at a cost of \$96.03

Three years later men continued to construct dry-laid stone walls along La Playa Creek, as in November of 1906, two-man teams constructed 130 walls:

- Creek work at Main Ranch, cement and stone walls below garden, east side creek, 136 days
- blasting and cutting stone at Prisoners Harbor, 55 days
- hauling stones from Prisoners Harbor, 41 days
- total 232 days labor at a cost of \$156.55, using 24 barrels of cement, six barrels lime and boards²⁹⁴

Laborers also worked extensively on the east end, installing more than 200 check dams in drainages there.

The extent of rock wall building is not readily evident today, as much of the work is hidden by vegetation or debris flows or destroyed by storm actions after the walls were no longer maintained. A curious wall is found along the road between the Main Ranch and Prisoners Harbor, being an extremely

²⁹³Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 200.

²⁹⁴[Unidentified] S.C.I.C. Ledger, p. 58, SCIF.

well built wall constructed as if holding up a large rock. It might be one of a series of revetments or walls projecting into the Cañada, seen on an early map, presumably to direct the water so that it didn't further erode the canyon walls.

Mining

Justinian Caire explored the profitability of opening a zinc mine near the Portezuela after finding deposits of that metal in a canyon. Samples sent for assay were disappointing so the mine never opened. However, the canyon became known as Cañada de la Mina.²⁹⁵

Weather and Fires

A study of weather and wildfires on Santa Cruz Island would require a specific research effort and would make an interesting report, well beyond the scope of this work. Both the Caires and the Stantons apparently kept weather records for the island, and an examination of those could lead to some interesting conclusions. However, it would be of interest to include a number of reports found during research. The following are some examples of weather and fire reports from the Santa Cruz Island Company records and other sources:

—On February 19, 1878 “a terrific rainstorm . . . raised the creek ten feet, so that it completely washed away the old Indian burying-ground, leaving not a trace behind. Rocks weighing two to three tons were carried along the stream.”²⁹⁶

—February 1882: five inches of snow was reported on the highest summits of the island, with none in the valleys, by S.C.I.C. Superintendent Joyaux.²⁹⁷

—In March of 1905, according to Margaret Eaton, a “terrible” southeast storm hit the island. She heard from Captain Vasquez that it was worse than any he had experienced in his many years of boating at the island. “The ocean had washed high up on the shore at Santa Cruz Island, tearing out trees and boulders, and the heavy rains had destroyed roads inland on the island. Every canyon was a running river of mud, and the ocean for half a mile out was the color of mud.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 81-82.

²⁹⁶Thompson and West, *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties*, p. 256. It is presumed that the creek in question was Cañada de la Puerto between the Main Ranch and Prisoners Harbor; the location of the “Indian burying-ground” is unknown.

²⁹⁷[Unidentified newspaper], February 16, 1882, SCIF.

²⁹⁸Eaton, *Diary*, p. 15.

—In February of 1918 the superintendent wrote that rainfall was generally heavier on west end than east; the following month he noted almost record rainfall, where considerable damage was being done to roads and fields and abutments were washing out at the Main Ranch creek junction.²⁹⁹

—The rainy winter of 1918 was followed by a drought, the lack of rain causing the death of lambs at Scorpion and Potrero Norte, and problems at the Main Ranch: “Hundreds of sheep are spending all of their time—day and night—endeavoring to break into the garden.” The manager suggested holding an early corrida and to reduce new births by disposing of all ewes over five years old.³⁰⁰

—In May of 1918 the Santa Barbara newspaper reported a fire burning “in the big pines near Pelican Bay” and heading in direction of Prisoners Harbor. The island superintendent Swain wrote that the fire “burned over the greater portion of Pinos Chicos” but damage was nominal; the fire started on the flat between Prisoners Harbor and Pelican Bay, another fire burned to the west, and a third small fire burned near the Pelican Bay trail, stopping before reaching Pinos Grandes. Island employees needed shovels, axes and hoes, their efforts “badly handicapped for lack of tools.” Swain considered the fires suspicious and named fishermen Frank Hansen or Clarence Libby as possible suspects; he suggested “putting a good detective on the job.” At the same time, stormy, windy weather caused sheep shipments to be delayed; the schooner couldn’t land at Prisoners Harbor and took seven hours for the return trip to Santa Barbara.³⁰¹

—Red Craine recalled a snowstorm in 1949 that “covered [the island] right down to the water line. In fact, there was a couple of inches of snow on the deck of the boat!”³⁰²

—A fire burned an undetermined number of acres, apparently more than a hundred, at San Pedro Point in August 1979.³⁰³

The “Mag” Line

The Caire Ranch, being composed of a Main Ranch and out ranches at the distant ends of the rugged island in either direction, made use of new technology of the day and constructed about 26 miles of magnetic telephone lines across the island. Alexander Graham Bell had recently perfected telephone technology and the world took notice. Telephone circuits appeared in cities, but just as much in rural areas where distance had always created barriers to communication. Justinian Caire’s grand vision at Santa Cruz Island included using this new invention to further the efficiency of his operation.

Caire began construction of the telephone “mag” line in 1885. Being in the hardware business no doubt aided Caire in procuring quality materials: he purchased equipment and wire from California

²⁹⁹Letters, February 26 and March 13, 1918.

³⁰⁰SCIC Letter B111, January 22, 1918, SCIF.

³⁰¹Letters, May 13, 1918; *The Morning Press*, May 11, 1918, SCIF.

³⁰²Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 31.

³⁰³Photographs in file East End/Development, SCIF.

Electrical Works at 134 Sutter Street in San Francisco, located a short distance from Caire's store on Market Street. Consisting of light, rust-resistant galvanized wire manufactured in England and telephone equipment including phone sets and possibly a switch board, the system worked as a magnetically charged line, primed by a crank operated at the sending end, which provided a medium in which to transmit voice signals through the solid wire. Work progressed through 1888 as workers strung the line, which weighed 168 pounds per mile, on redwood (and other types of wood) poles, attaching the wire securely onto glass insulators. A diary entry for the east end in 1887 noted laborers bringing timber down from the hills for telephone poles, and in 1888 spending more than a week in February bringing poles, digging holes and setting them, and setting up the wires.³⁰⁴ Ted Green of Ventura, who has studied and written about the "mag" line, described some of the feats in stringing the wire:

Because of the radical terrain changes on the island, it was necessary to at times make single spans in excess of 200 yards and at other times some spans were a mere 30 yards. The strains created under these conditions made constant repair necessary.

The necessity to easily communicate with all of the important outstations on this island cannot be fully appreciated unless one traverses the island from end to end. The radical terrain changes posed a constant challenge for road maintenance. There would be many times during the winter months that the telephone would be the only possible means of coordinating the commercial operations of the island.³⁰⁵

The original system that went into operation in 1888 emanated from the Main Ranch, where the phone circuits were located in the office. One line headed west to Christy Ranch, a distance of about ten miles; another the three mile distance to Prisoners Harbor where the phone was located in the caretakers house; and the third circuit about ten miles to Scorpion Ranch, the line traversing the isthmus, over the high point of the Montañon and down the trail to the ranch. Other out ranches fell along these lines, such as the Portezuela and Sur Ranches, but whether they had been equipped with telephones is unknown. Each ranch had been assigned a number of rings to identify it so if, say, three rings sounded, the foreman at that place would pick up.³⁰⁶

The phone system allowed the foremen at the out ranches to report to the superintendent, request supplies and report emergencies. In this way the watchman at Prisoners Harbor could announce the arrival of a schooner to the superintendent or owner at the Main Ranch, or the foreman at Scorpion Ranch could report a dangerous swell in order to reschedule a schooner delivery. No doubt the "mag" line served the island residents well. Within four or five years ranch crews strung additional lines to the out ranches at Forney's Cove and Pozo on the west end, and to Smugglers Ranch on the east end. A line may have extended to Eaton's resort at Pelican Bay, but that has not been confirmed.

An invoice dated February 2, 1917 showed the purchase of a telephone transmitter and wires. Ranch workers replaced the wires on the telephone line to Scorpion in 1918, because the "baling wire" lines had

³⁰⁴Transcript of "Diary for 1887 [faded cover]" and "Diary for 1888" courtesy of John Gherini; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 99-100.

³⁰⁵Ted Green, "Santa Cruz Island Telephone, The 'Mag' Line," typescript of paper given at Channel Islands Symposium, April 1999.

³⁰⁶Ibid.; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 68.

deteriorated to the point that, according island superintendent Swain, “every time the wind blew the wire would break.” Swain noted that “considerable” wire would be needed to repair the line to Christy.³⁰⁷

The Symmes Report of 1922 mentioned the telephone line. Symmes found the system in operation between the Main Ranch, Christy and Scorpion Ranches, but the extensions “have been abandoned for many years though a number of the poles are still standing.” The phone line remained in service until later-owner Carey Stanton’s death in 1987, marking a century of primitive but pioneering telephone service on the island.³⁰⁸

Transportation On and Around Santa Cruz Island

By Sea

The needs of the island enterprises coupled with the nature of the Santa Barbara Channel produced a unique, challenging and exciting way of life for the Caires and their employees. All business and communication was done with the passage from the mainland to the island in mind. Transportation of employees, livestock, products, provisions, equipment, letters and newspapers, all revolved around the company schooner, or visiting steamers and fishing boats. Management of the island required the ownership and maintenance of a good boat, and weather and sea conditions ruled the transportation schedules. A good harbor would be essential for a successful island business.

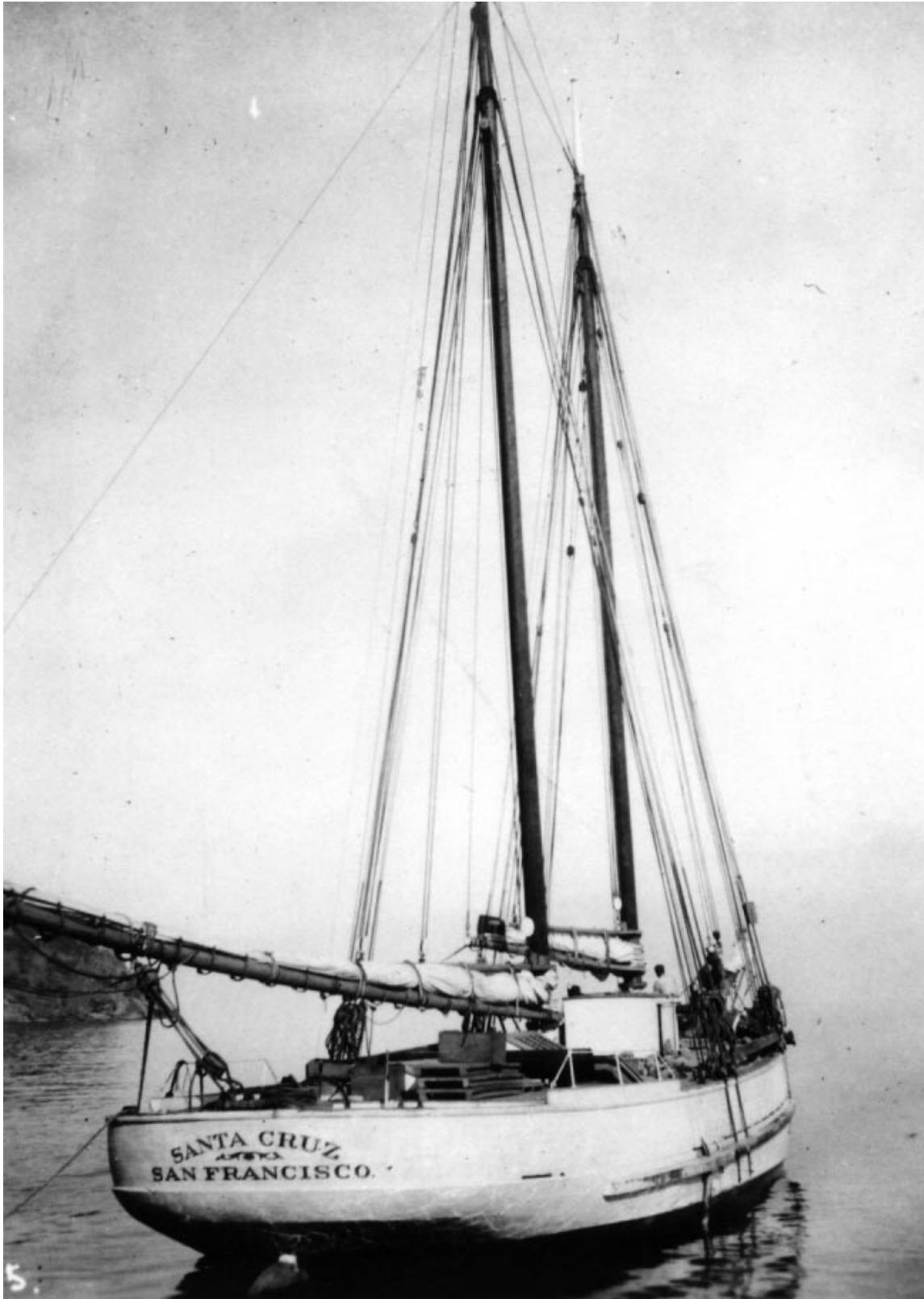
Prisoners Harbor provided the only landing place on the island meeting the criteria of a safe and reliable harbor. The harbor itself is a cove in the westerly part of a wide bight stretching from Pelican Bay to Coche Point, the eastern half of which comprises Chinese Harbor. Dr. Shaw probably had a smaller pier for his use at Prisoners Harbor, but a very substantial pier was constructed in 1869 by the newly formed Santa Cruz Island Company shortly after it bought the island. Prisoners Harbor became the hub of activity on the island. George Davidson of the U. S. Coast Survey provided a description of Prisoners Harbor as of 1889 and recommended that mariners

. . . anchor on the range of the wharf and the cottage, and abreast of the large white rock on the west side of the bight in ten to fifteen fathoms . . . A buoy lies off the end of the wharf with moorings suitable for schooners or small steamers. The anchorage is an excellent refuge in southeast weather, and for moderate westerly weather, but there is no protection from the heavy swell setting in with a strong northwester; it is dangerous in a northeast wind which, however, is rare. The depth of the water at the end of the wharf is between fifteen and sixteen feet.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book, June 18, 1918, SBMNH #0923; Invoices May 1914, B42, SCIF.

³⁰⁸Ibid.; Symmes, *Report*, pp. 57-58.

³⁰⁹Quoted in Symmes, *Report*, p. 86.



The schooner *Santa Cruz* prepares to leave the island with a load of sheep, 1905.
Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California

Vessels

Apparently the first vessel owned by the Santa Cruz Island Company was the schooner *T. G. Sanborn* under Captain Chase, reported in a newspaper as being owned by the “new company” on Santa Cruz Island and bringing “a load of piles for the wharf” under construction on the island. Chase skippered the next company schooner *Star of Freedom*, which served the island up to at least 1893.³¹⁰

Shipping from the east end of the island posed a problem, as conditions at Scorpion Harbor did not support construction of a lasting pier. Livestock, goods and passengers had to be transported between the schooner at anchor and the rocky beach in a skiff or lighter. A newspaper reported in 1881 that one Capt. Harrington built a large lighter in Santa Barbara to be used in removing sheep from east end of island. The lighter, probably a barge, had a capacity of 40 tons, and could reportedly carry 150 sheep per load between the beach and the *Star of Freedom*.³¹¹

Spring shipments of live sheep from the island often elicited news reports. *The Weekly Press* reported that 1,000 sheep were being shipped every ten days on the steamer *Santa Cruz* (not to be confused with the Santa Cruz Island Company’s later *Santa Cruz* built in 1893), which has been chartered to deliver a total of 14,500 sheep to Merry, Faul & Company. “It will take about 4 months to ship the entire lot,” they wrote. Dozens of vessels served the island during its business heyday, including and among the most frequent: *Bonita* 1890-1898; *Coos Bay* 1890-1914; *Eureka* 1889-1914; *Homer* 1898-1918; *Queen* 1891-1914; *Santa Rosa* 1892-1898 (owned by the More family of neighboring Santa Rosa Island); and *Santa Rosa Island* 1909-1911 (owned by the Mores’ successors, Vail & Vickers). In 1920 Ira Eaton’s fishing and excursion boat *Sea Wolf* hauled sheep on at least one occasion at 100 per trip for four trips to Santa Barbara. Vail & Vickers’ *Vaquero* called for sheep that year as well. The Santa Cruz Island Company maintained corrals in Santa Barbara at the beach near Bath Street, with a shack for shearing and storage. Sheep were off loaded onto Stearns Wharf and driven to the company corrals for processing and shipping by rail. The company sold the parcel in 1900.³¹²

The Santa Cruz Island Company hired seamen and schooner captains as part of their large work force. For instance, “Captain of the sloop” Giuseppe Fetter, employed from October 1890 to February 1891, was paid \$25 per month.³¹³

Schooner *Santa Cruz*

Justinian Caire ordered construction of a 64-foot wooden schooner in 1893 to supplant the veteran island schooner *Star of Freedom*. Matthew Turner (1825-1909), noted by maritime historians as “this most prolific of West Coast builders,” built *Santa Cruz* at his shipyard in Benicia, California in the San Francisco Bay Area.

³¹⁰*Santa Barbara Post*, May 5, 1869, SCIF.

³¹¹*The Weekly Press* [Santa Barbara], February 26, 1881, SCIF.

³¹²*The Weekly Press* [Santa Barbara], March 12, 1881; *Invoices* 1889-1918; J. P. Harrington, “Burton Mound,” *BAE 44th Annual Report*, 1928, pp. 565, 62; Letters, June 4 and 14, 1920, SCIF.

³¹³S.C.I.C. Ledger D 1890-, SCIF.



Delphine Caire and her mother, Albina, wait on the pier with the *Santa Cruz* behind them. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*



A panoramic view of Prisoners Harbor. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

She made her trial voyages between June 13 and 22, 1893, after which she was accepted for service by the Santa Cruz Island Company. [In a letter dated May 26, 1893 Caire noted that the new schooner was moored at the “Italian fisherman’s wharf” in San Francisco.] Her gross tonnage was listed in 1930 as 45 tons (43 net), length 64 feet, beam 18.6 feet, depth 6.4 feet with one deck, and was reportedly valued at about \$15,000. The Santa Cruz Island Company had hired Giovanni Revello, a sea captain from Liguria, on January 21, 1893 at \$45 per month. He apparently was the first captain of the *Santa Cruz* but was dismissed as a “Crank” on July 1, 1894. Company sailors hired between 1896 and 1906 were paid \$20 to \$30 per month. Longtime island employee Pietro Olivari was first hired as a young man in 1901 as a deck hand at \$20 per month; his father was the captain at the time. James B. Prescott, former captain of Vail & Vickers’ *Mildred E*, was hired in November of 1906 at \$30 per month and when hired as captain received \$45 per month.³¹⁴

At first a sailing schooner, the Company adapted her abilities with the installation of a gasoline engine around 1906. Red Craine, later the captain of the schooner in the early 1930s, related that in the early days of power the crew had to sail her as they tried to get the engine started. He related that the engine was used primarily for landings and entering and exiting the harbor.³¹⁵

The *Santa Cruz* spent her 67-year career serving Santa Cruz Island and its owners, as well as neighboring island enterprises, carrying goods and provisions to island residents, the island’s many products to the mainland, passengers and equipment. A typical short report in a Santa Barbara newspaper illustrated the schooner’s uses:

The *Santa Cruz* island schooner came in yesterday with a cargo of wine, walnuts and almonds, products of the island ranches, and returned in the afternoon for a cargo of sheep.³¹⁶

Service by the *Santa Cruz* was interrupted when, on September 19, 1913 she went aground on the rocky shore southeast of Santa Barbara. Captain George Nidever piloted the *Santa Cruz* from San Pedro where the 20-year-old schooner had just undergone repairs in dry dock. Nidever’s compass proved to be damp and therefore inaccurate, causing him to miscalculate the bearing as he passed Hueneme Light. In the dark the vessel hit rocks and began to list heavily with waves breaking over her. The crew stopped the engines and quickly decided to abandon ship, launching a lifeboat with great difficulty. Nidever and his two crewmembers, unaware of their location, rowed aimlessly in the darkness until daylight revealed Santa Barbara ahead.

That morning, motorists passing on the Coast Highway noticed the wreck near the mouth of Rincon Creek between Ventura and Santa Barbara, and one couple reportedly boarded the *Santa Cruz*. Nidever procured the services of a number of power launches including a tug, none of which could pull the vessel

³¹⁴“Record,” Log Book No. 5, Schooner Santa Cruz, SCIF; Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56 (Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996), pp. 173-175; S.C.I.C. Ledger D 1890-, SCIF; Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, “Santa Cruz Island,” p. 4.

³¹⁵Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 6.

³¹⁶Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, November 23, 1906.

off the rocks. Fearing the total destruction of the island's important schooner, work continued for weeks to accomplish a rescue of the vessel. Her small cargo was removed and empty casks installed below decks to keep her afloat. Not until December 18, almost one month after the stranding, did a salvage company successfully pull *Santa Cruz* off the rocks. After a couple of months of repair in San Pedro, the boat returned to service.³¹⁷

The *Santa Cruz* provided weekly service to Santa Barbara with regular calls at Scorpion Ranch and occasionally Smugglers and Campo Chino. The company had much if not all of the major maintenance, such as bottom scraping and repairs, performed in San Pedro, which had facilities for such work. The crew took care of the basic maintenance such as painting and cleaning.³¹⁸

In 1919-1920 Captain Olivari continued as skipper of the *Santa Cruz*. Clifford McElrath wrote about Olivari's skills. While in the harbor, Olivari remained alert for weather conditions. "By the lapping of the waves against the hull he could tell exactly what was happening weatherwise," McElrath wrote. "He didn't sleep with one eye open but he did sleep with both ears wide open." McElrath claimed that in rough weather, Olivari ordered all aboard to quarters below and lashed himself at the helm as the boat was pummeled by huge waves. "The *Santa Cruz* rode them out one after the other, largely due, I think, to the skillful handling of the old captain."³¹⁹

Vivienne Caire Chiles recalled that the family caught the schooner at Stearns Wharf in Santa Barbara; the younger children were required to stay below deck but as they grew in age they were allowed on deck.³²⁰

Red Craine took over operation of the *Santa Cruz* from Ira Eaton about 1932. Craine described the schooner at that time as

A full schooner rig . . . two masts. A main mast and a fore mast. She had a long jib, a boom that stuck way out in front and that had a sort of odd ball sail, it wasn't actually a jib, it was what they call a jib staysail . . . [We used the sails] more and more for steadying the boat than for anything else . . . although a couple of times I have sailed her in from the island when a heavy northwest wind would hit, and before the sea got big. I have sailed her in from the island on sail alone, which was a lot of fun!³²¹

According to Craine, the *Santa Cruz* required a crew of three in the 1930s, the master and two deck hands. The crew slept in bunks below decks while the captain had a cabin behind the engine room in the stern. "We just lived on the boat and at times we wouldn't move for two weeks at a time. We would lie there, and about all we had to do was keep the boat clean and painted, cleaned up and in good shape. With three men on the boat, it took about an hour and a half every day. The rest of the time we did a lot of pig hunting and beachcombing, things like that . . . fishing. We lived a lot on sea food." The trip to Santa Barbara took less than three hours when the boat was clean of barnacles and the weather was smooth. "But then the old engine in her wasn't too powerful, and if we hit a bad wind or bad sea, sometimes it would take five or six

³¹⁷Stella Haverland Rouse, "The Way It Was," *Santa Barbara News Press*, December 18, 1988; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, footnote 83, p. 105.

³¹⁸Reports in Letter Book #3 and letters of December 29, 1919 and August 2, 1920, SCIF.

³¹⁹McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 58-59.

³²⁰Oral history with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.

³²¹Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 5-6.

hours to get there.” During the 1930s the Caires had the boat kept docked at San Pedro for the winters after supplying the island. The boat was put back in use in time to ship sheep in the spring. The *Santa Cruz* could accommodate up to 300 sheep below decks during shipping.³²²

Arthur Caire reportedly purchased the *Santa Cruz* from the Santa Cruz Island Company during the litigation between family members, 1912-1932. When the Caire family sold Santa Cruz Island to Edwin Stanton in 1937, the *Santa Cruz* came along with the property. After 67 years in island service, the *Santa Cruz* was destroyed in a storm at Prisoners Harbor in December of 1960.

Roads and Trails

Years of sheep and cattle grazing, coupled with the activities of vaqueros and horsemen, produced miles of trails crisscrossing the island. These trails reached into virtually every canyon and across all ridges, unless topography made such passage impossible. It is not known whether many of these trails were maintained beyond knocking down branches and clearing fallen rocks and trees. The trail with the most importance traversed the Montañon on the route to Scorpion Ranch in the east. Here it was necessary to cut a trail in places on the rocky face of the badlands on the west face of the pass. The trail was noted by Coast Surveyors William Greenwell in the mid-1850s and Stehman Forney in 1873-1875.

No known engineered roads existed when Caire took over operation of the ranch; even the rough track between Prisoners Harbor and the Central Valley was little more than a route along the gravelly creek bank. Arthur Caire had studied engineering and surveying while at the University of Santa Clara and contributed to the planning and construction of good roads. The route to the west end, called Camino del Carro, had ascended southwesterly from the Main Ranch and followed the ridge line south of the Cañada de Portezuela until descending to the wide valley of the West Ranch. Arthur Caire reportedly engineered a new road up the valley to La Cascada and then over the passes to the Centinela Grade which descended in hairpins to the west end. Stone retaining walls held some of the steeper portions of fill, and repairs were often needed during the winter storms in this section.³²³

The Santa Cruz Island Company’s crews of laborers built numerous roads on the island between 1880 and 1900. Often the road building required the construction of dry laid stone retaining walls such as those found in the vicinity of Scorpion Ranch. By the ‘teens the road system of the island had been well developed and served the island industries well.

Symmes felt that the only roads of importance as of 1922 were the two from the Main Ranch to Prisoners and Christy. He noted the old road connecting Scorpion Ranch with the then-abandoned Smugglers Ranch; otherwise he made no mention of other roads on the island.³²⁴

More detail on roads in the study area is found elsewhere in this report.

³²²Ibid., pp. 4-9, 17.

³²³Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 70.

³²⁴Symmes, *Report*, p. 58.

Labor at the Caire Ranch

To accomplish his dream for the island, Justinian Caire and his Santa Cruz Island Company hired hundreds of men, from skilled craftsmen to ditch-diggers. Extant records show the bulk of the island labor force to have been Italian. According to Pier Gherini, Justinian Caire had a friendship with P. C. Rossi, manager of the Italian Swiss Colony at Asti in Northern California (Rossi married Caire's daughter Amelie). Italian men approached Rossi regularly for work; Rossi and Caire reportedly worked together in hiring men for their respective industries.³²⁵ Justinian Caire spoke French, Italian and English with a "working knowledge" of Spanish. His hiring reflects his knowledge of languages, as the labor force consisted almost entirely of Italians, French, Spanish-speaking "Barbareños" and Americans.³²⁶

Men arrived at the ranch by the company schooner and found lodging at their base of operations. The Main Ranch had at least one bunkhouse but many workers reportedly lived upstairs in the stable or other ranch buildings. Bunkhouses were available at Scorpion, Smugglers, Christy and other out ranches. A cook usually provided food for the workers. The company procured all sorts of supplies for workers and apparently kept a store for the men's needs. For instance, in an order for supplies in 1917 an invoice listed clothes, shoes, blankets, tobacco, food, medicine, soap, Briar pipes and cigars for the ranch employees, and ranch supplies such as silverware and kitchen goods, shipping tags, chemicals, tools, grape hooks, cotton sacks, lumber, hardware. To those with certain responsibilities on the island, Caire provided his workers with maps of the fields: "He made his plans in an orderly manner," recalled his granddaughter Maria, "and each ranch had hand-drawn drawings on a thin type of oil cloth sheets showing the different fields and their positions in respect to the buildings." As of September 1889, 110 workers were kept busy on the island: 70 men at the Main Ranch, 10 at Smugglers, 14 at Scorpion, eight at the West Ranch and eight at Portezuela.³²⁷

Management

The company employed a system of island superintendents who reported directly to Caire or his sons in San Francisco, writing weekly reports on the progress of the work and activities, and keeping detailed ledgers of expenses, sales, plantings, and the like. Records of the superintendents have gaps, but the following list provides an idea of the men and some of their rates of pay:

Jean B. Joyaux, born in France in 1846, acted as superintendent from circa 1877 to 1882 or before 1888, and died in 1919 in Santa Barbara;

Jules Moullet in 1890 [noted by Goodyear in 1890];

³²⁵Typed commentary by Pier Gherini on Daily Work Sheets, 1886-1900, p. 7, courtesy of John Gherini.

³²⁶Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 5.

³²⁷Payroll Book 2, September 1889 to April 1893, entry for September 1889; Invoices May 1914, B19 September 6, 1916, B80 July 25, 1917, SCIF; Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, "Santa Cruz Island," p. 6.

Goffredo Capuccio, May 1893-June 1894, \$100/month (Capuccio later married one of Caire's daughters, Aglae³²⁸);

Theodore R. Fiala, July 1894-October 1895, \$60-\$75/month;

Auguste Clement, [November 1895]-May 21, 1897, \$75/month;

Leon Valadie [a vineyardist; responsibility unclear];

Carlo Erbeti, April 5, 1898-February 12, 1902, \$60/month, resigned;

Alanson Swain, June 1916-August 1919 \$125-150/month;

A visitor provided this description of Swain in March 1919:

The Supt. is a peculiar person; medium in height, dark and very quiet. He is exceedingly hard to talk to on this account, and I felt rather nervous when near him. He has a very pleasant and very *Talkative* wife . . . We figured that the Supt. probably didn't like us much . . . he is probably the possessor of a very fiendish temper. Somehow I don't like the hang of his jaw. It certainly does no good, especially for his sweet wife. Her only apparent fault is her bubbling type of talkativeness which I don't condemn violently, even if she may be a little inquisitive.³²⁹

Clifford McElrath, August 1919-September 1921, \$100-125/month (see section below on McElrath's accounts of island life);

Ulric (or Ulrico) Revel, October 1921-October 1923, \$100-125/month (his predecessor McElrath described Revel as elderly);

Pete Olivari as of 1930 to the late 1940s; the longtime island resident worked for the Caire brothers and the Stantons, and reportedly eventually didn't want the responsibility of superintendence as he got older, and so spent his last days maintaining roads and fields.³³⁰

The superintendents managed a group of foremen, each assigned to an out ranch. The foremen may have made weekly trips to the Main Ranch to report on the activities in their sections, and the superintendents traveled to the out ranches as well.

³²⁸According to notes by Arthur Caire, Capuccio had been hired in 1891 on the recommendation of Pietro Rossi, Justinian Caire's son-in-law, first as a clerk in San Francisco and then as island superintendent. Arthur Caire claimed that Capuccio was fired for his "bad temper and ill-advised actions." Capuccio would become a key player in later activities that led to the division of the island ("Copy of Diary kept by Arthur J. Caire," courtesy of Mary B. Brock).

³²⁹Dawson, "Diary," SBMNH #0863, quoted in *A Step Back in Time*, p. 152.

³³⁰Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 14. Much of the list compiled at SCIF.

Jobs, Wages and Working Conditions

Men hired for labor and skilled work at the ranch came from many places around the world. The majority during the late 19th and early 20th century were Italians from, as written in employee ledgers, Toscana, Piemonte, Lombardia, Genova and Venezia. Other nationalities, besides American (and “Santa Barbarans”), included French, Mexican, Portuguese, Chinese, Greek, English and Swiss. Labor tended to be divided among ethnic lines, although not exclusively. Italians made up most of the laborers, masons, stonecutters, vine workers and the like, while French men worked in the wine cellar and the wine warehouse. Santa Barbarans and Mexicans made up most of the force of vaqueros, largely seasonal workers. The Company hired Chinese cooks at times. One of Caire’s granddaughters wrote of his manner as an employer:

My grandfather, Justinian Caire, infused into his employment just the right amount of patriarchal spirit, a tradition of management followed successfully by his heirs During a depression Justinian Caire was approached by many laborers who begged to be allowed to go to the island and work for board or lodging. Much as he sympathized with them, Justinian Caire could never bring himself to hiring without payment. He always paid prevailing wages, and never imported foreign labor in order to pay less.³³¹

Men hired at the ranch possessed many capabilities, although the most common employee was the laborer who would perform numerous tasks which ranged from digging ditches and hauling stones to cutting hay, pruning vines or building roads. Turnover was fairly high over the years: while the ranch employed perhaps 80 men at any one time, the employee records show over 300 workers passing through in a period of a few years, and some 1,300 between 1884 and 1906. General laborers, who made an average of fifteen to twenty dollars per month, numbered the highest.

The following job disciplines were recorded on the island in the early 1890s:

- superintendent
- captain
- majordomo
- foreman
- magasinier [warehouseman]
- cellarman
- clerk
- stableman
- vaquero
- mason
- seaman
- cook
- driver
- blacksmith
- gardener
- carpenter
- farrier
- butcher

³³¹Letter of Jeanne Caire quoted in Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 60.

pick & shovel
driller
vineyard
cavalry
artillery
hunter
dairyman
saddler
charcutier
brick maker
mirratore [watchman]
charron [wheelwright]
braciante [day laborer]
stone cutter
wagon maker
laborer

Tasks performed by these men included:

making dried meat
corridas for castration and separation
making charcoal
water works
surveying (making maps etc.)
brick making
lime making
wood chopping
wagon making
wharf repairing
rectification of creeks
fishing
wine cellar
schooner
planting, cleaning vegetables
haying
horse breaking
building and repairing fences
clearing land for avenues or veredas
shipping sheep, cattle, hogs etc.
dry walls and creeks
fruit trees
hunting wild hogs, etc.
ploughing land for cultivation and planting same
clearing land (breaking ground) for cultivation
roads and highways
shearing sheep
planting, watering etc. eucalyptus and other unvaluable trees
filling in pieces of ground preparatory to building

construction and improvements
 constructing and repairing telephone lines
 help around trasquila at shearing time
 harvesting and hauling of hay
 general hauling and teaming
 planting, vintage and general work in vineyards
 plowing land for new vineyards
 hauling or carrying wool and wine to Prisoners Harbor
 saddlery
 poultry³³²

The following list from the employee's ledger provided an example of the range and talents of the laborers working on Santa Cruz Island in 1890:

Vasquez, Ramon, Vaquero	labor 17 days 14.16 [wage] from shearing 45.72
Rezzonico, Luigi, Mason	labor 26 days 17.33
Olivas, Frank, Seaman	labor 2 days 1.60
Dally, George, Seaman	labor 2 days 1.75
Villozi, Gioachino, Mason	labor 30 days 19.33
Scudelazi, Alberto, Carpenter	from shearing 22.10 labor 9 days 6.00 labor east end 4.67
Fetter, Giuseppe, Captain of the sloop	\$25. per month
Prescott, James, Captain	\$45. per month
Kays, John, Driver	labor 27 1/2 days 18.00
Perini, Giuseppe, Foreman	\$25. per month
Sicilio, Ferdinando, Blacksmith	labor 29 days 21.30
Dorée, Isidore, Gardener	\$20. per month
Griffin, William, Blacksmith	labor 27 1/2 days 18.33
Moulet, Jules, Superintendent	\$100. per month
Bianco, Michele, Magasinier	\$40. per month
Fantini, Luigi, Farrier	\$20. per month
Capuccio, Goffredo, Clerk	\$40. per month

Company clerks carefully recorded labor statistics in leather-bound ledgers, information including name, when the person arrived, how many days worked at what price, items purchased from the company storehouse. The Company kept provisions available for the workers and worked the store on a credit system. Items such as blankets (\$5), soap (.10) clothes, tobacco, even cash, were available at the store. Clerks recorded the men's wages and debits from the store. For example:

Fezzeli, Giovanni, laborer.				
1890	October	26	passage	\$7.50
		28	tobacco, stamps	.32
		31	labor 5 days	\$3.33
			balance	4.49

³³²Payroll Ledger, S.C.I.C., 1893-1901, SCIF. The listing of "cavalry" and "artillery" have not been explained.

November 30 soles, shoe - nails .60
 20 labor 29 1/2 days \$19.66
 [etc.]³³³

The superintendent also kept track of the workers' habits and worthiness. The Company upheld strict codes of conduct at work and off hours. Foremen reported on the conduct of their men to the superintendent who relayed the information to company heads in San Francisco and duly marked infractions in a ledger. The ledger noted terms of dismissal, names, occupations, time of employment, salary, gratification and remarks. The key in the front of the Employees ledger listed the following:

Explanations

Thanked means dismissed for the convenience of the Company; but could be taken again
 Dismissed means dismissed for not very grave reasons; but should not come back
 Discharged means dismissed for grave reasons; cannot be taken back
 Voluntarily means left the Company's employ for a change of climate; should not be taken back
 Honorably means left the Company's employ for private but honorable reasons; could be taken back

Note: The following remarks applied to an employee mean that "he must not be taken again":

Drunkard or fond of wine
 Lazy or Slow or Tramp
 Insubordinate or Rough to Foreman
 Disobedient
 Foolish or Weak-minded
 Or any man who remains only a few days or weeks

The comments inscribed in the ledger over the years that it was in use ranged from scathing to glowing, with a number of humorous comments as well. For instance, former assistant superintendent (1884-1885) S. J. Rasette received the comments, "unfit to be in any society" and "should have never been taken on the island," while another was called "a faithful man in every respect." The keeper of the ledger noted that Vincenzo Tosi, a cook at Smugglers Ranch, "kicked the foreman" in early 1887; other comments included "lazy, growler," "requires constant watching," "revolutionist by instinct," "block head," "good worker," totally unreliable" and "rather a lengthy talker, but a good man." Many entries ended with "not to return." While some popular accounts implied that working on Santa Cruz Island was a "happy" experience, the isolation of laboring on an island with more than a hundred fellow employees, a strict system of discipline and restricted communication with the mainland made for a difficult situation for both the owners and managers of the island and many of the employees.³³⁴

³³³Ledger "S.C.I.C. D 1890-", SCIF. It is presumed that the store or commissary was located in the ranch office; in later years, according to Marla Daily of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, basic necessities were kept in a locked case in the *commissary* (office) for distribution and/or sale to Stanton employees.

³³⁴Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 87; Duncan Gleason, *Islands of California: Their History, Romance and Physical Characteristics* (Los Angeles: Sea Publications, Inc., 1950), p. 71; John Gherini to Ann Huston, October 13, 2000.

The management, apparently following customs from then old country, provided employees with a daily ration of watered-down wine called Piquette:

The vintage is a season of jollification, but though in a land of wine, there is no excess in drinking. This was explained by the manager, who said that the men rarely drank water, a variety of claret being made for their especial benefit. This, diluted, each man carried in a small keg when he went into the field, and used to quench his thirst; and in consequence a case of intoxication was never known.³³⁵

Labor disputes have been recorded only a few times. On January 12, 1900, a strike resulted in five men being discharged, but no details have surfaced. Labor problems abounded during World War I as numerous men went to war and men remaining on the island, many of whom were Spanish-speaking, experienced dissatisfaction. Vineyard workers went on strike in June 1920.

Superintendent McElrath wrote a great deal about labor problems of all varieties in 1920. That year he caught Capt. Nigro making raisin wine in the house at Prisoners Harbor; the foreman at Scorpion threatened to quit with no one available to take his place; a puzzling epidemic affected the island workers, as they acted dizzy, sleepy, shaky, with red eyes, listless, like malaria, one man went “out of his head” and had to be sent to the mainland. A post-war labor situation proved to be critical: higher wages and strikes on the mainland affected the now-underpaid work force on the island and men quit at an accelerated rate, causing McElrath to make some suggestions for change on the island:

The situation as regards cooks is a serious one. At the outside ranches the foremen have been doing the cooking and have been for some time. This is not desirable naturally and amounts to riding a free horse to death. I am afraid of losing the foreman if we keep it up too long.

I realize that the Company’s experience with married couples has not been encouraging but with a couple on the job you at least have a cook.

With the use of tractors, gang plows, etc. it is no longer necessary to keep such a large gang of men at the outside ranches even if we could get them. A plan of organization which I believe would help in the present labor shortage is as follows: [describes a situation of a man, wife, perhaps 2 hired men at each ranch, who could take care of plowing and planting; three can cut, rake and shock during harvest] . . . We would have a “bull gang” such as we are using very successfully this year to go from one ranch to the other to bale, stack, etc. The gang could be used out of haying season to build fences, repair roads, etc. [a bull gang was at present baling at Scorpion then moving to Prisoners Harbor to repair the pier]

³³⁵Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 264.

In the same letter, McElrath informed the Caires that he was offering a man and his wife a position at Prisoners Harbor for \$75.00 per month.³³⁶

Red Craine recalled the food and the cook on the ranch in the 1930s:

. . . they had a cook over there who had been with them for 16 years, a guy by the name of Hercules Pico. You knew what you were going to eat every meal that you sat down at the table, 365 days a year, with him. He baked wonderful sourdough bread. He was actually a baker by trade. You got in the morning mutton chops and boiled beans and that bread and coffee. At noon you got roast mutton and beans and bread and coffee. At night you got stew and beans and bread and coffee. Other than once in a while on a Sunday morning, if he felt good natured, he would make hot cakes! . . . They had chickens down there, but we never saw any of the eggs. They went to the family.³³⁷

Craine stated that between 1930, when he came to the island, and 1937 the Caires employed an average of eight to ten men to run the ranch, a great decrease since 1920.

McElrath's Recollections

Island superintendent Clifford McElrath wrote a book in 1967 on his experiences in charge of Santa Cruz, which provided an in-depth and some times humorous view of island life. Although his employment on the island was relatively brief (March 1919 through September 1921), he left one of the three major and remarkable first-hand accounts of island life, *On Santa Cruz Island*. Highlights from McElrath's book, republished in 1993, follow.³³⁸

Arthur Caire hired McElrath to oversee the cattle operation on the island, giving him the title, assistant superintendent. When McElrath arrived at the Main Ranch to work for Superintendent Swain as the cattle boss, he showed pleasure with the accommodations:

I was assigned to a room on the second floor of the adobe house in which the superintendent and his wife made their home. My room had two windows. It was reached by an outside stairway with a roofless porch about four feet square at the top of the stairs, the porch being surrounded by a wrought-iron railing all forged out by hand on the island. The balustrade to the stairs was the same. In the room was a bed with a mattress and a pillow; I had my own sheets, pillow cases, and blankets. There were a couple of straight-backed chairs, a bureau of sorts, and a curtained-off section to hang my clothes in. There was also an old styled marble-topped washstand on top of which was a pitcher of cold water, a wash bowl, a tumbler, and a soap dish. On the floor was a bucket or slop jar, as they were called, for dirty water. A small table and kerosene lamp completed the furnishings.

³³⁶Reports of February 2, April 12, June 6-20, July 5, August 16, 1920, also Clifford McElrath to [Dr.] Benjamin Bakewell, Santa Barbara, June 24, 1920, in Letter Book #3, SCIF.

³³⁷Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 27-28.

³³⁸The other books noted are Helen Caire's *Santa Cruz Island: A History and Recollections of an Old California Rancho* and Margaret Holden Eaton's *Diary of a Sea Captain's Wife*.

Other conveniences were on a hillside several hundred feet away. The bull cook swept my room, kept my water pitcher full, and emptied the slop bucket. He also did my washing but no ironing. When I wanted a hot bath, I carried a pitcher of hot water from the kitchen and took a sponge bath.³³⁹

McElrath ate alone in a small dining room off the office, joined occasionally by cattle buyers or Mr. Caire. When McElrath became superintendent in August of 1919 he worked out of the ranch office composed of “a couple of chairs, a couple of high stools, and two high desks that it was necessary to stand up to when writing unless you sat on one of the high stools.” The superintendent’s weekly reports to the owners were hand-written and duplicated on a copying press. McElrath described the buildings at the ranch and many of the features of the island including vegetation, birds and animals.

McElrath was taken to Christy Ranch, it being the hub of the cattle operation, to see the facilities, and to the east end. He was assigned to break horses as part of his duties and related a number of amusing incidents. His descriptions of the corridas, like those of Helen Caire, provided a vivid look into that adventurous event. He described the hiring of vaqueros, who were given an advance which some used for a drinking binge before boarding the boat:

Most of them arrived at the boat in good time, some a little worse for wear. There were always a few that failed to appear. On being asked “Where are so and so and so and so?” they never replied, “He is in jail.” Instead they rolled their eyes, maybe sighed and replied, “Ah, pobrecito, está en dificultades.”

That meant the boss had to go up to the county jail and talk Sheriff Jim Ross into turning them loose. This he generally did in return for the promise that they would not be back in town for two or three months.³⁴⁰

After readying themselves and their mounts for the corrida and spending a day repairing wing fences and trails, the men left before dawn the next day for the wild roundup. McElrath’s description rivaled that of Ms. Caire:

The sheep, true to their instinct, started for the high country with the riders following behind, cutting down through canyons and along hillsides to stir up any that lagged and the next minute riding hard for some spot on a hogback or cuchillo where it looked as though the sheep were going to try to break through into some other canyon not included in that day’s run.

This was where the men on the puestos (men posted along the route) had to keep their eyes open and anticipate where the sheep were going to try to break through, waving their hats, yelling and popping their whips or riding hard to get to some small saddle in the ridge before the sheep got there. If a few broke through it was very hard and sometimes impossible to turn the rest of them.

Finally the sheep topped the ridge and headed down hill only because no other direction was open to them. There might be five hundred or a thousand in the drive and it meant ride hard to keep up with them. Sheep can go fast downhill in rough country.³⁴¹

³³⁹McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 4.

³⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 25.

³⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 26.

McElrath commented on the strange sheep that lived in the rugged country on the south side between the Sur Ranch and the Aguaje on the east end:

The sheep that lived in the central portion of this waterless stretch, unbelievable as it may seem, never tasted water from birth to old age except what they received from dew or rain or eating a form of ice plant called Siempre Viva. I have chewed Siempre Viva many times when thirsty and it is a good substitute for a drink of water. These sheep lived in a country composed of lime rock and were easy to recognize by the large amount of powdered limestone in their fleeces. They would spend three and four days in the corrals and never go near the water troughs.³⁴²

According to McElrath, the owners sold several thousand sheep to Basque sheepmen from Nevada. The Basques insisted on rounding up the sheep with their dogs, a practice never seen on the island. He wrote that “some of those old wild bucks took it as an affront to their dignity. When the dogs tried to head them off they promptly butted the dogs into the cactus and rock and mauled them generally.” After unsuccessfully trying sheep wings hastily constructed of muslin (the sheep ran right through them), the Basques gave up and reverted to the old methods.

McElrath’s chapter on rustlers told of the rise in livestock killing as the fishing industry grew, from small boats out of local ports to the purse seiners after tuna and albacore with crews of up to twelve men hungry for fresh meat, sometimes killing half a dozen steers at a time and firing upon ranch employees who may have stumbled across the spectacle. Swain and McElrath spent countless hours trying to get the authorities on the mainland to protect the island from such depredations but got little help. One boat crew, after buying wine at Prisoners Harbor, went to Scorpion Ranch and robbed the place of hogs and chickens. After becoming superintendent, McElrath armed all willing island employees. Now the island experienced shoot-outs as cowboys would return fire, but rustling apparently slowed a bit after word got out that the ranchers were armed.

Arthur Caire asked McElrath to succeed Alanson Swain as superintendent. McElrath wrote that

Santa Cruz offered a challenge that I didn’t want to miss. It was probably forty or more years behind the mainland in its methods of farming and livestock management. It was in fact a piece of California of the 1870s and ‘80s. Spanish and Italian were the accepted languages unless one considered the dialect used by the Italian vineyard and farm hands when talking to me. This was a mixture of Spanish and Italian with a little English thrown in. For want of a better name one could call it Santa Cruz Islandese.³⁴³

McElrath noted his desire to upgrade the ranch management practices into the 20th century: “I saw no sense in feeding from twenty to twenty-five thousand sheep to shear about nine or ten thousand and get a forty to fifty percent lamb crop.” He decried the fact that the bull cattle ran with the cows year round resulting in deaths of too-young pregnant heifers and calves being born at the wrong time of the year for a healthy upbringing. He wanted to stop the rustling. Prohibition was looming and he would be responsible for selling 50,000 gallons of wine before the law took effect, and then make the transition to grape growing for the commercial market. McElrath worked hard: “Some days I rode as many as fifteen hours and on one

³⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 30.

³⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 51.

occasion I was in the saddle for thirty-six hours except for short cat naps on the ground or stopping to change horses or to eat. I kept five or six good horses working most of the time.” He wrote of an old island custom that posed a problem for a hard-working superintendent working a roundup way east at Scorpion Ranch:

The story went that many years before the island had a superintendent who was a student of Shakespeare or maybe he just had insomnia. Anyway he sat up most of the night reading and never got up until near noon. So he started a custom of ringing a gong after supper and all the men gathered in front of the office. He then assigned each man his duties for the following day. This custom had been carried on religiously by every superintendent since that time. I had already learned that old island customs must not be broken lightly. They must be allowed to fall into disuse gradually and so it was with this one. I never discarded it but if I was going to be away I either gave them their orders a couple of days ahead or, later, when I had an assistant, had him do it. During that roundup I kept the trail hot between the Scorpion and the Main Ranch. As often as not I rode the fourteen miles before daylight in the morning.³⁴⁴

McElrath collected wild steers in the mountains by mixing tame cattle with them or employing a *cabresto*, a trained steer or bull raised at the Main Ranch. The *cabresto* would be tied to a wild bull or cow in the mountains and then lead it back to the ranch in a tamer condition. McElrath’s book provided a number of stories of roundups and detailed the crafting of a rawhide reata. He wrote of pig hunts and adventures with the movie companies that operated on the north side. One employee made olive oil and another cheese, supplying the island residents. Of the characters and old-timers on the island, McElrath wrote lovingly. He closed his memoir with this passage:

Undoubtedly things have changed. The old Spanish riders and their California poche, the old Spanish language of California, have all long since ridden to the last roundup. The old Italian vineyard workers who spent their lives on the island and spoke no English are gone too. Methods have changed and been modernized. A few of the young men, old men now, may still be around Santa Barbara and remember the old days. They were good days.³⁴⁵

After leaving the island in late 1921, McElrath did odd jobs until settling in as a ranch manager in Monterey County and a cattle raiser.

Litigation Amongst the Caire Family

During the four decades following Justinian Caire’s death in 1897, his heirs entered into a long period of actions and litigation that eventually divided both the family and the island. Few accounts have been written of the complicated and historically significant litigation. William Henry Ellison included five pages about the litigation in his short history of Santa Cruz Island (1937), almost all derived from contemporary *California Reports*. John Gherini, great-great-grandson of Justinian Caire and a third generation attorney whose grandfather played a key role in the case, wrote a detailed and well-researched book about the

³⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 52.

³⁴⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

island, using the legal disputes within the family as the central theme; this work has been most valuable in compiling this chronology. Justinian's son Arthur J. Caire left a diary that, although containing mostly personal observations and opinions, has proved helpful in understanding the events. The intensity of this dispute among family members, which began as early as 1894 and intensified in 1911, is seen in documents owned by various members of the family, with opinions often contradicting each other. Although sorting out the many events and personal feelings left in the wake of the litigation posed a considerable challenge, there is no doubt that the activities leading to the partition of the island were of great importance and set the course of the history of the island for years to come.

The Caire Family: The Second Generation

As noted earlier, Justinian and Albina Caire had six children who survived childhood: Delphine, Arthur, Amelie, Aglae, Frederic and Helene. All of the family apparently visited the island regularly, but Delphine and Frederic seemed to have the closest connection to the island. Amelie's family (she had married Pietro C. Rossi in 1880 and the couple had ten children) came to the island for visits, and her husband must have taken a keen interest in the island vineyards, as he was involved in a profitable wine business himself. Members of the family visited the island for summers, usually for about six weeks. Amelie's daughter Maria spoke of the childhood trips from Oakland to Santa Barbara aboard the freighter *Eureka*, which made numerous stops on the way and provided an unpleasant ride. Later by the *Santa Rosa*, a passenger steamer (not to be confused with the ranch schooners *Santa Rosa* and *Santa Rosa Island* from neighboring Santa Rosa Island) brought family members to Santa Cruz Island. The family endured the coastal trips despite the conditions: “. . . we never rebelled; it was all worth it, because, when we left San Francisco, we expected to stay the whole six weeks or more at Santa Cruz Island.” In the later years, the family traveled by train to Santa Barbara and then from Stearns Wharf aboard the *Santa Cruz*.³⁴⁶

Justinian Caire had a “slight stroke” while on the island during the spring of 1896. A ship was sent for which returned him to Oakland. The isolation of the island during a medical emergency may have inspired Caire to study improved communications with the mainland: his granddaughter recalled that he became particularly interested in carrier pigeons after the incident. Caire never fully recovered and died at his home in Oakland on December 10, 1897. His sons Arthur (1859-1942) and Frederic (1865-1950) took on the full responsibility of the city and island businesses. The brothers lived in Oakland with their families and operated both the Justinian Caire Company and the Santa Cruz Island Company. Albina Caire continued to reside in Oakland and rarely visited the island.

³⁴⁶Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 86; Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, “Santa Cruz Island,” p. 5. Three of the Caires' children died in infancy or at a young age. It is important not to confuse Justinian Caire's youngest daughter Helene with his granddaughter Helen, daughter of Frederic Caire. On occasion, the latter Helen Caire signed her name, “Helene.” Helen Caire wrote extensive accounts of life on Santa Cruz Island, which are referenced throughout this document. P. C. Rossi was a principal in the famous Italian Swiss Colony at Asti, California, a pioneering wine business in the state.



Portrait of Albina Caire. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

Frederic Caire took on the most responsibility for the island operation, learning the ranching business and taking part in the work while he was there. He brought his family to Santa Cruz for the summers and on other occasions, including a number of Christmases. Frederic's daughter Helen wrote that Justinian Caire's daughters rode around the island sidesaddle, but the next generation (according to Helen Caire's sister), dominated by girls, rode in the traditional manner. One employee described Fred Caire as "a very fair

person. Very strict, very straight laced, but a very fair person.” He had a great sense of humor, was well-read, and liked people and entertaining; he was known for his fine tenor voice. Arthur Caire, reportedly more studious and serious than his brother, apparently rarely visited the island in the later years although his family did, but Frederic spent a great deal of time there and obviously loved the island life.³⁴⁷ Red Craine, captain of the schooner Santa Cruz in the 1930s, recalled that Frederic Caire

went back and forth with us a good deal of the time. Sometimes in the winter, he wouldn’t go over too much, but during the summer he went back and forth with a lot of the trips we made. He had a chair in the cockpit—it was an open cockpit in those days, we were out in the weather all the time—he had a chair he would wedge in against the aft rail in the cockpit, and get wedged in there. He would just sit there and shut his eyes, and be green all the way over and all the way back! He was sea sick all the way, not actively, but he was sick. And, he would just shut his eyes and grit his teeth!³⁴⁸

Frederic’s daughter Helen Caire wrote a number of essays about the ranch life and history and eventually published a book that provides loving descriptions of the corridas, vaqueros, family activities, fishermen and favorite ranch dogs. She claimed to have been working on a book “on our coastal islands” with Georgia C. “Babbie” Overton as of 1947.³⁴⁹

The Will of Justinian Caire

Justinian Caire prepared a will on January 24, 1889, which left his estate to his wife Albina. In the will Caire expressed his desire that the family businesses be continued “with as little change and alteration as possible” by his heir and children. Probably realizing the possibility of his outliving his wife, Caire amended the will on January 28 to provide that if Albina Caire was dead at the time of his passing, the estate would be distributed to his children equally, or to their children, if any of the second generation had not survived. Caire named his two sons as executors of the estate, operators of the family business and “guardians” of the four sisters. Caire’s death at age 70 in 1897 initiated the standard probate proceedings that would examine the will and distribute the assets. However, the assets as filed did not include any interest in the Justinian Caire Company or the Santa Cruz Island Company. Caire had transferred his stock in the companies to his wife in late 1895, two years before his death. So, Albina Caire already owned the Santa Cruz Island Company and continued to do so for a number of years after her husband’s death, leaving management to Arthur and Frederic.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷Oral history interview with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by the author; interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 7.

³⁴⁸Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 8.

³⁴⁹Helene Caire to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, March 11, 1947, SBMNH #0900. Overton’s draft of the island history is in the possession of the Caire family.

³⁵⁰Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 118-120; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 175; “Ownership of Stock,” p. 1 in Arthur J. Caire diary. According to Arthur Caire, his father had obtained full control of the Santa Cruz Island Company in 1887, at that time placing “a certain number of shares” of stock in the name of his nephew and employee Adrian Merle, sons Frederic and Arthur, and son-in-law Pietro Rossi, “all those shares being endorsed back to him.” This is puzzling, as it implies that Caire made a gift and then took it back.



A rare photo of a gathering of the Caire family, circa 1908, who would soon split in years of contentious court battles. At the top left is Helene Caire, with Delphine Caire in front on her left; the three men at upper right are Ambrose Gherini, Frederic Caire and Arthur Caire; P. C. Rossi is the man on the left with the beard, with his wife Amelie Caire Rossi next to him; Edmund Rossi is the man in the front right. Albina Caire can be seen in front of her son Frederic near the right rear. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

Disagreement among Family Members

Business on the island continued unchanged after Caire's death as evidenced by ranch records that reflect the typical work in the vineyards, creeks, shearing sheds and warehouses. Albina Caire owned the operation and her sons managed it; they, with Delphine and Aglae, acted as the directors of the company. Mrs. Caire began to distribute, at various times, the 100 shares of stock in the Santa Cruz Island Company among her six children, each receiving seven shares with the widow retaining a majority interest; however, according to Arthur Caire, all of the stock certificates were endorsed back to the mother, who received the

subsequent dividends. In June of 1911 Albina Caire distributed additional shares in the company to three of the adult children: five more shares each to the sons, and three additional shares to oldest daughter Delphine. Amelie, Aglae and Helene retained their original seven shares. Soon after, Mrs. Caire gave Arthur and Frederic two more shares each and sold three shares each to the two men and Delphine. At the time Albina Caire wrote her final will in 1912 (her original will had been destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco fire, and a replacement had been laid aside), she owned 32 shares of the company, her sons 17 each, Delphine 13 and the remaining three sisters seven. In what would become a bone of contention among the family, Mrs. Caire left equal shares of her personal estate to all the children but the two one-sixth shares for daughters Amelie Rossi and Aglae Capuccio would be in the form of a life trust with their brothers as trustees. Also in 1912, an ailing Mrs. Rossi transferred her seven shares in the island company to her oldest surviving son, Edmund Rossi.³⁵¹

A seemingly innocent mistake in the office led to a breakdown within the family. As a California corporation, the Santa Cruz Island Company paid an annual license tax of five dollars, which under a 1905 law, was necessary for the business to continue as a corporate entity. The law stipulated that failure to pay the tax would result in forfeiture of the franchise of the corporation and the distribution of its assets. For unknown reasons the company management or staff failed to pay the tax in November of 1911 and the corporate charter was forfeited. This resulted in the family directors (Albina, Arthur, Frederic, Delphine and Aglae) becoming trustees for the shareholders (the remaining family members), the assets becoming the property of all shareholders, and the requirement that the trustees liquidate the corporation and distribute its assets if requested by any owner. The directors, with Aglae Capuccio abstaining, tried to reincorporate the Santa Cruz Island Company in 1913 and, although this move was not legally binding, continued the business as usual. That year, the aging Albina Caire transferred all of her shares of island stock, as well as her entire interest in the Justinian Caire Company, to Delphine, Arthur, Frederic and Helene. Although Albina Caire did not die until 1924, these uneven but legal distributions of assets caused a family rift that never healed.³⁵²

Only two of the four Caire daughters had married: Amelie (1861-1917) had married Pietro C. Rossi, an old friend of Justinian Caire and one of the developers of the famous Italian Swiss Colony vineyards at Asti in northern California; the couple had 14 children, ten of whom survived into adulthood. Aglae (1864-1943) married Goffredo Capuccio, once one of Caire's island superintendents who had, after an absence of 15 years, returned to the company's city office to become the secretary, and this couple had two children. Rossi died in 1911 and Capuccio in 1915, leaving both sisters widows with children. Delphine (1856-1949), the oldest child of the couple, and Helene (1867-1929), the youngest, remained unmarried. (See the genealogy of the Caire family in the appendix.)

The forfeiture of the corporate charter, and no doubt the uneven distribution of the company stock, spurred the son of Amelie Caire Rossi to file a lawsuit that would be the first action in a series of litigation that would go on for 20 years.

³⁵¹Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 123-124; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 175; Ellison, "History of the Santa Cruz Island Grant," p. 279; "Ownership of Stock," pp. 2-4 in Arthur J. Caire diary.

³⁵²Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 125-126, 134; communication by the author with Vivienne Caire Chiles, February 24, 1999.

Litigation

Edmund A. Rossi, grandson of Justinian Caire and oldest surviving son of Amelie Caire and the late P. C. Rossi, and now an owner of seven shares of the Santa Cruz Island Company, filed a lawsuit for injunctive relief in San Francisco Superior Court on July 12, 1912. His suit endeavored

to enjoin the directors [of the Santa Cruz Island Company] from carrying on the business of the corporation, and to compel them as trustees to wind up its affairs, pay its debts, distribute its assets to its stockholders according to their interests, and specifically to distribute to Edmund A. Rossi, as plaintiff, seven one-hundredths of said assets.³⁵³

Rossi contended that the forfeiture of the corporation's charter should result in the liquidation of the Santa Cruz Island Company and distribution of its assets to the shareholders. Aglae Capuccio had a similar suit prepared but it was held up pending the outcome of the Rossi suit. The court ruled in Rossi's favor on June 9, 1913; four days later Albina Caire disinherited her two daughters Amelie and Aglae. Tensions had been rising between Albina Caire and her sons and the sons-in-law for a number of years over a number of issues. Then the trustees, using terms of an amendment to the License Tax Act, revived the corporation in August of 1913, but without the consent of all parties. The Santa Cruz Island Company would therefore continue in operation. This act notwithstanding, the judge in Rossi's case ordered an accounting of the property and the sale of the company's real estate and personal property, which would include Santa Cruz Island and all of the equipment, products and supplies on the island. The majority trustees appealed the ruling to the California Supreme Court.³⁵⁴

San Francisco newspapers followed the activities with interest. The *San Francisco Examiner* reported in 1913 that Santa Cruz Island "is to be sold and the proceeds divided among disgruntled stockholders."³⁵⁵

Rossi hired Orrin Kip McMurray and his brother-in-law Ambrose Gherini as counsel in the appeal. San Francisco attorney Ambrose Gherini had married Edmund Rossi's sister Maria (a granddaughter of Justinian Caire) in 1906. The California Supreme Court ruled in 1916 that, while the earlier ruling in favor of Rossi as concerning the forfeiture of the corporation was valid, the sale of the assets was invasive as the courts should not interfere with the lawful distribution activities and that the property could be divided without forcing a sale. The Supreme Court affirmed that the trustees were responsible to their stockholders for the fair distribution of the assets and that only with all of the stockholders' approval could the

³⁵³Ellison, "History of the Santa Cruz Island Grant," p. 279.

³⁵⁴The narrative concerning litigation is derived, unless otherwise noted, from: Ellison, "History of the Santa Cruz Island Grant," pp. 279-283; John Gherini, "Santa Cruz Island: Conflict in the Courts" in *The Fourth California Islands Symposium: Update on the Status of Resources* (Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1994), pp. 167-169; and Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 129-141. Arthur Caire's diary contains numerous references to tensions between his family and Goffredo Capuccio in particular; he accused Capuccio of illegally opening a copy of Albina Caire's new will in Italy in 1906 and sharing its contents with other in-laws, causing some of the first family rifts, and claimed that the notice of delinquency for the license tax had been placed on Capuccio's desk and then disappeared without explanation. Caire wrote that the family was particularly upset when an accountant, H. M. Brace, showed up to scrutinize company records on behalf of Mrs. Rossi and Mrs. Capuccio in January of 1912. The difficulties that followed were inflamed by the strong personal feelings of all involved.

³⁵⁵*San Francisco Examiner*, April 18, 1913, in CHS, Biography Collection: Caire, Arthur J.

corporation be revived. In essence, the property, both real and personal, would need to be divided amongst the family members according to their shares of ownership.

In 1917 Rossi filed for an accounting of the Santa Cruz Island Company in order to allow the distribution to take place. The trustees asked the court to dismiss Rossi's action and succeeded, so Rossi and his aunt Aglae Capuccio appealed. The California Appellate Court agreed with Rossi and Capuccio in 1919 but the trustees of the defunct corporation refused to cease operation and distribute the properties. They claimed that they had legally revived the corporation in 1913 under the terms of a new statute allowing such actions, even though Mrs. Rossi and Mrs. Capuccio as minority shareholders had not taken part in or supported the action; the Caires felt that since they controlled a majority of shares of the stock they could and would continue to operate as usual. At the trial it was revealed that the directors of the renewed corporation had extended the life of the Santa Cruz Island Company for 50 years, to 1969. Judge Troutt of the San Francisco Superior Court ruled in favor of the trustees and again Rossi and Capuccio appealed.

The litigants found themselves in front of the California Supreme Court again in January of 1921. The debate centered on the forfeiture of the corporation and the legality of its revival under the new statute. Without a legally revived corporation the assets would be owned by all parties and by earlier court decrees divided and distributed; with the corporation in place the property would have been re-transferred back to the company and business would continue as usual, although with majority and minority stockholders of opposing views. After much spirited debate about the finer points of corporate law, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Rossi and Capuccio, noting that the forfeiture of the corporation was "not a case simply of suspended animation . . . but one of absolute death . . ." When the corporation died, the shareholders automatically obtained vested rights in the assets that could not then be taken away. The court ruled that the corporation could not be revived without the consent of the former stockholders. Back in Superior Court it was then ordered that the trustees file an inventory and render an accounting of the Santa Cruz Island Company. The trustees submitted the inventory and the court appointed an agricultural engineer in early 1922 to confirm the inventory and make an evaluation of the island ranch.

The Symmes Report

The Superior Court judge ordered a professional evaluation of the island ranch operations. Symmes & Associates, an agricultural engineering firm with offices in the Merchants Exchange Building in San Francisco, sent its representative Leslie W. Symmes and former island superintendent Clifford McElrath to the island in early 1922 and produced a 94-page typewritten report, which principal Leslie Symmes delivered to the Court in May of 1922. Not only had the family been engaged in ten years of litigation over control of the island, but also the changing face of the activities there made such an evaluation timely. Prohibition had ended wine production, the sheep business was being run in the 19th century fashion, and labor shortages had caused difficulties in retaining an efficient work force. The Symmes Report provided

the court a clear view of the ranch as it existed in early 1922, and gives the historian a detailed look at island conditions at that key juncture in the island's history.³⁵⁶

After describing the island in some detail, the author evaluated the harbors and anchorages, noting Prisoners Harbor, Chinese Harbor and Smugglers Cove as the most important; at the time, only Prisoners had a pier but the other two provided good anchorages except in heavy weather. Symmes also mentioned the smaller, mostly recreational anchorages on the north and south shores.

Symmes described the ranch operation physically and from a management standpoint. He described the potreros and ranges, finding them to be in fairly good condition but with great potential for improvement. Symmes took water resources into account, noting where livestock could find water and where it was scarce. He spent particular attention to the natural forage and its quality and quantity. Finding alfileria, burr clover and wild oats predominating, Symmes praised the regenerative powers of these grasses and encouraged protection of ranges through grazing controls and improved fencing. Overall, Symmes deemed the island ranges "overstocked."

The report evaluated the existing developed water systems and found them generally to be old, unclean and in need of repair. The report recommended developing reservoirs in order to improve livestock watering in remote areas.

In evaluating the buildings and improvements, Symmes found many instances of poor maintenance coupled with age; overall, the old buildings, fences and water systems needed upgrading.

The report took a close look at the livestock conditions. Symmes found the sheep to remain mostly true to the original stock, but producing a smaller clip of lower quality than should be expected. Introduction of closer controls of the free-ranging sheep, such as full-time herding and better fencing, would improve the operation. The cattle, a subsidiary business for the island's operators, were found healthy although feeding in the same pastures as the sheep, an uncommon practice in the evaluator's eyes. Horses, needed for roundups and general ranch work, were also found to be in good condition.

Symmes listed a few "problems" facing the ranch operation, namely poaching, predation and wild hogs. He considered that by changing the herding practices of the sheep the depredations by fishermen and birds could be lessened or entirely eliminated. He offered no solution to the hog problem, although intimated that stricter controls on the range could affect the hog problem positively.

Symmes considered the agricultural operations on the island, consisting of vineyards, feed and orchards, to be minor compared to the livestock operation. While the vineyards showed signs of maintenance and improvement, the orchards were neglected, in fact the olive groves at Smugglers had been abandoned. Symmes estimated that the acreage of presently cultivated areas could be tripled, from 530 acres presently in use to 1,550 acres possible, mostly in hay and vineyards. He found the equipment for farming to be outdated or unused, and recommended purchase of tractors. The schooner *Santa Cruz* needed overhaul for optimum use.

The Symmes Report looked to the future, finding that overall the island operation was run in an archaic manner and could be greatly improved by use of modern knowledge, programs and equipment.

³⁵⁶Symmes, *Report*, pp. 42-93; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 110. Whether Leslie Symmes himself wrote the report is unsure but likely; for the purposes of this narrative, "Symmes" refers to either the report or Symmes himself.

The island offers many opportunities for the extension of its agricultural operations and the development of its range and livestock possibilities . . . There is considerable land well adapted to the production of hay and alfalfa which can be profitably farmed . . . With modern and sufficient equipment these lands can be better prepared and more economically handled with consequent increase in yield and returns.

The greatest possibilities lie in the improvement of the range and water conditions and the change from the present system of raising livestock.

Symmes claimed that instituting rotational grazing coupled with the needed repair of fences could rejuvenate the pastures, given their recuperative powers. He recommended that the wild sheep be gathered and removed, to be replaced over three or four years by tame herded sheep, which would increase the number of lambs sold and improve the wool clip. “Under this system less sheep would be run on the island than at present but all would be productive of returns which is not the case under the present system.” Cattle numbers should be increased as well as feed crops, wherein some 300 steers and additional cows and heifers “could be turned off each year under good management.”

Irrigation could be brought to some 300 acres of the island, mainly at the Main Ranch and Christy Ranch. The stream at La Cascada west of the main ranch could be tapped and fed by gravity to vineyards and alfalfa fields in the Central Valley, while small dams could be constructed in Scorpion Canyon to irrigate fields of alfalfa in the valley flats above the ranch. “The value of irrigation is well known,” wrote Symmes, “and that there are irrigation possibilities on the island which can be economically developed is apparent.”

Symmes discussed the trees on the island, finding the natives to be of only botanical and visual interest. The numerous groves of eucalyptus had been and should continue to be used for pier pilings.

The report evaluated the transportation and communication of the island enterprise. The schooner *Santa Cruz* was found to be adequate for island supply and sales to the local markets, but not for improved operations, as it was too small to haul a full carload of cattle and its gasoline engine was inefficient. Symmes recommended a larger boat with a diesel engine, which would deliver livestock to San Pedro where a larger market was available and prices higher. A “more economically operated boat,” presumably smaller, could be “of considerable value for mail and the ordinary mainland trips, as well as for an occasional patrol of the island coastline.” The pier could be extended 50 feet for optimum service to larger vessels. Of communications, Symmes noted that the boat was the only means of contact with the mainland, and he recommended that a radiophone, a new technology to the world at the time, would “not only save the expense of many unnecessary trips by the schooner, but would make operating and living conditions on the island more satisfactory.”

The report found the local market at Santa Barbara to be sufficient for the island business as it stood, but increased efficiency and production could spur the island managers to widen their marketing sphere to include San Francisco and Los Angeles.

There is little doubt but better prices could be obtained for the island products with a wider trade acquaintance and sales by the island superintendent. A little effort would develop a competitive market for a larger number of sheep and cattle which can and should be sold annually.

Wine grapes sold well at the time, despite Prohibition, but the livestock prices at Santa Barbara were lower than elsewhere even though there was a viable market there. The ranch could increase production and sell at San Pedro for a better profit, unless the Santa Barbara market remained strong.

The Symmes Report extolled the beauty and attractiveness of the island and noted the lively fishing industry off shore. The writer warned that the increased activities of the purse-seiners “are fast cleaning up these waters as was done around Santa Catalina Island Elimination of these boats would practically eliminate one of the most troublesome local island problems of the free and unprotected system of raising livestock.”

The report concluded:

From our investigations of the island and its conditions there is no question but that properly developed and operated as a livestock and farming proposition, it can be made to return a satisfactory income on a reasonable valuation and investment.



Frank Flourney surveyed Santa Cruz Island during the litigation, calculating the portioning of the island among family members. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

The Partition

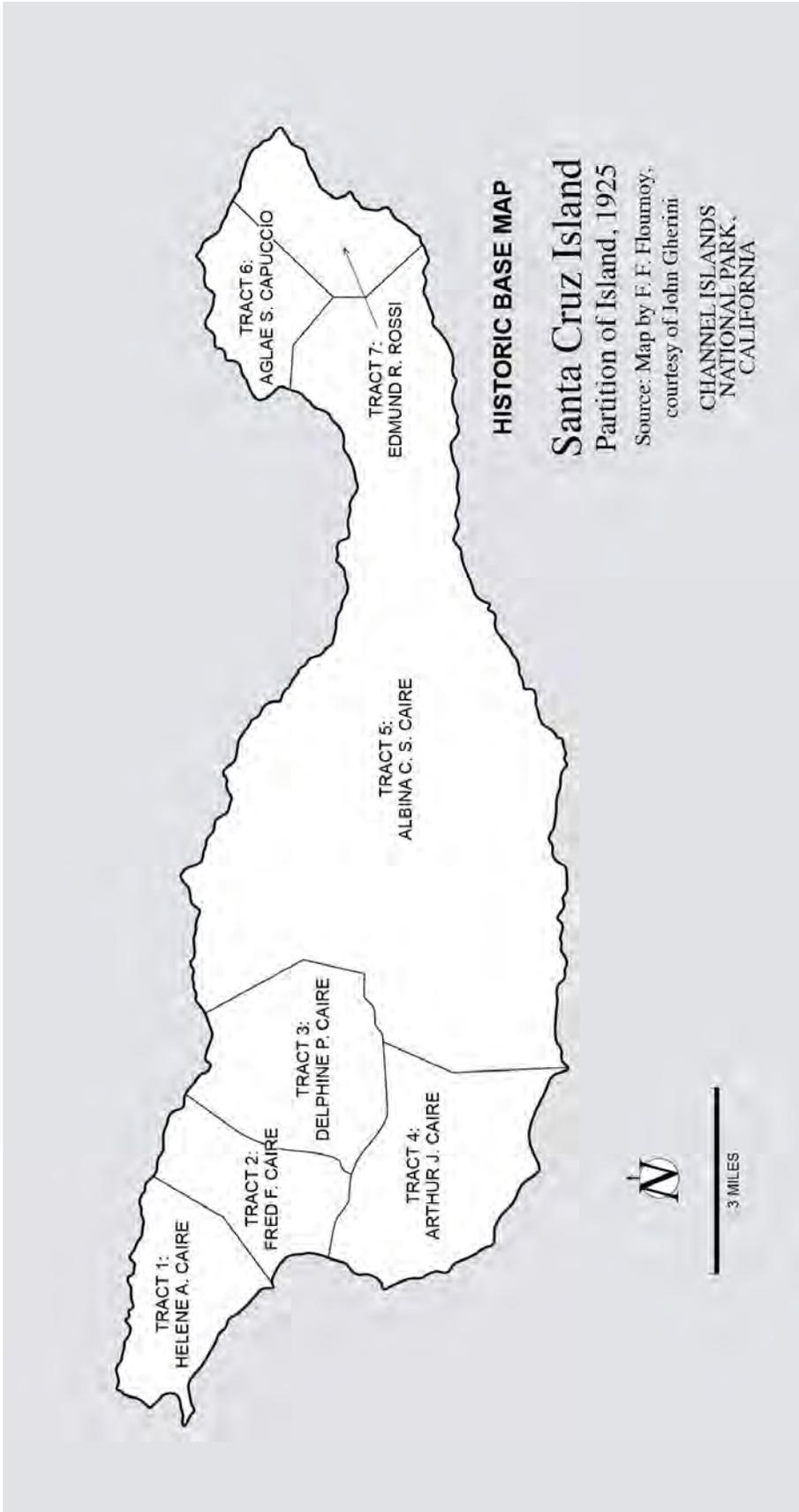
As the litigation proceeded through the San Francisco courtrooms, Edmund Rossi and Aglae Capuccio filed for a partition of the island in 1918 in Santa Barbara County. A partition would, under supervision of the court, divide the island into sections of value equal to the shares held by the various owners. Again the two sides battled over the legitimacy of the revived Santa Cruz Island Company. On September 21, 1920, Judge Samuel E. Crow of the Santa Barbara Superior Court ruled in favor of a partition of the island and on October 6 appointed three referees to oversee the survey and division of the island. Santa Barbara surveyor Frank F. Flournoy, one of the referees, would produce an accurate topographical map and determine the appropriate tracts according to land classification, water supplies and acreage balanced with the value due to each family member. Another referee was a successful real estate broker among other pursuits. Again the trustees, Arthur, Frederic and Delphine Caire appealed on numerous fronts but failed every time. The two sides reportedly attempted to settle out of court in 1922 but could not reach an agreement.³⁵⁷

Flournoy assembled a team of surveyors and chain men who spent parts of 1923 and 1924 mapping the entire island, the first time since the U. S. Coast Survey visited the island in the mid-19th century. At a cost of \$37,500 for 238 days of work, the party of six men measured and recorded every valley, mountain, stream, beach and cliff on the island. Their work commenced on February 28, 1923. Using the old government surveys as a guide, they first measured the coastline to produce an outline of the island. Flournoy reported that

This work was extremely difficult and very dangerous and could only be accomplished by employing expert surfmen with boats to assist in landing the surveyors at points along the shore, and in some places even this was impossible and life-lines were let down from above or detours were made inland sometimes to the distance of one mile in order to reach an outlet to the shore. The surveyors and the surfmen employed to assist them were required to work rapidly at times because of the dangerous swells and blind breakers, and yet the entire work was done and monuments and monument tags of permanent character were firmly and securely placed.

The surveyors found the exterior boundary line, which followed the tide line around the island, to be 70.47 miles. With plane tables, chain and rod the men then measured the topography and elevations. While mapping the island Flournoy “computed the acreage of farming land and the acreage of other classes of land, determined the location of roads and sources of fresh water supply and harbors,” taking into account value of the different types of land for the purpose of making a fair division based on “quality and quantity.” Besides employing surfmen (at a cost of \$3,220), the crew rented lodging with board and an automobile, presumably from the Caires. The survey concluded on December 26, 1924. The final products

³⁵⁷Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 143-156.



included a topographic map and a partition map showing the proposed boundary divisions as assigned to each family member.³⁵⁸ Flournoy and the two other referees recommended the following:

Helene Caire 7/100ths—3,867.39 acres valued at \$42,000;
 Aglae Capuccio 7/100ths—3,035.60 acres valued at \$42,000;
 Edmund Rossi 7/100ths—3,217.89 acres valued at \$42,000;
 Delphine Caire 10/100ths—6,024.70 acres valued at \$60,000;
 Frederic Caire 12/100ths—3,667.12 acres valued at \$72,000;
 Arthur Caire 12/100ths—6,639.77 acres valued at \$72,000;
 Albina Caire 45/100ths—34,289.27 acres valued at \$270,000;
 TOTAL [1911] VALUE \$600,000

Helene Caire’s tract 1 included the western tip of the island including West Point and Fraser Point and the site of Rancho Nuevo; Frederic Caire’s tract 2 included the northern section of Christy Ranch; Arthur’s tract 3 included the southern part of the Christy Ranch (the buildings on the south side of the creek), the Pozo drainage and Johnson’s Lee; Albina Caire’s tract 5 was by far the largest, representing 45 per cent of the estate. Her parcel stretched from Arch Point on the north shore and Punta Arena on the south all the way to the ridge of the Montañon, including the Main Ranch and Prisoners Harbor. From this tract would be control for access to the western tracts, all to be owned by the Caire side in the dispute. The Rossi and Capuccio interests received tracts 6 and 7 on the eastern end of the island, considered by some to be the best part of the island but disputed by the Rossi/Capuccio attorney, Ambrose Gherini. Gherini contended that his clients should have larger parcels to offset the access problems with the east end.

Flournoy broke down the attributes of each tract, including improvements, useful and waste land. In the final survey the east end parcels were reported as follows:

Lot 6, Aglae Capuccio 3,035.60 acres (Scorpion Ranch area)

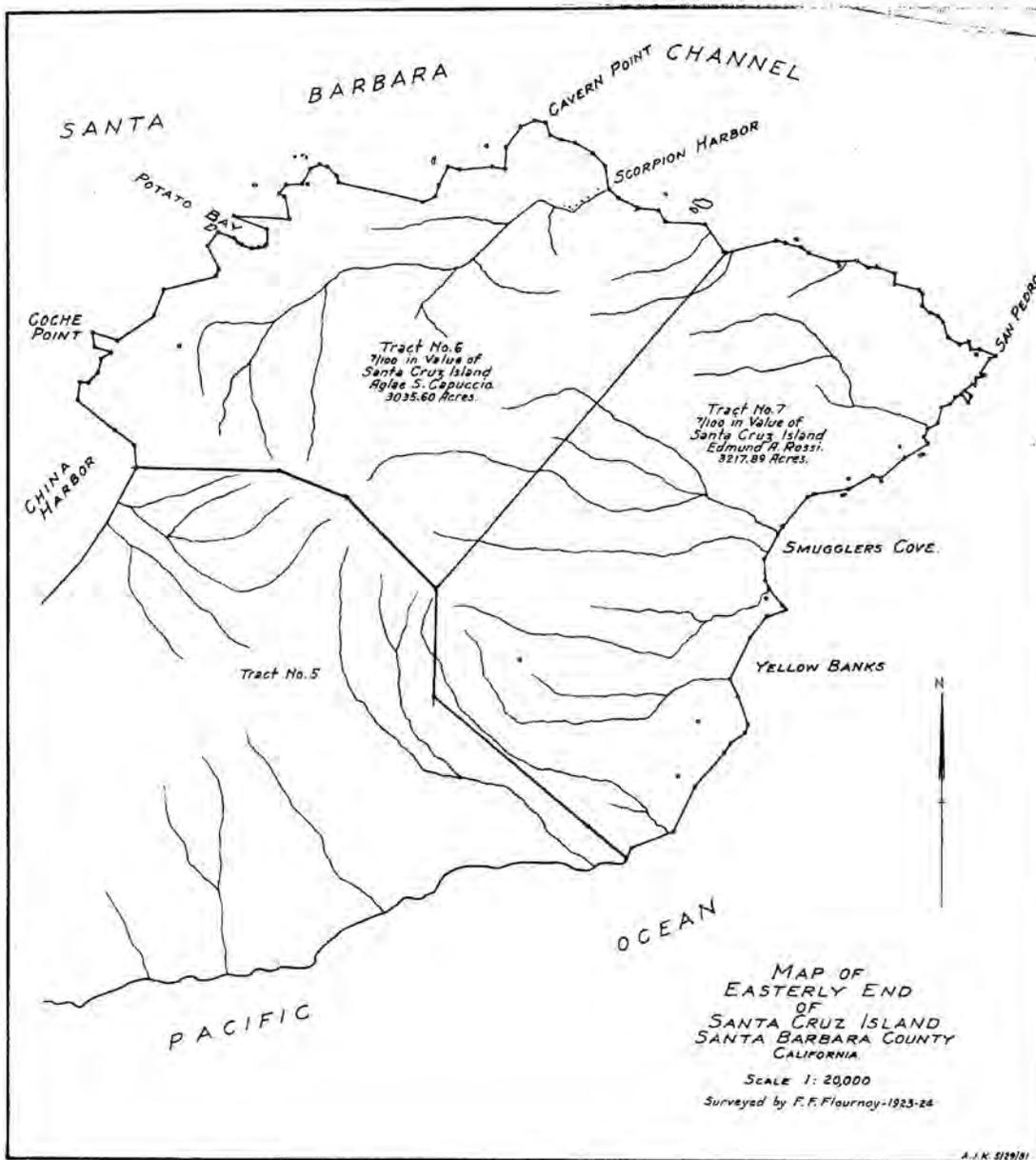
150 acres	Valley		
	Alfalfa		
	Irrigation plant and improvements,		
	Good buildings	@\$150. per acre	22,500.00
300 acres	Mesa	50. per acre	15,000.00
2,200.60 acres	Grazing, brush	5. per acre	11,003.00
385 acres	Waste, cliffs	(no value)	-----
Total 3,035.60 acres			48,503.00

Lot 7, Edmund Rossi 3,217.89 acres (Smugglers Ranch area)

150 acres	Valley		
	Well and old dwelling		
		@\$100. per acre	15,000.00
350 acres	Mesa	50. per acre	17,500.00
2,414.89 acres	Grazing, brush	5. per acre	12,074.45
303 acres	Waste, cliffs	(no value)	-----
Total 3,217.89 acres			44,574.45 ³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸Aglae S. Capuccio vs. Arthur J. Caire, et al, No. 10812, *Referee’s [sic] Report in Partition of Santa Cruz Island*, F. F. Flournoy, Geo. W. McComber, H. J. Doulton, *Referees, 1923-1924*, pp. 5-6, courtesy of John Gherini; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 143-156.

³⁵⁹“Comparative Value of the Tracts Allotted in Partition, by the Referees of Santa Cruz Island, Based on the Agricultural Value of the Island, or Practically \$10.00 per Acre.” circa 1924, collection of John Gherini.



Partition map of the east end of Santa Cruz Island, showing the parcels of Rossi and Capuccio. These properties became the Gherini Ranch. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

The referees recommended that rights-of-way over existing roads or ones to be built be granted to Rossi for passage to Scorpion Harbor, where a 300-foot wharf could be constructed for \$25,000, and that all tracts on the west end have right-of-way to Prisoners Harbor and wharf rights there.³⁶⁰

An unknown party had an appraisal made of the Caire's designated 54,488 acres of the island as it would have been valued in 1913. State Inheritance Tax Appraiser for Santa Barbara County J. W. Smith retroactively valued the island property at \$746,042 with 22 miles of fencing worth \$8,712. At Prisoners Harbor the improvements were valued at \$9,200: the residence \$1,000, wool warehouse \$2,000, barns \$200, and wharf \$6,000. Flournoy signed the document in concurrence. Curiously, the figure given for 1913 value was more than \$200,000 higher than that given in 1924.³⁶¹

Flournoy had purposely assigned the isolated east end parcels to the Rossi and Capuccio interests, citing a "very strong and bitter feeling" between them and the Caires. He wrote to Judge Crow and noted that "by placing them separately by very high, rough, brushy ridge running across the island with only one main trail connecting the two, forms a barrier as if both were surrounded by water." Flournoy justified the smaller acreage assigned to Rossi and Capuccio (7/100ths of the island in land mass would be 4,252 acres while their tracts were 3,000 to 3,200) by pointing out "the rich fertile land in the canyons and mesa with additional good grazing" as features on the east end adding to its value as property.³⁶²

Judge Crow heard testimony from Flournoy and the other referees and former superintendent Clifford McElrath who spoke in favor of Rossi and Capuccio. Crow accepted the survey and valuation and entered the final decree on November 16, 1925. Thus the island became seven separate land holdings, the first time in the island's history that it was physically divided under a number of owners. The Caires continued the operation of the ranch and vineyards but continued to defend themselves from litigation. The injunction lawsuit and accounting action were dismissed in 1930 after settlement of the partition action. Court expenses and attorney fees became an issue. David Freidenrich, Jr., son of one of the lawyers representing Rossi and Capuccio sued the two and their attorney Gherini for fees owed to his late father and was awarded \$25,000. Rossi and Capuccio filed for attorneys' fees to recoup the expenses for the partition, including the \$37,500 for the survey work. At first denied by a trial court, fees in the amount of \$75,000 were eventually awarded to Ambrose Gherini by the Supreme Court; again the Caires appealed and were rebuffed for a final time with a final decision from the State Supreme Court on May 23, 1932, a full 20 years after the first injunction lawsuit. Gherini had also appealed for better or larger tracts for his clients but lost.³⁶³

The Rossi and Capuccio properties, tracts 6 and 7, came under the management of Ambrose Gherini, the attorney largely credited with pursuing the litigation. His wife, the former Maria Rossi who was the sister of Edmund Rossi and granddaughter of Justinian Caire, had acquired the interest of her siblings and aunt, Aglae Capuccio. In the spring of 1927 the opposing parties divided up the livestock on the island. Gherini kept all of the sheep located on the east end, but first Frederic Caire supervised the final shearing of all island sheep in May. The clip would be packed and stored in the warehouse at Prisoners Harbor and

³⁶⁰Referees' Report, p. 47.

³⁶¹ "Appraised Value of Land and Improvements on That Portion of the Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, Known as Lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and Comprising 54,489 acres, for the Year 1913," collection of John Gherini.

³⁶²[Referees] to Judge S. E. Crow, December 22, [192]4, in Referees' Report.

³⁶³Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 158-160.

divided, with 14/100ths belonging to Gherini's clients. The new owners of the east end were awarded 4,700 sheep in "an equitable portion of bucks, ewes and lambs," which after shearing would be delivered in amounts to make up the difference at the east end. The cattle on the island would be driven to Prisoners Harbor, divided, and 14/100ths driven to Scorpion Ranch by Fred Caire. Ambrose Gherini then operated the east end ranches as the active member of the Rossi/Capuccio/Gherini interests. The history of the Gherini Ranch is told later in this study.³⁶⁴

Last Years of the Caire Family on Santa Cruz Island

The extended litigation took a toll on the entire Caire family. While the Rossi and Capuccio interests could claim victory in the courts and settled into their business on the east end of the island, the families of Arthur and Frederic Caire and their unmarried sisters felt angry and betrayed. While the family continued a sense of business as usual, the costs of litigation, ranch operations and effects of the stock market crash doomed the continuance of Justinian Caire's legacy. The island ranching and farming operations never regained their status of the 19th and early 20th centuries and the remaining family members considered selling their island property.³⁶⁵

Wine making resumed after prohibition but, as an agriculture analyst wrote, "with strong outside competition and apathy on the part of the owners . . . wine inferior in quality to that previously produced was turned out, and the industry failed to fully revive." The sheep business continued as it had uninterrupted, but the number of wild sheep grew in proportion to the tame flocks and the island began to appear overgrazed. The family returned to the island for the corridas and shearing, and marketed the sheep and wool at depression prices.³⁶⁶

As early as 1924, proposals to create a national park on Santa Cruz Island surfaced. National Park Service director Stephen Mather suggested that the island would be appropriate as a state park, or failing that, a national monument. Development threats had emerged at the time, as southern California entrepreneurs William Doheny, W. A. Breckenridge and Dr. H. C. Bumpus and others reportedly looked to Santa Cruz Island for a resort similar to that being developed by William Wrigley, Jr. on Santa Catalina. Following creation of the State Parks Board in 1928, a \$6 million bond was passed by voters to purchase properties for state parks, and Santa Cruz Island ranked second on the list of hundreds of potential parks recommended by nationally-recognized landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted.³⁶⁷

The National Park Service, in an investigation into the possibilities of a park at the Channel Islands, described the situation on the island as of 1933. The writer, Roger Toll, noted that the Caire and Gherini interests were "antagonistic to each other and no cooperation is to be expected between them." Toll wrote

³⁶⁴Note dated May 13, 1927, in Referees' Report; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 182-184. Aglae Capuccio sold her tract on the east end to the Rossi heirs, who incorporated as the National Trading Company, in 1926; Maria Rossi Gherini bought out her siblings in 1930. Meanwhile, the revived Santa Cruz Island Company remained a valid corporation until it was dissolved in 1946.

³⁶⁵Personal communication with Vivienne Caire Chiles, February 24, 1999.

³⁶⁶Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 34.

³⁶⁷*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, October 27, 1928, and *Santa Barbara Daily News*, January 3, 1929, courtesy of Mary B. Brock.

that the island property had never been mortgaged, but that the Caires were at the time “short of cash with which to pay taxes and some obligations for legal services.” The Caires had valued their portion of the island at four million dollars:

The owners of Santa Cruz Island place a valuation on their property far in excess of its assessed valuation. The island does not produce any very substantial revenue and in some years it is said to show a loss, but taxes are low and the owners have been able to hold it for a possible future sale. The sale of Santa Catalina [in 1919 to William Wrigley, Jr.], which is reported to have brought three million dollars, doubtless has affected the valuation that the owners place on Santa Cruz. If a definite offer to purchase the island should be made and declined, the county authorities might increase the assessed valuation. The result would be higher taxes which would have the effect of stimulating the desire of the owners to sell.³⁶⁸

Toll suggested an offer of \$1.5 to 2 million for the Caire interests, or a sale of parts of the island with scenic values but no value for agriculture. David Banks Rogers of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History wrote in favor of a federal purchase of the island, stating that 60,000 sheep were “rapidly diminishing the once lush verdure . . . and if something is not done to check it, this entrancing spot . . . will join the list of desert islands.”³⁶⁹

The proposals for development and parks went nowhere, but the interest in the island from various quarters no doubt laid the way for the eventual sale of the island. The Caire family, especially that of Frederic Caire who took the most interest in the island affairs, continued to spend their summers at the Main Ranch, the children and young people riding on horseback to all ends of the property, picnicking, hunting, hiking and generally enjoying what would be the last years on their beloved private island. It is not known exactly what finally spurred the family to sell; the family’s debts after the litigation, the decline of the wine and grape business, and the general problems of the depression, all no doubt mounted to a point where a sale was the only option. In 1937 the Caires sold their portion of the island to Los Angeles businessman Edwin Stanton.³⁷⁰

Other Island Activities During the Caire Era

While Santa Cruz Island became known for its industries under the Caire family interests, a number of other activities added to the cultural makeup of the island. Santa Cruz Island had rich fishing grounds,

³⁶⁸Roger W. Toll to The Director, National Park Service, March 21, 1933 [the Toll Report], CHIS.

³⁶⁹David Banks Rogers, Curator, to Mr. Roger Toll, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, February 3, 1933, in Toll Report, CHIS.

³⁷⁰Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 161; oral history interview with Vivienne Caire Chiles, June 29, 2000 by Dewey Livingston.



Men and a bald eagle they had killed, no date. *Channel Islands National Park*

scenic wonders and feral game for hunting. A popular resort at Pelican Bay drew a generation of southern Californians for their summer vacations, and Hollywood moviemakers brought their cast and crews to the north side to film. A quarrying project provided the raw materials for the Santa Barbara harbor breakwater. The following short essays provide a brief overview of some island activities between 1880 and 1937.

Hunting

Santa Cruz Island was a favored hunting ground for almost 150 years. While most hunters sought wild pigs and sheep, wild turkeys were placed on the island for hunting in the 1870s. The presence of wild turkeys in California is the result of introductions that started before the turn of the century, and they are now managed as resident game birds. The first recorded release of turkeys into the wild in California was in 1877 on Santa Cruz Island. A newspaper reported some years later that “over 700 wild turkeys are on Santa Cruz Island . . . placed there by Judge Caton of Ottawa . . .” It is likely that visiting hunters and island employees stalked the turkeys.³⁷¹

The major hunting activity of the Caire era focused on the wild pigs which not only made for a good hunt but were reviled by ranch managers for the damage to crops and pasture. Superintendent Clifford McElrath acted as a guide to permitted hunters after pigs in 1919-1920 and overall made a serious attempt

³⁷¹Karen R. Fothergill and Thomas B. Stone, *California Turkey Hunter's Guide* (Sacramento: California Department of Fish and Game, June 1999), p. 8; Santa Barbara *Weekly Press*, September 3, 1881, SCIF.

to stem the numbers of pigs. He offered a bounty of two Toscano cigars for each pig snout brought in by island employees. In the 1930s Fred Caire allowed Ira Eaton and Red Craine to operate a commercial pig hunting operation. Craine recalled:

[Eaton] made a deal with [the Caires] to let him run the boat and we would do what hauling they had to have done in the winter for the use of this boat for this pig hunting operation . . . [Eaton] came to me and asked me what kind of a deal I would stay on with him. I thought it over and I know about what our operation would cost and what we would make, and I said, “Well, I’ll stay with you for 25% of the gross.” So, that was the deal we had. He got 75% and paid all the operating expenses of the boat and all that, and I did all the surfing and skiff work, and when I didn’t have anything else to do I would take parties out and guide them pig hunting with the dogs. That is like 15-dog work at one time over there!

Eaton and Craine used the *Santa Cruz* to transport hunters who paid about four dollars for the privilege. Craine claimed that on certain weekends up to 75 people would be hunting on the island. The guests were dropped off in groups at various locations on the north side such as Prisoners Harbor, Pelican Bay, Dicks Harbor, etc. Craine trained dogs for the hunt, feeding them hog meat. Craine claimed to have killed a 300-pound boar.³⁷²

Fishing

Santa Cruz Island has long been a favorite fishing ground for both commercial and pleasure fishing. Its many sheltered coves afforded overnight anchorages, which acted as base camps for fishing expeditions. The three main fishing activities were commercial fishermen in their own boats or company-owned ones; commercial boat operators bringing fishing parties to the island for a day or more of fishing; and pleasure boat owners who came to the island for fishing trips. A fourth method was the commercial fisherman without a substantial boat, who would live on the shore during the season and be serviced by either other boat owners or the company he was supplying at the time. This group formed a colorful chapter in the island’s history, as most seemed to be somewhat eccentric loners living a rough and isolated life among the coves and beaches of the Santa Cruz Island shoreline. The catch included the fish of the channel, although most accounts of fish camps regarded the Pacific spiny lobster, commonly called crawfish on the island.

Many accounts of the fishing activity on the island came from contemporary newspaper accounts. For instance, in 1883 Captain Larco took a party on an overnight fishing excursion to Santa Cruz Island. Earlier he had taken a group of men from Ventura who, en route to the island “devoted themselves to trolling for barracuda and the lovely bonita. Others cast forth a net, which came up loaded with delicate fresh mackerel, sardines and smelts. In the meantime the cheery tones of a well played violin and the melodious chords from the musical guitar were blended with the merry song and laughter of the delighted

³⁷²Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 23-25; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 92, 96.

party.” Their destination was eastern Santa Cruz where they landed on a beach: “All hands turned in helped get up a fish feast, under the direction of Captain Larco, who has no superior as a fisherman or fish cook, various dishes were prepared. There were sardines in oil, crayfish salad, rock cod chowder, fried smelt, soused mackerel, broiled bonita and barracuda cutlets. Such a variety of finny delicacies and relishes would delight an epicure.”³⁷³

Ira Eaton fished the waters of the island for much of the first quarter century. His wife Margaret Holden Eaton wrote a detailed memoir of island life from her first-hand experiences living in a number of fishing camps around the island. According to Mrs. Eaton, early in the century Captain Colís Vasquez plied the waters of the island in his 40-foot schooner *Peerless*. Vasquez served the fishing camps on the island and caught seals for zoos and circuses. Her husband Ira Eaton owned a boat that he had built, and acted as an agent for crawfishermen, besides fishing for himself:

The Lumber Company and Dardi’s Grocery Store advanced lumber and groceries to last the fishermen for the whole season, which was about five months. As each catch of fish was brought to market, weighed and sold, Ira took out two cents a pound for hauling the fish across the channel to town. He then made payments to the Lumber Company and the Grocery until all the advance bills were paid in full. This done, he took the balance of the cash back to the fishermen. They elected him their official banker, and anything they needed—from sou’westers to corn plasters—he bought, paid for, and delivered to them.³⁷⁴

The crawfish season opened on September 15 of each year and lasted about five months. Men of all nationalities sought out these crustaceans, either for themselves or on contract to larger fish companies in Santa Barbara, San Pedro or Los Angeles. Mrs. Eaton wrote:

The traps were made, baited and ballasted, and put in the water to soak. On opening day, September 15, the boys were up at four in the morning to pull their traps. If you leave the traps down too long, the sheephead and eel get into them and make a sorry mess of your catch. They attack the legs first, biting them off next to the body, and that ends your crawfish . . . After the season began, the men were up every morning before daylight, had coffee, and then rowed the skiff up to Gull Rock to check their traps. Sometimes their catch was good, sometimes poor.

Most traps in the early 1900s were made of wood and dropped into the water secured to a line and buoy; after being hauled in, the fishermen kept their catch alive and fresh in “receiver” containers tied behind the boat. Mrs. Eaton wrote of instances where the contents of the receivers would be stolen, often as a part of disputes over fishing rights in a particular territory. A man or company would have the right, either official or not, to fish exclusively in an area of shoreline, for instance between Coche Point and Cavern Point on the east end. If Mrs. Eaton’s accounts are to be taken as fact, many times these “rights” were challenged by other fishermen and fought over.³⁷⁵

Mrs. Eaton related a number of interesting stories about the lives of island fishermen. In 1906 eighteen crawfishermen lived in the old Caire hay barn at Forney’s Cove. “Each set of partners had their

³⁷³Santa Barbara *Weekly Press*, July 21, 1883, SCIF.

³⁷⁴Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 15, 23-24.

³⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 30, 81, 152.

own space in the barn and their own gasoline stove, and they all got along fine with each other,” wrote Eaton. “Among those camped there were George Nidever and his brother Jake, Clarence Libbey, Wes Thompson, Big Jerry, Little Danny, Kangaroo Joe, Hard Working Tom, the Big Swede, our friends Arturo, Charley and Cooney, and several others.” Mrs. Eaton wrote of a Christmas feast of island hogs and 35 wild geese from Santa Rosa Island (that island’s superintendent Frank Pepper attended the three-day party). The men baked bread in a “big stone oven” that had been used on the ranch “in the early days.” Mrs. Eaton’s full account of the party (second-hand, she didn’t attend) is worth looking up.

Frank Nidever’s father and uncle had built a cabin at Willow Canyon from salvage lumber off the *Colman* at San Miguel Island in 1905. Nidever and the Eatons fished out of that location in 1908. “The cabin had no windows and only a dirt floor, but it had a fireplace and a lean-to kitchen with a wood stove.” At Willow Canyon the Nidevers had put in a garden 50 feet square and raised vegetables during winter fishing season. The Eatons and Frank Nidever revived the garden and enlarged it 1908.

Mrs. Eaton wrote of many fishermen living in shacks along the shore. She wrote that an “old Spanish man named Joe” lived in a shack at Chinese Harbor who fished in the winter and worked for the Santa Cruz Island Company in the spring roundup. At Potato Harbor “a lone fisherman named Kangaroo Dick lived there in a shack perched on a rock shelf . . . It seemed to be holding on for dear life, as though a strong puff of wind might blow it into the water.” Later she wrote that “Old Man Joe” lived at the Potato Harbor location: “The smoke was always curling up out of the stove pipe, carried away in the wind.” She noted her husband picking up receivers from him in 1910.

Mrs. Eaton recalled Kangaroo Dick living and fishing at Hungryman Gulch, and Hard Working Tom and Skinny located at Smugglers cove in 1908. Chinese fishermen lived at Blue Banks in 1910. Once the Eatons delivered some goods to them, bringing their boat around the southeast side at night: “we saw lights in all the fishermen’s shacks along the beaches.”³⁷⁶

Mrs. Eaton wrote a description of a fish camp at Johnson Canyon on the south side as she saw it in 1908. A father and son from Lompoc, the Linscows, occupied it; the dividing line between their turf and Eaton/Nidevers was Gull Rock. The Linscows had a shack:

. . . the first thing I noticed was that there was a floor in it. You could stand in the middle of the floor, stretch your arms out, and touch both sides of the shack at the same time. There were no chairs, only short benches. There were two narrow bunks on one side of the shack, and at the end was a table and a stove about the same size as ours, and in the same condition. There was a window facing the bay.

. . . There were ashes all over the floor, overalls left on the floor just as the men had stepped out of them, socks that could stand up alone and keep the overalls company, boots thrown here and there, dirty red bandanna handkerchiefs scattered all over. The table was covered with dirty dishes from the night before, their coffee had boiled over, and the coffee grounds were all over the stove. Groceries were stored under the unmade bunks. The smell would knock you down.

The Eatons and certain other fishermen were known at the Caire ranch and treated well, although many unauthorized operators were unwelcome. At least one time the French watchman at Prisoners

³⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31, 38, 50-52, 76, 100, 136, 153, 155, 165.

Harbor let Ira Eaton and Frank Nidever stay in the barn overnight and fed them mutton chops and coffee for breakfast; the two got a ride on *Santa Cruz* to Santa Barbara. Frank Nidever's uncle ran the schooner which no doubt helped the situation.³⁷⁷

Ira Eaton and Eugenio "Jenny" Larco operated as partners at Scorpion Harbor in the winter of 1909-1910. While at Scorpion, Eaton and some of his friends ran off the competing Japanese fishermen, as well as Portuguese and Italians, by cutting their traps and reportedly stealing their catches. A State Fish & Game official visited the Scorpion camp where he purchased and tagged Eaton's catch and also released one dozen imported eastern lobsters. Fish & Game was reportedly studying the habits of the lobster, instructing Eaton to report a catch of any tagged lobsters. Mrs. Eaton claimed that many were found as far as Ladys Harbor some 15 miles west.³⁷⁸

Island superintendent Swain suggested charging rent of one or two dollars per month to fishermen in 1917. "There would be no profit in it at any figure," Swain wrote, "but with everyone feeling pleasant we would sell enough wine to make up for it. So far this year we haven't sold a single gallon to craw fishermen, while last year we very nearly paid the Cellarman's wages on these small sales." He reported that Larco had been handing out an attorney's business cards as a tactic to rebuff challenges by the island's owners: ". . . when we call upon the fishermen to collect rent or serve notice, they hand us a card with the remark, 'See our attorney in Santa Barbara.'" ³⁷⁹

Helen Caire wrote that the Larco Brothers of Santa Barbara had permits for crawfishermen to make camps along the shore in several coves. The family apparently didn't make much money in these ventures, as the regulation was poor and the fees small. Ranch manager Clifford McElrath raged against the crawfish camps in 1920: "They are Bolsheviks," he claimed, decrying the fact that the fishermen paid only \$2.50 per season yet gave him trouble when he came collecting. He wrote that the crawfishermen were "willing to pull off any rough stuff that they think they can get away with . . ." ³⁸⁰

One fisherman, Charles Erickson, lived in a cabin built on stilts over the creek mouth at Yellowbanks Anchorage. The Santa Cruz Island Company, its directors disturbed by the shooting of its livestock by fishermen, reportedly filed an ejection suit against Erickson in 1918 claiming that he had no right to occupy the cabin on, they claimed, company lands. Erickson's attorney readied himself to argue that his client had built over tidelands and therefore out of the company's jurisdiction when persons unknown destroyed the cabin and disposed of Erickson's equipment and possessions while he was away. Erickson suspected that company agents had done the deed, and planned to file a suit asking damages for the loss of property and for rights to continue using the location as a fishing camp. The numerous other fish camp occupants around the island no doubt watched the case with interest. ³⁸¹

The activities continued as long as a market existed. Some of the men spent a major part of their lives in the isolated industry. Fisherman William (Dutch) Schultz lived on the island for some twenty years. According to a newspaper article, he occupied a "tiny shack" and "seldom spoke to even his fellow

³⁷⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 59, 91-93.

³⁷⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 135-137, 149-152, 159-160.

³⁷⁹SCIC Letter B99, November 9, 1917, SCIF.

³⁸⁰Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 83; SCICo. Letter Book, October 3, 1920, SCIF.

³⁸¹Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, March 27, 1918, CHIS.

fishermen, never received a letter, nor asked for mail.” In 1933 Schultz’s skiff capsized and he drowned in a kelp bed.³⁸²

Other fatalities occurred, no doubt some going unreported because of the solitary nature of the work. Often, however, men worked as partners and so a number of incidents made it into the local newspapers. In one such incident, Swedish fisherman August Ericson from San Pedro drowned off the east end in early 1902. Ericson and his partner, David Peterson, had been fishing in a skiff at Smugglers Cove for the West Coast Fishing Company, which reportedly had a cannery on the island. Returning to their camp, presumably at Hungryman Gulch, their skiff overturned in heavy seas in the dark; Ericson drowned while Peterson, after much struggle, made it to shore although somewhat injured.³⁸³

Abalone Harvesting

Abalone originally had its market in China and American Chinatowns where the shells and dried meat brought a good price. As Americans acquired a taste for the meat and craftsmen in Europe found the wonders of the shell, exploitation of abalone expanded on Santa Cruz and its neighboring islands. Many of the early abalone fishermen were Chinese; Captain Vasquez and Ira Eaton transported Chinese abalone fishermen to the mainland and back. Once, for his services, a group of fishermen gave Eaton half a sack of shelled and pounded abalones.

Government agencies kept an eye on the abalone harvest but the distance from the mainland kept oversight at a minimum. In 1905 three fish and game commissioners in disguise hired Ira Eaton and his boat *Irene* for a purported picnic at Valdez Harbor. After having Eaton change course to Forney’s Cove they revealed themselves as lawmen and “explained that they had to pose as tourists because the waterfronters were so clannish and would not hire out their boats to the law.” After the raid Eaton worried about being thought of as a “stool pigeon” on the mainland.³⁸⁴

Eaton collected and prepared abalones on the island, transporting them to Santa Barbara only after a sizable catch had been taken. His wife described the process of preparing abalone for shipment early in the century. Eaton and his helper dug a six-by-four-foot pit on the beach above high tide and constructed a redwood tank with a galvanized metal bottom. The tank was filled with salt water and covered and a fire built beneath in the pit. While the water heated the abalones were prepared:

Ira took a large tree stump and nailed two abalone bars on it. Then he sat on a box—covered with sacks to make a cushion—and put cotton gloves on, as this work was very messy. He took an abalone, placed it under the bar, pressed hard, and the meat came loose from the shell. He dropped it in a can to his right, and Danny took the abalone, removed the innards, and threw it into the tub in front of him. When the tub was full, they dumped it into the boiling water. Then when the tank was filled, they covered it with gunny sacks to keep the steam in and put on the long wooden cover. After the abalones had boiled for four

³⁸²*Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1933, SBMNH #0531.

³⁸³*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, [February or March], 1902, CHIS.

³⁸⁴Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 20, 23.



Abalone gatherers on Santa Cruz Island, circa 1900. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



Abalone fishermen loading their boats with sacked abalone, at an unidentified location on Santa Cruz Island. *Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire*

hours they were ready to come out, but someone must stay to feed the fire all the time they were cooking.

After the four hours were up, the boiler was opened. Ira used a dip net with a long wooden handle to scoop the abalones up, held them for a few minutes to let them drain, and then dumped them on gunny sacks spread out by the side of the boiler. The men worked this way for two days . . . I knew they had about three tons to clean and boil, and were up to their necks in work.³⁸⁵

The men or Mrs. Eaton then spread the cooked abalone on the sand to dry, turning them at intervals until dried enough to withstand storage and shipment.

Almost regularly the issue of ownership and access arose. The Santa Cruz Island Company owned the island to the water line but not the area covered by water, a matter confused by the fact of tides. So while gathering abalone or lobster could be undertaken without permission from the Caires, the use of the beaches for camps and processing required a permit, although that route was not always taken. A newspaper reporter in 1893 wrote of the problem: “. . . in order to gather [abalone], a person must infringe on the proprietary rights of Mr. Caire—they must use his shores for drying or preserving their meat and cleaning the shells which are worth \$40 per ton at wholesale.” At one point the crew of the schooner *Santa Cruz* confiscated a shipment of dried abalone and shells:

A few weeks ago, some men went to the island, gathered a lot of abalone, dried the meat and sacked it and got it ready for shipment—all on Mr. Caire’s land. Captain Burtis went after the men and their goods as per agreement. It was found that the boat could not touch the land at the spot on which the fish lay, so the men began to transport it to Surprise Harbor. While engaged in taking the last load there, the *Santa Cruz*, a gasoline boat belonging to the island, confiscated the whole lot of goods. For this several arrests have been made and it is on this account that the nice legal talent will be required. It is a question of great interest to the people of this city who consider it a hardship not to be allowed to go to and from the island, camp there as much as they wish and appropriate firewood, shoot birds and seals to their hearts’ content. Until very lately, Mr. Caire has been very indulgent but he seems to consider it time to take a firm hand in the matter and has already ordered away several parties who have landed on the island.³⁸⁶

According to an unsubstantiated news report, in 1911 the Santa Cruz Island Company leased the exclusive fishing rights on the island to a Japanese firm, Asahi Fishing Company of Los Angeles. The Japanese group began to clear off the island the other six or seven camps operated by “Americans” in preparation to establishing twenty camps of their own. The articles claimed that the Asahi Fishing Company would charge \$20 per man for five months’ fishing privileges or be forced off the island, and that they erected large signs reading, “Warning: Those desiring to camp on Santa Cruz Island shall apply to the Asahi Fishing Company, 107 1-2 East First Street, Los Angeles.” Local fishermen complained about the fishing practices of the company, claiming that after the company had fished in an area “it is not good for ten years.” The captain of the schooner *Santa Cruz* was quoted as saying, “They even are trying to

³⁸⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

³⁸⁶Santa Barbara *Daily Independent*, August 30, 1893, SCIF.

prevent us from catching abalones to eat.” A boat from Larco Fish Company planned to set up camp to challenge the new operators.³⁸⁷

Two men who saw a Japanese abalone camp at Pelican Bay in 1911 described them as “well-equipped for the work, having divers and diving apparatus with them for taking abalones in deep water.”³⁸⁸

Previously (around 1905) Ira Eaton stole the catch from a group of Japanese fishermen out of spite: their presence was “not so good for the white fishermen” and they could eventually form a stronghold around the islands. Margaret Eaton later wrote that the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to ban diving for abalone after complaints about Japanese diving.³⁸⁹

Sea Lion Hunting

The Channel Islands, with their rich sea life and ample rookeries for pinnipeds, attracted sea lion hunters since the mid-19th century. The bulk of commercial collections were destined for zoos, circuses, and later to oceanaria and research institutions as well. Santa Barbara was the center of commercial pinniped collection for more than 100 years. These collecting expeditions began some time prior to 1877. While popular accounts describe capturing seals, usually the animals were California sea lions.³⁹⁰

Early seal hunters working in the area included Capt. E. A. Eastman, James Mullett and the Rogers Brothers, all operating in the 1870s and 1880s. The Rogers, or at least one member of the family, apparently continued to hunt sea lions in the area until the ‘teens, as did George McGuire.³⁹¹

News accounts supplied the few early mentions of “seal” collecting. For instance, the schooner *Restless* brought “four fine specimens of seals” to Stearns Wharf for shipment to London in 1896. In 1905 Capt. Vasquez brought “two small sea lions” to Santa Barbara on his *Peerless* for shipment to Monterey. These and other articles brought to light the regular activities at the islands around the turn of the century.³⁹²

A sophisticated visitor to Santa Barbara, Gordon Forbes accompanied Captain Vasquez on a seal hunt in early 1909 and left a diary of the adventure, which explained the methods used at the time. Vasquez was to capture 50 sea lions for an east coast circus, for which he would be paid \$50 apiece. The party left Santa Barbara on the *Gussie M*, a 40-foot powerboat stacked with 20 empty crates for the sea lions. Forbes described his fellow hunters as follows: “Capt. Vasquez, Spanish; 1st mate, ‘Dago,’ Italian; 3 brothers, full-blooded Indians; 1 Mexican; G. F. [Forbes], quartermaster and photographer to the expedition.” After a rough 4-hour trip across the channel with a mostly drunken crew, Vasquez anchored at Fry’s Harbor and

³⁸⁷Santa Barbara *Independent*, August 31, 1911.

³⁸⁸*The Ventura Free Press*, August 18, 1911.

³⁸⁹Eaton, *Diary*, p. 24.

³⁹⁰Peter C. Howorth, “Commercial Collection of Pinnipeds in the California Channel Islands, 1877-1981” in *Third California Islands Symposium*, 1993, p. 579.

³⁹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 580-581.

³⁹²*The Daily News* [Santa Barbara], May 2, 1896; *Santa Barbara Morning Press*, December 16, 1905, SCIF.



Hunters load a trapped sea lion into their skiff in this undated photograph taken off Santa Cruz Island.
Santa Barbara Historical Society

with Forbes put up a tent on the beach. In their spare time Forbes and other crewmembers hunted the Caire sheep. Forbes described the sea-lion capture, taking place at a sea cave west of Frys Harbor:

The shore of the island has several caves running back 100-300 feet & here the seals are to be found. The method of capture is as follows: A net 30 feet in depth is placed around mouth of cave & tied to rock on either side.

Capt. Vasquez stands in stern of skiff just outside this net. A rifle shot up into cave by its sound drives the seals out into the enclosure at mouth of cave. The first thing seen is a gray streak through the water, but as seal has to have air, a head is soon seen for a moment above water only to disappear in a second. The captain's duty is to anticipate the place where a seal is going to appear & throw a lasso which catches seal around throat & as noose tightens the fur prevents it from slipping over his head which is very little bigger than his neck. The sport now begins, as it is a pretty even fight between a man in a skiff and a 225-pound bunch of muscle. The next step is to get a second rope around his tail which branches out into two stiff points. This involves much roaring on the part of the seal — snapping and jumping out of the water in trying to bite the man's arm. It is no child's play & the man has to know his business very well to be able to outwit the sea lion. After 15-30 minutes the second rope is fixed to his tail, thrown ashore and pulled in by 3 or 4 of the crew — and as I had the pleasure of helping in this performance, I want to say that no fish on any light rod had the show & run for his money that a 200-pound seal has with a

rope about his tail. By putting the respective ends of the two ropes through opposite ends of the crate the seal is finally pulled in & boxed up. After roaring, snapping & thrashing about for 15 minutes he very sensibly comes to the conclusion that it is useless & lies still with his flippers folded under him, looking very peaceful & gentle with his big, soft, cow-like eyes. The crates are left in the water tied in a string & towed back to camp until ready to be taken home.³⁹³

The cave may have been Painted Cave. News accounts as early as 1877 have placed sea lion hunting activities in the Santa Cruz Island sea caves. As late as 1937 “Dutch” Fredericks worked at Painted Cave using the same techniques as Vasquez. Margaret Holden Eaton described Fredericks’ 91 kg. net as being 38 meters long, 15 deep, with 100 cork floats and 100 lead weights. The east end of the island saw seal hunting as well. Mrs. Eaton wrote of her husband Ira catching “many” seals to fill orders for Captain McGuire at “Black [Coche?] Point” in 1908. McGuire operated around the islands from 1904 to 1940, and then sold his business to Walter Miller, who continued to collect pinnipeds at Potato Harbor, Painted Cave and Gull Island. Richard Headley took over Miller’s business in 1958 and worked the same areas as Miller and McGuire had. Headley modernized the operation, called Sea Lions International. The Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 slowed the take of sea lions through regulation, and by 1981 collecting at the Channel Islands had ceased.³⁹⁴

Use of the Island by Recreational Boaters and Campers

The general public began to appreciate the scenic qualities of Santa Cruz Island as the California coast became populated and the desire for recreation rose with the growth of the cities. Boaters, both private and commercial, sailed to the island for summer camping trips, spurred by articles in magazines and newspapers about the scenic wonders of the Santa Cruz Island coastline. While the first waves of these activities may have been to such a small extent that it posed no problems to the Santa Cruz Island Company, soon the popularity of the place and the numbers and type of visitors caused problems for the island owners. The company issued permits for landing and camping, but abuses of the system were common. After a number of incidents related to recreational boaters, Justinian Caire was quoted as saying in 1893,

I have bought the property with my money as a heritage to my children. I have spent a great deal in the way of improvements and love to go there myself, and enjoy the quiet place. It is my own property and I do not wish to be molested by strangers. Camping parties have invaded my rights, killed my stock, burned my trees, destroyed my improvements and annoyed me in many ways.³⁹⁵

³⁹³Gordon Forbes, “Diary of a Santa Barbara Visitor” in *Noticias*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, Winter 1984, pp. 64-67.

³⁹⁴Howorth, “Commercial Collection,” pp. 581-586; Eaton, *Diary*, p. 51.

³⁹⁵Santa Barbara *Daily Independent*, August 30, 1893, SCIF.

Caire then granted no requests for camping, saying “it will save on annoyance and perhaps trouble if people refrain from camping on another man’s property.”³⁹⁶

Charles Holder wrote of the wonders of the Santa Cruz coast in *The Channel Islands of California*, a popular book published in 1910. He compared the Painted Cave to the grotto at Capri, calling the former “more remarkable” than the latter, and considered the most striking feature of the island to be its sea caves.³⁹⁷ Owners of excursion boats, and even fishing boats, hired out to take parties on excursions to the island, sometimes with permission and many times without. A newspaper reported that Capt. Charles Hanson’s *Flyer* transported passengers for camping and fishing at Johnsons Reef, “a place noted for its isolation, beauty of scenery and it’s fishing.” Hanson took a group of two women, a man, child and dog, for an eight days’ outing to Dicks Harbor. “They brought back a number of curious Indian relics and quite a few beautiful ferns,” noted the writer.³⁹⁸

Understanding the public’s desire for recreation on the island, the Caires allowed Ira and Margaret Eaton a license to operate a small resort on the north shore at Pelican Bay beginning in 1913 (see chapter below). However, other entrepreneurs attempted such operations without permission while private boaters camped and hunted unchecked. Problems with poaching and trespassing caused the Santa Cruz Island Company to close the island in September of 1917 to visitors except for paying guests of the Eatons. Arthur Caire wrote to Bay Webster, long-time Channel habitué, warning him to cease landing unauthorized parties on the island. Apparently Webster had hired out to transport people to the island to hunt “wild animals.” In another correspondence, Caire speculated that Webster’s clients shot hogs on the island. “His parties only last 2 or 3 days and then he is gone for a week or more and returns to some other harbor.” Fisherman and boat captain Colís Vasquez also caused trouble to the Caires and their superintendent. “Vasquez has been in the tourist business all season and up to a month ago Frys [Harbor] has been filled with his people. He used Eaton’s buildings and equipment . . .” Vasquez then moved to Dicks Harbor.³⁹⁹

Family historian Helen Caire wrote that landing and camping permits were given to “responsible persons who requested them,” but the family remained skeptical of visitors. In 1920, ranch superintendent Clifford McElrath drove a visiting party around the island and gave them lunch, apparently to the displeasure of the management. Another time McElrath had to defend his allowing a number of parties to visit the Main Ranch from Prisoners Harbor after they had called asking permission; McElrath wrote to his superiors that he was discreet about island statistics and business; he only issued two permits that year, and only one was used. He did report plenty of illegal campers.⁴⁰⁰

The Caires evidently allowed others than the Eatons to operate organized camps. A report noted that in 1934 a flash flood destroyed eleven cabins comprising the Anderson camp at Frys Harbor. While caretaker William Snyder and lobster fisherman Shorty Larsen escaped to high ground, two dogs and four

³⁹⁶Santa Barbara *Daily News*, June 18, 1896, SCIF.

³⁹⁷Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 266-168.

³⁹⁸Santa Barbara *Daily News*, May 23, 1914, SCIF.

³⁹⁹The Santa Cruz Island Co., A. J. Caire, to Mr. Bay Webster Esq., no date; Letter, November 9, 1917, both in Letter Book, 1917, SCIF; Eaton, *Diary*, p. 213.

⁴⁰⁰Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 83; Reports, August 21 and October 13, 1920, in Letter Book #3, SCIF.

cats disappeared. The torrent also swept away a 5,000-gallon water tank and narrow gauge railroad left by the Frys Harbor quarry operations of the late 1920s.⁴⁰¹

Resort Plans

As with most of the Channel Islands, speculators and developers often looked to Santa Cruz Island with imaginative and entrepreneurial minds. While many plans surfaced, mostly as reported in newspapers, none were ever realized.

In September 1895 news reports stated that Justinian Caire would build a “fine resort” on the island in partnership with mainland hotelier Walter Raymond. The two would establish “a summer resort on the island that shall eclipse everything on the coast.” Later calling the proposal a “sure thing,” the reporter predicted that the hotel on the island would, coupled with improved transportation to and water supplies for Santa Barbara, spur a boom in growth.⁴⁰²

In 1903 plans surfaced for a hotel/resort. Around April of 1903 Frederic Caire reportedly met with entrepreneur Allan G. Fraser and Milo Potter of the Potter Hotel in Santa Barbara, and agreed to lease part of the island for a “hotel, a tent city and a number of cottages and auxiliary buildings.” Fraser tried to purchase the entire island, the account said, but “only after considerable difficulty” obtained a lease. By July Fraser would have “substantial tents and small buildings” built for guests while the hotel would be under construction. Fraser had bought a powerboat with a capacity of up to 100 passengers, and would buy smaller boats “to make cruises around the islands, go on fishing expeditions, visit the marine caves and view the submarine gardens.” Although this may have been the beginning of the Pelican Bay resort (the news report does not specify a location on the island), Fraser’s grand scheme apparently went nowhere.⁴⁰³

Eaton’s Pelican Bay Camp

Only Ira and Margaret Eaton’s picturesque and rustic resort at Pelican Bay came close to what one could call a resort development on Santa Cruz Island. Bowing to pressures from the hundreds of illegal campers and those seeking permits, the Santa Cruz Island Company decided to allow the establishment of a sanctioned recreational facility. Helen Caire wrote, “So many yachtsmen and others wished to visit the island so that this [Eaton’s] was considered the best way to resolve the problem and preserve the beauty and ecology of the many accessible coves and canyons.” Margaret Eaton’s book, *Diary of a Sea Captain’s Wife*, provided a vivid account of life on the north shore of Santa Cruz Island and the activities at Pelican Bay Camp.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹*Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1934, SBMNH #0531.

⁴⁰²*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, September 7, 8, 11, 1895, SCIF.

⁴⁰³*Santa Barbara Morning Press*, June 23, 1903, SCIF.

⁴⁰⁴Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 83.

The Eatons had spent considerable time at Pelican Bay as Ira Eaton and his partners fished the coast. Pleasure boaters, many of them wealthy families from Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, paid regular visits to the pretty cove and it became the favorite of many visitors. Mrs. Eaton wrote of a group of late-summer visitors arriving around 1910:

. . . there was a good breeze outside and we could see the yachts coming out of the fog halfway across the channel. Then they started coming into the bay. There was the *Sylph*, *Clipper*, *Mischief I* and *II*, *Sea Bird*, *Wasp*, *Minerva*, *Idler*, *Winsome*, *Edna*, *Enchantress* and many more; all the owners were aboard . . .

All the yachts had open house that evening, and Ira and I were invited to come aboard and visit them. Ira wore clean blue overalls with a crease in them (they were taken from under the mattress) and a clean blue shirt. We went from one beautiful yacht to another. The ladies were very sociable, and drinks and sandwiches were handed around . . . it was not every day you saw so much liquor.⁴⁰⁵

Hearing rumors of a hotel development at Frys Harbor under license from the Caires, the Eatons decided to ask for permission from the island owners to operate a camp at Pelican Bay in 1913. The Caires accepted the proposal and within a week the Eatons hosted eighty people at what they decided to call Pelican Bay Camp. At first the Eatons provided for the guests with an open-air kitchen and camping in an oak grove. Fresh fish was the favored meal, and visitors enjoyed hiking around the canyon and exploring nearby coves. “The ladies were dressed in white flannel skirts, long coats, white silk shirt waists, sailor hats and high-heeled pumps. That was the way they dressed to go camping in those days.” Early guests slept in tents and ate outdoors. As time went on the Eatons constructed a number of buildings including a kitchen and a 90-foot long enclosed dining hall with a fireplace and windows overlooking the bay. Eaton built nine cabins for lodging, described as

twelve by fourteen feet, built from split shakes. There were five cabins side by side out on the point and then four more way out on the tip of the point. The windows could be left open in summer for the view of the bay, and shuttered in winter to keep out the wind and rain. Each cabin had blue and white rag rugs, a dressing table made of two fruit boxes nailed together, with a skirt of white muslin bordered in gingham, and matching curtains. They looked so neat and clean. The hills surrounding the camp were covered with wild oats, and in the winter and spring there were so many different shades of green in the grass and trees. The whitewashed cabins really stood out, making a beautiful sight as one approached Pelican Bay.

Eaton later outfitted the cabins with furnishings salvaged from the wreck of the *Cuba* off San Miguel Island. He developed the spring in the cove, pumping the water to a tank on the hill above that allowed the installation of sinks and toilets. Irrigation allowed a vegetable garden to provide for the kitchen and landscaping with flowers and ice plant. The Eatons rented horses from the Main Ranch for rides guided by their employee “Spanish Joe.” Many of the camp’s visitors came from Santa Barbara and Montecito, well-heeled and important people from Los Angeles and Hollywood, and people from as far as the east coast.

⁴⁰⁵Eaton, *Diary*, p. 175.



Pelican Bay, circa 1920s, attracted visitors from around the country, but mainly acted as a resort for southern Californians. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*

The camp hosted classes from the exclusive Thacher and Cate Schools in the Ojai/Santa Barbara area. The Eatons used carrier pigeons to communicate with the mainland.⁴⁰⁶

Ira Eaton had a new boat, the *Sea Wolf*, constructed to order in Sausalito. A Santa Barbara newspaper reported that the boat “is to figure in the summer passenger traffic between here and Santa Cruz Island.” Eaton brought her from San Francisco trip in less than 33 hours. The *Sea Wolf* served the Eatons and their island guests for more than a decade.⁴⁰⁷

As the Pelican Bay Camp became popular in the mid-teens other tourist operators began to bring large parties to the island without permission from the Caires. The Santa Cruz Island Company responded by closing the island to campers except those with permits in September of 1917. Mrs. Eaton wrote:

With this responsibility on us, Ira made sure that either he or one of his men would always act as a guide for any wild boar hunting parties. We never had any problems with the hunters; people coming to our camp seemed to realize they were enjoying private property and respected the privilege. This did not always apply to boaters who landed on the island. The Company found it necessary to employ riders to patrol the island, and because of its size and ruggedness this was a very difficult business.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 191, 193, 198, 202-204, 214-215, 245, 248.

⁴⁰⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 202-203; *Santa Barbara Daily News*, May 12, 1914, SCIF.

⁴⁰⁸Eaton, *Diary*, p. 213.

Island superintendent Swain wrote to his superiors in 1917 of the unauthorized competition causing problems for the Eatons. Swain wrote how Colís Vasquez moved into the Eatons' camp, using the buildings and equipment: "We don't know as we have to fight Eaton's troubles for him, but at the same time he is paying rent and should be protected in some way. We would suggest an injunction against him." Vasquez then moved to Dicks Harbor, apparently without permission still. In light of these events, Eaton asked for a reduction in rent, seeing how the unlicensed Vasquez and Bay Webster parties had taken business away from him and "deprived" him of use of nearby areas on the island for his authorized recreational activities. Swain wrote that Eaton "intimated that if Vasquez, Webster and others are allowed to bring camping parties to the Island without molestation that there was no reason for him to pay rent for a privilege used by others."⁴⁰⁹

The 1920s seemed to be the heyday of Pelican Bay Camp. Many movie companies with their large entourages filmed there and business was good for the Eatons. They employed a crew including kitchen staff, boat operators and camp workers, but camp life remained rustic. The camp transport, the *Sea Wolf* was lost in a storm on Christmas Day, 1927. Eaton rented the *Santa Cruz* from the Caires for camp transportation and also served the island business as captain of the schooner until 1932. Eaton's involvement in bootlegging became legendary in southern California, but he avoided conviction after once being arrested and tried. Clarence Laurabee, a surveyor on the island in 1923, claimed that Eaton traveled 50 miles off shore in the *Sea Wolf* to meet Canadian boats for a load of liquor; "He was a pirate all right . . . like Treasure Island!"⁴¹⁰

A coast survey map made in 1934 depicted at least 15 buildings at Pelican Bay, three of which were large. A set of water tanks stood on the hillside behind the camp.⁴¹¹

The loss of the *Sea Wolf* had been a blow to Eaton and business slowed during the 1930s. In 1937 Edwin Stanton purchased Santa Cruz Island and the Eatons were evicted. Eaton returned to fishing and his wife Margaret left to live with their daughter in Hollywood. Eaton died on August 13, 1938. The buildings at Pelican Bay Camp deteriorated and finally were removed, leaving only excavations in the hillside and some debris.⁴¹²

The Film Industry on Santa Cruz Island

The advent of the motion picture industry and its home in Hollywood resulted in film directors searching for locations for their "shoots." Popular early themes included westerns, pirate stories and fantasies about fabled lost civilizations. The simple nature of film technology, in which sound was not possible and artificial lighting not practical, allowed production companies to travel into the countryside

⁴⁰⁹Letters, November 9, 1917 and January 22, 1918, in Letter Book, SCIF.

⁴¹⁰Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini; oral history interview with Clarence Laurabee, March 24, 1982 by Marla Daily, SBMNH #2373.

⁴¹¹"Prisoners Harbor to Twin Harbors," U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Topographic Survey No. 4908, April 1934, RG 23, NA(CP).

⁴¹²Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 250-252.

needing only a camera, film, set technicians and the cast; by the 'teens the studios had discovered the Channel Islands. The north shore of Santa Cruz Island became a busy location for film crews as early as 1913 when stars Harold Lockwood and May Allison made a film there. According to Margaret Eaton, Jack London paid a visit to the set in his famous boat, the *Sea Wolf*.

The Eatons hosted numerous film companies at Pelican Bay Camp between 1913 and the 1930s. Mrs. Eaton wrote of the filming in 1915 of “Undine” which required 80 people on the set, 50 of whom were scantily clad “diving girls.” Directors using the island included Henry Otto (“Sirens of the Sea” in 1917 and “Temple of Venus”), Paul Hurst, and directors from the Flying A Studios. In March of 1916 Harry Pollard directed the pirate movie “Pearls of Paradise” featuring Margarita Fischer and a 2-masted schooner named *Alice*. Pollard directed a crew of 50 and was on the island for 40 days. At the same time, Oscar Opfel of the Fox Company directed “Battle of Hearts” with William Farnum at same time as Pollard and employed almost 90 people.⁴¹³

In the spring of 1919 Cecil B. DeMille filmed parts of his “Male and Female” at Frys Harbor. The cast and crew stayed at Pelican Bay Camp and in tents on location for about two months. Carpenters and set decorators transformed the cove at Frys Harbor into a South Seas setting with wooden sets depicting a village and two barge loads of palm trees and other tropical vegetation. The film starred Gloria Swanson and included scenes of a shipwreck.⁴¹⁴

The famous and well-regarded actor John Barrymore visited the set of a film in 1919 and stayed on for a week, inspiring essays by Mrs. Eaton and Helen Caire. According to Mrs. Eaton, her daughter Vera Eaton served as Barrymore’s guide and accompanied him on an invitation to dinner at the Caire’s after they had got word that he was staying at the camp. He reportedly enjoyed the island and the company so much that he came the following year for ten days and for a third time some years later with new wife Dolores Costello for a week aboard his yacht *Infanta*. Caire wrote a somewhat different story of the visits. She mistakenly placed the year of the first visit as 1930 and has the actor strolling into the Main Ranch to meet Fred Caire, and being invited to lunch. Barrymore became great friends with the Caires and visited at least two more times. A newspaper quoted him in 1930 as calling the island “the greatest institution of its kind in the world . . . I envy Fred Caire more than anyone else I know; Santa Cruz is such a great, fantastic dream of nature’s own. It is one of the most picturesque places I have ever visited.”⁴¹⁵

Superintendent McElrath reported in 1920 that a group of “moving picture people” bought 600 linear feet of young eucalyptus one to four inches in diameter for a shoot at Cueva Valdez. The J. Parker Reed Production Company was paying \$100 a week to film on the island for about two weeks. In at least one instance, a film company hired an island employee to perform a stunt; McElrath wrote of a company man diving from the rigging of the *Santa Cruz* for a scene. He claimed that numerous times, the island schooner appeared as a backdrop or set for island movies.⁴¹⁶

Filming continued through the 1920s, as “Peter Pan” in 1924 employed more than 100 people, many of them diving girls dressed as porpoises and mermaids. In 1928 Herbert Brenon’s “The Rescue” featured

⁴¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 200-212.

⁴¹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 216-221; oral history interviews with Karl Struss, February 20 and 23, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH # 0936 and 0934.

⁴¹⁵Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 221-223, 247-249; Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 159-164.

⁴¹⁶Letter Book, April 19 and May 3, 1920, SCIF; McElrath, *On Santa Cruz Island*, p. 340.

Ronald Colman and Lili Damita. About one-third of the 150 people on the set reportedly lodged at the Prisoners Harbor adobe.⁴¹⁷

The popularity of movies with sound tracks brought most film production indoors where the electrically driven cameras, powerful lighting and sound could be controlled. The era of movie making on Santa Cruz Island officially ended when the island changed hands in the 1930s.

Quarry at Frys Harbor

Passing boaters may notice a cove on the north shore where the natural features have been altered by blasting. The Frys Harbor Quarry operated here between 1926 and 1930, exclusively producing stone for construction of the breakwater at Santa Barbara Harbor. A former employee at the quarry, Robert R. Helen, wrote a short history of the quarry from which this description is taken.⁴¹⁸

The contractor for the breakwater made an agreement to open the quarry with the Santa Cruz Island Company, which paid by the ton on a royalty basis. The contractor selected a rock outcropping on the east side of Frys Harbor and constructed loading berths for two barges, one which would carry large stones for the breakwater slope and cap stones, the other for smaller rock for the breakwater core which was transported and deposited by bottom-dump barges. Derricks loaded the barges from the shore. A small railroad carried the rock from the quarry site to the barge landings.

The contractor located the central compressor plant, generators and living area in the canyon valley near the west end of the harbor. The campsite had a frame cook house and mess hall, supplied from the mainland except for whatever wild fish or game became available. The laborers, numbering between 50 and 60, bunked in wood-floored tents while the superintendent occupied a frame house built for the purpose. A radiotelephone provided communication to the mainland. The quarry employees apparently did not associate with the island management or workers.

After drilling tunnels for placement of dynamite, quarry men blasted the rock face into a vertical face that would accommodate the rail cars. Once blasted, the rocks were sorted, broken again if necessary, and loaded onto the rail cars by steam shovels for the short trip to the derricks and barges. When the barge was full to capacity, it would be moved to a temporary mooring out in the harbor to await transport by tug to Santa Barbara.

Crews constructed a dam on the creek to collect water for consumption and to supply the steam machinery, although the quantity collected barely met the needs of the operation. A diesel-powered compressor plant provided power to the derricks and drilling equipment.

Construction at the breakwater commenced with the first load of Frys Harbor stone in 1927. The next year the contractor defaulted and the bonding company wrote a new contract with New York-based Merritt-Chapman and Scott Corporation (MC&S). With an idea to expanding operations beyond the breakwater contract, MC&S formed a subsidiary, Seaboard Stone and Construction Company, to operate

⁴¹⁷Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 234, 246.

⁴¹⁸Robert R. Helen, "A Brief History of the Fry's Harbor Quarry, Santa Cruz Island, California" (typescript, 1979), SBMNH #0908.

the Frys quarry. Seaboard increased production at the quarry in order to meet the original schedule for the breakwater. The better rock was disappearing from the site and the need for only larger stone near the end of the job caused the quarry operators much additional labor in disposing of the smaller rock byproduct, which was dumped at sea. Weather also hampered efforts at efficient operations.

Seaboard Stone and Construction Company received an additional contract to enlarge the breakwater but the company apparently took a loss on the contracts. When the Santa Barbara job was completed in 1930, the quarry had been exhausted of quality materials and so closed. Seaboard removed all equipment and buildings and cleaned up the site to some extent. A news article four years later reported that the narrow gauge railroad and a 5,000-gallon water tank remained, as they had been swept into the Channel by a flash flood. Today the quarry is evident as the only area on the coast of Santa Cruz Island that exhibits major human disturbance of the land form.⁴¹⁹

Depredations of Island Livestock by Poachers

The sheer size of Santa Cruz Island made it a magnet for livestock poachers, most of whom seemed to be hungry fishermen rather than large-scale rustlers. Records showed the majority of alleged poachers were commercial fishermen, hungry for fresh meat. Island reports often carried stories such as this one from 1918: “Mr. Carrigan was fired upon by two sheep stealers at Bluebank and was forced to use his own gun in self protection.” The intruder ran to his boat and escaped. The Santa Cruz Island Company offered a \$200 reward for capturing poachers.⁴²⁰

Before and during World War I tensions arose over the behavior of Austrian fishermen who were numerous in the coastal fishing industry in those years. After numerous complaints from island officials concerning livestock depredations by these “alien” Austrian fishermen, authorities seized boats and crews but later released them. Superintendent Swain complained that the Austrians “were the worst stock thieves that we have had to contend with” and claimed that they were still stealing from the island after their release. Having contacted the U. S. Marshal and Congressman Hayes, he vowed to “go still further in order to get protection or to have the Austrians re-interned.” Swain wrote of “...depredations of armed alien fishermen upon the livestock of the Channel Islands . . . [the] worst offenders are the large purse net boats manned chiefly by Austrians who are alien enemies. [They] . . . kill cattle and sheep . . . in a wholesale manner . . . [and] threatened to kill employees . . .” Swain wrote to the U. S. Marshal that he had armed his men to protect company property and sought an opinion. He also wrote to island neighbors the Vail Company asking for support in having something done about the situation by authorities.⁴²¹

Some of the island’s resident fishermen no doubt took some livestock for their own use. In 1920 McElrath caught crawfisherman Frank (“the Wild Man”) Hansen poaching sheep. Later that year McElrath reported a shoot-out in Coches Prieto Canyon between island workers and poachers off a purse seiner;

⁴¹⁹*Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1934, SBMNH #0531.

⁴²⁰SCIC Letter B111, January 22, 1918, SCIF; also see Caire, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 54-55, and Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 114.

⁴²¹Letter, SCIC Supt. to Vail Company, Los Angeles, April 30, 1918; Clifford McElrath to Office of the U. S. Marshal, Los Angeles, May 23, 1920, in Letter Book #3, SCIF.

soon after, two S. C. I. Co. men found about 20 men rounding up cattle and, when approached, the poachers opened fire; in the resulting shoot-out, a fisherman was wounded.⁴²²

In 1920 superintendent Clifford McElrath wrote a report to his superiors:

Friday morning October 29th Mr. Atkins, Cuate, and myself were riding in the Potrero Norte when a purse seine boat, which I believe to be the *Unity*, put into Aguaje Escondido, landed, four men climbed the bluff, shot a sheep and then we opened fire from the top of the first slope above. They all ran for the edge of the cliff but one man crumpled up before he reached the trail, lay a few seconds in the dirt and then crawled over the edge and got away with others in a boat. If we did not get him we scared him into a faint.⁴²³

McElrath felt the poachers were Austrians. He continued, “I do not feel it is safe for men to ride unarmed . . . I believe the only way to stop the wholesale thievery that has gone on is to keep after the fishermen through the regular channels of the law where possible, and with rifles when we catch them in the act of stealing.”

Agricultural consultant Leslie Symmes commented on the problem when appraising the island ranch in 1922. He wrote that fishing boats both large and small land and kill and steal both sheep and cattle, but that eagles and ravens took lambs and sheep as well.⁴²⁴

⁴²²Letter to Sheriff Ross, Santa Barbara, January 19, 1920, and Clifford McElrath to Sheriff James Ross, Santa Barbara, September 20, 1920, in Letter Book #3, SCIF.

⁴²³Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book #3, November 1, 1920, SCIF.

⁴²⁴Symmes, *Report*, p. 65.



Ambrose Gherini, who with his wife Maria Rossi Gherini and their family owned and operated the Scorpion and Smugglers ranches on the east end of Santa Cruz Island between 1926 and 1984; the Gherinis were the last of the Caire family to own any of the island. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

The Gherini Ranch, 1926-1998

The litigation that began in 1912 and virtually split the family and the island lasted for twenty years, but within fifteen years the Rossi and Capuccio families took possession of the east end. Prior to that, other family members did not, according to Marie Gherini Ringrose, allow members of the Rossi/Capuccio/Gherini families on the island before the suit was settled. The litigation resulted in the distribution of various parcels to seven family members, the two comprising the east end assigned to Edmund Rossi and Aglae Capuccio. Maria Rossi Gherini acquired the two tracts from her siblings and aunt and so the Gherini family took charge of Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches in 1926. For the next 70 years the Gherini Ranch would be operated by three generations of the family as they pursued sheep ranching and, in the later years, sheep hunting and recreation.⁴²⁵

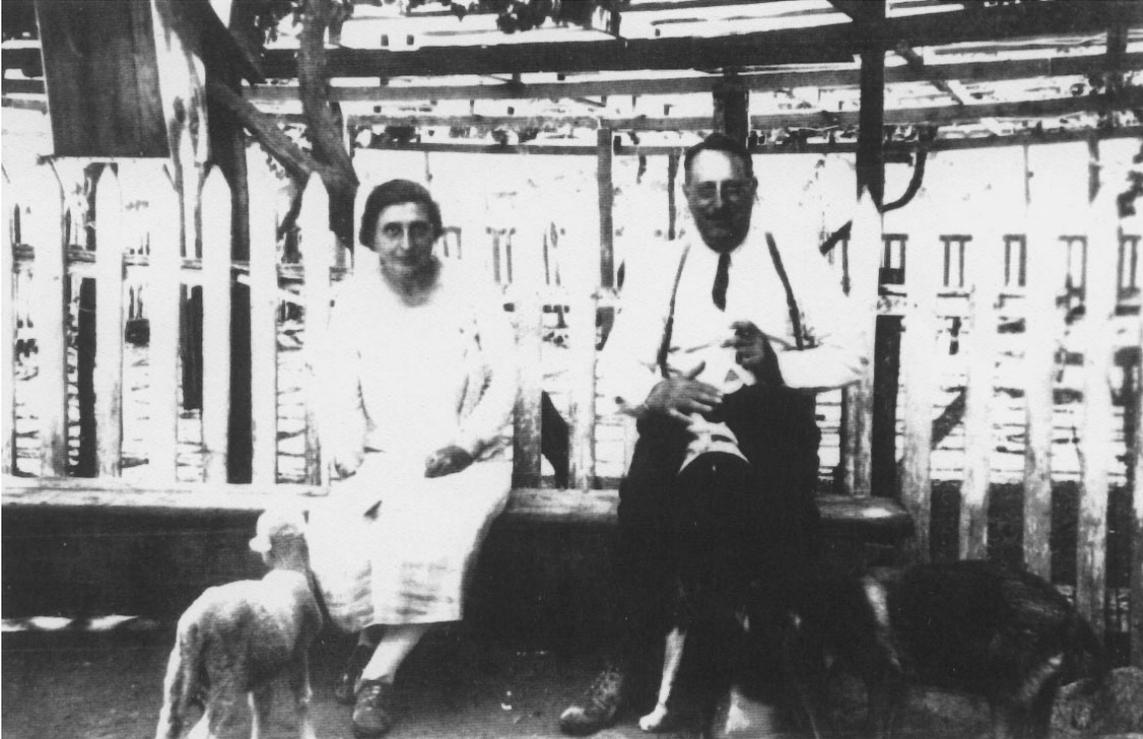
The Gherini Family

Justinian Caire's granddaughter Maria Rossi married Ambrose Gherini on October 30, 1906. Gherini, born in San Francisco on October 10, 1878, was a Yale graduate and successful attorney in San Francisco. He served for some years beginning in 1911 as the Imperial Vice-Consul to Russia. The couple had four children: Marie ("Dini"), born in Asti on August 29, 1907; Ilda, born in San Francisco on January 3, 1910; Pier, born in San Francisco on November 5, 1912; and Francis, born in San Francisco on July 4, 1914. Maria Gherini and her children spent summers on the island: Marie recalled that ". . . the boys also spent their summers there, building fences, and occasionally they were permitted to have some of their friends there, but they also worked building fences and doing what had to be done." The family traveled by car from San Francisco for a two-day drive to Santa Barbara, where they rented a house or hotel rooms. The family traveled out to the island on a fishing boat, although after Santa Barbara's pioneer flyer Earle Ovington staked out two landing fields on the east end in 1928 the family occasionally flew to the island. They also acquired a boat for the business, which provided transportation to and from their island property.⁴²⁶

The Gherinis lived in the San Francisco peninsula city of Hillsborough and, as the Caires had before them, traveled to the island on a regular basis for work and recreation. Horses provided almost unlimited access to the parts of the island and there was plenty of work to be done. Daughter Marie recalled riding on horseback over the island, and being installed as the ranch cook when the hired cook quit. During World War II she was inadvertently left on the island alone for some time. Marie Gherini attended University of California while her brothers Pier and Francis attended, respectively, Boalt Hall School of Law at

⁴²⁵“Conversation with Marie Gherini Ringrose and John Gherini Concerning Family History, June 24, 1983,” p. 15, typescript in collection of John Gherini.

⁴²⁶Marie Gherini Ringrose, June 24, 1983, pp. 14-15; oral history with Marie Gherini Ringrose, December 26, 1985 by Marla Daily, SBMNH #2374; Franklin Harper, Ed., *Who's Who on the West Coast* (Los Angeles: Harper Publishing Company, 1913), p. 217; Gherini, “Island Rancho,” p. 77. Not until the 1950s did flying to the island become routine.



Maria and Ambrose Gherini at Scorpion Ranch, with the arbor that was adjacent to the owners residence above and behind them. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



Scorpion Ranch seen from the harbor, circa 1930s. Note the windmill, barn, bunkhouse and residence. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*

University of California and Stanford Law School; both became attorneys like their father. While pursuing school and their livelihoods, the family worked hard at the island; Ambrose Gherini had a stroke in late 1936 and so relied on his children for help in running the island ranch.⁴²⁷

Sheep Ranching: The National Trading Company

Ambrose Gherini, while not a rancher but a successful San Francisco attorney, took a great interest in the ranch and took care in its operation. He consulted with former ranch manager Clifford McElrath who recommended a focus on sheep ranching rather than the diversified operation the Caires had run. In order to do so, many repairs had to be made on the neglected ranch including buildings, water systems and fences. Pier Gherini claimed that during the litigation amongst the Caires, facilities on the east end of the island had been allowed to fall into disrepair and that only about one-fifth of the pasture acreage had been fenced. As a sheep-only operation, the Gherinis installed “an elaborate system of fencing and cross-fencing” enclosing approximately 80% of the range to provide control of the animals and to allow seasonal grazing to improve and conserve range productivity. He made it clear to his sons Pier and Francis that operation of the ranch would be their responsibility as they grew older.⁴²⁸

Upon taking control of the east end of the island including Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches, the Gherini family commenced an inventory of livestock, equipment and assets and thereafter kept annual accounts of business activities. The island would be operated as of October 1926 under the name National Trading Company, an inactive import-export business founded in 1916 and owned by Ambrose Gherini who continued to act as its president. The island’s owners remained the Rossi heirs: Ambrose and Maria Rossi Gherini, and eight other members of the Rossi family. As of December 31, 1927, Ambrose Gherini owned over 32% of the company, while his wife and eight Rossis each owned just over 7.5%. The first year of operation brought an income of \$4,991.71 to Gherini and \$1,170.89 to each of the other shareholders, for a total profit of \$14,043.89. Gherini also received \$2,583.86 in commission.⁴²⁹

The first financial report of the National Trading Company provided an inventory of livestock and equipment on the island as of 1927:

- 3 hogs
- 9 horses
- 33 chickens
- 2,966 sheep:
 - 34 rams
 - 1,404 old ewes
 - 110 wethers
 - 533 6 mos. ewes
 - 507 ewe lambs
 - 378 wether lambs

⁴²⁷Marie Gherini Ringrose, June 24, 1983, pp. 16-18; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 199.

⁴²⁸Pier Gherini quoted in Warren, *Agriculture*, pp. 37-38.

⁴²⁹Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 182-183; National Trading Co., Financial Report of Scorpion Ranch Operations, Nov. 1, 1926 to Dec. 31, 1927, courtesy of John Gherini.

Value: \$11,919.50

Guns, revolvers, small tools & utensils, weather instruments, furniture, bedding, Fordson tractor, double seeder, pumps and a windmill.

Value: \$1,594.28

In 1927 the company sold 63 head of cattle, apparently ridding the east end of the island of cattle after some 75 years. They sold 2,309 head of sheep for \$12,919.94, cutting the herd almost in half, but sold only \$17.38 worth of pelts. The company owned 175 tons of hay valued at \$2,000, and paid \$3,820.52 in wages. Fencing was valued at \$1,300.⁴³⁰

As president of the National Trading Company, Ambrose Gherini wrote narrative reports of Scorpion Ranch operations for 1928 and 1929. He noted that despite “the difficulties and obstacles due to the nature of the property and contacts therewith,” ranch work progressed during the year. The ranch crew spent time building fences and making trails, in addition to planting and sowing hay and tending the sheep and horses. The crew installed a windmill at Scorpion and planned one for Smugglers, the equipment having already been purchased. Gherini praised the mechanical skill of the foreman whose talents kept expenses down. That year, labor costs halved, likely by a layoff of Caire-era employees or from the use of Pier and Francis Gherini during labor-intensive times such as shearing. Gherini proposed rehabilitating the abandoned house at Smugglers Ranch and stationing a man at the site to watch the sheep in that vicinity. He noted that during 1928 a man had to make two trips daily to the ranch to water the sheep, and that unwatched, the sheep in the area suffered from poaching by fishermen and others. Gherini enlisted a fisherman and his wife who had been camping at San Pedro Point to repair the house and “make it habitable.”⁴³¹

Gherini lamented the condition of the four saddle horses on the property and recommended the purchase of four or five new horses. He also recommended the construction of a pier, and reported a fire that burned about 1,000 acres at San Pedro Point; the incident spurred Gherini to insure the two hay barns and their contents for \$10,000. Purchases for the ranch that year included a Sparton radio, a Detroit mower, a skiff with outboard motor, a lighter, a toilet and lavatory, and 5,000 shearing tokens.

Concerned with low sheep counts and the poor lambing season, Gherini wrote of the under utilization of the east end, noting that

the number of sheep with relation to the size of the range shows clearly that far from the maximum return is being obtained. It is much like operating a factory far short of its capacity. The building up of a worth while flock upon the present unsatisfactory basis is a very difficult task.

He also pointed out that the sheep counts were not accurate, but based on estimates by the foreman. Numerous sheep were running wild in the rugged hills and could not be accurately accounted for. Gherini proposed rounding up some of the wild sheep to offset losses from the poor lambing season.⁴³²

⁴³⁰Financial Report, Nov. 1, 1926 to Dec. 31, 1927.

⁴³¹National Trading Company, Copy of President’s Report of Scorpion Ranch Operations for the year 1928, courtesy of John Gherini.

⁴³²Ibid.

The following year (1929) was dry, causing many problems on the ranch. The company sold 566 sheep for “the highest price ever realized for Island sheep” but the drought had limited the number in shape for sale. The lack of good forage caused an increase in lamb mortality. The production of wool increased, with the ranch producing 16,542 pounds that was stored in a warehouse due to low market prices brought on by the stock market crash. Gherini purchased 20 purebred rams for “the ridiculously low figure of \$180.” and transported them to the island after a quarantine period and dipping. He also had purchased an undetermined number of horses valued at \$135. Gherini reported on the physical improvements on the island:

With the meager means available and all of the difficulties inherent in the property, nevertheless a systematic course of development was continued. The house at Smugglers was rehabilitated with no other cost than the material used in its rehabilitation, and that cost was negligible.

Much needed fencing was also set up, and sufficient hay was had on hand to meet any untoward result of the drought. It will be desirable to develop two or three more water wells.

A telephone was installed between the Scorpion Ranch and Smugglers at no other cost than that of the wire and the instruments [\$81.61].

Gherini reiterated the need for a pier and recommended that a geologist examine the island property in search of oil, noting that the Caires’ Santa Cruz Island Company had reportedly entered an agreement with Standard Oil. He also gave a progress report on the litigation. In closing the report, Gherini complained that his “assumption of responsibility of management” has resulted in his being paid “absolutely nothing; . . . it is now two and a half years that this work has been carried on by the writer, with absolutely no cooperation or assistance from the co-owners of the property. Such a situation is too unjust to need further comment.”⁴³³

The ranch lost money the first years until 1935 when Gherini reported a gain of almost \$3,000. The following year the family began construction of a pier. The ranch required at least one full-time employee but may have supported two or more at times. Company accounts show annual expenditures for labor in the 1930s ranging from \$1,003 to almost \$3,000 during busy years; the figures included a foreman and seasonal workers. During the 1930s the company purchased two tractors, a bulldozer and a hay baler. They continued to expend money on fencing although the major fencing project occurred in 1928 when \$1,778 was spent. Between 1928 and 1944 the company spent almost \$3,000 on fencing improvements. Besides sheep, the family kept pigs until 1931 and chickens until at least 1939. Horses, always a necessary component of an island ranch, were used for ranch work and corridas into the 1980s. Between 1927 and 1940 the Gherinis kept anywhere from five to 18 horses on the property, starting with the breeds left over

⁴³³National Trading Company, Copy of President’s Report of Scorpion Ranch Operations for the year 1929, courtesy of John Gherini.



The old horse barn at Scorpion Ranch in World War II. *Channel Islands National Park*



Sheep sheds at Scorpion Ranch during World War II. *Channel Islands National Park*

from the Caire management and eventually replaced by quarter horses from the mainland; according to Pier Gherini's radio logs, 15 horses were on the east end in 1973.⁴³⁴

The quality of the sheep stock required improvement, as the old Merino stock had largely turned wild. The Gherinis purchased Rambouillet rams in the early 1930s, and every three or four years additional stock including Suffolk and Corriedale (Hampshire) rams was added, resulting in some improvement. The company purchased 20 "black faces" and four "old Suffolk rams" in 1941, and six Corriedale rams in 1943 for \$200.

The infusion of new blood showed a definite gain in the size of the lambs produced. A conservative estimate would be that the lambs, on the average, were five to seven pounds heavier than those shipped previously. It was found that the Suffolk was a good range animal and had no difficulty in getting used to the rough terrain. The same was not true with a few Hampshires which were brought from time to time. Either these animals were too domesticated or the particular animals were too stocky, but in any event they refused to leave the lower valley.⁴³⁵

Predators caused problems at times on the ranch. In 1945 ravens killed an estimated 250 newborn lambs. Otherwise, mainland predators such as coyotes were unknown on the island. Other problems beset the ranch operations. Poachers approached the isolated portions of the east end and shot sheep. In the 1950s the Gherinis bought Texas rams, but the venture seemed to be cursed: four of the first shipment in 1957 were swept overboard while in transit to the island, 11 were lost the following year, and in 1959, 30 of the 55 bought died.⁴³⁶

Pier Gherini described the family's sheep herd as "predominately Rambouillet-Merino," being the old Caire Merino stock improved with Rambouillet blood. The ranch operators controlled the breeding, bringing rams into the flock in July or August so the ewes would produce lambs in the green season during and after the winter rains. Wild bucks from the old herd and intruders from the west side of the island caused problems with the Gherini's breeding regimen. The ranch attempted to produce a fine quality of wool, according to Pier Gherini:

The wool is in the fine wool category, as distinguished from the coarse wool and intermediate categories. The sheep are smaller, quicker and more of a range type animal. The ewes lamb on the range and are excellent and very protective mothers. Any effort to have shed lambing as is done in many mainland operations would be chaotic.⁴³⁷

The National Trading Company sold its wool to Boston merchants, including Brigham & Drew. The wool was shipped east after being delivered to Santa Barbara on the Gherini's boat and then trucked to Los Angeles. Occasionally the Gherinis stored wool to wait for better prices, and the accounts often listed wool

⁴³⁴Balance Sheets, Scorpion Ranch, 1927-1944, and Equipment Depreciation Sheet 1944, courtesy of John Gherini; John Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz: Island Ranch Life from 1951 to 1984." Manuscript of paper given at 6th California Islands Symposium, December 2003.

⁴³⁵Balance Sheets, 1927-1944, p. 38.

⁴³⁶Balance Sheets, 1945, 1957-1959; Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz."

⁴³⁷Gherini, "Island Rancho," p. 14.



In August of 1951, Gherini employees Tony Hernandez, Mike, Manuel, and Joe Hernandez pose in the sheep corral with two rams. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



Sheep in the pen at Scorpion Ranch. Note the pole fence, blacksmith shop, replacement horse barn, old wooden windmill and road to Smugglers. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

in storage in Boston. The Gherinis also sold a small amount of meat (and walnuts from the old orchard), apparently to fishermen or maritime passersby.

The Gherinis kept the ranch stocked conservatively from their initial stewardship in 1926 through the 1950s. While at one point in 1931 the head count spiked at 5,182, the average count at the end of the year hovered around 2,500; sales of sheep and lambs ranged from about 500 to 1,400 annually. The wild sheep were apparently not counted; it can be speculated that approximately 2,000 to 3,000 additional sheep roamed the highlands of the ranch at any given time.⁴³⁸

Earl Warren, Jr., son of the California governor and Supreme Court Justice, wrote a paper on the agriculture of Santa Cruz Island which in the end focused on the wild sheep of the old Caire Ranch and to some extent the Gherini Ranch. He claimed that the unique island sheep, having been on the island for some 200 years (if his premise is true that sheep were introduced by the Spanish) had shown a remarkable level of adaptation to the rugged island environment to the point of peculiarity. He noted that the wild island sheep could jump a six-foot fence “with ease” and run at a speed of 35 to 40 miles an hour for “a considerable distance.” Many of the sheep sold after the Caires sold their portion of the island were incorporated into mainland flocks, with varying results. Warren felt that the island sheep could adapt to a domestic life after less than a year. He was obviously fascinated with the breed, and wondered of their future: would they be killed or removed from the island as the Chumash Indians were, or continue to thrive and further adapt to the unique island environment?

But no matter how fate will have it, it is certain that they will never be lost completely, for these hardy animals have become an integral part of the strange and colorful history of their lofty home, the fascinating island of Santa Cruz.⁴³⁹

The Gherinis sheared the sheep in the spring and summer, the best time being April and early May before the still-green grasses seeded. Occasionally shearing occurred in November and December as well, and in off months the Gherinis “sheared animals outside the main flock that were located in the Mountain, Newfield and Aguaje pastures,” according to John Gherini. Burr clover and foxtail produced seeds that caught in the fleece and lowered its value. As with the Caires, shearers came mostly from Santa Barbara and lodged at the ranch for the week or so they would be working. In the early days a few continued to use hand clippers, but during the Gherini regime mechanical shears came into use, thereby reducing the shearing force by half. Also in the later years, shearers traveled from the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys rather than Santa Barbara. After packing the wool into sacks, a buyer inspected the product and offered a price that would usually lead to “the usual haggling” before a final price was agreed upon. Most wool was shipped from the mainland to the mills in New England.⁴⁴⁰

The Gherinis employed a number of men on the ranch on a regular basis in addition to the seasonal shearing crew. At least two were holdovers from the Caire days on the island. An “excellent rider,” Jim Perla worked on the island for more than 50 years and “possessed all around attributes that are needed in

⁴³⁸Balance Sheets, 1927-1959.

⁴³⁹Warren, *Agriculture*, pp. 41-48.

⁴⁴⁰Gherini to Huston, March 25, 2004; Gherini, “Island Rancho,” pp. 18-19.



View of Scorpion Ranch, circa 1940. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



View of Smugglers Ranch from the steep hill south of the ranch house. *Courtesy of the Gherini Family*

Island living,” according to Pier Gherini. Gherini recalled the former Caire blacksmith Felix Mauri who worked as their foreman:

During his time we still used draft horses and wagons, and the skill of an iron worker was always in demand. In addition to repair of plows, wagons, sleds, there was of course horse shoeing and other related jobs. With Felix, breakfast was an important meal. Each morning he would have a “rosetta,” consisting of four raw eggs and a glass of wine mixed together.⁴⁴¹

Pier and Francis Gherini actively participated in the roundups and other island activities, while their father Ambrose “kind of directed traffic” during the busy times. Warren, writing a feature article for *National Geographic* in 1958, reported the Gherini brothers on horseback moving “a skittish flock along a steep, rocky hillside, herding them inexorably toward a fence that would press them into a series of field-size traps.” The article featured color photographs of the sheep and corrals at Scorpion Ranch.⁴⁴²

A regional drought in 1947-1948 forced the Gherinis to remove and sell 2,240 head of their herd, resulting in a lowering of stock levels for a number of years leading to financial setbacks. Balance sheets for 1948 show the year ending with only 450 sheep, and fewer the following two years. The ranch saw little or no profit during the early 1950s. Ambrose Gherini wrote to his son Pier of “the situation” on the island: “As it is, all we are doing is to load expenses upon ourselves and operate the place for the benefit of the hands. That simply does not make sense.” Gherini mentioned the small number of animals available for shearing that year. Pier wrote back asking to hire two shearers who had worked the year before, confident that they could find enough sheep “to get all possible income from wool and sale of animals.” This he apparently did, as in 1951 the National Trading Company found 1,712 animals to be sold. The following year only 150 sheep were counted on the Gherini property, and the numbers only slowly grew to the former numbers in the 2,000s in 1956. Dry years in 1960-1961 forced the Gherinis to import feed.⁴⁴³

Warren, in his evaluation of the ranch written in 1952, considered the possibility that the era of sheep ranching was coming to a close, no doubt because of the conditions he witnessed on the island:

The death of Ambrose Gherini, the sale of the major part of the flock in 1948, the persistence of the wild island sheep, and the renewed need for such developments as new fencing and wells makes it highly possible that the Gherini property may soon be converted to a cattle ranch as was done on the rest of the island. If this occurs, it will at least temporarily signal the end of the sheep raising industry among the coastal islands of California, for on all the other privately owned island properties, cattle raising has superseded the great sheep enterprises which have thrived there in past years.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁴²Marie Gherini Ringrose, p. 16; Earl Warren, Jr., “California’s Ranches in the Sea” in *National Geographic*, Volume CXIV Number Two, August 1958, p. 270.

⁴⁴³Ambrose Gherini to Pier Gherini, June 13, 1951, and Pier Gherini to Ambrose Gherini, June 22, 1951, collection of John Gherini; Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 38; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 193; Gherini, “Radio Santa Cruz.”

⁴⁴⁴Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 38.

The persistence of the Gherini family, perhaps pushed by the widowed Maria Rossi Gherini, led to the continuation of sheep ranching on the east end for another 30 years. Profits, if existing at all, never reached great amounts, and labor expenses grew. The grandchildren of Ambrose and Maria Gherini continued to work on the ranch through the 1970s, upholding a long family tradition and keeping alive a disappearing way of life.

Fields and Pastures

During the Gherini tenure on the east end uses of the land changed only slightly but many of the pasture names changed or were translated. For instance, Campo Maximo became known as Campo Grande, both of similar meaning; Potrero Llano, which stretched from Scorpion to Smugglers Ranches, had been divided into Scorpion Field and the larger Smugglers Field; the old Potrero Vallata and Campo Cruce became known as Wether Field as the fence between was abandoned; Campo Toros changed to Buck Pasture; and so on. The Aguaje region on the southeast side retained its name but was divided into the New Field and Aguaje #1 and #2.

The Gherinis focused their energies on sheep ranching exclusively, with hay growing accomplished at a lesser extent than under Justinian Caire and his sons. Most of the old hay fields became pastures, the sheep grazing around the old stone piles left from the Caire's field clearing work. However, haying continued to be a part of the operation, and even into the 1950s and 1960s, hay was cut and raked using horse-pulled mowers and hay rakes. In 1956 the Gherinis purchased a hay baler.⁴⁴⁵

C. W. Towne and Charles Wentworth, writing of the sheep enterprises in the state, noted the Gherini ranch as being divided into nine potreros

which are rotated for grazing and so arranged that the flocks come out to the shearing sheds in April. After shearing, they are turned loose in the next potrero. Some sections are subdivided for separating rams and ewes seasonally. While the property could easily support 6,000 head, the policy has been to limit the number to 4,500.⁴⁴⁶

Ranch hands and the Gherinis constructed a system of sheep herding wings, or double fences that funneled sheep into corridors that led to the shearing and shipping areas at Scorpion Valley. The ranchers placed wings at crucial areas allowing sheep to be herded from the larger pastures across the property into the wings, then moved down the wings for sometimes more than a mile to the corrals in the valley. The four major wings were located in the outer potato pasture on the north slope of the Montañon above Coche Point, which led sheep across upper Scorpion Canyon for about three-quarters of a mile into the valley; on the trail to the Montañon, from a pen at 1,250 feet elevation; to the valley via the old Main Ranch Trail, a distance of about 1.25 miles; the longest wing, from Smugglers Ranch to Scorpion Valley, running about two miles until it joined the wing from the Montañon near the oil well; and a wing over a mile long from

⁴⁴⁵Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz."

⁴⁴⁶Charles Wayland Towne and Edward Norris Wentworth, *Shepherd's Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945), pp. 210-212.

the Aguaje pastures on the southeast part of the ranch to Smugglers Ranch. Ranch operators maintained these wings until sheep ranching ceased in 1984, and all remain mostly intact.

Fencing during the Gherini era in part followed fence lines that had been established previous to 1875. The fence between Scorpion and Smugglers, enclosing the Scorpion and Smugglers fields and San Pedro Point, was recorded on the 1875 Coast Survey map, and other enclosures were depicted in the Caire-era maps of the 1880s and 1890s. Almost no changes were made from the fences depicted in Swain's 1918 maps of the east end.

During the early 1940s the National Trading Company enlisted in a soil conservation program, which provided expertise in range management and erosion control. In 1959 the Gherinis received a payment of \$900 for fencing through a conservation program.⁴⁴⁷

Improvements at Scorpion and Smugglers, 1928-1979

Little has been recorded concerning building construction and maintenance on the Gherini Ranch save for records of expenditures for materials and old photographs. In essence, the Gherinis did not live on the island but made occasional income from its operations; they kept the structures in fair condition although rarely spent much time and money on building projects. Apparently the ranch foremen and employees performed the bulk of the repair and building work, with various generations of Gherini family pitching in. One could surmise that the sheep ranching operation, never a big profit-maker, was not seen as a long-term use of the land and so the existing buildings were kept only in a state of preservation for day-to-day utilitarian uses. This resulted in the ranch's retention of much of its historical integrity.

In 1938 the National Trading Company inventoried the buildings at the ranch in order to calculate depreciation for business purposes. The buildings listed were the major ones; less significant structures like sheds and the blacksmith shop were not included. The seven buildings listed, with estimated dates of construction, were:

- Frame barn, Vallata [1915]
- Frame barn, Campo Grande [1910]
- Frame horse barn, Scorpion [1898]
- Frame residence, Scorpion [1914]
- Adobe bunk house, Scorpion [1886]
- Adobe house, Smugglers [1888: 1889]
- Frame shearing shed, corrals & out buildings [1898]

The depreciation list considered that the residences and the Vallata barn were almost worn out, having only two more years of useful life remaining. The remaining barns and shearing shed were considered to be at the end of their usefulness.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷Balance Sheets, 1940-43, 1959, courtesy of John Gherini.

⁴⁴⁸Scorpion Ranch Balance Sheet, December 31, 1938, Depreciation Buildings (Ranch), courtesy of John Gherini.



Hay barns once dotted the landscape at Scorpion Ranch. This one, built under the supervision of Alonson Swain in the 'teens, was located in Campo Grande. A similar barn still stands at Christy Ranch on the west end of the island *Courtesy of John Gherini*



The blacksmith shop at Scorpion Ranch as it appeared in 1960; the building was destroyed by a flood in 1997. *William Girvan photograph, courtesy of John Gherini*

The business accounts of the ranch operation recorded ranch expenses and purchases between 1927 and 1959. The records show a slow but steady improvement in equipment and comforts at the ranch, as washing machines, stoves and lavatories were purchased in the 1930s and 1940s and farming equipment increased. In the 1930s the ranch received a new windmill, a hay baler, seeder and cultivator, a used truck and a used tractor, and a new bulldozer (cost \$375.50). The 1940s brought a water tank and a hot water boiler with pipes before the war, and some pumps and engines that helped with ranch work and water supply. After the war the Gherinis purchased a lighting plant, evidently the first electrification in the residences. The one-cylinder generator provided lighting for many years before being replaced. Three water tanks, a hay rake and a radio transmitter were purchased in 1946 and 1947, also an Army surplus carrier truck, a used grader for road maintenance and an old barge. The 1950s saw the rare purchase of a new item, a Chevrolet truck for \$700. The company also purchased air and water-cooled pumps for the wells, a one-man hay baler and a 10,000-gallon redwood water tank.⁴⁴⁹

Few records exist concerning physical improvements on the east end during the Gherini era, but an examination of historic photographs provided some clues. At the time the Gherinis took over the east end in late 1926, the ranches had reportedly been neglected for some years; all of the improvements dated from the Caire era, and most of those dated from the late 19th century. Work commenced immediately to improve the facilities at both Scorpion and Smugglers, including making the Smugglers house habitable and replacing and adding fencing. But no major capital expenses were apparently made on any of the buildings other than general maintenance, a situation that preserved the historical integrity of the buildings and structures. Two large and major ranch structures disappeared in the first few decades of Gherini ownership, namely the old hay barn at Campo Grande and the dilapidated horse barn across the creek from the shearing corrals. In 1976, ranch crews dismantled the deteriorating hay barn located for many years in the upper Scorpion Valley, and used the materials for other projects. Other barns located in the hills had evidently been demolished before the Gherinis arrived, although their foundations remain to this day.⁴⁵⁰

Little is known about the condition of Smugglers Ranch at the time the Gherinis took possession except that the house needed work. Whether the outbuildings had survived is not known. A photograph dated 1939 shows that the stable was gone by that date. The Gherinis had the Smugglers ranch house rehabilitated in 1929 after it had sat abandoned for many years. The work was done by a fisherman and his wife who apparently then lived in the house for some time afterwards. The extent of the work done is not known, but very little money was expended on the project.⁴⁵¹ Graffiti inside and outside the house from all decades of the 20th century indicate that it was abandoned for a number of years and open to trespassing and vandalism by curious boaters, both before and after the fisherman and his wife lived in it.

In the 1930s Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, the former Maria Rossi and granddaughter of Justinian Caire, planned to remodel the masonry building at Smugglers Ranch into a comfortable residence, probably for the family's use while visiting the island. Between 1934 and 1937 she hired two architects, each of whom submitted different plans for the renovation. San Francisco architect John H. Powers drew a plan, dated February 16, 1934, which would expand the house on the front and north sides, with a sun room attached

⁴⁴⁹Balance Sheets, 1927-1959, courtesy of John Gherini; Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz."

⁴⁵⁰Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz."

⁴⁵¹President's Report, 1929, courtesy of John Gherini.



A man named Charlie Ersepki, reportedly the caretaker, poses on June 24, 1939 in front of the house at Smugglers Cove. Photograph © 2002 by M. Woodbridge Williams



The masonry building at Scorpion Ranch as it appeared in 1942. Channel Islands National Park

to the south side. John H. Ahnden, also of San Francisco, proposed an addition on the rear and extension of both ends of the house on his plans dated March 1, 1937. For reasons unknown, neither plan was implemented and the house remained in only occasional use. However, for at least one year the family kept a “Smuggler House Account” in the business books, amounting to \$213.42 in 1938.⁴⁵²

Few changes occurred at Smugglers Ranch during the Gherini period until the 1980s, as evidenced by historic photographs. The stable and other buildings extant during the Caire era were either gone by the time of the island partition or removed shortly after (although a barn with a different roof line appears on the old stables site in an undated, circa 1930s photograph). The large cave behind the masonry building eventually filled in, or at least its entrance was covered; a photograph dated 1939 clearly shows the entrance to the cave, and one taken in 1969 shows the top of an arched masonry doorway visible above the slope of an old slide, yet by 1998 no evidence remained. The house was occupied at least during the late 1920s, as mentioned above, and a caretaker named Charlie Ersepki reportedly resided there in 1939, but the house apparently saw little or sporadic use until 1984. Two photographs of the house taken some time after 1947 show the house undergoing repairs; in one, scaffolding made of tree poles has been erected on the facade of the house and work is underway on the roof. The other photo shows evidence of vandalism and graffiti, and masonry repairs. A couple appears in the photographs, giving the impression that they were living in the house at the time. Radio logs note that the house was re-roofed in 1953, indicating that it retained some importance to the Gherinis. A photograph taken by William Girvan in 1960 focused on the facade of the building, showing the sundial, date plate, intact original windows and center door, and a chimney; the east and west portions of the facade are not visible. Additional masonry repairs had been made. At an unknown date, probably in the early 1930s, a new windmill was installed on the site of the 1880s mill.⁴⁵³

A number of physical changes occurred at Scorpion Ranch under the Gherinis, although none of a major nature. At an unknown date the long bunkhouse west of the adobe (recorded in Swain’s 1918 plat of Scorpion Ranch) was removed, as was a storehouse near the beach. As mentioned previously, the old stable across the creek was torn down or destroyed in a storm, probably in the 1940s. The wood shed near the sheep corrals was practically a ruin when the Gherinis removed it in the 1960s or 1970s. The family replaced the old wooden windmill near the blacksmith shop in 1975 with a metal one.⁴⁵⁴

The Gherinis kept up the two-story adobe and the frame residence, and the shed and storehouse west of the adobe, apparently making no major changes in the process. The original stairway and landing on the east end of the adobe was removed sometime after 1918 and it is not known when a stairway was developed up the back. At the time the stairway was removed, the door was replaced with a window, the lower part of the opening being filled in and finished to match the existing walls. The short stubs of the sturdy landing joists remained, as did faint impressions of the stairway on the exterior plaster. A metal chimney was added in the kitchen and a temporary shed porch roof covered the kitchen door in the early

⁴⁵²Plans in central files, CHIS; Balance Sheet, 1938, courtesy of John Gherini.

⁴⁵³Photographs courtesy of John Gherini and M. Woodbridge Williams; Gherini, “Radio Santa Cruz.” The windmill standing at Smugglers was installed in 1971.

⁴⁵⁴These and following observations based largely on examination of historic photographs provided by John Gherini, and Gherini to Huston, March 25, 2004.



The old windmill at Scorpion Ranch as it appeared in the 1930s. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

1980s. At an unknown date the Gherinis added a small bathroom on one end of the south-facing porch of the frame residence, and a storeroom on the other end. A lean-to was added on the east side of the frame house, date unknown. The yard of the frame house featured an extensive horizontal trellis measuring approximately 50 feet by 60 feet growing with grapevines and creating almost half an acre of shaded ground. A picket fence surrounded the yard of the house and a large fig tree stood at the northeast corner of the house. Another large tree grew at the opposite corner.

The family and ranch workers kept the grounds between the houses and the beach in good order, the old Campo Casa being grazed or tilled and board fences kept in repair along the lane from the pier or beach. The old cypress trees lining the lane coupled with the board gates and corral-style fences offered a picturesque entrance to the ranch complex from the cove. Approaching the buildings one passed the old

forge/implement shed and outhouse, both eventually abandoned. The board fence lining the lane from the beach reached all the way to the southeast corner of the adobe.

The Gherinis also kept in use for some years the slaughterhouse, pig pens and chicken shed upstream of the Campo Casa. Joe Griggs, one of the Gherini's employees, built a small house between the frame residence and the slaughterhouse in 1955. Various sheds from the Caire era remained such as a woodshed located against a steep hill near the shearing shed. It disappeared at an unknown date.⁴⁵⁵

At the ranch area opposite and southeast of the shearing sheds the Gherinis, or possibly the Caires between 1918 and 1926, constructed a gable-roofed horse barn adjacent to the blacksmith shop. In the meantime the original shearing shed was removed or destroyed. The blacksmith shop itself dated from the Caire era, being in place as early as 1918; it was not the first smithy at Scorpion but a larger version probably constructed between 1900 and 1918. It was similar to one at Christy Ranch, and possibly identical to the one built at Smugglers Ranch in 1886 (the possibility exists that the building was moved from Smugglers to this site some time before 1918). The Gherinis continued to use this building as a forge and tool shop until it was destroyed in a flood in December of 1997.

Farther upstream, the rock walls in the creek survived the Gherini years only to be largely destroyed in the 1997 storms. The concrete reservoir survived as well, but the wood frame roof installed in 1920 collapsed in the late 1980s.

The bulk of rehabilitation and remodeling activities at Scorpion and Smugglers occurred between 1984 and 1996 and are described later in this study.

Transportation and Communication

As the Gherini family well knew, transportation posed one of the biggest challenges in operating an island ranch business. Upon taking control of the east end Ambrose Gherini made a deal with the Larco Fish Company to provide transportation of supplies and passengers in return for rights to operate fish camps at Potato Harbor, Scorpion Anchorage, San Pedro Point and Yellowbanks. The arrangement was not satisfactory for the Gherini purposes as the boats tended to be unreliable due to weather and other factors. For shipping sheep Gherini at first hired Alvin Hyder, "a little man with remarkable skill" who had ranched on Santa Barbara Island and hauled sheep for many of the neighboring islanders on his 65-foot boat *Nora*. Hyder proved unreliable as well, at least as far as schedules went: Pier Gherini recalled "the *Nora* would often arrive days late. Upon arrival, [Hyder] always expected everything to be ready, and loading to commence without delay," a rough task when taken by surprise. The Gherinis also hired the cattle boat *Vaquero* owned by Vail & Vickers of Santa Rosa Island in the spring of 1928 for shipping their sheep to market at Los Angeles.

Feeling the need to own their own boat, Francis and Pier Gherini located a 42-foot salmon boat at the Anderson and Cristofani Boat Works in San Francisco in 1932. Ambrose Gherini purchased the boat and the family refurbished it to work the sheep trade. En route down the coast to Santa Barbara Francis and

⁴⁵⁵Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz."



Workers loading wool sacks onto a boat called Dawn at the first wharf at Scorpion Harbor, 1933. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



Men with wool sacks on the Scorpion pier, 1950s. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

Pier encountered headwinds and heavy seas, which caused them to seek shelter and replace the engine with an appropriate diesel. The family christened the boat *Natco* after the ranch business (National Trading Company). Francis Gherini, having a particular interest in boats, usually acted as her skipper although brother Pier reportedly traded off a year at a time during their university days in the late 1930s.⁴⁵⁶

Landing at Scorpion Harbor had proved a challenge for decades, the lack of a pier forcing ranch managers to use skiffs and barges to land on the rocky beach. As early as 1928 Ambrose Gherini had written of the need for a pier:

. . . thought must be given to some improvement at the harbor. By means of a skiff and a small lighter it is highly dangerous to do loading of freight. It is very difficult to obtain boats to go to Scorpion because of this reason. A small wharf would be the means of being able to take advantage quickly of a good lamb market when it exists. Various estimates running from ten to twenty-five thousand dollars have been given as covering the cost of a wharf. We are satisfied that a wharf such as we need may be built for a figure very substantially under that first named.⁴⁵⁷

The National Trading Company constructed a short pier towards the center of the beach in the early 1930s; it soon washed out. Not until the late 1930s did the Gherinis build a more substantial pier at the northwest side of the cove. Workers used dynamite to blast the landing on shore. A newspaper reported that “the new pier being built by the National Trading Company is requiring the shipment of considerable materials and equipment,” all being shipped to the island on the *Natco*. Work commenced in 1936 at a cost of \$469.26; the next year the pier was added to but was damaged by a storm that washed away half of the work. Pier Gherini took a year off his law studies at Boalt Hall, University of California, to work on the pier in 1938; his task included construction of a concrete platform on an existing offshore rock. Eucalyptus poles served as pilings. After repairs of the 1937 damage, the pier was completed in 1939, but soon a storm “washed out everything,” according to the ranch financial accounts.⁴⁵⁸

In the 1930s the *Natco* unloaded some 150 sheep at a time at Stearns Wharf at the foot of State Street in Santa Barbara. Sheep were herded to pens on the wharf, after which the sheep were shipped away in trucks to their markets. Most shipments went to Los Angeles in the 1940s and early 1950s, after which Port Hueneme became the mainland destination. Boats other than the *Natco* also served the island residents.

The Navy gave the Gherinis a five-ton concrete mooring around 1949 but the cable had broken, so the ranch foreman enlisted some abalone divers in 1951 to attach a chain with a shackle; it took the whole morning just to find the mooring before performing the work. In 1959 the family replaced the *Natco* with the larger and more adaptable *Hodge*. She was a 61-foot former military transport of 37 tons burden. The *Hodge* served the Gherini family’s sheep operation for 17 years until sinking off Santa Barbara, with Gherini family members aboard, in 1976; the Coast Guard rescued all aboard. After that, the Gherinis chartered Vail & Vickers’ *Vaquero II* for sheep shipments.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁶Gherini, “Island Rancho,” pp. 15-16 ; C. P. Visel to Mr. Edward N. Vail, March 9, 1928, courtesy of John Gherini; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 190-193.

⁴⁵⁷President’s Report, 1928, courtesy of John Gherini.

⁴⁵⁸Undated news clippings, circa 1937 and Equipment Depreciation Sheet 1944, courtesy of John Gherini; e-mail, John Gherini to Ann Huston, February 21, 2003.

⁴⁵⁹Pier Gherini to Ambrose Gherini, June 10, 1951, collection of John Gherini; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 193.



The Gherini family enlisted the help of Vail & Vickers, owners of nearby Santa Rosa Island, to ship sheep after the Gherini boat *Hodge* was sunk. Here, Vail & Vickers' cattle boat *Vaquero II* stops for a load of sheep at Scorpion Harbor. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

The Scorpion pier, reportedly destroyed or damaged regularly after completion in 1939, remained in use when operable. Radio logs showed work performed on the pier in 1953, and in 1956 when the Gherinis' employees built a pile driver. They repaired the pier using eucalyptus pilings and planks sawn from local eucalyptus trees using a home-built sawmill. The workers installed an animal chute, but a storm damaged the pier that December. Photographs dated September 1959 show men loading wool off a pier or dock with a wood deck and jury-rigged approach that appeared to be of temporary construction; that was the year the pier broke, resulting in the loss of sacked wool. In early 1966, after a storm destroyed the pier, William Petersen and Hersel Wells constructed a steel pier from salvaged materials including railroad tracks and steel military landing matting, for an oil company and ranch uses on the foundations of the 1930s pier. This pier, as others before had, continued to be damaged by storms. By 1983 the last workable portions of the pier were destroyed in a storm. For many years only the imposing concrete abutment remained to remind the visitor of the existence of landing facilities.⁴⁶⁰

Shipping by sea was not without its small disasters. In 1957 four newly purchased Texas rams were washed overboard, and in 1959 a storm washed 5,000 pounds of the wool clip into the channel. The trials of owning a boat and relying on weather and seas for safe transportation of commodities and personnel were great, and the costs high.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶⁰Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 188-189; Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz;" photographs courtesy of John Gherini; e-mail, John Gherini to Ann Huston, February 21, 2003.

⁴⁶¹Balance Sheets, 1957-1959, courtesy of John Gherini.

Flying small planes to the east end commenced on April 18, 1928 when Earle Ovington landed in the flats near the ranch house at Scorpion. He brought with him the first airmail letter to the island, addressed to Ambrose Gherini and affixed with a ten-cent Lindbergh airmail stamp. Stranded by weather for a few days, Ovington scouted the island for landing sites and established two, one adjacent to the barn at Campo Grande and the other on the mesa northeast of Smugglers Ranch. He left a penciled note, including a sketch of the plane, in the old bakery room of the Smugglers ranch house marking the historic flight. Ovington wrote about the qualities of the Campo Grande field in 1933:

By far the best landing field on [Santa Cruz] Island is Campo Grande, on the northeast end. It is over two thousand feet long, with a slight grade down to the west, good surface, and its major axis parallel to the prevailing wind, i.e., WNW and ESE. Planes coming in to land should, with the prevailing WNW wind, leave the old barn on the east end to starboard and set down about fifty feet after passing it. There is a bluff about two hundred feet high on the west end of the field so that if a plane overshoots the pilot can give her the gun and get flying speed before hitting the water. Other than the old barn mentioned, there are no obstructions. This field is sown to a crop, usually oats or barley, but is mowed early in the season.

Campo Grande has the making of a fine airfield with some grading and surfacing.⁴⁶²

Flying to these fields continued for decades as the family, visitors and officials made use of these primitive landing fields. The Gherinis budgeted certain amounts for plane travel to and from the island; in 1959 they spent almost \$6,000 on air charters. The Campo Grande field was apparently last used regularly in the 1980s.⁴⁶³

The Gherinis used radio communications for contact with the mainland from the time they took over the island. In 1928 the National Trading Company purchased a Sparton radio for \$104.50. In 1935 the Gherinis obtained an FCC license and in 1936-1937 purchased a five-watt radio and radio generator for emergency communication to the mainland via the Anacapa Light Station. The island radio equipment gradually improved and took a leap when Pier Gherini purchased a set of 2726 kw transmitters, placing one on the island and the other at his Santa Barbara home. Gherini installed an antenna on the hill north of the Scorpion ranch house. From 1951 to 1984 Gherini maintained a strict schedule of communications with the island, taking reports at 0730 and 1800 hours every day of the week. As John Gherini recalled, “Everyone in his family became familiar with the call: ‘KMD83 calling KMC83, do you read me.’”⁴⁶⁴

During World War II, with both Francis and Pier Gherini in the armed services and strict travel restrictions in the channel, Hal Proctor operated the Gherini boat and communications. In the name of national defense, the Navy revoked the Gherinis’ harbor privileges at Port Hueneme, although the ranch operators had apparently not been using Hueneme as their shipping point for some time.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶²Earle Ovington to Miss Pearl Chase, February 10, 1933, copy in Toll Report, CHIS. Ovington’s graffiti in the Smugglers building is being preserved.

⁴⁶³Gherini, “Island Rancho” p. 19; Earle Ovington, Consulting Engineer to Mr. Ambrose Gherini, Scorpion Harbor Ranch, April 17, 1928, courtesy of John Gherini.

⁴⁶⁴Gherini, “Island Rancho” p. 19; Balance Sheets, 1928, 1936-1937, courtesy of John Gherini; Gherini, “Radio Santa Cruz.” Gherini’s radio logs noted that in 1956 the phone lines had been repaired between Scorpion and Smugglers, although three years later trespassers stole the old Caire-era phone at the latter site.

⁴⁶⁵Gherini, “Island Rancho” p. 19-20; L. F. Thibault, Captain U.S.N. Retired, Commanding to Mr. A. Gherini, 19 August 1942, RG 181, H2 Navigation 1945, NA(LN).

Fishing Camps During the Gherini Era

As mentioned previously, Ambrose Gherini made a deal with the Larco Fish Company to provide transportation to and from the island in return for rights to operate fish and lobster camps at Potato Harbor, Scorpion Anchorage, San Pedro Point and Yellowbanks. From 1927 to the early 1940s the National Trading Company collected rents from the fish camps, usually from \$100 to \$175 per year collectively. Usually one or two men would staff a fish camp and could claim a certain area along the shore as his exclusive lobster grounds. Pier Gherini recalled that Charley Gunderson's territory stretched from Chinese Harbor to Cavern Point, Ben Journey's continued to halfway between Scorpion and San Pedro Point, and Sam Hageras occupied the San Pedro Point area. In the off season the men would build and maintain their wooden lath lobster traps which would be deployed weighted with rocks from a 14- to 16-foot skiff. Until Gunderson obtained an outboard motor all of the travel was done by oars. Gherini recalled some of the people he had met on the island:

These camps were occupied by as varied an assortment of characters as one would ever find. The "Big Swede" whose name was Axel Swanson, was a man of some 240 to 250 pounds. I recall him telling me as a child how he drank "fusil oil" because he got a kick out of it. Then there was Ben Journey, a tall, lean French-Canadian. Ben was born in 1850. I will never forget an incident in the summer of 1936. Ben rowed his skiff out to a cruiser that had dropped anchor. I suspect that Ben might have brought a few lobsters with him. At any rate, Ben was enjoying the liquid refreshments and the company aboard the yacht when it lifted anchor. When they were over halfway up the Island going west, Ben suddenly discovered that the yacht was heading back for Santa Barbara. He took off and rowed 11 or more miles in a stiff breeze—at the age of 86. Ben loved the Island and seldom left it.⁴⁶⁶

The fish camps generally consisted of a shack with adequate ground for preparing, building and repairing traps and nets. Journey's shack was located on a leveled bench on the north side of the beach at Scorpion. The men tended to be solitary people but friendly to those who did not threaten their fishing rights. Larco boats would tend to the camps every week or ten days, bringing supplies and news and picking up the catches. According to Pier Gherini, the men usually existed "in an informal type of servitude" to Larco as they spent their earnings in town and required advances from the company to finance the following season of fishing. "Payment of these advances would be made out of their catches," Gherini wrote.

⁴⁶⁶Gherini, "Island Rancho," p. 15.



Ambrose Gherini, recognizing the need to store water for ranch use, built two earthen dams on the east end. Above, a dam under construction in upper Scorpion Valley in the 1930s. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



The Gherinis constructed a small earthen dam near San Pedro Point in 1951, but a storm soon destroyed it. *Courtesy of John Gherini*



This photograph, taken in 1959, shows the approach to the Gherini pier at Scorpion Harbor. Note the wool sacks awaiting loading at lower right. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

Pete Olivari, an employee of both the Caires and the Stantons for almost 60 years, recalled Charley Gunderson to reporter Charles Hillinger in 1956. Hillinger relayed that fishermen sought Gunderson, described as “an island hermit who lived in a shack at China Harbor.” He would row “his tiny boat to the fishermen’s boats and sell them lobster and abalone.” Gunderson moved away from the island around 1954.⁴⁶⁷

The Last Years of Sheep Ranching

Pier and Francis Gherini continued to operate the sheep ranching business despite their careers as attorneys in Santa Barbara and Oxnard, respectively. They relied on a ranch manager and their own children, some of whom also became attorneys but traveled to the island for work and pleasure. The family made a tradition of traveling to the island at shearing time and participating in the roundups, shearing, packing and shipping of the wool and meat. As of 1970 Andy Lucero was the ranch manager for the Gherinis. After Lucero sustained a serious injury on the ranch, his worker David Petersen took over and lived at Scorpion Ranch with his wife Gayle for one and a half years. Ed Pasich replaced the Petersens

⁴⁶⁷Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, p, 117.

around 1973, and Fidel Huerra, an Apache Indian, arrived in 1975. Ranch workers included Ben Valdez, Juan Negrete, John Oviatt, Ed Cota and others. The sheep operation continued but apparently on a diminishing level. Poachers and vandals plagued the east end, especially at Smugglers, stealing things, breaking windows and taking sheep. Finally, in early 1979 after over 50 years of operating the ranch, the Gherinis decided to turn ranching operations over to 55-year-old William C. (Pete) Petersen, father of one-time manager David Petersen. The two parties made an agreement on January 10, 1979 in which Peterson paid the family \$7,500 per year and shared one-third of the gross proceeds over \$30,000. The agreement limited the island use by Petersen to sheep ranching and required that a person be present on the island at all times. Petersen would bear all expenses in running the business. Petersen had no previous experience as a sheep rancher but had many skills with machinery and building and was familiar with the Gherinis. He had worked on the island previously with the Santa Cruz Island Exploration Company when that firm drilled for oil in the hills above Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches. Later Petersen had worked for the Gherinis as a mechanic, and his landing barge *Double Eagle* had been chartered by the Gherinis for a number of island shipments in the late 1970s.⁴⁶⁸

Petersen moved into the small residence that Joe Griggs had built in 1955 and set to work resurrecting the ranch with the intention of making a profit. He hired his experienced son, David, as his “chief shepherd” and kept a seasonal crew of some five vaqueros including Fidel Huerra who resided in the old adobe. In April 1979 Petersen hired as a cook Michel Ravenscroft, a young Englishwoman looking to stay in the country. Ravenscroft later wrote a memoir of her five years on the island, during which time she married Petersen. She described the conditions at Scorpion Ranch the day she arrived:

The long table in the dining room could easily seat over twenty people at one sitting. But my heart sank when I saw the kitchen where I would be expected to work all day.... The whole place was covered with a thick film of dust and there was a mountain of dirty dishes in the single, blocked, wooden sink.⁴⁶⁹

By this time, the 90-year-old buildings showed their age. Petersen and his crew worked on repair projects when not tending sheep and fences. In the masonry ranch house, Petersen repaired the walls and floors and installed new sinks and a washing machine. The crew cleaned and repaired the old concrete reservoir up the valley and laid new pipe to the house and other buildings. In the field, dilapidated fencing systems were repaired, including the boundary fence on the Montañon separating the Gherini and Stanton properties. New fences divided the old potreros and campos into more pastures, easing the task of controlling the herds and their feeding. The crew built a new sheep trap at Yellowbanks in the Aguaje pasture. According to Michel Petersen, David Petersen began a program of taming the mostly-wild sheep by removing as many Merino rams as possible and replacing them with 70 domestic Rambouillet rams from Texas. Unfortunately, the new rams were too young to procreate and thus delayed by a year the improvement and expansion of the Santa Cruz Island flock. Despite the setback, culling of old stock and

⁴⁶⁸Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 206-207; Gherini, “Radio Santa Cruz;” Michel Petersen, *Once Upon an Island* (Santa Barbara: Occasional Paper Number 9, Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1998), in foreword and footnotes by Marla Daily, pp. 3-4, 188; John Gherini to Ann Huston, October 13, 2000.

⁴⁶⁹Petersen, *Once Upon an Island*, pp. 18, 22, 47 and footnotes by Marla Daily p. 188.

the return to a routine of roundup and shearing led to an improved herd beginning with 260 bearing ewes between the ages of 2 and 5. The Petersens' herd grew to about 5,000 within five years.⁴⁷⁰

Michel Petersen described the shearing process at the ranch, which differed in some ways from the traditional process. Sheep driven down from the hills the previous day were kept in a field above the valley bottom to graze and wait for shearing. Middle Field Lane, located near the oil well, was apparently the usual stopover for the night. In the morning the sheep would be driven, with the help of dogs, down a wing into Valley Field in the flats upstream from the corrals and shearing sheds. There, the shepherds judged and separated out the sheep to be shorn; those not picked would be sent back up the wing to the pastures. The remaining flock was then moved down the valley to the large corral. Once in the main corral the sheep were moved, in Michel Petersen's words, into "smaller sorting corrals beneath the cypress trees, which even at this early hour offered delicious shade from the already offensively hot sun."

I climbed amongst the sheep, wading through the excited animals to remove the plywood partition which led into the dividing chute and the switch gate with which we would separate the lambs from their ewes.

Pete and Fidel began driving the reluctant animals into the chute, where they approached the switch gate in line, one by one as they squeezed down the narrow corridor. I worked the gate so fast that the lambs did not even know that their ewes were being separated off from them. While the lambs turned left to roam free, the ewes were trapped in the shearing pen where they would shortly be driven six at a time into each of the three separate curtained-off cubicles to await their turn to be pulled into the shearing shed for clipping.

At the time of which Petersen wrote, three veteran Mexican shearers were at work in the shearing shed. Using electric shears powered by a generator, these old men were paid \$1.25 per ewe and \$2.50 per ram (low for the time) and could shear perhaps 100 sheep a day. Pete, Fidel and Michel handled the sheep in the pens and fed them to the shearers one by one. Petersen continued her narrative:

Manuel . . . whipped back the tarpaulin and legged out his first sheep, artfully flipping it over on its back and holding its four legs with his left hand, while he roped the spindly limbs with his right. He hooked himself up on his elasticized belt before he began shearing. The belt would jerk him upright when he was done with bending over the sheep. Flicking the switch to power his razor-sharp shaver, Manuel began to free the underside of the fleece from the terrified animal now wide-eyed, panting and frozen with fear. When he had sheared the fleece from underneath, he unbound the front legs, but kept the hind legs tied as he clipped quickly along from its head to its tail, ever careful to keep the fleece intact. Finally, pulling the fleece off the backside of the animal, he kicked it forward for collection, and then guided the ewe by one of its rear legs through the tarpaulin behind him into the counting pen where it would wait until the pen was full.

After shearing the released sheep were kept separate from the remainder of the flock for a while. The fleeces were collected, tied with paper ties and packed, as in days of old, into long wool sacks weighing about 300 pounds when packed full with 30 fleeces.⁴⁷¹

⁴⁷⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 46, 57, 74-75, 164, 191.

⁴⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 141-149.

Shearing continued for many days until all the sheep with marketable fleeces had been shorn. At shearing day's end the ranch work was not done:

[Pete] was off to repair a burst water pipe, and to check the generator, which had developed an unhealthy knocking sound. I would have to reset the gates at the bottleneck, recheck the fences on the lower Potato Pasture and Campo Grande, see that the hogs hadn't broken through again into Valley Field, and take a look at the water level in the reservoir.⁴⁷²

Production at the ranch during the Petersen years increased slowly but never matched the numbers of the Caire era or the early Gherini years. Sheep numbers dropped in the first year of Petersen's operation (1,044 sheep providing 8,775 pounds of wool) but slightly increased during the next years (1,100 sheep in 1980). Wool weight rose in 1982 to 11,000 pounds but Petersen needed to look for other forms of income during those years. He sold more than 3,000 head of sheep in 1979 and 1980 in attempts to raise money and to clean up the old herd. Eventually his efforts began to pay off but never brought an income high enough to keep up payments to the Gherini family.⁴⁷³

Petersen, an experienced mariner, had a 19-foot powerboat to use as an island tender. He hired various vessels to transport livestock to and from the island, including fishing boats, barges and landing craft. Petersen exhibited a natural talent for mechanical solutions. After the metal pier that Petersen had installed for the oil company in the 1960s washed out in 1983 he had to find other ways to ship sheep. John Gherini wrote that

there didn't seem to be anything that Petersen could not build or fix. He adopted creative methods to load and ship the sheep and wool. For instance, he used a barge which could hold 1,000 sheep and later built a small landing craft called the *Double Eagle* which measured 65 feet and could hold 350 sheep . . . [He developed] a couple of unique ways of loading the sheep onto the vessels. One method involved a 22-foot floating corral built on top of 55-gallon barrels welded together. Approximately 50 sheep were loaded at a time. The amphibious corral, equipped with a loading chute, was pushed into the ocean by a specially rigged bulldozer. The crew on the waiting boat used a tow line to pull the corral to it. Petersen also built a mobile pier, resembling a flat bed trailer. Again he used the bulldozer to push the pier into the water from the shore. The *Double Eagle* then came up to the temporary dock, lowered its bow ramp onto the pier and the sheep were herded onto the vessel. After the procedure was completed, the bulldozer pulled the dock out of the water.⁴⁷⁴

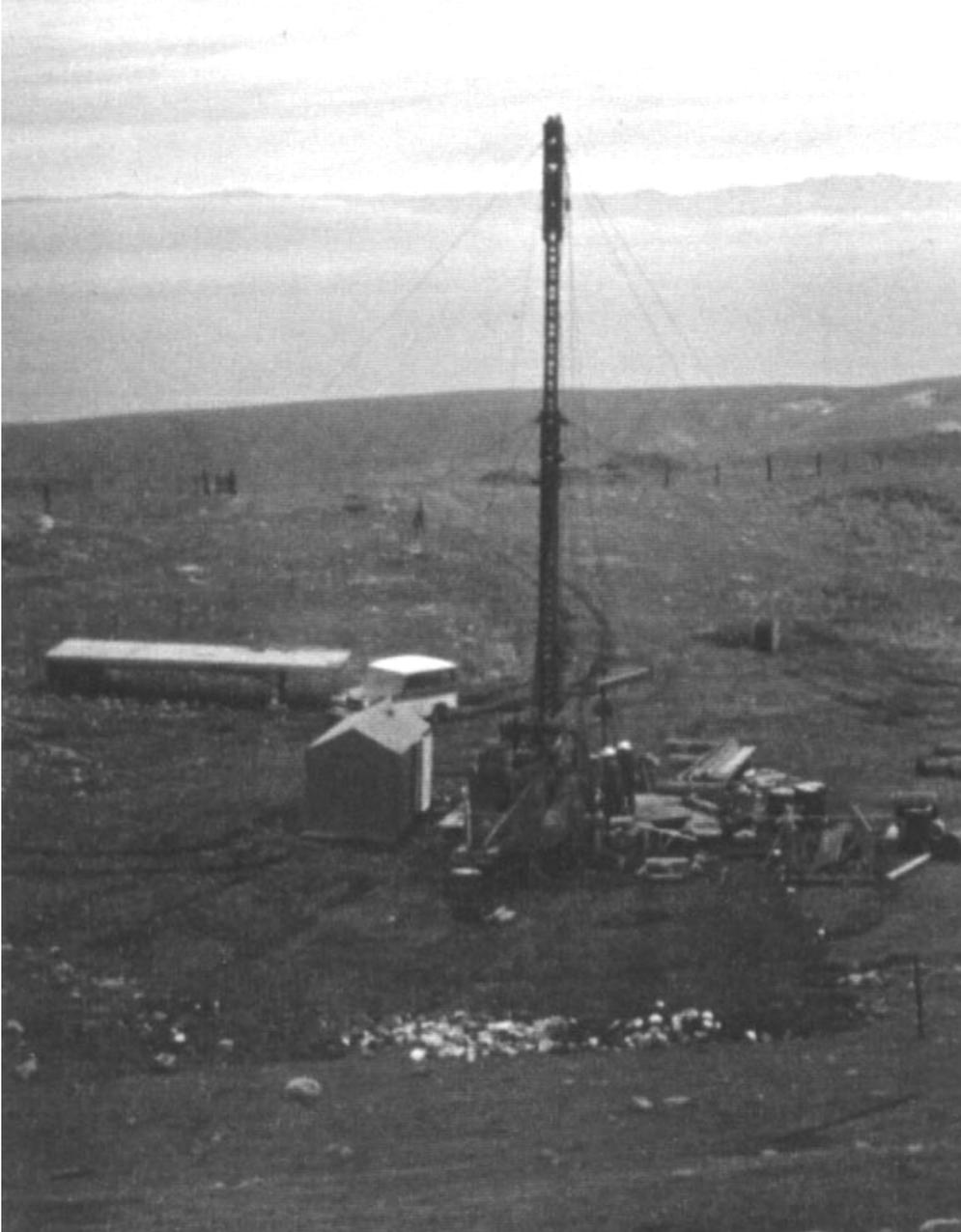
Petersen's taste for seagoing vessels led to the collection of a number of abandoned mine sweepers that the Petersens salvaged to some extent for additional income. Petersen also brought a D-7 Caterpillar bulldozer to the island and left it there.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁴⁷³Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 208, 210.

⁴⁷⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 207-208.

⁴⁷⁵Petersen, *Once Upon an Island*, pp. 47, 91-104 and footnotes by Marla Daily p. 191.



The oil drilling rig above Scorpion Harbor as it appeared in 1965. *Courtesy of John Gherini*

After five years of hard work, the Petersens were enjoying some success on the island when in January of 1984 “Pete” Petersen and two others were injured in a plane crash in the Campo Grande field. As Petersen recovered Francis Gherini invited an organized group of hunters to the island, apparently testing the idea of starting a commercial operation. Amidst the protest of Michel Petersen, newly married at the time of the plane crash, Jaret Owens and various groups of hunters allegedly targeted the Petersen’s livestock, enraging her and bringing Pete back to the island for a confrontation. Unfortunately for the Petersens, the Gherinis were wearying of the sheep business and the small returns it had been bringing, and Petersen owed the family some \$14,000. In late April of 1984 the Petersens were served a 30-day eviction

notice claiming “substantial non-compliance” with the original agreement, although they did not receive the notice until ten days remained. Pete and Michel Petersen and friends rounded up the last of the herd and left the island, being the last of the sheep ranchers after some 130 years of sheep husbandry on the island. A newly formed hunting club called Island Adventures leased the facilities from the Gherini family.⁴⁷⁶

Oil Exploration

The presence of oil in the Santa Barbara Channel brought a surge of exploration to the Channel Islands beginning in the 1920s. Geologists probed for oil on Santa Cruz Island in 1929 and on Santa Rosa in 1932. Geologist Joseph LeConte explored much of the island in the 1950s. Richfield Oil Company set up drilling operations at Forney’s Cove and upper Pozo Canyon in the mid-1950s, and Humble Oil drilled for oil at Chinese Harbor in 1964. By that time drilling in the Channel from offshore drilling platforms had become a lucrative industry.

On the east end, a new limited partnership known as Santa Cruz [Island] Exploration [Company] (SCE) attempted to find oil on the Gherini property beginning in 1964 under an agreement negotiated by a geologist named Dr. Natland and John Myers. After making a survey of the island, SCE selected a drilling location about half way up the Montañon on the old trail to the Main Ranch, designating it “Gherini 1.” William Petersen, who later would operate the last sheep ranching operation on the ranch, was hired by SCE to barge equipment to Smugglers Cove and repair the road between the cove and the airstrip. He eventually became a partner in the venture. By February of 1965 the site had been graded, and a drilling rig installed: photographs show a tall mobile rig anchored by numerous guy wires, a small red utility building, a flatbed trailer, and barrels and building materials. The rig was on wheels, and would be hauled behind a tractor or truck to transport it to the location. The many accounts of the oil story become conflicting at this point. According to John Gherini, Epsilon Oil Company took over the operation for a short time. According to former oil driller Jack Hundley, the firms ran out of money and invited Richfield Oil Company to take a 50% share in the operation. Richfield sent out a larger drilling rig in 1966 and drilled to a depth of 4,953 feet; Petersen spoke of new equipment brought in to drill the deeper well but did not mention a new company. John Gherini wrote that other major companies were involved.

Whatever the case, the firms set up a small complex of sheds and metal buildings adjacent to the tall drilling rig and at one point installed a metal pier at Scorpion Harbor on the foundation of the Gherinis’ old pier. They found no oil or gas but a plentiful supply of water. Joe Dunn and Hundley recalled that Carey Stanton was concerned that discovery of a water supply on the east end could lead to commercial development of that end of the island. Later, crews used the water for a second drilling operation and piped the water to the ranch for the Gherinis’ use. They built a road down from the well site into Scorpion Canyon then up to a large shallow reservoir that crews constructed near Cavern Point; the road was built to the site from behind the sheep corrals. William Petersen was responsible for installing a submersible pump in the well. Water flowed for some time into the reservoir, and the Gherinis used oil well water for their

⁴⁷⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 153-158, 178-183; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 210.

flocks for a while, but after the pump failed the water system was abandoned and the reservoir has remained dry since then. In 1967 Union Oil Company drilled on Gherini lands to a depth of 7,377 feet, apparently at Cavern Point, but found only a “show” of gas and oil. It was reportedly to serve this operation that the water development first occurred at the old well site.⁴⁷⁷

Development Plans and Zoning Debates, 1960s-1980s

Just as congressional candidate George E. Taylor announced in October of 1964 his support for a Channel Islands National Park that would include Santa Cruz Island, Pier and Francis Gherini revealed the family’s plans for a resort development on their 6,700 acres. Since 1962 the Gherinis had seriously contemplated a development to offset or replace the marginal sheep ranching operation. They hired well-known Los Angeles architect George Vernon Russell to draw up plans for a combined resort/harbor/residential development which would focus on the areas at Scorpion Harbor and Smugglers Cove, each of which would have a small village constructed around the centerpieces of the historic adobes. The heavier development would occur at Scorpion, where the lower valley would be dredged to allow boats to enter a basin adjacent to the adobe, named the Scorpion Inn. A 1,000-foot long breakwater at the north side of the cove would afford calm waters for a small marina for visiting boaters. Lodging, apartments and cottages were planned ringing the valley but the ravines and canyons would be left as open space. The uplands would be developed with 3- to 10-acre ranch estates, a golf course and landing field. Smugglers Cove would be focused on boaters who would find “all the conveniences similar to other major marinas on the coast.” A shopping center, hunting lodge and recreational facilities would be offered. The total cost of the plan, which could accommodate a population of up to 3,000, was estimated at 15 to 20 million dollars.⁴⁷⁸

Days after the announcement, candidate Taylor came up with his own plan: sell the island to the National Park Service and let them create the developments, similar in scope to the Gherinis’. Taylor was quoted as saying, “I just can’t see allowing these islands to be subdivided On the other hand, I don’t see why private developers can’t go hand in hand alongside a national park development.” Taylor’s plan focused on Prisoners Harbor and included a museum and art gallery, boat sales and service and a meeting hall. Meanwhile, the Gherini plan was reported in *The New York Times*.⁴⁷⁹

The Santa Barbara County Master Plan had designated Santa Cruz Island as an agricultural use area and Pier Gherini appeared before the county planning commission to present the development plan and ask for an amendment to the master plan which would allow the family’s plans to move forward. Public viewpoints varied but seemed to favor preservation of the island in its current state or as a national park.

⁴⁷⁷Oral history interview with Jack Hundley, June 25, 1991 by Marla Daily, SCIF; interview with John Gherini by the author, October 10, 1998; photographs in collection of John Gherini; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 207, 212 and footnote 86; Jack Hundley, “Oil Story, Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands” (typescript), SCIF; Petersen, *Once Upon an Island*, in foreword and notes by Marla Daily, pp. 4, 190, 193; map of oil exploration on ESCI in park file L14 SRI Land Acquisition, CHIS.

⁴⁷⁸*The Press Courier* [Oxnard], October 10, 1964; *Santa Barbara News Press*, October 12, 1964, SCIF.

⁴⁷⁹*The Press Courier* [Oxnard], October 13, 1964; *The New York Times*, November 1, 1964.

Fred Eissler of the Sierra Club noted that the National Park Service had been studying the islands for inclusion in a larger national park and that no decisions should be made that would endanger such proposals. Approval of development plans would also inflate the value of the land, Eissler said, thereby making federal purchase more difficult. One member of the planning commission disagreed, claiming that by restricting the Gherini family pending a congressional decision would force them to “sit and wait for the federal government to come around and make up its mind to buy it” The commission moved to hold a series of public hearings on the subject.⁴⁸⁰

After four hearings at which opposing sides made stronger pleas for preservation or development, the planning commission approved the plan amendment and sent the issue on to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. Representatives from the National Park Service claimed that their plan would be in place before Congress within the year and one commissioner blasted his associates for not taking more time to study the issue. The board of supervisors took up the plan amendment amidst a swirl of controversy. In March of 1966 the supervisors heard four hours of testimony, including that of two men who felt that the island wasn’t appropriate for national park status because of the “treacherous waters around it,” and others who wanted the land left as it was or included in a new park. A National Park Service representative said that the Gherini plan differed from the park service’s plan only in the existence of residential development, implying that as a park the east end would be developed with extensive visitor facilities. The board received a number of telegrams from officials in Washington stating that no congressional action was imminent but studies were being made. Hundreds of letters were received supporting a delay in the decision or expressing outright opposition to the development plans. Nevertheless, the board approved the amendment of the master plan on a 3 to 2 vote.⁴⁸¹

The Gherinis had won the battle for the master plan amendment but had yet to submit detailed plans for the development. The proposal lingered for at least four years as costs increased and public debate continued. A newspaper reported that at least two large developers had expressed interest in carrying out the development plans, but these never amounted to anything. The National Park Service continued to study the islands as a park, albeit slowly. The Gherini family eventually dropped the plan, as John Gherini wrote:

The cost to undertake such a project on an island was daunting and the plan was never implemented. This was, in effect, the last hurrah for any private development on the island.⁴⁸²

The development plan document offered a fascinating glimpse at what “could have been,” with its well-thought out depiction of attractive harbor facilities and entirely feasible road and lot division surveys. However, two large dams and reservoirs planned a short distance up Scorpion Canyon and behind Smugglers Cove would have raised some alarm among geologists in this earthquake-prone landscape.

⁴⁸⁰Unidentified newspaper clipping dated October 21, 1965, SCIF; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 202-204.

⁴⁸¹*Santa Barbara News Press*, January 13, March 8 and 19, 1966; *Goleta Gazette-Citizen*, March 17, 1966; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 205-206.

⁴⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 206; *The Ventura County Star-Free Press*, April 12, 1970; George Nicholaou, Boise Cascades Properties, Inc. to Wally Smith, *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, May 7, 1970, SCIF.

The Gherinis and Union Oil Company applied for permits in 1969 to drill for oil on the east end. After issuing the permits, the Sierra Club and others sued the county supervisors; while the court denied the suit, the actions ushered in a new era of environmental politicization in California's coastal area. The offshore oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel in January of 1969 opened the gate of public awareness and political involvement in environmental issues, not to mention staining some of the beaches on Santa Cruz Island. The adoption by the state of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 1970 and the creation of the Coastal Commission in 1972 had a direct affect on the potential development of Santa Cruz Island for residential or industrial uses.⁴⁸³

The California Coastal Act of 1972 mandated that Santa Barbara County

prepare a local coastal program, including a land use plan and a set of implementation maps and ordinances for all lands and waters within its jurisdiction which lay within the California coastal zone. This included Santa Cruz Island, Santa Rosa Island . . . and the mainland coastal areas within the county.

Santa Barbara County submitted its plan in January 1980, one that allowed oil and gas development and subdivision of the Gherini and other island properties into 320-acre "ranchettes" for sale, a much lower density than had been allowed in the previous master plan. The Coastal Commission rejected the plan "as inconsistent with the resource and agricultural protection policies" of the Coastal Act. The county then changed the plan slightly, allowing oil and gas development subject to various conditions and increasing the density of residential development on a smaller portion of the land thus creating a permanent reservation on 97% of the land for agriculture and open space. The Coastal Commission also rejected this plan and made their own recommendations, which would deny any oil exploration and restrict development to 21 units clustered on no more than 2% of the land area. The Gherinis went to court to challenge the commission but lost, the court finding that the commission's actions did not constitute a taking or damaging of their property. The Gherinis appealed but again failed; the summary of the case noted that "the commission had properly balanced the risk of harm to the highly sensitive and unique natural resources in and around the island against the public's need to permit energy development, and that substantial evidence supported the commission's decision that no energy development could be permitted." The Court of Appeal also supported the commission in their opinion that residential development of the proposed density "was excessive in view of the sensitivity of the environment and the remoteness of the island." The Gherinis had seen this as inverse condemnation but the court found that it might have constituted a diminution of value but not a taking. The litigation over the zoning of the island had taken almost ten years; by the time the case was settled the island had long been included in the Channel Islands National Park and funds were becoming available for purchase from the Gherini family, but the next step would take another ten years.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸³Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 212-213; Gherini, "Radio Santa Cruz."

⁴⁸⁴Pier Gherini, et al., v. California Coastal Commission et al., 204 Cal.App.3d 699, and summary in California Reporter. September 1988, pp. 699,704-705; Memorandum, Peter H. Kaufman, Office of the Attorney General, San Diego to Ralph Faust, Chief Counsel. California Coastal Commission, September 20, 1988, SCIF.

Hunting Clubs

Jaret Owens of Ojai contracted with the Gherini family in December 1984 to operate The Island Adventures Club, a hunting operation that, according to John Gherini, had started informally the previous January with the permission of Francis Gherini and had signaled the end of the sheep ranching era on the island. Owens signed an agreement in which he paid 25% of the gross proceeds to the Gherini family in return for exclusive use of their island property. Island Adventures offered hunting trips after wild Merino rams (“with mountain climbing capabilities matching those of the Dall sheep in Alaska,” claimed the company’s brochure, “many [with] full-curl to curl and a half.”) and wild boar which, while not part of the official hunting program, offered a “bonus” to the sheep hunt for which the customer was paying. Guests arrived by a chartered Aspen Airways plane from Oxnard (\$75 round trip) and stayed in the two-story house at Smugglers Cove and later at Scorpion Ranch as well. An early brochure noted the conveniences available at Smugglers: solar lights, hot water, shower, two refrigerators, stove, barbecue, a flush toilet, and two pit toilets. Owens constructed a stone patio with a barbecue in front of the house and fitted the house with ten beds. Guides took hunters on foot to remote areas of the ranch and provided services including cleaning, packing and skinning the animals. In the early days of the club, each guest was charged \$500 for a trophy ram and a yearling sheep for meat, \$150 for a boar, plus \$75 for food and cooking if the guests chose not to bring their own. Non-hunters could join the party for \$100 each; Owens encouraged family participation. Hunters were encouraged to use medium caliber rifles or crossbows.⁴⁸⁵

Island Adventures increased their business by adding recreational uses such as kayaking, camping and bed and breakfast operations. Helicopter tours and boat excursions brought more visitors as Owens’ profits increased. According to John Gherini, Owens’ business grossed over one million dollars between 1984 and the time of its closing in 1997. Owens brought his parents, Duane and Doris Owens to the island in February 1984 to help with the business and to refurbish the facilities out of their home base at Scorpion Ranch. Duane Owens wrote to the Gherini family in May of 1987 to report on the improvements he and the family had made on the island. He had originally felt the house at Smugglers had been neglected and vandalized to the extent of being irreparable, but “Jaret had more vision than I and we commenced the renovation process.” The pair worked for some five months making the Smugglers house into a “comfortable and enjoyable” lodging place for hunters and visitors. Duane and his wife then moved to Scorpion Ranch as caretakers, keeping the horses and sheep watered and discouraging trespassers. They also spent the next three years making repairs and renovations.⁴⁸⁶

Owens obviously disapproved of the Petersens’ lifestyle judging by the condition of the ranch after they had left. While the Petersens’ small house was in fairly good shape, Owens expressed disgust at the “maze of discards” in a field near the corrals, containing “old engines, parts of the old semi truck, steel frames from an old building, broken glass and numerous old window frames, mesh wire, boards and other debris” including discarded appliances and old barrels. Junk littered the beach and other fields in the

⁴⁸⁵Brochure for Island Adventures, circa 1985, SCIF; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 210-211, 228. Owens had previously worked for the Santa Cruz Island Hunt Club on Carey Stanton’s side of the island.

⁴⁸⁶Duane Owens to Members of the Gherini Family, May 10, 1987, CHIS files. Owens’ remarkable letter provides important details on the transformation of the ranch during the 1980s, but it appears to be a plea for a better lease

valley. He complained of the accumulation of items in the shop but otherwise found it well organized. In these observations Owens showed himself to be a newcomer at island life, as the collections of parts and debris tended to illustrate the life of isolation where transportation is difficult and spare parts and ingenuity often saved the day. However, the accumulation after more than a decade of neglect must have been a shocking sight for the retired school principal from Ojai. With the Petersens having been gone for more than a month, Owens discovered rotten chicken eggs amongst the shelves in the shop and mice infestations everywhere.

I was most distressed about the condition of the buildings. The old adobe-rock building was almost ready for a caterpillar-bulldozer to level it. Upstairs under a layer of dirt and filth was a rotten carpet laid on musty newspapers. Floor boards were warped immensely because the roof had leaked allowing water to puddle and stand in the room . . . Walls were filthy; windows were out; paint was chipping and flaking off. The rooms downstairs weren't too well cared for either . . . numerous windows were out and screens were gone so swallows nested in rooms upstairs and down. Moisture from winter rains softened the plaster near the floor causing it to deteriorate and flake off.

Owens found the room with the bread oven so full of “junk” that he didn't realize that the oven existed. As for the bunkhouse, it needed paint and much window repair. The porch roof leaked into the small restroom on its west end and the storeroom on the east. (Curiously, NPS historian Bruce Craig evaluated the buildings the previous year and found them to be in relatively good condition. The bunkhouse was “in a remarkable state of preservation,” he wrote. “The exterior is well maintained . . .”). The sheds east of the adobe building were in bad shape and also full of debris and vermin. The water system was in poor shape with the lower wells full of silt and dead animals and the pump on the upper well not functioning. The trees in the valley had broken limbs and many had fallen. Owens typed almost four single-spaced pages detailing the problems he found upon his arrival. He then wrote four more pages listing the improvements he had made in the three years since.

Duane Owens, along with members of his family and friends such as Bill Connally of Island Packers, turned the place from a worn-out old ranch into an attractive guest facility and residence. He cleared debris from the beach and fields, cleared out the creek and wells, trimmed trees and landscaped around the buildings. Owens created a fenced oasis in the dry valley: “This little half acre is a show place of flowers, grass, graveled walks and road ways, beautiful tables, barbecue pits, a fire circle, new trees, a garden, rock walls and outside solar powered lights. I'm so proud to have people come to visit during the day or come and stay overnight.” Owens rehabilitated the adobe by installing a new roof and repairing the warped floor, and painted the walls and floors. He eliminated mice and installed beds for at least ten guests upstairs. He gave similar treatment to the bunk house; he painted inside and out, installed solar lights, repaired the bathroom, reroofed the porch and planted flowers around the house, now white with green trim. With Bill Connally he installed new doors and windows as needed. “Every room has a different color decor,” wrote Owens. “Matching bed spreads and rugs create a colorful and restful setting for anyone staying there.” Adjacent to the bunkhouse he planted lawns and spread gravel collected from the beach making a much less dusty environment. He built and installed outdoor tables constructed of old barn doors and other scavenged materials.

Owens improved the small dwelling that he occupied, a portable building brought to the island in the 1950s by the Gherinis. He also constructed a double rest room with toilets, sinks and showers, located between the adobe and the old shed. While removing or dumping great piles of “junk,” Owens claimed to be careful as regarded historical items such as “the old forge, the home made grinding wheels, the old scrapers, the ploughs, the harrows, the old mowing machines, the disk plough, the old pumps and engines . . .” Island Packers brought visitors on regular tours and overnight excursions to Scorpion Ranch, with Duane and Doris Owens as the hosts (Jaret Owens’ hunting club was based entirely at Smugglers Ranch, similarly improved by the family). Duane Owens invited members of the Gherini family, three generations of whom visited and apparently enjoyed the improvements that he had been making. The fact that no sheep ranching remained (the sheep were now targets for the paying hunters) allowed family members to visit the ranch unhindered by the labors of roundup, shearing and shipping.

Friction among the Gherini family arose over financial oversight and control of the hunting contract, known to be of most interest to Francis Gherini. By 1989, his brother Pier was ill and the sisters Ilda and Marie lived elsewhere and took less interest in day-to-day operations on the island. Island Adventures continued to operate on the island under contract to Francis Gherini after the other family interests in the island had been sold to the park service in the early 1990s; two-thirds of the contract fees were paid to the federal government. At the end of Francis Gherini’s ownership in the spring of 1997, Island Adventures ceased to operate on the island.⁴⁸⁷

National Park Service Purchase

The National Park Service had a hot and cold relationship with the various owners of Santa Cruz Island over more than five decades. The Caires wanted to sell the island for a park, and Edwin Stanton expressed such desires at times. His son Carey Stanton was firmly against any park acquisition. The Gherinis generally supported park purchase but were divided about process, their activities reminiscent of the relations amongst the Caire family some 75 years earlier. Even before the contention of the 1980s and 1990s, the Gherini family acted to protect their rights of privacy. In late 1965 the NPS sent investigator teams to all the islands to look into possible park uses, and were reportedly refused entry on all or part of Santa Cruz Island.⁴⁸⁸

Public Law 96-199 authorizing Channel Islands National Park in 1980 paved the way for federal purchase of the east end of Santa Cruz Island (The Nature Conservancy portion of the island would be exempted). Congress authorized \$3,840,000 for FY82 land acquisition with east Santa Cruz Island as a target, but the Gherini family members refused to permit an appraisal of the property. Another problem was that the legislation establishing the park stated that the Vail & Vickers property at Santa Rosa Island

⁴⁸⁷Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 211-212, 228.

⁴⁸⁸Oral history interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston; unidentified newspaper clipping dated October 21, 1965, SCIF.

would be purchased first, although officials in Washington wrote that an appraisal of that island in 1982 would be premature.⁴⁸⁹

Representative Robert J. Lagomarsino testified in 1983 before a Congressional committee that the landowners on Santa Rosa Island and Santa Cruz Island would be willing to consider a phased purchase and asked for an appropriation of \$8 million for such land purchases, noting that only \$4 million of the original \$30 million appropriation had been spent, most of that amount on the new visitor center at Ventura Harbor. The Gherinis offered to sell about 700 acres of the uplands of their property, along with a trail easement from Smugglers and a half-acre administrative site there (where, later, a small shipping container was installed for a ranger contact station). Meanwhile, Stephen D. Veirs, Jr., a visiting research scientist from Redwood National Park, had inspected parts of the east end and found the vegetation in the lower valleys of Scorpion and Smugglers to be “thoroughly trashed” by human influences. Veirs also warned the park service of the potential for flooding in Scorpion Valley.⁴⁹⁰

By the late 1980s momentum grew towards the purchase of the east end of Santa Cruz Island, but lack of adequate government appropriations and family disagreements delayed progress. Pier Gherini’s death in June of 1989 played a role in getting the process moving, as his heirs asked to sell his interest in order to be able to pay estate taxes. The United States of America purchased Pier Gherini’s undivided one-quarter interest from his heirs on December 18, 1989 (transaction was completed on April 25, 1990) for \$3,874,750. The grantors, namely Pier Gherini Jr., Elena Reis, Thomas Gherini (executor) and John Gherini, reserved for 25 years the right of use and occupancy for “noncommercial single family residential purposes” three parcels of land in Scorpion Valley and at Smugglers Ranch. In Scorpion Valley the reservation included two parcels, the first an area surrounding and including the bunkhouse, bathrooms, storage shed, caretaker’s house, work shed, old meat house and hen house; the agreement did not include the old two-story adobe house with bake oven. Upstream the family reserved an undefined five-to-seven acre area of undeveloped land. At Smugglers Ranch the reservation consisted of about one acre of undeveloped land southeast of the adobe and straddling the road. Both undeveloped parcels were meant to be the sites of new residences to be constructed by members of the Gherini family after approval of design by the park superintendent. In December of 1992 the government purchased the two one-quarter interests held by the Gherini sisters, Ilda McGinness and Marie Ringrose, for \$4 million each. This left only the one-quarter interest owned by Francis Gherini, who felt that the proposed purchase price was not enough, despite repeated appraisals of the property that dipped as low as \$2.9 million for the remaining interest.⁴⁹¹

Public concern about the park service’s inability to regulate uses on the island since it held only three-quarters of an undivided interest brought pressure to somehow settle the impasse between the government and Francis Gherini. At the urging of the park service and various local parties, Representative Andrea Seastrand (R-Shell Beach) introduced legislation in the second session of the 104th Congress, September

⁴⁸⁹Memorandum, Assistant Director to Regional Director, Western Regional Office, May 13, 1982, File L14 SRI Land Acquisition, CHIS.

⁴⁹⁰Testimony of Rep. Robert J. Lagomarsino before the Subcommittee on the Interior on Appropriations, U. S. House of Representatives, May 5, 1983; Memorandum, Stephen D. Veirs, Jr. to Architect, Western Team, Denver Service Center, May 4, 1983, both in file L14, SRI Land Acquisition, CHIS; File L1429, Land Records, ESCI, CHIS.

⁴⁹¹Warranty Deed, Reservation of Use and Occupancy and Exhibits in file L1429 Land Records ESCI, CHIS; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 227.

11, 1996, to authorize a taking of the Francis Gherini property; Seastrand intended to pursue the action only with Gherini's consent, and later wrote that she had been assured that Gherini could obtain a reservation for continued use as his brother's family had. In a move that would somewhat complicate the dealings, Francis Gherini, as sole owner of the one-quarter interest in the property, made a gift deed to the Santa Cruz Island Foundation on September 23, 1996 for 25/10,000 of his island interest with a value of \$43,065, which included an easement across the entire property for use and occupancy and recreational purposes. However, the Seastrand bill passed the house and was approved as part of the Omnibus Parks Bill by the Senate. On November 12, 1996 President Clinton signed the legislation taking the property from Francis Gherini, setting the date of transfer as February 10, 1997. Compensation would be agreed upon through negotiation, a situation that later was decided by a jury to Francis Gherini's advantage, and had not been enjoyed by any other island owner (prior land transfers were paid for by congressional appropriations making use of limited funding). Much to Representative Seastrand's surprise, the National Park Service informed Gherini that the legislative taking seized all property rights, including the right to a reservation of use and occupancy, and that the government had no legal authority to grant a reservation since the transaction had been a taking rather than a negotiated purchase as outlined in the original park legislation. Following the legislative taking, Gherini made attempts to overrule the action, including a federal lawsuit (*Francis Gherini vs. United States of America*, No. CV 97-0819) and the drafting of House Bill HR 2689 which would grant him a reservation of use and occupancy; both actions failed. In the lawsuit (which sought, among other things, equal protection for Francis Gherini based on negotiated reservations of continued use between NPS and his siblings), District Judge George H. King agreed with the National Park Service that the taking was entirely different from a negotiated purchase, "like comparing apples and oranges for purposes of equal protection." Meanwhile, the government compensated the elderly Gherini sisters for the taking of their reserved rights, which had been negotiated in 1991.⁴⁹²

At the time of the legislative taking, a number of businesses operated on the east end under agreements with Francis Gherini and the National Park Service. These included: Jaret Owens' Santa Cruz Island Adventures; Horizons West/Guided Travel Adventures, owned by Len Daniello and his wife of Seal Beach, which booked and guided summer recreational trips to Smugglers Ranch as an "eco-destination"; Paddle Sports of Santa Barbara; Petroleum Helicopters of Goleta; OARRS of Ventura; Southwind Kayak Center of Irvine; Aspen Helicopters of Oxnard; Channel Island Aviation of Camarillo; and the Santa Cruz Island Foundation. The park service canceled these agreements as of February 10, 1997 and ordered the "termination of all current activities and the removal of any equipment, facilities or personal property." The government compensated these tenants with sums ranging between \$6,200 and \$20,000 for expenses involved in moving or loss of improvements. Island Adventures held its last hunt and the island was turned

⁴⁹²Information contained in park file L1429, Land Acquisition, ESCI; Santa Cruz Island Foundation to Stanley Albright, Regional Director, December 12, 1996, in File L1425, Acquisition of SCI; Patricia L. Neubacher to Francis Gherini, January 3, 1997, L1429; File W32 U. S. v. Francis Gherini, CHIS; interview by the author with Tim Setnicka, January 27, 2000; letters, John Gherini to Ann Huston, October 13, 2000, and Andrea Seastrand to Tim Setnicka, April 30, 2001. For a detailed account of the acquisition of the east end of the island, see Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 222-236.

over to the superintendent of Channel Islands National Park. After 17 years of negotiation and litigation, The National Park Service owned in full the east end of Santa Cruz Island.⁴⁹³

Another two years elapsed before a court awarded Francis Gherini \$12.9 million for his share of the island property. Not long after the verdict was announced, Gherini died on April 28, 1999 at the age of 84. His wife Inez died shortly thereafter.⁴⁹⁴

After the controversial removal of the Gherini family's semi-wild horse herd, the park service faced the task of removing almost 10,000 sheep belonging to the Gherinis from the island as called for in the GMP. Animal rights groups and others voiced objections to shooting, as The Nature Conservancy had done on their part of the island, so the decision was made to remove the sheep alive, albeit at greater expense. The first loads of sheep could be coaxed into pens by the presence of a water trough, but the bulk of the herd lived in the rugged slopes of the Montañon and required chase and capture. The park employed a number of contractors, the last being Ralph Lausten who was an expert at capturing wild livestock, to catch the sheep and deliver them to a corral at Scorpion Ranch. Lausten, with his own employees and park staff assigned to the task, spent almost two years chasing and corralling the feral sheep into small temporary pens on the island, using old Gherini fences and new fence lines to herd them into captivity. Once in the corral the sheep were herded into trailers and transported by landing craft, three trailers at a time, to the mainland. Sheep owned by Francis Gherini were shipped to an Oregon ranch, D. T. I. Sheep Company operated by Larry Ammon, while others were sold for breeding or slaughter. By the end of 1999 and after an expenditure of \$2.1 million, the last of the island sheep—possibly descendants of the first sheep placed on the island in 1852 by Dr. Shaw—were taken from the island.⁴⁹⁵

The park service improved the two existing campgrounds at Scorpion Valley, both originally developed by Island Adventures and located in eucalyptus groves upstream from the ranch. Trails, all of which were old roads used by the Gherinis and Caires, were opened to hikers who arrived by concession or private boat at Scorpion Harbor. A new well was drilled near the upper well and adjacent to the old concrete and stone reservoir; this would provide water to the ranch buildings and park residences, constructed in 1999 in a swale above the sheep corrals. In December of 1997 severe rainstorms caused flooding in Scorpion Valley, as an avalanche of water, rocks and debris swept through the campgrounds and ranch complex. The old blacksmith shop and “Cat barn” were destroyed leaving barely a trace; the bunkhouse was washed off its foundation. Mud and water swept into the other buildings, including the adobe and sheds, and deposited a layer of silt throughout the valley. The water system, landscaping and trees, rock retaining walls, roadways and camp structures were damaged or destroyed. Park emergency crews made quick repairs on essential services, and for two years worked on repairing the stream channel, buildings and structures, infrastructure and landscaping.

⁴⁹³L1429 Land Records ESCI, CHIS.

⁴⁹⁴*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 3, 1999.

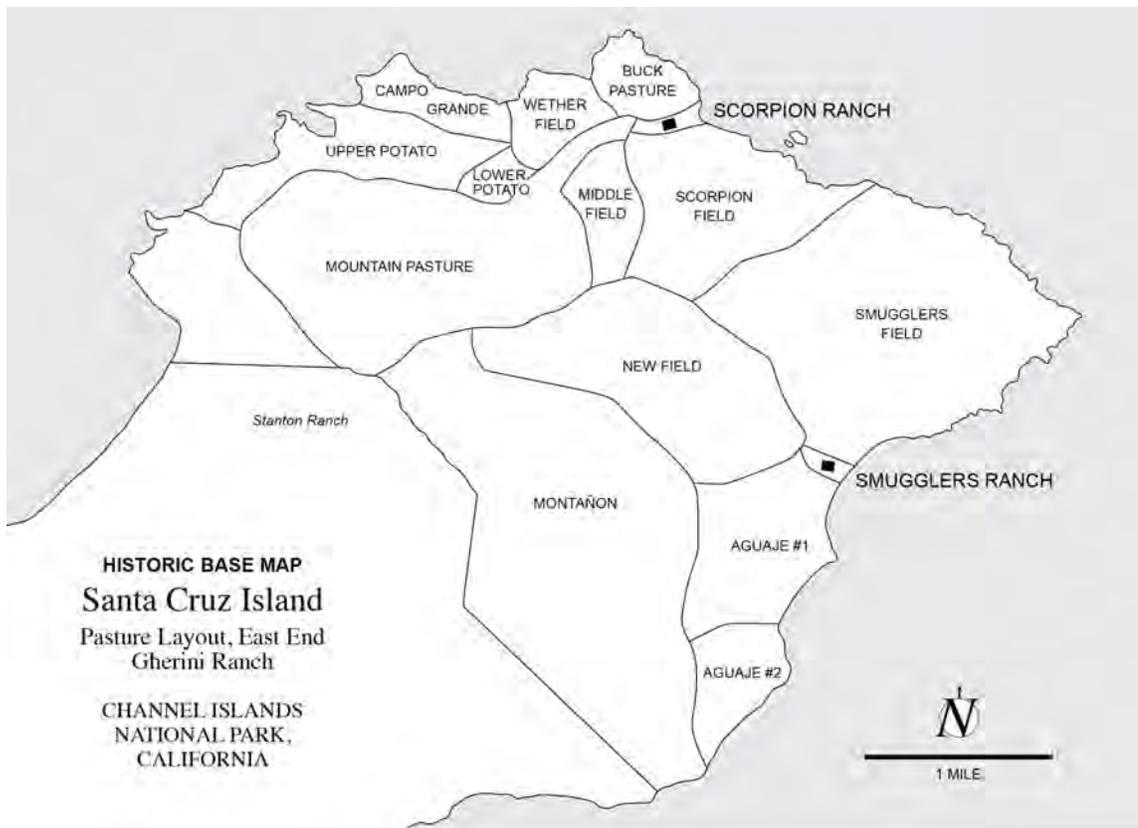
⁴⁹⁵*Santa Barbara News Press*, December 6, 1999; File L1429, Land Records, CHIS; personal observations by the author, 1998-1999. Proposed removal of horses from the east end of the island elicited objections from various organizations (including the Foundation for Horses and Other Animals, which sued the government to halt the removal in 1998 on the grounds that the removal would require compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act) and individuals who claimed that the animals were part of the heritage of the island and that removal would harm them. The fact that the horses were the Gherinis' personal property doomed the arguments against removal. The Gherini family gave the horses to a horse sanctuary in northern California.

In 1999 a National Park Service crew constructed an abutment on the beach and enlarged the old concrete foundation atop the rock, and placed a railroad car flatcar between the two to create a new pier, ending the days of relying on a skiff to get people and supplies on to the beach.

Conclusion

Following the contentious litigation and historically important division of Santa Cruz Island, Justinian Caire’s granddaughter Maria Rossi Gherini and her family settled into the east end and took on the Caire family tradition of sheep ranching. Ironically, the majority island owners, for the most part her uncles and aunt who had fought to retain family control and traditions, eventually sold their portion of the island and left the business. The Gherinis made improvements but mostly continued ranching as usual, living on the mainland but visiting and working on the island regularly. Through this period the ranch retained its historic character, and for the most part, it has been acts of nature, storms and flood, that have damaged the east end’s ranching-oriented cultural resources.

The Gherini Ranch remains as an illustration of Justinian Caire’s European-themed agricultural developments of the late 19th century. Extant resources are many, and include buildings, fence lines, stone work and water developments. The historical developments at Scorpion Harbor and Smugglers Cove act as a welcoming respite from 21st century pressures to the visitors to Channel Islands National Park, and their preservation and interpretation should be a high priority to the National Park Service.



The Stanton Ranch, 1937-1987

The change in ownership in 1937 marked the end of an era on Santa Cruz Island and in California history. The sons and daughters of Justinian Caire departed (granddaughter Maria Rossi Gherini remained on the east end parcels) and a new family, very different from the Caires, took control of most of the island. While Edwin Stanton announced his intention to continue the status quo to some extent, he brought with him a 20th century ethic and set to work modernizing many aspects of the island ranch. Stanton, after failing to improve the sheep herd, got rid of it and stocked the island with cattle. He corresponded with farm improvement organizations and upgraded and expanded the water systems, and built a new ranch complex at Potrero Norte. Following a devastating fire at the main ranch, Stanton constructed a new house and altered the historic winery buildings. But he and his son, Dr. Carey Stanton, also respected the rich history of the Caire era and worked to preserve the character of the island ranch. Dr. Stanton especially took pains to record and preserve island history, and fiercely protected his privacy and property. Dr. Stanton's unexpected death in 1987 led to permanent changes in the management and landscape of the island.

Edwin and Evelyn Stanton

A 44-year-old Los Angeles manufacturer and oilman named Edwin Stanton purchased the major part of Santa Cruz Island from the surviving Caire family members, doing business as the Santa Cruz Island Company, on April 10, 1937. A Stanton family attorney and other sources estimated the price of the island to have been \$750,000, while newspapers claimed an exaggerated price of \$1,000,000 (the *Santa Barbara News Press* quoted Stanton on the purchase price as “a secret between me and Uncle Sam;” the article claimed that the county recorder did not have enough tax stamps on hand to affix to the deed due to the unprecedented size of the transaction). The following year Stanton divided ownership between himself and his wife, Evelyn Carey Stanton, each thereafter owning an undivided half of that portion of the island not owned by the Gherinis.⁴⁹⁶

Edwin Locksley Stanton was born on July 12, 1893 in San Diego and raised in Los Angeles. After a stint at University of California where he excelled at sports, he served in the Army during the First World War. After the war Stanton went into business in Southern California where he found success. Stanton, through the Stanton Oil Company located in Long Beach, owned properties at the Huntington Beach and Signal Hill oil fields and other interests in Texas. He also controlled the Edwin L. Stanton Company and the Stanton Axle Works in Long Beach, which supplied Chevrolet with automobile axles. Between 1927 and 1936 he made a great deal of money that allowed his purchase of Santa Cruz Island. Whether his

⁴⁹⁶Oral history interview with Richard Bergen, March 11, 1992 by Marla Daily, SCIF; *Los Angeles Times*, May 18, 1937; *Santa Barbara News Press*, April 23, 1937; Deeds between E. L. Stanton and E. C. Stanton dated January 1, 1938 and August 4, 1948.

interest in the island was tied to oil possibilities is not known; oil exploration on both Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands had begun in the 1920s and by 1932 Standard Oil had drilled for oil on the latter island.⁴⁹⁷

Stanton married Evelyn Carey in 1915 and the couple, residing in the Hancock Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, had two children, Edwin Jr. and Carey. The latter son, born on February 20, 1923, would become a major figure in Santa Cruz Island history. The Stanton family regularly visited the island and Edwin Stanton took a particular interest in making improvements in both facilities and livestock. According to a news report, upon purchasing the island Stanton “declared his intention of maintaining the island property as a great, typical, old-fashioned California ranch” and planned to build an airport to facilitate speedy transportation to the island from his Los Angeles home.⁴⁹⁸

The *Los Angeles Times* published an article reporting the sale, claiming that Santa Cruz Island was “becoming the most tightly-locked, one-family island estate in the Pacific Coast” and rued the end of an idea that had been floated to turn the island into a national park. The writer, Ed Ainsworth, claimed that the Caire family had offered the island to the state government at a reduced price but that officials had not provided “a satisfactory response.” And so, “California’s most famous ‘feudal barony’ is going to put up the ‘No Admittance’ sign.” While the perspective of the article is interesting, the lengthy piece contains so many errors that the claims noted above are questionable. However, Stanton did immediately cancel Ira Eaton’s lease for his Pelican Bay resort, which had not been used for some years, thus indeed ending the era of general public enjoyment of the island’s resources.⁴⁹⁹

At first Stanton appeared to have contemplated keeping island activities somewhat that same as they had been during the Caire’s time. Indeed, not much had changed when Stanton bought the property, as he found in the island’s Central Valley “a community unto itself, a part of early California rancho life unknown to the outside world.” The Santa Cruz Island winery remained in operation for a short time after Stanton bought the island. Red Craine claimed that Stanton was dissuaded from continuing wine production by the low quality of the current product and the extent of paperwork in keeping a bonded winery operating. Craine recalled that, in order to legally close the winery, Stanton invited federal officials to the island to taste the wine and to then declare the wine unfit for human consumption. The remaining wine in storage was dumped, and the winery buildings caught fire in 1950, resulting in the destruction of the contents and roofs.⁵⁰⁰

Edwin Stanton expressed plans to sponsor a history of the island, apparently under the direction of noted California historian Dr. Robert Glass Cleland. Stanton wrote to Helen Caire, granddaughter of Justinian Caire, in 1947 asking for help with providing references to the island’s history. No such history work was completed as far as is known.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁷Documents in file labeled “Stanton,” SCIF; Jack Hundley, “Oil Story,” SCIF; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 162-163. The Stanton Oil Company was located at 2780 St. Louis Avenue in Long Beach; the family resided at 435 South Windsor Avenue in Los Angeles.

⁴⁹⁸*Santa Barbara News Press*, April 23, 1937.

⁴⁹⁹Ed Ainsworth, “No Trespassing” in *Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine*, May 18, 1937, typescript at Ventura County Free Library; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 162.

⁵⁰⁰Lt. Commander Stanley A. Wheeler, “California’s Little Known Channel Islands,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings [March 1944]*, p. 261; interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 11-12.

⁵⁰¹Helene Caire to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, March 11, 1947, SBMNH #0900.



The Stanton family, in a passport photograph taken in 1934, three years before Edwin Stanton purchased Santa Cruz Island. Left to right: Edwin, Jr.; Evelyn; Carey; Edwin. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*



Pete Olivari, a longtime employee of both the Caires and the Stantons, posed for a photographer while being interviewed in the 1950s. *Los Angeles Times* photo, *UCLA Special Collections*

Carey Stanton once described his boyhood on the island: “It was a truly wonderful place to grow up, a marvelously-preserved, 19th century working cattle ranch.” Dr. Stanton and his older brother Edwin, Jr. spent school vacations and other periods on the island riding, working and relaxing on their parents’ unique estate. Edwin, Jr. married and, shortly before the birth of his son, was killed in action in World War II; he had been chosen by his father to eventually run the ranch. Carey Stanton studied at Stanford University School of Medicine and went into practice on the east coast in internal medicine and pathology. After about ten years as a medical doctor, Dr. Stanton heeded the call of the island and, in his words “overtaken by good sense,” moved to the island permanently on April 10, 1957, exactly 20 years after his parents had purchased it.⁵⁰²

Dr. Stanton immersed himself in ranch operations and history and became a knowledgeable rancher, manager and historian of the island. Rather than allowing operation of a camp or resort, Dr. Stanton invited organized groups such as historical societies and scientific research organizations to visit Santa Cruz Island. His father had hired Henry C. Duffield, Jr. in 1960 as ranch manager and vice president of the Santa Cruz Island Company, and Duffield stayed on after the elder Stanton’s death in 1963. Duffield was crippled in the legs but performed his duties with energy and authority. Shortly after taking up residence on the island, Dr. Stanton’s old friend from Stanford, noted California painter Richard Diebenkorn, designed a flag for the Santa Cruz Island Company as a gift in 1964. In 1958 Diebenkorn produced a simplified but graceful rendition of the historic image of the cross on a hill. The artist visited Stanton a number of times and produced dozens of paintings of the island.⁵⁰³

Edwin Stanton died of a heart attack on June 5, 1963. In following his wishes and a subsequent court order, Stanton’s widow and surviving son reincorporated the Santa Cruz Island Company and deeded the island to the corporation on December 21, 1964. Carey Stanton had been operating the ranch since 1957 but did not gain major ownership of the island and the Santa Cruz Island Company until the death of Evelyn Stanton in 1973. Dr. Stanton continued in his quest to preserve the island, as noted in this statement in *La Reata* published in 1983:

The island continues to be operated in much the same manner as a 19th century California ranch was. It offers a very special window into the past, with a 20th century emphasis being placed on preservation and ecology.⁵⁰⁴

Transition from Sheep to Cattle

Edwin Stanton at first chose to “revive and improve” the sheep operation on the island. According to his son Carey, “It was a difficult task because the sheep had become accustomed to life in the wild and would not cooperate with round-up and shearing efforts.” Earl Warren, Jr. wrote that Edwin Stanton “earnestly” attempted to continue the island sheep business and brought to the island some 10,000

⁵⁰²Carey Stanton, *An Island Memoir* (Los Angeles: The Santa Cruz Island Company, 1984), p. 11; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 164.

⁵⁰³Stanton, *An Island Memoir*, p. 12. The Santa Cruz Island Foundation owns many of Diebenkorn’s paintings.

⁵⁰⁴Marla Daily and Carey Stanton, “Historical Highlights of Santa Cruz Island” in *La Reata*, Number 5, Fall 1983, p. 18.

domestic sheep “with the hope that they would induce the wild ones to join them and thus regain a degree of docility and herding instincts.” The ploy did not succeed, as the Stantons watched the tame sheep head to the hills to join their wild brethren. No doubt frustrated, Stanton decided to pursue cattle ranching on the island instead.⁵⁰⁵

In 1939 Stanton ranch hands began to round up sheep for shipping to packing houses on the mainland, collecting about 35,000; professional hunters killed some 20,000 more. As these activities took time, the sheep continued to multiply and populate the island’s ranges. They reportedly crossed the eastern boundary and mixed with the Gherini family’s herd, which the Gherinis had been attempting to improve with new stock.⁵⁰⁶ Red Craine complained about the sheep on the island:

They were all everywhere you looked. The island was overrun with them. They had multiplied and multiplied—due to the fact that you couldn’t catch them very well, and they didn’t have fences enough to get them down into small pastures where you could control them. The island was overrun with them. In fact, they were just denuding the island . . . We estimated that there were probably around at least 30,000 head of sheep on the island at one time.⁵⁰⁷

In the late 1950s the Stantons worked hard for seven years to remove or at least reduce the sheep from their portion of the island. Carey Stanton kept a record of sheep shipped to market between 1955 and 1962, noting the following figures:

<u>date</u>	<u># sheep shipped</u>	<u>total shipped since 1955</u>
1955	3,692	3,692
1956	10,027	13,719
1957	4,312	18,031
1958	1,415	19,446
1959	1,699	21,145
1960	4,340	25,485
1961	2,339	27,824
1962	126	27,950 [last entry]

While the sheep were greatly reduced by the end of 1962, the effectiveness of the fence between the Stanton and Gherini ranches continued to pose problems as descendants of Justinian Caire’s island sheep now infiltrated their old pastures.

As sheep were eliminated the pasture became available for more cattle, a use that had seen only a small presence in the entire history of the island. When the Stantons purchased the island only about 300 to 500 head of cattle ranged there, probably being shorthorns. Edwin Stanton shipped polled Hereford steers to the island on the *Santa Cruz* for fattening, operating a stocker operation for some years in which the rancher imported weaned calves to the island for fattening, rather than raising calves from birth. “They would go to the island weighing from 450 to 550 [pounds] apiece,” recalled Red Craine, “and in good

⁵⁰⁵Daily and Stanton, “Historical Highlights,” p. 18; Warren, *Agriculture*, pp. 36-37. The shipment of more than 10,000 sheep, purchased in Arizona, was noted in a Santa Barbara newspaper on October 13, 1937. The sheep were transported by train to Santa Barbara, herded onto Stearns Wharf by “two expert sheep dogs of the Island, Spot and Shep,” and loaded onto the *Santa Cruz* and Vail & Vickers’ *Vaquero*.

⁵⁰⁶Letter, Pier Gherini to Earl Warren, Jr., August 11, 1952 as quoted in Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 38.

⁵⁰⁷Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 16.

years they would go off the island weighing about 1,000 pounds.” Stanton switched to a traditional cow-calf operation in 1950.⁵⁰⁸

Carey Stanton described the island cattle operation in one of his many interviews with Marla Daily. After his father had imported the better breeds of polled Herefords (“English country Herefords”) to the island, the ranchers switched between “line breeding” in which they used their own stock rather than hired bulls or artificial insemination, and bringing new bulls to the island for breeding as part of a herd improvement program. The Stantons built extensive fencing in the early 1950s and some pastures with a water supply were used for breeding to keep the activity out of the rougher terrain on the island. The island bull-to-cow ratio was one to fifteen and the cows would be put in with the bulls in mid-February for about three months. Cows went in heat every 21 days and so the cow could be with the bull through four heats to ensure pregnancy. Calves would be born late in the year and into early January, a time when feed was good on the island for the mother cow. The ranchers employed two major roundups per year. The first occurred around March after the cows had been with the bulls and when new calves were about two or three months old. Sick cows or calves were separated and killed. The cowboys counted the cows, separated the calves and then separated the young bulls from the heifers; the bulls were examined and in most cases castrated. All of the young cattle were branded and earmarked with their year of birth. All of the stock was then returned to pasture after their one-day ordeal.⁵⁰⁹

The second major roundup occurred usually in September when the calves would be weaned. The cattle would be rounded up and examined, the old and marketable ones separated and removed for shipment. The calves were vaccinated for black leg and malignant edema, sprayed for heel fly larvae, and returned to the island pasture. At the end of the year they would be separated, with most of the heifers retained for breeding and the steers sold and shipped to Santa Rosa Island where Vail & Vickers operated a stocker ranch. This system worked well as the young cattle experienced little climate change from their birthplace to the neighboring island where they would be fattened for market. In later years the Stanton Ranch raised steers to market weight.

The Stanton cattle were kept in three main areas of the island. Bulls resided in the vicinity of the Main Ranch and towards Prisoners Harbor where signs warned yachtsmen away: “Dangerous Bulls—Do Not Enter.” The bulls, happy to be separated from the cows after the busy season (Stanton said they were “plum wore out”), rested in the Matanza, Nuevo Mundo and Sur pastures (all named by the Caires) and sometimes in the Cañada del Puerto. The Stantons kept the bulls and cows separated by at least one pasture. The western roundup was located at Christy Ranch near the airstrip, with corrals, a squeeze chute, calf cradles and a barn. The Stantons regularly used Christy Ranch, with its bunk facilities for cowboys, for ranching activities. The surrounding fields were reorganized and fenced by the Stantons.⁵¹⁰ The eastern roundup was at Potrero Norte, where in the early 1950s the Stantons built a ranch house and corrals with a

⁵⁰⁸Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 16-17. Vail & Vickers operated a stocker ranch on neighboring Santa Rosa Island.

⁵⁰⁹Oral history interview with Carey Stanton, March 2, 1986 by Marla Daily, SBMNH #2375.

⁵¹⁰Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 16.



Dr. Carey Stanton notching the ear of a calf at Rancho del Norte, 1983. *Photo by Marla Daily*

squeeze chute and covered pens. The favored pasture for heifer calves and weaners was the south side of the island.

Stanton noted some of the old Spanish terms used on the island throughout the life of the ranch: *Seca*, a dry cow; *besera/besero*, a female or male calf; *torito*, a small bull; *novillo*, a steer; *novito*, a little steer;

vaquilla, a heifer not old enough to be bred. Stanton continued the use of the old Spanish names on the island including pastures, fields, and geographical features, and hired mostly Spanish-speaking vaqueros for roundups and ranch work.

The Stantons used the modified island schooner *Santa Cruz* for shipping their cattle until it wrecked in 1960. They hired Vail & Vickers' *Vaquero II* for shipping after that date. The cattle were shipped to Port Hueneme where they would be trucked to destinations such as Buellton or Templeton. The *Vaquero II* held one and one-half carloads or up to 120,000 pounds of cattle or more than 100 head. All cattle were loaded at Prisoners Harbor off the pier. The corrals and pens at Prisoners Harbor accommodated the cattle to be shipped that day, while others would be held in the pastures up the hill to the east. In preparation for loading, the cattle were weighed and distributed into a row of pens corresponding with the pens on the boat; at the right time, each pen would be emptied, the cattle in it driven to the boat and the corresponding pen aboard, then the next pen would repeat the move.

Carey Stanton noted the fine conditions for cattle raising on Santa Cruz Island: the isolation prevented diseases and noxious weeds, no boundary fences were needed, animals were seldom stolen and never escaped, unless falling off a cliff. The Stantons never imported feed, and if a drought caused short rations the cattle were moved and sold.

By 1952, when Earl Warren, Jr. wrote a thesis on the agriculture of the island, Stanton had developed a "fine cattle ranch." Warren wrote, "It has been calculated that the range will quite safely support a breeding herd of about 800 animals and their immature offspring, making a total herd of approximately 2,500 head." At the time of Warren's visit, the ranch was recovering from a two-year drought and had not been fully restocked. Warren described the island stock as being "remarkably healthy" and repeated the oft-noted peculiarities of island isolation and the resulting lack of predators, weeds, pests and diseases.⁵¹¹

At the time of Charles Hillinger's visit as a reporter for the *Los Angeles Times* in 1956, 65-year-old John E. Imhoff acted as cattle foreman and oversaw about twelve ranch hands and a temporary fencing crew of about eight. Blaine Powers, also 65 and the sole resident of Rancho del Norte, took charge of calving and Pete Olivari, 70, worked in many capacities as he had for the last 54 years. Olivari had worked for the Caires (his father was the captain of the *Santa Cruz* for many years beginning in 1897) and stayed on to work for the Stantons. Hillinger quoted Olivari as saying that he left the island only once every three years, and then for only a few days when he would "look around" Santa Barbara or Los Angeles. Olivari took care of the Caire's chapel, making regular inspections of the rarely used building. When Olivari died in 1961, he left \$5,000 to Carey Stanton, who used the money to move Olivari's parents' remains to the chapel cemetery to rest next to their son. A Chinese cook named Sam Wong provided meals for the ranch crew and the Stanton family when they were in residence on the island.⁵¹²

Hillinger reported on the problems with sheep and hogs on the island in the mid-1950s. Stanton told him of plans to have the sheep under control within "a year or two," having successfully trapped about 4,000 the year before. The wild pigs did double damage, rooting in the valuable pastures and causing damage to fences, thereby allowing sheep into the cattle range. Hillinger claimed that the Stanton Ranch

⁵¹¹Warren, *Agriculture*, p. 37.

⁵¹²Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, pp. 155-118.



The Central Valley and Main Ranch, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

was “one of the largest cattle ranches in the nation,” a statement fitting for Santa Barbara County but certainly not the west where 100,000-acre cattle ranches could be found.⁵¹³

Ranch Life, 1937-1987

Edwin and Evelyn Stanton spent leisure time at the ranch as well as working time devoted to the ranch operation. They took an interest in the history and architecture of the ranch and spent time with improvement projects on the island. They remodeled the Casa del Mayordomo to, according to their son Carey Stanton, “make it more comfortable and habitable.” Workers installed an interior bathroom and staircase. The Caire’s old carpenter and blacksmith shop was replaced by a corrugated metal automotive shop, which later was given wood siding.⁵¹⁴

Red Craine recalled that Edwin Stanton retained Justinian “Justy” Caire (son of Arthur Caire) to be superintendent of the ranch for up to two years after the purchase, until transferring Craine from boat duties to control of the inventory and other responsibilities. “He wanted me to see that the men were fed well” The old Caire cook Pico, who had served mutton relentlessly, had been replaced by a Chinese cook who “made pies and cakes, and we got milk cows and we made our own butter and had our own milk

⁵¹³*Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁵¹⁴Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 5, 11.

... so we had a much better diet.” The cows were milked and the cream separated for butter, while the men drank the skim milk. The men kept pigs, which would be butchered and made into bacon, ham and sausage on the mainland. Craine kept a cold storage box in Oxnard near the harbor for meat storage. A gardener tended a half-acre vegetable garden at the Main Ranch where he grew zucchini, radishes, green onions, lettuce, cucumbers, watermelon, cantaloupe, and corn. The gardener also took care of the cows and local stock. Craine recalled that about seven men worked at the ranch for the Stantons during the 1940s, some of who remained from the Caire days. Craine kept inventory on the island, did the purchasing and maintained the equipment. He installed a generator plant for lighting in the 1940s, and oversaw the establishment of water systems on the isthmus.⁵¹⁵

A fire destroyed or damaged a number of buildings in 1950. The large one-story frame Casa del Dueño or “owner’s house” built by the Caire brothers was totally destroyed and the two winery buildings gutted. The fire destroyed the roofs and contents of the winery buildings: “Much island memorabilia was destroyed in that fire, including most of the ranch wagons and carts, and all of the original wine making equipment,” recalled Dr. Stanton. Some years after the fire, Edwin Stanton lowered the height of the brick walls and installed massive metal frame roofs, an undertaking that took an extraordinary effort in shipping materials to the site from the mainland.⁵¹⁶

The Stantons quickly replaced the family residence with a new two-bedroom ranch house designed by H. Roy Kelley (1893-1989). Kelley was among the pioneers in developing the suburban California ranch house style that was especially popular during the 1930s through 1950s but is still influential today. Ranked highly among contemporaries such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Cliff May and William W. Wurster, Kelley designed homes in prominent Los Angeles areas such as Beverly Hills, Bel Air, Palos Verdes Estates and San Marino. He designed the effective camouflage treatment of the Douglas Aircraft Company plant in Los Angeles during World War II, in which an entire, five million square foot suburban neighborhood was built out of chicken wire and light materials and suspended on poles over the strategic plant. Kelley’s most famous work was the Santa Monica headquarters of the RAND Corporation, which he designed during the period he was working for the Stantons. At the same time the house was rebuilt, two maid’s rooms were added to the office and both the adobe and frame bunkhouses were remodeled.⁵¹⁷

The Stantons hired architect Kelley again in 1952 to design a small ranch house at a central location in Potrero Norte on the eastern part of the Stanton property. The new Rancho del Norte would act as the out ranch headquarters for cattle operations on the isthmus and was constructed at the same time that the area was being revamped with new fences and water systems for increased efficiency. The Stantons selected a small knoll adjacent to a flat area that would be appropriate for corrals and outbuildings. After

⁵¹⁵Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 28-30.

⁵¹⁶Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 5-10.

⁵¹⁷“Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960,” National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Nomination Form prepared by Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, Sarah Dillard Pope, National Park Service, circa 2002; LIFE Magazine, September 26, 1938; Thomas P. Gates, “The Palos Verdes Ranch Project: Olmsted Brothers’ Design Development For A Picturesque Los Angeles Suburban Community of The 1920s” in *Architronic*, Volume 6 Number 1, May 1997; Greg Goldin, “Mutually assured destruction? The RAND building comes out of the cold” in *Los Angeles Magazine*, April 2003; “Camouflaged Douglas Aircraft Company,” <http://www.stelzriede.com/ms/html/mshwdoug.htm>.



The house at La Playa, in a photo taken about five years before it was demolished. Damage from a previous flood is visible in the deterioration of the west wall; fennel is growing in the yard. *Los Angeles Times* photo, *UCLA Special Collections*

cutting a road to the site carpenters constructed the simple house composed of four small rooms flanking an open area, which acted as a kitchen/dining room/sitting room. The porch faced south towards the hills but a panoramic view of China Harbor and the mainland could be enjoyed from the yard on the east.⁵¹⁸

The new out ranch was used to store saddles and feed. Blaine Powers occupied the house for only about five years, after which it was used during the rainy season as a cowboy residence during calving time. Carey Stanton wrote that they used Rancho del Norte “as a day house while cattle are being worked in the area.” No one lived there as of 1981 but the trees required occasional watering. Carey Stanton’s death in 1987 and the subsequent closing of the ranch led to the abandonment of the house until its rehabilitation in 1996 by the Santa Cruz Island Foundation.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 19-20.

⁵¹⁹Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 20.

The Stantons Preserve and Remove Old Buildings

The Stantons made a number of modernizing improvements at the Main Ranch. They added gas refrigeration in a storage room in the comedor (dining hall) and installed a radiotelephone in a storage room off the office for communication with the schooner and the mainland. Red Craine supervised the installation of modern toilets, septic tanks and showers, and installed a solar water heater shortly after the Stantons purchased the island. The Caire family house, built in 1914 and mostly bedrooms, was apparently left as is until it was destroyed by fire in 1950. Craine installed a lighting plant in the 1940s, and fuel tanks, both gasoline and diesel. By the early 1950s, according to Craine's memory, the Stantons had a D-6 Caterpillar bulldozer, two tractors, five trucks and a Model A Ford converted into a pickup truck.⁵²⁰

While the Stantons worked to preserve many of the old buildings on Santa Cruz Island, other old, Caire-era structures were removed by Mr. Stanton for safety purposes, including the Main Ranch shearing sheds which were no longer needed and of poor construction for any other use. The wool storage building (trasquila) was retained, as Craine noted: "I left that building because it was exactly the same height as the beds on our trucks. And we could store stuff we wanted to keep in out of the weather in there." The Stantons removed dilapidated cabins at Buena Vista, Portezuela and Rancho del Sur.⁵²¹

In the 1940s the U. S. military, as part of its operations on the island, constructed a causeway across the creek at Prisoners Harbor. This diverted waters from the creek during the rainy season into the old house. Carey Stanton and Marla Daily wrote,

As a result, the front adobe wall of the house collapsed, and the back wall pulled away. The house remained this way for many years.⁵²²

After consulting with historic preservation officials, Stanton decided to demolish the house, and for safety reasons it was removed in January of 1960.

When Dr. Carey Stanton came to the island permanently in 1957 to live and work, he made a number of changes over the 30 years that he occupied the island. He remodeled the ranch office into a comfortable and efficient room. Dr. Stanton had a swimming pool and pergola constructed adjacent to the new ranch house in 1960. Dr. Stanton removed many of the older, abandoned buildings across the island for safety reasons, including the remaining structures at Rancho Nuevo and Prisoners Harbor (excepting the warehouse), and the Stantons removed the graves and markers from the old cemetery overlooking the harbor to a new site at the Main Ranch chapel. Dr. Stanton had the dilapidated second story of the old apiary/winery, called the Cantina Vieja and one of the oldest structures on the island, removed with the intent of adding a roof to the masonry walls, although this was never accomplished. He allowed the addition of a building at Christy Ranch in the late 1970s for use by a hunting club.⁵²³

⁵²⁰Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 35-38. The 1952 D-6 Cat is still in use by TNC to grade roads.

⁵²¹*Ibid.*, p. 38; Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 14, 17-19.

⁵²²*Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵²³*Ibid.*, pp. 6, 9-10, 14, 16, 21-22.

Fields and Pastures

The Stanton Ranch managers made numerous improvements on the east side of their island holdings. They laid out a revised pasture scheme, following the old Caire fences to a point but further subdividing the isthmus into manageable pastures with, in most cases, an adequate water supply. Around 1950 the east end was largely re-fenced with sturdy redwood and steel posts and barbed wire. A fence stretched from the Main Ranch to the Gherini boundary, always located along the ridge and effectively dividing the north and south sides of that part of the island. From this fence at least ten others cut the lands north and south into pasture divisions ranging in size from less than 100 to 1450 acres. Red Craine recalled building fence lines on the west end and then “along the main backbone of the island, the main ridge of the island, from right up behind China Harbor clear over to the Gherini property.”⁵²⁴

Construction of the Navy base on the ridge top east of Mount Pleasant in 1950 inspired new water development to supply not only the Navy but also to improve the old water systems dating from at least the 1920s. A spring in the Merquitez pasture provided water to the eastern part of the isthmus, stored in a metal tank on the ridge at Loma Pelona with lines extending northeast to Merquitez trap, thence southeast in a straight shot almost two miles down to a trough at Pila Moullet near the ocean; another pipe line led west from this tank west and north to the Corrales Viejos and to the Navy base.

Stanton and his son Carey had maps prepared of the pastures, fences, ranch roads, and water developments on the island, using the U. S. G. S. quadrangles as base material. The maps delineated improvements on the east side of the Stanton Ranch as follows:⁵²⁵

Isthmus, North Side:

Holding Pasture (64 acres)

The Stantons transformed the old Caire crop fields known as Campo Primero, Segunda and Tercero into a holding pasture for cattle awaiting shipment off the island after they had been gathered from the east side of the island. The fence line at the south part was apparently changed slightly. The lower section of the road from Prisoners Harbor to the ridge passed through the holding pasture, branching at one point with a western route leading to the top of Valley Peak. At least during the 1980s, this area was called *Anisal* for the proliferation of licorice-scented fennel.⁵²⁶

Lake Pasture (1,082 acres)

Stanton divided the majority of the Caire’s old Potrero Norte into five pastures, the largest of which was the Lake Pasture. Named for a small natural pond known as Laguna Seca, the Lake Pasture included the watersheds of Eagle Canyon and Cañada del Agua. The upper, east portion of the latter drainage, called Agua Muro on a 1919 map, had a spring that supplied a trough central to the pasture. The road from Prisoners Harbor to the Navy base crossed the west side of the pasture and ran along the fence on the south

⁵²⁴Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 10-11.

⁵²⁵Maps at Santa Cruz Island Foundation.

⁵²⁶Interview with Jesus Idefonso by the author, November 12, 2000.

edge of the pasture at the top of the ridge for about a mile. Another road branched off to the east near Eagle Canyon, following the old route to Scorpion, passing below Rancho del Norte and leading farther east until joining the road to the east end north of the Navy base. Roads branched off and made loops around and to Rancho del Norte.

Cruz Roja (about 30 acres)

This small enclosure cut out of the southern part of Potrero Norte was located at the top of the Navy Road and the head of Eagle Canyon. It was adjacent to the junction of the Navy road and the Sur road, enclosing the top of the latter and the east part of a ridge top road to Valley Peak and beyond. Later, Mari-Pro installed two metal water tanks here. The name is of fairly recent origin, as the Navy placed a large box of emergency supplies marked with a red cross here.

Horse Pasture (91 acres)

A narrow fenced area extending from Campo del Norte northward to the Channel, this pasture was apparently used for ranch horses needed on the east part of the island. The Prisoners Harbor-to-east side road passed through the upper elevations of the horse pasture.

Campo del Norte (about 10 acres)

A fence enclosed the new (as of 1952) Rancho del Norte, which consisted of a set of corrals and shelters, water troughs and a residence. Roads led to the site from above and below.

Trampa del Norte (100 acres)

Located in the northeast corner of the old Potrero Norte. A water trough was located in the southwestern corner of the pasture adjacent to Campo del Norte. The road from Prisoners Harbor to the east end passed through this pasture, with a cutoff towards Campo del Norte.

Mount Pleasant (123 acres)

Located adjacent to the mountain peak of that name. A metal water tank had been installed around 1950 in the southwestern corner of the pasture that supplied the Campo and Trampa del Norte and the Corrales Viejos. The main ridge road passed along the southern fence of this pasture, and a natural pond west of Mt. Pleasant provided water for livestock.

Corrales Viejos (700 acres)

A large and productive pasture, formerly the east part of Potrero Norte, covering most of the watershed of Cañada del Sanjon Hondo, ranging from the Navy Base on the ridge to the west end of Chinese Harbor. This pasture had three watering places, the central and western ones supplied by the Mount Pleasant tank and the eastern one supplied from Loma Pelona tank. The road from Prisoners Harbor and two branches passed through the pasture.



View of the Lake Pasture circa 1940s, in the foreground is the future site of Rancho del Norte. *Channel Islands National Park*

Mielquieres and/or Merquitez (1,325 acres)

Covering most of the Chinese Harbor drainage, this was the largest of the north side pastures and included the old Campo Chino and Mielquieres pasture. The major spring on the east side was located here as well as another farther east. The Stantons placed a concrete watering trough near the east end of the pasture. This large pasture was well covered by four ranch roads, one of which led to the site of Campo Chino on Chinese Harbor. The Stantons placed a series of traps or smaller enclosures called Merquitez at the east end of the pasture extending into the barren No Man's Land, a largely eroded landscape with poor grazing capabilities. No Man's Land (1,193 acres) marked the boundary with the Gherini property and the range of rugged peaks and ridges called Montañon and acted as sort of a buffer zone between the cattle operation and the Gherini's sheep ranch. Only the narrow old trail from the Main Ranch to the east end passed through this area.

Cattle foreman John Imhoff related to newsman Charles Hillinger in 1956 the problems facing calves and the cowboys in the Chinese Harbor area. Noting that the island cattle were healthier than the average mainland livestock and roamed farther, Imhoff was quoted as saying, "The calves keep working down canyon slopes and can't get back up. Over at China Harbor the critters drop off the bluffs and slip down to the beach."⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, p. 117.

South Side Pastures

The South side of the Santa Cruz Island isthmus had no water, was rugged and steep, and featured a poorer quality of pasture. The Stantons divided the area, which measured some eight miles long by one to two miles wide, into four large pastures: Sur Grande (439 acres) which abutted the old Rancho del Sur; San Lucas (979 acres) on the south side of Mount Pleasant; Limu (950 acres), east of the Navy Base; and Loma Pelona (1,450 acres) which reached to the southeastern portion of No Man's Land. These pastures were well fenced but only Loma Pelona had a water trough, at Pila Moullet. The main road to the Navy base and east passed through the San Lucas, Limu and Loma Pelona pastures, and a long, loop road traversed the eastern half of the latter.

Main Ranch and West

The Stantons retained many of the old Caire fields in the Central Valley such as the Americano, Africano, Asiatico, Chapel, Mission, Burgundy and European Fields. Workers removed the old vines making way for hay fields and pastures. The old Pila del Pato water system and another spring north of the ranch complex continued to provide water for the ranch. Medium-sized pastures in the vicinity of the Main Ranch included Sur Chico, Matanza, Potrero Verde, Albert's, Potrero de Cabrillo, Cascada and Portezuela. Vast acreage north and south of the Central Valley remained as open range. In the vicinity of Christy Ranch, pastures included Playa Larga, Johnson's, Pozo, Lower, Middle and Upper Sauces, Cebada and Upper Cebada, Alegria, Embudo, Ladera de Christi and La Punta. At Christy Ranch itself, the Stantons retained the old Campo Nuevo and Campo Marino.

Water Systems

The drought of 1948-1949 spurred the Stantons to establish a more reliable water system on the isthmus. During the year that the island recovered its pasture, 1950, the ranch crew worked at water development. Edwin Stanton procured a used 50,000-gallon oil tank and had it steam cleaned and disassembled for shipping to the island. He also bought four or five 25,000-gallon metal tanks that were shipped in crates and assembled on site. Red Craine and a crew developed the spring at Cañada del Agua in Potrero Norte and placed a 25,000-gallon metal tank there. A pump pushed the water up some 1,200 feet in elevation to fill the 50,000-gallon tank that had been placed on a high point on the ridge called Loma Bonita. Craine described the system:

We had a three-cylinder water pump. We were pumping under 350 pounds of pressure. I had that rigged so that it would take about four days to fill that 25,000-gallon tank, and it would take about two days to pump it out. I rigged a float in the tank and ran [a wire] up overhead and down into the engine room I built for the engines and pumps. I ran this wire with pulleys down here and I had a float in the tank and the fuel pump on this diesel was

an up and down pump, and all you had to do was raise it up It had a little hole in the top of the shaft and I just took this piano wire and ran it to this float in the tank, and when the tank went empty it would lift the fuel pump and shut off the diesel. Then I would have to go over about every fourth day and when the tank was full start up the diesel again. They would run 24 hours a day

Another metal water storage tank was built closer to the east end at a knoll called Loma Pelona. Craine and his crew constructed eleven concrete watering troughs, or *pilas*, equipped with volume float valves, all fed by the tanks through gravity. Craine considered that the best water on the island was found on the east part of the ranch. A hired crew drilled a number of wells, including one at Christy Ranch, one or two at the Main Ranch and two in Potrero Norte. One, on the south slope west of the Gherini ranch, produced no water, but another in Cañada de la Calera above China Harbor eventually provided water for the Navy base as well as ranch use. The Navy drilled a well at Prisoners Harbor in 1953 to meet their growing demand, leading to the abandonment of the other sources on the isthmus.⁵²⁸

Roads

The Stantons had a number of roads built in the 1940s and 1950s. For the most part, Pete Olivari performed the maintenance on the roads and built new ones during that time. Most road building acted to improve access to cattle pastures and water systems. The U. S. Navy initiated the island's major road project in 1950 at the time of construction of the Navy Base in the hills above Chinese Harbor. Government contractors widened and partially rerouted an old ranch road from Prisoners Harbor towards the east end and made drainage and grade improvements. The last road built on the island by Stanton connected Coches Prietos with Willows Anchorage and was called San Justiniano Road. The roads of the island are described later in this report.⁵²⁹

Soil Conservation Service Reports and Agreement, 1949-1950

Southern California experienced a severe drought during the years 1948 and 1949, leading all of the Channel Islands to be temporarily emptied of livestock. The Stantons removed all of their cattle and many horses for the duration of the dry spell and spent a year allowing the pastures to reseed and grow before returning stock to the range. In the spring of 1949 a representative of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) visited the island at the request of Edwin Stanton, for the purpose of evaluating the range conditions and to provide recommendations for improvement and conservation. Waldo R. Frandsen noted a number of problems on the island, most blamed on the sheep ranching of the past century. Frandsen listed ten problem areas:

⁵²⁸Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 32-35, 40. More detail on the water facilities can be found in the resources section that follows.

⁵²⁹Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, p. 14; Lyndal Laughrin to Ann Huston, January 23, 2001.

1. The long overgrazing by sheep has resulted in severe erosion on many of the ridge tops and slopes.
2. Deep gullies (barrancas) have formed in many of the drainages which are heading back and ruining grassy mountain slopes.
3. The annual forage provides from two to three months of green high quality forage each year which leaves the cattle to subsist on dry forage from 9 to 10 months. This is one reason why it requires approximately 32 months to produce a 900-pound steer.
4. The ranch needs to develop the kinds of feed and forage resources that will extend the green feed period over a longer portion of the year. 900-pound steers should be produced in at least 22 months.
5. The ridgetop water developments will intensify the grazing by cattle on the ridgetops and higher slopes and increase the runoff and gully erosion at the base of the slopes unless they are rightly used.
6. Water needs to be piped from the ridgetops in the east pastures to the lower basins on the south side.
7. Both hay and irrigated pastures are possible and needed to extend the high quality green forage and feed period.
8. The possibility of spreading winter water on the bottom lands in the west end of the island, near the Cristy [sic] Ranch headquarters and on the landing field should be investigated. It appears that most of the needed hay could be produced around the Cristy Ranch and landing field. This would enable Mr. Stanton to use his late irrigation water from the reservoir to develop irrigated pastures in the valley, around the ranch headquarters.
9. The rank growths around the manure droppings indicate a need for fertilizing the accessible portions of the annual range. Many of these basins above the cropland could be greatly improved by fertilizing. This would lengthen the green feed period of the annuals, greatly improve the quality and increase the amount of forage produced.
10. Many of the slopes are badly infested with cactus.

Frandsen recommended surveys of watershed, croplands and range conditions followed by seeding and fertilizing in certain areas, grazing limits and erosion control. Watering spots should be moved away from overgrazed ridges. He stressed production of hay and development of irrigated pastures as the solution to underweight cattle. Various methods of eradicating or controlling cactus were discussed, including insect control, 2,4-D and a thorough soaking of each plant in diluted ammonium trichloroacetate.⁵³⁰

The preliminary investigations resulted in a cooperative relationship between the owner and the government service. Following an extended evaluation of the island range and water resources, the SCS produced a plan for Santa Cruz Island with a signed conservation agreement between Edwin Stanton and the Southern Coastal Santa Barbara County office of the SCS. The “Farmer-District Agreement” stipulated that Stanton and the SCS would cooperate in implementing the new range and water conservation plan.⁵³¹

The five-page report and plan, and an additional 4-page water development plan, outlined a number of sometimes-ambitious projects. The report repeated the observations of overgrazing and erosion, especially on the southwest side of the island and noted that, although some 40 to 50 thousand sheep had been killed, the owners had not been able to restock any cattle for two or three years because of the competition from

⁵³⁰Memorandum, Waldo R. Frandsen, SCS, Portland, Oregon to Nelson Rutherford, SCS, Santa Barbara, June 3, 1949, SCIF.

⁵³¹Farmer-District Agreement dated May 5 and June 6, 1950, SCIF.

the remaining sheep. To continue the sheep operation would require expensive development, staffing and transportation, an option Stanton obviously did not favor: “The owner, fully realizing the complications of combined use, is only interested in development of the island for cattle.”

The report did not address the north slopes of the island west of Prisoners Harbor because of their inaccessibility to cattle. The writer recommended resting the southwestern part of the island for a “long period of time” due to the severe erosion in the Pozo and Johnson Canyon areas, and developing a water source for the Christy area that showed great potential for again being a prominent out ranch. Describing the “neck” of the island towards the east end, the report noted that the area

is fairly open grass covered slopes with patches of scrub oak and brush near the top of the ridges. Severe erosion is evident near the east property line and along portions of the south slope. Some large land slips are located on the north slope.

The vegetation consisted of “filaree” (alfileria), bur-clover and wild oats, with “considerable infestation” of mustard, foxtail, malva, plantain, tar weed, rip gut, cactus and yellow fiddle-neck. Water tanks had been placed on the ridge top and north slope in a number of locations, and water could be piped by gravity to needed locations on the south slope.

The central Valley offered the best location for irrigated pastures and water development:

It is estimated that 40 percent of this area is grass lands available to cattle use. The balance is made up of steep and rocky land covered with brush, scrub oak and cactus. About 150 acres of reasonably good soil is located near the headquarters.

The major project, at this date, is pointed to the development of some 100 to 140 acres of irrigated pastures. This involves the construction of a water storage dam some two miles west of the ranch headquarters and the installation of pipe lines to deliver water for sprinkler irrigation on the planting areas.

The report concluded with a call for conservative stocking numbers to help the range heal from past abuses, coupled with regulated grazing in certain areas and establishment of cross fencing.⁵³²

Plans for a dam at Portezuela (called Porto Suelo in the report) included an impoundment of 515 acre feet of water to provide water for five fields both west and east of the Main Ranch. The rolling topography of the fields required the use of sprinkler systems. Planners listed four options ranging from a 138-acre development of all five fields to a limited 50-acre area consisting of two fields. The dam did not get built, but Stanton and his son did adopt various other recommendations such as cactus removal and improved range management practices.⁵³³

A map of the pastures, water improvements and ranch roads from the Stanton era shows, on the isthmus section, a long pipeline extending from the ridge top near No Man’s Land to a watering area called Pila Moullet in the Loma Pelona pasture, the only water development on the south side. Ten troughs

⁵³²Santa Barbara Soil Conservation District, Farm Conservation Report and Plan of Operations, no date [probably mid-1950], SCIF.

⁵³³“Preliminary Water Development [Plan], Stanton Ranch, Santa Cruz Island” [SCS ca. 1950], SCIF.

received water from two tanks and at least one spring; all but the one trough lay on the more productive north side of the isthmus.⁵³⁴

Pier at Prisoners Harbor

The aging pier at Prisoners Harbor continued in use as a shipping point for livestock and supplies until the commencement of World War II, when both the Army and the Navy established emergency operations on the island. In early 1942 the Navy established a Coastal Lookout Station at Mt. Pleasant and the Army a camp for tactical purposes elsewhere on the island. All equipment and supplies, including construction materials, vehicles and technology, were landed on the pier, noted at the time to be “of light construction” by Navy engineers; one military engineer admitted that “the movement of heavy supplies and equipment in addition to the berthing of boats and barges contributed to the weakening of the structure.”

Army engineers made frequent repairs, the last of which included “the spiking of all deck planking.” Soon after, a storm “completely demolished” the pier in late 1943. The Navy blamed the Army deck repairs and the general weakening of the structure. Edwin Stanton believed that the Navy would contribute to its repair as they had been using the pier for operations during the previous year. A Lt. Gee had inspected the pier in January 1944 with Stanton and they reportedly discussed Navy cooperation. The Commandant wrote to Washington, explaining that the pier was not essential for Navy lookout purposes but he felt an obligation to Edwin Stanton, who had “always been extremely cooperative in all dealings with the Navy and has on many occasions, at his expense, aided the Coastal Lookout Station in repairs and supplies.” In June of 1944, the Commandant recommended that the Navy contribute \$10,000 towards the estimated \$41,000 cost of replacing the pier; the Navy sum would be allotted for “local purchase of materials.” His superiors in Washington denied the request, leaving Stanton in the position of making a claim against the government for damages. Apparently, repairs had begun as early as May 1944 and continued through June and probably beyond.⁵³⁵

Shortly after that correspondence, the Navy abandoned its coastal lookout station on August 15, 1944. The issue continued to be debated over the responsibility for repairs on the pier at Prisoners Harbor; the pier had been damaged by military uses and Navy officials had refused repair funding. Stanton ended up rebuilding the pier at his own expense and reported that he lost some \$20,000 in revenue from thwarted cattle sales. The Navy told Stanton that he could file a claim for damages on the pier but denied ever making promises as to its repair. This dispute held up the signing of the release from the Navy/Stanton lease into December of 1944, and it is unknown whether Stanton ever filed for damages. The new pier was higher and shorter than the original.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴Map at Santa Cruz Island Foundation.

⁵³⁵W. L. Friedell, Commandant to Budocks [Navy Bureau of Docks], 9 June 1944; E. L. Marshall, By direction of Chief of Bureau to Commandant, Eleventh Naval District, June 20, 1944, RG 181, District Planning Officer, San Diego, General Correspondence File 1925-52, Box 28 EG 1940-50, NA(LN); Lima, *Historic Study*, p. 7, noting entries in the *Schooner Santa Cruz Logbook Number 5* in the SCIF collection which contains references dated May 26, June 2-3, 4 and 20 to transporting wharf timbers, pile driver and “6 men for wharf job.”

⁵³⁶Edwin L. Stanton to Office of the Commandant, Attention Capt. A. K. Fogg, August 18, 1944; A. K. Fogg, Public Works Officer, Naval Operating Base to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, 26 August 1944; C. C. Jersey, Chief of Staff to

The Navy entered a new agreement with the Stantons in 1949 in which an extensive observation station was constructed in the mountains on the isthmus. Use of the pier and liability for damages were written into the lease, but the Navy also installed a pontoon wharf next to the pier on the west that was used until at least 1954. In 1965 the Navy commissioned an evaluation of the pier by Marine Barriers, Inc. After an inspection of the pier by divers on September 7, 1965 a representative of the U. S. Naval Air Station at Pt. Mugu presented the findings to Dr. Stanton. Except for “several scattered deteriorated conditions,” the firm found the pier to be in “relatively good condition” and the maintenance work to be satisfactory. While the divers found some piles destroyed by borers, they found the creosote piles to be in excellent shape. The report recommended: a study of future uses of the pier to determine the required repairs; to proceed with maintenance as scheduled and to use “Pile-Gard” plastic barriers to deter borers in damaged pilings; to inspect caps, top of piles and the superstructure for dry rot and termites; to check the condition of the shore bulkhead and reinforce it if necessary; check all the pile contacts with caps and shim as necessary; and repeat a diver inspection in two years. The reporter made a “very rough” cost estimate for needed repairs

Replace 9-10 poles - jetting operation	\$5,000
Install PILE-GARD plastic barriers	1,000
Cement work, concrete sleeves	900
Contingencies	500
Total rough estimate	\$7,400

The work was performed as recommended in 1966. In addition, workers installed 80 new deck planks and 20 stringers. Following this rehabilitation, the pier was repaired at least two more times during the 1970s and 1980s.⁵³⁷

The Stantons shipped their stock off the pier for 50 years, making use of a slanted cattle chute mounted at the end for loading onto the *Santa Cruz*, a barge or Vail & Vickers’ cattle boat *Vaquero II*. Cattle pens and corrals occupied much of the land area at Prisoners Harbor, with a long chute leading onto the pier.

Edward [sic] L. Stanton, 13 October 1944; Edwin L. Stanton to Office of the Commandant, December 15, 1944, SCIF; Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 21.

⁵³⁷W. H. “Bill” O’Kane, U. S. Naval Air Station to Dr. Carey Q. Stanton, 22 September 1965; Report of Inspection, Naval Air Missile Test Center Pier, September 7, 1965, SCIF; Lima, *Historic Study*, p. 12; Dr. Lyndal Laughrin to Ann Huston, January 23, 2001.

Schooner *Santa Cruz*

The veteran *Santa Cruz*, built in 1893 for the Santa Cruz Island Company, came with the island when Stanton purchased it in 1937. Stanton understood the necessity of having an island transport and apparently appreciated the tradition and history of service by the *Santa Cruz* to the island; he retained her for further service after making a number of improvements. In June of 1937 the 44-year old wooden gasoline schooner underwent an overhaul, which included installation of a Buda diesel engine (model 6LDMR 909C), new 920-gallon fuel tanks, new wiring in conduit, and a fire suppression system in the engine room consisting of a 50-pound CO₂ canister with four outlets. Crews sheathed the raised deck over the cabin and replaced the old ballast system with a nine-ton lead keel. The following year Stanton had a deckhouse constructed over the cabin and installed a new anchor winch, and in 1942 removed the main mast and bowsprit.⁵³⁸

Boat operator Red Craine modified the deck of the *Santa Cruz* for shipping cattle. Originally, according to Craine, the deck accommodated 19 large head of cattle, but by changing the deck arrangement the schooner transported up to 56 head per load, all above deck. Craine installed a “big” mooring for the boat off the pier. After the engine “blew up on me” at the outset of World War II, Craine installed a Caterpillar T-13000 diesel “from Shephard’s down in L. A., and they brought it up to Port Hueneme and delivered it to me. I changed the engine beds and mounts, and put the engine in myself at Port Hueneme.” The new engine allowed a passage time of two and a quarter hours to Santa Barbara in good conditions. “But it was always a bad run with livestock, because you were running in the trough, you were running on beam sea all the time. It was a round bottom boat and she would roll pretty badly. So there were a lot of days we couldn’t ship, especially cattle.” When Port Hueneme opened for operation in 1939, Craine and the Stantons used that port exclusively, except for during the war. “That was a much better run. We were running more or less with the sea.” Craine skippered the *Santa Cruz* from 1932 until leaving the island in 1951.⁵³⁹

The old island schooner broke loose from her moorings at Prisoners Harbor in a Santa Ana wind on December 6, 1960 and wrecked on the rocks; she was a total loss.⁵⁴⁰

Telephone “Mag Line” System

Ted Green remembered seeing Stanton’s crew installing extension lines to Campo del Norte and the new Navy base:

The Navy had one telephone circuit to the operator on base at Pt. Mugu. We would patch the Magline to the operator when the Ranch needed to place a mainland telephone call. When the ground was wet, especially in winter, the voice level on the Magline was good. However, when the ground dried out, the power generators at the Ranch and Navy sites

⁵³⁸“Record,” Log Book No. 5, Schooner Santa Cruz, SCIF.

⁵³⁹Interview with Red Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini, pp. 17-19.

⁵⁴⁰Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 174-175; unidentified news clipping, December 6, 1960, SCIF.

printed a loud sixty cycle hum on the line, making conversation between these two stations poor to impossible.⁵⁴¹

The phone line remained in service until Carey Stanton's death in late 1987, marking a century of primitive but pioneering telephone service on the island.

Hunting Clubs

Hunters continued to be attracted to the island as the wild sheep and pigs made for an exciting and profitable hunt. After purchasing the island Edwin Stanton reportedly ended hunting by outsiders but attacked the pigs in a different way through the introduction of hog cholera, which was showing some positive effect by 1944. Most likely in order to stem the proliferation of feral animals, Carey Stanton allowed the formation of the Santa Cruz Island Hunt Club in the early 1960s. The club, owned and operated by William E. Huffman and Richard A. Lagomarsino, made use of the facilities at Christy Ranch on a seasonal basis and paid the Santa Cruz Island Company 25% of its gross receipts, a figure which some years approached \$150,000. Members hunted feral sheep and boars. Hunting guests arrived by chartered plane and slept in the Casa Vieja, to which the owners added in the late 1970s a bathhouse on the north side of the old building. The guides and cooks slept in the old two-story adobe across the creek. During the summer the Santa Cruz Island Club used the ranch for family activities with a similar setup. Stanton kept the Christy Ranch complex maintained because of these activities. From a base camp at Prisoners Harbor, the club offered bow and arrow hunting with transportation provided by Island Packers. The camp featured a 75-foot long bunkhouse/kitchen, and an outdoor barbecue pit.⁵⁴²

Oil Exploration

Both the Stantons and Gherinis made leases with various oil companies to explore for oil on the island. Edwin Stanton, who had made his fortune in oil leasing and production which allowed him to purchase the island in 1937, reportedly invited Richfield Oil Company to drill two wells on the west end, one at Forney's Cove in December 1954 and the other near Christy Ranch above Pozo Canyon. The Forney's well became quite an operation, according to drilling and production superintendent Jack Hundley, with heavy equipment and up to 30 workers supplied by barge and a newly graded and fenced 3,000-foot landing strip and roads. Crews reportedly dammed streams in the vicinity to impound water for

⁵⁴¹Green, "Santa Cruz Island Telephone." Green, who worked for the Navy and later as a communications contractor on the island, recalled finding downed poles from the Magline on Montañon, and has found insulators mounted on trees at numerous locations on the island. Much of the line to Christy Ranch on the west end still stands.

⁵⁴²Wheeler, "California's Little Known Channel Islands," p. 261; Daily and Stanton, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 16; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 167-168; *Ventura County Star-Free Press*, July 26, 1982; Jim Dougherty, "Boondocks and Bowstrings" in *Bow & Arrow*, Vol. 4, No. 5, January-February 1967, #1883, SBMNH; Dr. Lyndal Laughrin to Ann Huston, January 23, 2001; interview with Jesus Ildefonso by the author, November 12, 2000. According to Laughrin, Carey Stanton reintroduced wild turkeys (six female and two male) around 1972.

the operations. Stanton was strict in his island rules: “no women, liquor or guns,” and no visits from friends. The trucks being shipped over had to be washed down before arriving at the island in order to remove exotic seeds. Stanton, however, occasionally invited the crew to the Main Ranch for drinks. The well at Forney’s Cove reached 8,374 feet before being abandoned in March of 1955; crews drilled the Pozo well to only 3,660 feet before giving up in April. Stanton also reportedly negotiated an option with Richfield to open a quarry west of Prisoners Harbor to supply rock for the company’s artificial Rincon Island shipping terminal to be built off the shore near Carpinteria. Richfield instead chose a novel form of artificial reef similar to huge toy jacks.⁵⁴³

In 1964 Stanton agreed to have Humble Oil Company drill an exploratory well at Chinese Harbor. No oil was found at that time. In 1974 Arco reportedly entered a lease option on two 20-acre parcels of land on the south shore of the island for construction of a tank farm and marine shipping terminal to service an offshore drilling rig at Tanner Bank located out at sea some 80 miles south of the island. Nothing ever came of this venture and the lease was eventually quitclaimed.⁵⁴⁴

According to Hundley’s paper on oil exploration on Santa Cruz Island and other sources, the Stanton family, both Edwin and Carey, had strong ties to oil interests as the major source of their income. The Stanton Oil Company held investments in oil fields at Huntington Beach and Signal Hill from which they derived sometimes-substantial profits. After Edwin Stanton’s death his widow and son reincorporated the old Santa Cruz Island Company on July 13, 1964 to succeed the Stanton Oil Company and thereby incorporate the interests in the island. Richfield Oil Company (renamed Atlantic Richfield or ARCO after a merger with Atlantic Oil Company in 1966) agreed to take over operation of the Santa Cruz Island Company’s wells at Carey Stanton’s request and eventually the business agreement helped both Dr. Stanton and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in the latter’s acquisition of much of the island in 1978. The previous Santa Cruz Island Company oil leases on the island were transferred to The Nature Conservancy upon Carey Stanton’s death; TNC reportedly sold the leases in 1989.⁵⁴⁵

University of California Field Station

Faculty and students at the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) have long been interested in island sciences. With Carey Stanton’s permission, Dr. Don Weaver held a summer geology class at the island in 1964. The association between the University and Carey Stanton grew and so did the program. The next year the quarters for the class were improved from a tent to “some semi-permanent buildings,” according to Carey Stanton’s memoirs; the first was a surplus modular building brought over from Los Angeles and reassembled by students, recalled longtime station manager Dr. Lyndal Laughrin. In 1966 the University established the Channel Islands Field Station at the island, in a location about half a mile west of the main ranch. Over the years the field station grew to include numerous buildings for

⁵⁴³Oral history interview with Joe Dunn and Jack Hundley, October 24, 1991 by Marla Daily, SCIF; Jack Hundley, “Oil Story.”

⁵⁴⁴Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 212 footnote 86; oral history interview with Jack Hundley, June 25, 1991 by Marla Daily, SCIF; Hundley, “Oil Story.”

⁵⁴⁵Hundley, “Oil Story”; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 164-165.

lodging, study and meals. Stanton encouraged scientific study of the island and allowed his portion of the island to become part of the Natural Land and Water Reserve System (now the Natural Reserve System) of the University of California in 1973. The field station, long managed by Dr. Laughrin of UCSB, now consists of: a combination mess hall, dining room, kitchen, recreation room and meeting room; a complex of rooms for researchers and a bunk house; a library and computer center; a garage/shower/lavatory; and a residence for the reserve manager. The field station's vehicles provide transport to remote parts of the island.⁵⁴⁶

Carey Stanton's Stewardship

Dr. Carey Stanton became well known around California for his private and seemingly lonely occupancy of the huge island despite his dislike of publicity and the attention it brought. Almost three decades after his death his name continues to be associated with the island in day-to-day conversation



Dr. Carey Stanton in his office at the Main Ranch, 1980. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*

⁵⁴⁶Stanton, *An Island Memoir*, pp. 23-24; Dr. Lyndal Laughrin to Ann Huston, January 23, 2001. See "Oral History Interview with Dr. Lyndal Laughrin," interviews by Dewey Livingston, May 2011, for more detail about the field station.

along the coast. Stanton relished his ownership of the island and made it his serious business to act as a steward of not only the cattle ranching business but also of the health and well being of the island's cultural and natural history and its scenic beauty. While he was a private man, he published two accounts of the island and occasionally spoke at meetings or gatherings. He hosted visiting groups such as the Santa Barbara Historical Society as he proudly showed off the legacies of Justinian Caire and his own father and mother. One historical society visitor found the most vivid image of her visit there to be the scene while leaving the island by boat in the sunset: there stood Dr. Stanton, short of stature and mild-mannered, alone on the pier waving to the departing boat as the huge island loomed behind him.⁵⁴⁷

Los Angeles Times feature writer Charles Hillinger became friendly with Dr. Stanton after writing an article about the island in 1956. Stanton hosted friends in overnight visits to Santa Cruz Island, driving guests in his jeep. Hillinger wrote: "We consumed gin martinis on a different beach every day, ate a picnic lunch, then fell asleep for a couple of hours." Hillinger noted Stanton's "marvelous library" of books on California and the Channel Islands, and his collection of art and antiques. "He had a cook and would always dress formally for dinner in Brooks Brothers suits and black knit ties, even though he usually ate alone."⁵⁴⁸

Stories of Dr. Stanton's passionate protection of the island are many. One has a yachting party leaving garbage on a beach, spurring Dr. Stanton to track the culprit down and to deposit the garbage onto the perpetrator's desk at work in Ventura. Hillinger claimed that Stanton listened to the traffic reports from the mainland as if to remind himself of his luck to be living on the quiet island. In 1968 he initiated a tradition of inviting Msgr. Francis Weber to celebrate Mass once a year in the old Caire chapel, on the Feast Day of the Holy Cross on May 3 (the day for which the island was named), an activity that continues as of this writing.

Dozens of entrepreneurs, developers and individuals made inquiries about purchasing Santa Cruz Island from Stanton or his parents, many of whom made offers. The Stantons reportedly offered the island for sale "off the market" between 1941 and 1952; in 1950, the asking price was \$50 per acre or about \$2.7 million in a commercial real estate listing. By 1956 the island was not for sale, but after that date at least 28 inquiries and offers were forwarded, including a \$15 million offer from a party in Las Vegas and a development proposal from a Long Beach engineering firm, both in 1962. Carey Stanton had no intention of selling the island and exerted complete control of its operation.⁵⁴⁹

The Stanton family engaged in litigation in the mid-1970s that echoed the conflicts in the Caire family early in the century. Three years after the death of Evelyn Stanton in 1973, her grandson Edwin Stanton III, the son of Dr. Stanton's deceased older brother, filed a lawsuit in 1976 to dissolve the Santa Cruz Island Company and distribute its assets. At that time, Carey Stanton was the president of the company and his nephew a director and minority (one-third interest) stockholder. The younger Stanton alleged that Evelyn Stanton and her son Carey had conspired for control of the company and that Edwin III had no benefit from his assets due to his uncle's single-handed operation of the business. Stanton could not afford to buy out his nephew and reportedly dreaded any litigation. Both the National Park Service and The

⁵⁴⁷Recollection of Jane Rich Mueller.

⁵⁴⁸Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, pp. 123-124.

⁵⁴⁹Fact sheet on development offers at SCIF; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p.167.

Nature Conservancy had become interested in the preservation of the island, but Stanton was not interested in the island becoming a park. He turned to The Nature Conservancy to help himself out of the dilemma.⁵⁵⁰

The Nature Conservancy

According to Santa Cruz Island Foundation president Marla Daily, Carey Stanton became concerned about the future of the island in the case of his death. He reportedly did not want his portion of the island to become a public park as he was concerned about the fragility of the island resources, and was faced with the lawsuit that could divide the island as had happened 50 years earlier. He approached The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D. C., which purchased unique and/or threatened lands for preservation. Stanton and his lawyer negotiated an agreement in which TNC would raise the funds to buy out Edwin Stanton III, pay Dr. Stanton half the value of his two-thirds share, and eventually take possession of the island, all at reduced valuation. The deal allowed Dr. Stanton to retain control of the island for 30 years through his continued leadership of the Santa Cruz Island Company and a conservation easement drawn up between the Santa Cruz Island Company (Stanton) and TNC. The Conservancy began a high-profile fundraising campaign that brought in donations large (\$1 million from ARCO) and small. In a deed dated September 15, 1978, Stanton transferred approximately 12,000 acres in fee and TNC reserved a remainder interest in the balance after a 30 year term or Stanton's lifetime if less than 30 years. Stanton was paid about \$1 million and his nephew, Edwin Stanton III, received about \$1 million as a settlement. The remainder of Stanton's interest in the property, valued at the time as another \$1 million, would pass to TNC upon Stanton's death. TNC leased the 12,000 acres back to Stanton's Santa Cruz Island Company for continued grazing and hunting operations.

The conservation easement stressed preservation of natural resources but allowed the continued grazing of livestock and ranching operations. The document addressed the control of other feral animals "by the use only of selective control techniques," presumably hunting which had been occurring in an organized manner for more than ten years. It prohibited importation of exotic plant and animal species except those needed for ranching, "hunting of any non-game animals other than to cause the reduction or elimination of non-native animal species," construction of harbor facilities, oil exploration, any subdivision "except for such subdivisions as may be necessary for a conveyance to the Conservancy," activities that may cause soil erosion, the use of biocides, and transfer of any interest in the island with certain limitations. Some of the stipulations would lead to controversy in upcoming years, as in the case of TNC's proposed elimination of feral animals that threatened Dr. Stanton's hunting business. After a number of years of debate and conflict between the two parties, TNC successfully killed the 32,000 feral sheep on the property.⁵⁵¹

Stanton died unexpectedly at age 64 on December 8, 1987 at the ranch and was buried in the family plot in the yard of the Chapel of the Holy Cross at the Main Ranch. His personal estate and possessions on

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 168-171.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 177; "Deed of Conservation Easement" dated September 15, 1978, SCIF; correspondence with Peter Schuyler.

the island, many of which dated to the Caire era, were left to the Santa Cruz Island Foundation (see below) while the island property (excluding the Gherini's east end) and its buildings and cattle herds became the property of The Nature Conservancy. Stanton's premature death no doubt surprised all involved. TNC's staff was unprepared to run a cattle ranch and so within months, Stanton's cattle were shipped off the island, and eventually captured a herd of wild cattle was removed.⁵⁵² Other than a handful of cattle and old horses remaining on the island, the ranching era on Stanton's portion of the island was over.

The Nature Conservancy manages its property from offices in San Francisco and Ventura. A small staff lives on the island full time, performing maintenance and hosting visiting groups of volunteers and donors. In August of 2000, The Nature Conservancy transferred about 8,500 acres to the National Park Service for inclusion in the Channel Islands National Park, including Prisoners Harbor and the isthmus.

The Santa Cruz Island Foundation

Carey Stanton's interest in the island's cultural and natural history led him to establish the Santa Cruz Island Foundation in 1985. Dr. Stanton, his associate Marla Daily and his attorney David D. Watts acted as the first directors. Daily had worked for Dr. Stanton since meeting him in 1973, as well as working for Lyndal Laughrin at the U. C. field station. Daily and Stanton collaborated on a number of projects, beginning with the cataloging of Dr. Stanton's large library of books on the California islands and other subjects of his interest. Daily interviewed Dr. Stanton about the island's history, recording a reported 30 hours of tape. She and Stanton wrote a report detailing the history of the buildings on the island. Stanton left his estate to the Santa Cruz Island Foundation upon his death in late 1987. Under foundation president Daily, the organization has actively collected papers and items of historical interest, pursued preservation issues on this and other Channel Islands, published a number of books detailing the history of the islands, presented exhibits, and supports continued historical research by interns and researchers. The foundation administered the restoration of the Chapel of the Holy Cross and Rancho del Norte. Daily and the Santa Cruz Island Foundation have been working with the National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy for a number of years on various projects on and about the islands. The foundation's office and research facility is a small, historic building in downtown Carpenteria.⁵⁵³

National Park Service

While Santa Cruz Island did not attain National Park designation until 1980, visitors and even owners of the island had understood the resource values of the island and contemplated preserving the property as a park for perhaps 100 years. For instance, a news article about activities on the island appeared in 1896 and opined that the island

⁵⁵² Personal communication with Peter Schuyler, May 2006.

⁵⁵³ Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, pp. 134-137; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p.179.

ought to be owned by the State. Such a property is too unique to belong to private individuals. Probably it could not be purchased for a cool million dollars, but that doesn't alter the case at all. The people have all too few such bits of nature. We do not suggest that Mr. Caire and his associates are not entitled to their own, but we think the state should acquire by purchase this wonderfully productive and beautiful little principality.⁵⁵⁴

In 1936 the Caire family reportedly offered their 9/10ths of the island for \$750,000 to the state for use as a state or federal park. Charles Hillinger quoted a letter at the time from Clarence L. Bart of Riverside:

Santa Cruz could become an Island of Yesterday, a horse and buggy island entirely free from automobiles and the noise and exhaust fumes which accompany them. Let's not allow all the pleasure and romance the horse, buggy and carriage afford to pass entirely out of our civilization. Why not take advantage of this golden opportunity and establish this type of a park on Santa Cruz Island.⁵⁵⁵

The *Los Angeles Times* noted that financing could not be arranged and that the "huge island, with gushing springs, beautiful harbors, heavy verdure, much game, an Old World vineyard and winery, would have made a public park unique in America."⁵⁵⁶

The 1930s proposal did not progress, but three years after Edwin Stanton purchased the island he wrote to an old schoolmate from Berkeley, Newton Drury, who had recently been appointed as director of the National Park Service. Addressing him as "Newt," Stanton wrote, almost prophetically,

Although I am not pressing to dispose of this property still it has always been in my mind that the Islands off shore should be owned by the government. It is only a matter of time until that will be accomplished.

It is my belief that the opportunity for acquisition is before a property is subdivided and when it is still in its natural state. There is an abundance of water and lovely trees. The same could be made both a game preserve and a resort for the ever increasing population in our portion of the state. It might also tie into the national defense program.

I am calling this to your attention as food for thought and if such a program should be of interest I would be only too glad to take you or your representative over the property.⁵⁵⁷

Nothing happened for decades, but Stanton's predictions about park and military uses of the offshore islands came true. Dr. Carey Stanton was not interested in a government purchase of his beloved island and took steps to avoid such events by making the agreement with The Nature Conservancy. Although Santa Cruz Island was included within the boundaries of Channel Islands National Park, The Nature Conservancy portion of the island did not become park land. In the late 1990s The Nature Conservancy proposed to transfer about 8,500 acres comprising the isthmus of the island to the park service with the agreement that the federal government would cooperate in the eradication of fennel and feral pigs. The transfer was executed in August of 2000.

⁵⁵⁴Santa Barbara *Daily News*, February 24, 1896, SCIF.

⁵⁵⁵Letter quoted in Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, p. 113.

⁵⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁵⁵⁷Edwin L. Stanton to Mr. Newton Drury, September 9, 1940, RG 79, Central Decimal Files 1932-53, Cabrillo, Box 14, File 201, CHIS Admin, NA(SB).

Conclusion

The Stanton period on Santa Cruz Island marked a new direction in island history. Edwin Stanton was a businessman, the island his setting as a “gentleman rancher.” While preserving historical features of the island, he also constructed a modern home and out ranch. Stanton transformed the bulk of the island into a fine cattle ranch while preserving many of the Caire-era traditions. Stanton’s son Carey had the incentive to live on the island and manage it full time, forsaking a career in medicine. Dr. Carey Stanton especially was interested in the island heritage and worked for its preservation. While all of his wishes were not honored after his premature death, many of the historic resources that he had hoped to preserve remain. A combination of organizations, The Nature Conservancy, the National Park Service and the Santa Cruz Island Foundation work today to protect the island’s resources, which continue to reflect the significant enterprises of Justinian Caire and his successors.



The Main Ranch, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Military Uses of Santa Cruz Island

The military forces of the United States took notice of Santa Cruz Island during World War II, and since that time have constructed and maintained strategic installations in the name of national security. Like all its neighbors, Santa Cruz Island acted as an early warning outpost watching for enemy planes and ships during World War II. The Cold War brought the greatest development on the island, as the U. S. Navy constructed and operated a major communications station as a part of the Pacific Missile Range. This station remains in operation, although not at the levels of its heyday in the 1950s and 1960s.

World War II Coastal Lookout Station

Prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor the United States activated a number of defense mechanisms on the Pacific Coast, but the events of December 7, 1941 put coastal defenses at the forefront of military activity in California. Following the attack, at least three incidents occurred involving Japanese attacks on the California coast, including the torpedoing of a freighter off Los Angeles and a submarine firing on the Ellwood Oil Field near Santa Barbara. The evolving hostilities in the Pacific brought World War II to American soil, spawning a network of Coastal Lookout Stations and aircraft warning installations from San Diego to the Canadian border. The Navy established coastal lookouts on all of the Channel Islands, and radar posts on two of the northern islands, Santa Barbara Island and Santa Rosa Island.

The Navy created the Coastal Lookout Organization to provide a system of coastal surveillance over the shoreline from Point Arguello to the Mexican boundary by visual lookout, maintaining communications with Joint Operations Surface Control Center, headquartered at the 11th Naval District, San Diego. It reported to the Shore Establishment, Local Defense Forces, 11th Naval District. The 11th Naval District worked with the Joint Army and Navy Plans, Southern California Sector, and they in turn with the Army's Western Defense Command, the Fourth Air Force, and the Western Sea Frontier, the latter headquartered at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Coast Guard and Navy personnel manned Coastal Lookout Stations. Each station had a staff of seven men on 24-hour duty once the organization was completed. The Coastal Lookout Stations, Offshore Patrol, and Inshore Patrol, which made up the Local Defense Force, communicated through an operational battle circuit. Each station was allotted one portable radio, a transmitter to be placed on a roof or tower, and one receiver. By December 30, 1941, the Inshore Patrol had twelve vessels and the Offshore Patrol three. Among the latter was the *Hermes*, which had long patrolled the islands and served as free transportation for island dwellers. During the war it was credited with sinking a submarine outside San Pedro Harbor.⁵⁵⁸

The Navy approached the Stantons for access to the island for a coastal lookout. Apparently a temporary lookout was instigated in late 1941 or early 1942, as Edwin Stanton later related his allowing Navy personnel to stay at the Main Ranch and use the ranch radio equipment early in the war. On March 1,

⁵⁵⁸ Memorandum, Facilities to Commandant, June 16, 1944, A-3, Org. & Mgmt., 1943-44; Pierce, Commander Inshore Patrol to Commandant, 11th Naval District, March 16, 1942 in Commandant's correspondence, Records of the 11th Naval District, NA(LN).

1942 Edwin and Evelyn Stanton leased approximately 500 square feet of land at Mount Pleasant, a site called Hill #1496 by the military, for a period of 16 months at a rent of \$1.00 per year. The Army Corps of Engineers erected a Coastal Lookout Station composed of a barracks building, lookout tower and “other building appurtenances.”⁵⁵⁹

In July of 1943 the Stantons agreed to a license and easement for an aid to navigation known as the Santa Cruz Island Light located about six-tenths of a mile from the lookout at a place called Yellow Bluff, which would be operated by the staff of the lookout station.⁵⁶⁰

Details of the lookout operation on Santa Cruz Island have not been located in research. The station doubtlessly operated in a similar manner as the one on Santa Barbara Island, which has been more thoroughly documented elsewhere in this report. Edwin Stanton revealed in a letter his enjoyment in having the men stationed there, indicating some form of personal relations between the men stationed on the island and the Stanton family and employees. That the enlisted men used island facilities such as roads, water systems and the pier at Prisoners Harbor is unquestioned.

The Stantons renewed the Navy lease for another year, to June 30, 1944, and then for another to June 30, 1945; but in August 1, 1944 the Assistant Operations Officer in the Commandant’s office ordered the station closed as of August 15, 1944, the material and equipment to be removed by the lookout personnel and the buildings and tower to be removed.⁵⁶¹ Edwin Stanton wrote to the Commandant after receiving the notice of the station’s closing, expressing his disagreement over the decision:

For this, I am very sorry as the personnel stationed there were most agreeable and we enjoyed having them, and, in my opinion, such a station should be maintained as this is rather a large piece of ground, isolated, over which planes are constantly flying and the communication that is there well might easily be the reason for saving someone’s life should an accident occur either on land or off shore.⁵⁶²

Acting Commandant G. M. Ravenscroft replied to Stanton’s letter, stating that the coastal lookout on the island could “be dispensed with” since the stations on San Miguel and Anacapa Islands were being retained and would provide adequate defense coverage. Ravenscroft expressed his appreciation for the Stantons’ “thoughtful and generous treatment of the men [which] made their duty on the island more agreeable than would have been possible otherwise.”⁵⁶³

The Navy abandoned the site with buildings intact on August 15 as planned. The Stantons eventually signed a release of the lease and acknowledged the presence of the structures (barracks, water tank, engine house and lookout tower) thereby taking responsibility for future liability. An issue arose over the responsibility for repairs on the pier at Prisoners Harbor; the pier had been damaged in late 1943 and Stanton believed that the Navy would participate in its repair as they had been using the pier for operations

⁵⁵⁹Lease [No. NOy(R)-307] Between Edwin L. and Evelyn C. Stanton and United States of America, March 1, 1942; Edwin L. Stanton to Commandant, Eleventh Naval District, August 18, 1944, SCIF.

⁵⁶⁰License and Easement between Edwin L. and Evelyn C. Stanton and the United States of America, dated July 14, 1943, SCIF.

⁵⁶¹Forms of Renewal of Government Lease NOy(R)30307 dated May 31, 1943 and May 31, 1944; Memorandum, J. S. Conover to Public Works Officer, Eleventh Naval District, 1 August 1944, SCIF.

⁵⁶²Edwin L. Stanton to Office of the Commandant, August 8, 1944, SCIF.

⁵⁶³G. M. Ravenscroft, Acting Commandant to Edwin L. Stanton, 16 August 1944, SCIF.

(use of the pier, however, was not addressed in the original lease or its two renewal documents). A Lt. Gee inspected the pier in January 1944 with Stanton and they reportedly discussed Navy cooperation, which was subsequently refused by Navy officials. Stanton ended up repairing the pier at his own expense and reported that he lost some \$20,000 in revenue from thwarted cattle sales. The Navy told Stanton that he could file a claim for damages on the pier but denied ever making promises as to its repair. This dispute held up the signing of the release from the Navy/Stanton lease into December of 1944, and it is unknown whether Stanton ever filed for damages. Stanton requested that, in light of the closure of the lookout station, he be allowed to again use his radio equipment at the main ranch that had been silenced during the emergency.⁵⁶⁴

Another military use of the island during the war has been documented but its nature remains a mystery. In May of 1942 Edwin Stanton entered into an agreement with the War Department's Office of the Division Engineer in Los Angeles for the use of ten acres in an undisclosed location for a camp site and tactical activity area. The lease provided the Army with the "right to use any of the harbors, docks, roads on the lessor's property . . . for the purpose of transporting troops, materiel and/or equipment" and the "right to widen, repair or straighten said roads, or to build new roads . . ." The lease ran to July 28, 1943.⁵⁶⁵

Aids to Navigation: Santa Cruz Island Light 1943-1947

In July of 1943 the Stantons agreed to a license and easement for an aid to navigation known as the Santa Cruz Island Light to be located about six-tenths of a mile from the Coastal Lookout Station at a place called Yellow Bluff (in some correspondence it was referred to as Yellow Bluff Light). The staff of the lookout station would operate the light. The agreement allowed the government to construct a wood skeleton tower containing a light fixture and equipment to operate and control it on a site 25 feet square, and to construct and maintain power poles between that site and the coastal lookout on Mount Pleasant some six-tenths of a mile away. The agreement would terminate six months after the end of the "present emergency."⁵⁶⁶

Personnel constructed the Santa Cruz Island Light at Yellow Bluff and completed its electrification by July 24, 1943 when it was made ready to be lit. The Assistant District Coast Guard Officer requested that the Officer-in-Charge of the Naval Lookout Station turn on the light one hour before sunset and extinguish it one hour after sunrise, and notify the Coast Guard of any problems with the light. Navy lookout personnel would stand by for blackouts when necessary, following a strict set of procedures in case of enemy attack. W. D. Cash, the naval observer in charge of the Coastal Lookout Station received the

⁵⁶⁴Edwin L. Stanton to Office of the Commandant, Attention Capt. A. K. Fogg, August 18, 1944; A. K. Fogg, Public Works Officer, Naval Operating Base to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, 26 August 1944; C. C. Jersey, Chief of Staff to Edward [sic] L. Stanton, 13 October 1944; Edwin L. Stanton to Office of the Commandant, December 15, 1944; Edwin L. Stanton to Commandant, Eleventh Naval District, August 18, 1944, SCIF.

⁵⁶⁵Lease No. W 868-eng-4891, SCIF.

⁵⁶⁶License and Easement between Edwin L. and Evelyn C. Stanton and the United States of America, dated July 14, 1943, SCIF.

confidential set of instructions called “Blackout Control, Aids to Navigation” on August 3. The navigational aid was turned on on July 29. The 640-candlepower Santa Cruz Island Light showed a flashing white light of two seconds every ten seconds, with an eclipse of eight seconds.⁵⁶⁷

The Navy announced closure of the Coastal Lookout Station as of August 15, 1944. Because the lookout personnel operated the light, the Navy operations officer requested that the Coast Guard place the Santa Cruz Island Light out of service on August 10. The naval officer requested that the aid to navigation at Gull Island be reinstalled and placed into operation. The Coast Guard vacated the property and terminated the agreement on July 10, 1947. The Stantons signed a release on the agreement on September 4 of that year.⁵⁶⁸

Fighter Plane Crash on Gherini Ranch, 1949

In early March 1949 a Navy “Hellcat” fighter plane separated from its squadron and crashed in the Mountain Pasture on the lower east slope of the Montañon on the Gherini Ranch. Captain Jess Thierry, Jr., a 27-year-old flyer from Costa Mesa, was on maneuvers out of the Santa Ana Marine Corps Air Station in heavy weather. The small Vought F4U-4 prop-driven plane (U.S.M.C. #97449) crashed on a small plateau near the old trail to the Main Ranch and was completely demolished. Capt. Thierry’s parachute had been deployed and partly covered the plane wreckage and his body. Coincidentally, that same day another Marine aircraft out of Santa Ana crashed in Southern California, killing two. Wreckage remains at the site.⁵⁶⁹

Naval Air Missile Test Center Facilities

Pacific Coast facilities and personnel took a major role in national defense efforts during World War II (1941-1945). The military used the Channel Islands and adjacent mainland areas to a limited extent for armed defenses but mainly as supply depots for the Pacific war effort and for surveillance and detection of incoming enemy ships and aircraft. Continued activities after war’s end saw the southern California area become one of the nation’s leading locations for testing and innovations in new war technology.

The U. S. Navy facility on Santa Cruz Island evolved out of the country’s early efforts in defense and surveillance, and saw its heyday during the Cold War era as the United States found itself at odds with the Soviet Union and China. After witnessing the destructive power of German buzz bombs on European cities

⁵⁶⁷Memorandum, Joseph Greenspun, Assistant District Coast Guard Officer to Commandant, Eleventh Naval District, 24 July, 1943, NA(LN), courtesy of James Lima, MMS; Patrol Commander W. H. Lassing to Senior Coastal Lookout Officer, 11ND, 30 July 1943, and C. P. Holt, Senior Coastal Lookout Officer to Patrol Commander, 10 August 1943, RG 181, H2 Navigation 1945, NA(LN).

⁵⁶⁸W. H. Lassing, Operations Officer to District Coast Guard Officer, 11th Naval District, 1 August 1944, RG 181, H2 Navigation 1945, NA(LN); L. L. Bennett, Commodore, U. S. Coast Guard to Edwin L. Stanton and Evelyn C. Stanton, 10 July, 1947; Release dated September 4, 1947, SCIF.

⁵⁶⁹Long Beach *Press-Tribune*, March 5, 1949, SBMNH #535; Petersen, *Once Upon an Island*, in notes by Marla Daily, pp. 190-191.

and the United States' nuclear attacks on Japan, governments and military leaders came to realize that technological advance would define future warfare. The Navy, breaking with its own tradition of fiscal prudence and minimal research and development of new technology, began after the war to expand research into new defense technology. The Navy more than quintupled its expenditures for research and development in ten years' time which also brought a huge increase in lucrative contracts to defense industries. Missile technology, largely developed by the German military, came to the forefront of national defense, as control of the seas and air space became the focus of military strategies. The Pacific Ocean provided an ideal testing ground and the various Channel Islands fell into play as integral units to the successful testing and maintenance of the nation's guided missile defense systems.⁵⁷⁰

The U. S. Navy established a field test site for the Special Weapons Tactical Test and Evaluation Unit in 1943 at Point Mugu, a former swamp located south of Ventura and Port Hueneme; the location provided "an overwater space through which missiles can be launched while data on their performance are being obtained in such a manner that correct evaluations of their performance can be made." Headquarters for the unit were located at Traverse City, Michigan. The use of airborne weapons had advanced during World War II to the point that military leaders realized the importance of such modern systems in global warfare and defense. On the urging of Navy Commander Grayson Merrill, the Navy created its Pilotless Aircraft Unit Detachment at Point Mugu in 1945 where engineers tested guided missiles such as the Loon using the expanse of ocean, which it called the Instrumented Sea Range, as a proving ground. The offshore islands provided locations for monitoring missile paths and, in some cases, acting as targets, dummy ships at sea as it were. According to Navy historian Maxwell White, the islands were a major consideration in the selection of Point Mugu as the location of the United States' first over-water missile testing range.⁵⁷¹

During the 1940s the Navy tested a number of guided missile systems such as the Gargoyle, Gorgon, Lark, Little Joe and the Loon which figured in the ship-to-shore bombardment of Japan late in the war; systems tested in the 1950s and accelerated by the Korean conflict included the Regulus I, a submarine-to-shore missile; Regulus II, an early supersonic missile; and various versions of the Sparrow, launched from a plane for airborne targets.⁵⁷² The government owned and controlled three of the Channel Islands (San Miguel, San Nicolas and San Clemente) and made use of their entire landmasses for testing, targeting and facilities. The Navy also placed facilities on privately owned Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands. For

⁵⁷⁰Stephen R. Wee and David S. Byrd, *The Navy's Pacific Guided Missile Sea Range, 1946-1991: Historic Context for Cold War-era Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California* (Draft, February 1997), pp. 11, 16. A guided missile is defined as an unmanned, expendable, self-propelled flying vehicle equipped with some sort of guidance, which allows it to be steered towards, rather than aimed at, the target.

⁵⁷¹*Design Criteria and Schematics for U. S. Naval Air Missile Center at Point Mugu, California and San Nicolas Island and Santa Barbara Channel Islands*, October 1948, p. 7; JRP Historical Consulting Services, *Draft Inventory and Evaluation of National Register of Historic Places Eligibility For Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California* (Contract No. DACA05-97-D-0013, June 1998), pp. 7-11; Maxwell White, *Datelines: A History of Navy Missile Testing at Point Mugu, California* (Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, 1992), p. 1.

⁵⁷²White, *Datelines*, pp. 3, 16-17; JRP, *Draft Inventory*, pp. 13-14.

example, in 1946 Vail & Vickers granted permission for Navy personnel to enter their property at Santa Rosa Island to make electronic tests, leading to construction of a small communications facility there.⁵⁷³

The U. S. Naval Air Missile Test Center (NAMTC), as the Pilotless Aircraft Unit had been renamed in 1946, made plans in 1948 for major facilities at Point Mugu and the Channel Islands. With the major installations to be constructed at Point Mugu and San Nicolas Island, plans included a radio communication center on Santa Rosa Island and a fully staffed “observation site” on Santa Cruz.⁵⁷⁴

The Navy had considered an outright purchase of Santa Cruz Island for its own use as early as February 1945. A map attached to the Navy memorandum recommending Point Mugu as the site for the nation’s missile test center denoted all of the northern Channel Islands as potential Navy property. Island owner Edwin Stanton expressed some anxiety at the prospect, noting in a letter to a vice-admiral in Washington, D. C. the need for time in dealing with cattle sales and the three-year cycle of fattening for market. The Navy replied that the decision had not been made but whatever the case, the possibility existed in which Stanton could remain under lease for a period of three years or longer. While the purchase did not come to pass, the Navy did construct and operate a small radar-testing shack on the preferred summit location for the later facility.⁵⁷⁵

The Navy decided to construct an installation of electronics facilities for the purpose of tracking missiles during test periods and communicating with other NAMTC sites on a high point on the island with views to all directions of the compass. Congress authorized \$30,000,000 in June of 1948 for the overall NAMTC project, including the major work at Pt. Mugu and San Nicolas Island, and appropriated \$14 million for initial construction and contract obligation. The second appropriation of \$16 million included funding for the Santa Cruz Island facility.⁵⁷⁶

On August 3, 1948 the Navy approved a \$1.2 million contract with Parsons-Aerojet Company, an architect/engineering firm located at 411 W. Fifth St., Los Angeles, to design the facilities. The initial plan was released in October, 1948 and included preliminary designs on Santa Cruz Island for a telemetering and radio receiving building, a radio and radar transmitting building, accommodations for 60 men and support structures. The plan estimated the cost of the Santa Cruz Island facility to be \$528,000 not including technical equipment. Of that figure, \$230,000 would be for buildings, \$150,000 for docks and approaches, \$85,000 for roads and \$20,000 for water and sewer systems. The plan indicated that \$1,318,000 would eventually be spent on the island for a runway and beacon on the west end of the island, an additional barracks and mess/recreation hall, and upgrades to buildings, roads and utilities. An entirely new pier would be constructed at Prisoners Harbor, according to the plan.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷³Capt. R. Fowler to Vail Company, 19 February 1946; A. B. Scoles to Vail-Vickers Company, 24 September 1946, SBMNH #0887.

⁵⁷⁴*Design Criteria*, pp. 22-23, 203-211, 289.

⁵⁷⁵Edwin L. Stanton to Vice Admiral Ben Morrel, April 9, 1945; B. Morrell, Chief of Bureau to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, April 17, 1945, CHIS; Enclosure B, Memorandum dated 17 March 1945 in Maxwell White, *An Interpretive History of the Pacific Missile Test Center. The Genesis: Road to Point Mugu 1936 to 1946* (Point Mugu: Pacific Missile Test Center, n.d.

⁵⁷⁶“Naval Air Missile Test Center” in *U. S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps Bulletin*, Vol. 4 No. 48, November 1950, pp. 307, 309.

⁵⁷⁷*Design Criteria*, pp. 203, 205-212, 285, 288.

In late 1948 Parsons-Aerojet produced final plans for the NAMTC facility on Santa Cruz Island; drawings were completed in January of 1949 and revised in March. Only a few changes were made from the earlier drawings in the design document. The observation site would be constructed on a broad summit about one mile southeast of Mount Pleasant overlooking the Pacific Ocean to the south (the site actually afforded a panoramic view in all directions). Plans included a road “over which 50 ft. right-of-way is desired, plus easement for necessary side slopes and drainage structures.” The new improved road would follow the existing ranch road between Prisoners Harbor and the construction site with minor variations to ease sharp curves and steep grades. Plans also called for the construction of an approximately 300-foot pontoon ramp to be located 200 feet west of the existing pier. The facility would use water supplied from a ranch spring above Chinese Harbor, pumped through an existing 2.5-inch water line from the spring to the ridge. There the Navy added a pipeline to the observation site over a 20-foot easement; Stanton installed a new steel water storage tank on the road above Loma Pelona and two new pumps near the spring.⁵⁷⁸

Upon approval of the plans, Edwin and Evelyn Stanton entered into a lease with the United States Government on May 5, 1949 for the Navy’s exclusive use of the observation site together with rights of joint use for the “dock site, road areas, pump station site, and pipe line locations.” The original lease would expire on June 30 of 1950 but could be renewed year to year up to June 30, 1969, a period of 20 years. The government agreed to an annual rent of \$7,500, payable quarterly, through the lease period ending June 30, 1953, after which the rent would rise to \$10,000 per year. Both parties, however, were afforded the option to negotiate the lease fees after June 1953. The lease allowed the Navy to build upon the observation site and erect any structures or signs as needed; all such structures would be owned by the government and the government would restore the property “to the same condition as that existing at the time of entering upon same under this agreement” if the lessor so desired in writing. The lease permitted the Stantons to enter a separate agreement in which the ranch company could use the planned Navy docking facilities. The Navy would be allowed use of the pier at Prisoners Harbor during the construction phase and would maintain and repair the pier during that time; it would also have non-exclusive use of the pier thereafter, at times when the government pier was inoperative. All government personnel would be restricted to the areas specified in the lease, be provided with sanitation facilities, and would not be allowed to bring non-human forms of life and firearms.

The government held rights to build and maintain certain roads for joint use and to use 3,000 gallons of water per day (or any surplus if the water source decreases in quantity) from a spring located above Chinese Harbor. The spring had been previously tapped by the Stantons with a 5,900-foot, 2.5-inch line and the Navy would extend the pipeline to a storage tank at the observation site. The Stantons had the right to make connections with the Navy’s water pipeline for ranch purposes. If the water source proved to be insufficient the Navy held the right to survey and explore for alternative sources from which the government could obtain an unrestricted quantity for their use and the Stantons would receive the surplus.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁸Parsons-Aerojet Company, *Real Estate Plan, Santa Cruz Island*, Drawing No. 468826, Approved 26 January, 1949, revised March 15, 1949, SCIF.

⁵⁷⁹Agreement Between Edwin L. & Evelyn C. Stanton and The United States of America dated May 5, 1949, SCIF. A Navy orientation brochure written about 1981 related an unsubstantiated “story” that Edwin Stanton did not

The Edward R. Siple Company of Los Angeles submitted the winning construction bid of \$421,844 and commenced construction on July 4, 1949. The pier at Prisoners Harbor had to be repaired and a temporary float pier was installed; to off load heavy equipment the contractor used landing craft barges. More than six miles of old ranch road between Prisoners Harbor and the station site was transformed into a wide gravel highway. A newspaper account of construction activities noted “the Little Burma Road” as being “gouged and blasted and scraped from the earth, circling back and forth to keep the grade at 17 1/2% or less. A quarter of it was ‘shot’ with dynamite, where cuts as deep as 40 feet were required. It was finished . . . in two months.” While the road generally followed the old ranch road, in one location west of Mt. Pleasant it veered off to take a more reasonable grade, leaving the old route abandoned.⁵⁸⁰

Siple’s heavy equipment crews cut the hilltop site into about five level areas with short roadways connecting them; the old radar shack was apparently preserved until the new unit could be put into operation. Excess fill was dumped on the north side of the complex forming a wide area at the entrance road. The contractor built temporary quarters for the construction crew. The first buildings included a 6,281 square-foot barracks for 30 men including mess hall and recreation room, a 2,973 square-foot radar receiving building and a separate 3,189 square-foot transmitting building (placed at opposite ends of the complex to reduce interference) with antenna towers, and a 1,228 square-foot power building for the generators. A 4,000-gallon diesel storage tank was supplemented in later years with five additional tanks for eventual storage capacity of 35,000 gallons. The Navy installed a small filling station for base vehicles.⁵⁸¹

A 30,000-gallon water storage tank was erected on a high steel tower and a pipeline run about four miles from the Stanton supply. In little more than a year the water supply was found to be inadequate and the Navy exercised its rights to explore for a new water source. After a site at Prisoners Harbor was located and specifications developed, the Navy advertised for bids, notified the Stantons of the plans and commenced development of the well in the spring of 1953. Contractors drilled a well and constructed a 190 square-foot pump house and pipeline. These developments allowed the Stantons to install a water tank for livestock on the ridge above their new Rancho del Norte. By 1956 the Navy had installed permanent water pumping station and a fire pump station, as well as a pumping station with a collection dam and 480 square-foot pump house building at the previous source site above Chinese Harbor.⁵⁸²

The Santa Cruz Island base served primarily as a communications station and observation site for missile testing. The base acted as a relay station for communications between San Nicolas Island and Point Mugu and employed surveillance radar during missile tests. A recent history study of Point Mugu’s role in national defenses during the Cold War noted that the

originally want the Navy presence on the island in 1949 and offered an amount equal to the lease terms to the government to “leave his island alone” and protect the peace and privacy of the place.

⁵⁸⁰*Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1949, SBMNH #0538.

⁵⁸¹“Index of Structures, Santa Cruz Island,” NAWWS, Pt. Mugu.

⁵⁸²A. I. Flaherty, District Public Works Officer, Eleventh Naval District to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, 9 August 1951; R. G. Muench, Public Works Office, Eleventh Naval District to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, February 4, 1953; O. E. Forbess, Resident Officer-in-Charge of Construction, USNAMTC to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, March 4, 1953, SCIF; Pacific Missile Range Facility Maps [ca. 1964], RG 181, Pacific Naval Test Center, Pt. Mugu 1944-, Public Affairs Office, Special Studies and Reports, Maps, Box 43, NA(LN).

offshore islands of the Pacific sea range made ideal sites for signal transmission and radar, optical and photographic tracking of guided missiles and target vehicles for [the test center]. Communications with the main base at Point Mugu were established using long-range radars and telemetry equipment. Tracking stations at Laguna Peak, San Nicolas Island, Santa Cruz Island and Point Mugu tracked guided missiles in flight and relayed the information to a central range control building at Point Mugu. Ships carrying guided missiles were also able to launch missiles on the . . . sea range and utilize the tracking installations on these islands. Among the important resource types associated with these activities are: instrumentation facilities, radar stations, photographic instrumentation facilities, and telemetry stations.⁵⁸³

The Navy base at Santa Cruz Island was originally equipped with the AN/APS-20 S-band radar in conjunction with matching setups at Point Mugu and nearby Laguna Peak. A technical manual described these radar systems as “extremely simplified one-megawatt, magnetron-based instruments that provided continuous coverage. They could detect small boats from fifteen to thirty nautical miles” Certain aircraft such as the EC-121 were equipped with these radar systems at the time. Testing of missiles progressed from the Loon of the 1940s, an American version of the German V-1 buzz-bomb, to the Lark, a surface-to-air, liquid-propelled missile airframe used in the early 1950s. These missiles targeted pilotless aircraft, or incoming enemy missiles. The Santa Cruz Island station relayed telemetry data to and from San Nicolas and Point Mugu as missile test flights were tracked from the firing point, usually Point Mugu.⁵⁸⁴

Development of missile defenses expanded rapidly in the 1950s. The Bullpup air-to-surface bomb, the first “smart” missile which could attach itself to a target, was put into testing in 1953 and remained, in its many stages of development, an important weapon into the 1970s when it was supplanted by the Walleye which used television for homing in on its targets. By 1956 the NAMTC employed 4,800 people and operated out of a \$50 million plant; it was, along with Navy’s China Lake facility in the Mojave Desert, the military’s most important missile testing facility. In 1957 President Eisenhower called for the national testing ranges to be available to all of the armed services. On June 16, 1958 the Navy joined with the Air Force’s Atlantic Missile Range at Cape Canaveral and the Army’s White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico to create the Pacific Missile Range (PMR), which became known as the Cold War’s “Keeper of the Pacific.” The following year the Naval Missile Center was created exclusively to test and evaluate Navy missile systems, in effect splitting the mission of the old NAMTC. By 1959 the PMR owned or held interest in properties at Pt. Mugu, Pt. Arguello and six other mainland coastal sites, San Nicolas, Santa Cruz and San Miguel islands, two inland sites in Nevada and Utah and sites on Hawaii, Midway and Wake Islands. In 1963 the Air Force took over the facilities at Pt. Arguello and most Pacific range sites, but the Navy continued to control the PMR with its facilities at Point Mugu, San Nicolas Island and Santa Cruz Island.⁵⁸⁵

When feature news writer Charles Hillinger and photographer Howard Maxwell visited Santa Cruz Island in 1956 they found Lt. D. H. Pfaffly in charge of the base. Pfaffly told them that they were the first civilian newsmen to be allowed at the facility, and the resulting illustrated article in the *Los Angeles Times*

⁵⁸³Wee and Byrd, *Historic Context*, p.101.

⁵⁸⁴*Days of Challenge*, pp. 26, 35, 39-40.

⁵⁸⁵White, *Datelines*, pp. 18-22; JRP, *Draft Inventory*, pp. 14-15; *Days of Challenge*, p. 69.

provided an early view of life at the base. Fourteen Navy men, including the one officer Pfaffly, and sixteen civilian technicians staffed the base; the Navy personnel worked 12 day shifts with every other weekend off while the civilians worked ten on and four off. Three times a week a converted Navy PT boat or AVR rescue craft served the base's transportation and supply needs. Staff reported to Hillinger that morale had always been outstanding. "They were well-versed on island lore, history, wild life, fauna and geography," Hillinger wrote. "They seem to be imbued with an insatiable interest in their middle-of-the-sea homes."

The men enjoyed fishing and bird watching, playing pool, cards and table tennis, playing baseball and watching television. A station store operated by Ship Serviceman Richard Worley provided essentials for the men and staff; Worley also had responsibility for the recreation facilities, quarters maintenance, ordering, and he was the base barber. Commissary Man 3rd Class Joseph LePine cooked three meals a day for 30 men at the base and cleaned up as well.⁵⁸⁶

Damage to island facilities attributable to Navy activities occurred in the 1950s and 1960s. Storm waters washed into the compound at Prisoners Harbor in the late 1950s, allegedly because of a diversion in the Cañada del Puerto associated with the new Navy well; the flood damaged the cattle facilities and house at Prisoners Harbor, leading to the demolition of the historic house in 1960. Storms in the winter of 1961-62 caused damage to the Navy road, which required temporary repairs involving a large cut and fill section near the Navy base. The work required that a fence and the water line be moved to accommodate the cut. The Navy later addressed the stabilization of the new cut slope and evaluated the need for improved drainage to prevent a recurrence of damage, a concern of Dr. Stanton's. Navy personnel discussed various methods of stabilizing the slope and installing culverts and ditches before the next rainy season. At the creek draining into Prisoners Harbor, the Navy proposed construction of a cribbing barricade to prevent winter runoff from overflowing the banks into the stockyards and pier area. The Navy admitted that riprap placed at the Navy well upstream had caused the waters to flow over to the area causing damage. The road crossing at that location was examined as well, with a concrete apron eventually being installed across the creek to the base of the Navy Road. The presence of weeds in the well enclosure, grown up since cattle had been excluded, was discussed, with a recommendation of applying a weed killer to sterilize the ground unless the possibility of well contamination existed. The pier also sustained enough damage or wear and tear to require a Navy evaluation of the pier in 1965 (see page 656).⁵⁸⁷

Overall, the Navy made efforts to be good neighbors to the Stanton family and to not interfere in their cattle operations. In the later years the Navy circulated an orientation paper that stressed good neighbor values and listed the many concerns of island life such as fire prevention and importation of weeds and non-native animals. "One must recognize," the brochure stated, "that the Navy in reality could be classified as a legal encroacher. While on SCI legally and with a proper lease, because of Navy presence the privacy of the island has been encroached upon and partially compromised." The Navy worked with the Stantons and vice versa to help each other with water supply, fire suppression, safety during storms, transportation and communications.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶Hillinger, *Channel Islands*, pp. 118-122.

⁵⁸⁷Memorandum to "6230" from "6220" [W. H. O'Kane, U. S. Naval Air Station, Pt. Mugu], 17 August 1962, SCIF.

⁵⁸⁸"The Navy at Santa Cruz Island (An Orientation)," circa 1981, SCIF.

The Navy continued to improve equipment and facilities on Santa Cruz Island. Development of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in the 1960s required expansion of the sea range, the addition of island and shipboard instrumentation sites farther out in the Pacific, and improvements in technology on the island. In 1964 Navy technicians installed RF transmitting and receiving equipment with antennas in the HF, VHF and UHF frequencies. Construction of various storage sheds, diesel tanks and a fire pumper truck garage occurred at this time. A metric optic station requiring a 400 square foot building was installed in 1965. The old APS-20 radars were replaced in late 1960s with FPS-114 surface surveillance radar and the microwave system of the F-114 radar was upgraded. The war in Vietnam spurred the highest number of test operations; in 1966 the average number of monthly firings was 1,300. In 1978 the Navy installed a 54-foot high Extended Area Test System (EATS) antenna and constructed a second generator shed. EATS was a product of the Vietnam-era technological advances of the 1960s and 1970s as the old telemetry systems converted to UHF, and computer systems allowed tracking of missiles over the horizon (out of the standard range of traditional radar and sight). Meanwhile, in 1975 the PMR and the Naval Missile Center merged, a reversal of the split of 1958-1959, to form the Pacific Missile Test Center (PMTTC), an organization that lasted with that name for the next 16 years.⁵⁸⁹

Almost concurrent with the creation of the Pacific Missile Test Center, the government began to downsize military operations and testing as a result of the end of the Vietnam War. The emphasis of the Center reverted to fleet weaponry rather than the wider-scope range testing. The work force at PMTTC remained somewhat stable at just under 5,000 in 1980. As the Cold War thawed in the late 1980s the Department of Defense began to reduce the number of military bases. In 1990 the Navy Air Systems Command proposed to consolidate its field activities and created the Naval Air Warfare Center with headquarters at China Lake. The Point Mugu facilities operated as the principal site of guided missile testing and evaluation and were redesignated as Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, with its subsidiary Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWPNSDIV) in charge of the island facility. As the 1990s neared an end, most activities on Santa Cruz Island would be operated by remote from the mainland, and the number of operations declined to about 350 per year.⁵⁹⁰

Upon Carey Stanton's death in 1987 The Nature Conservancy gained ownership of 90% of Santa Cruz Island. The Navy lease for 10.8 acres reverted to TNC which continued the lease for up to 15 years on October 1, 1991. The TNC/Navy lease provides an operating agreement which states that the Navy will provide certain benefits, such as telephone and radio communications, excess electricity and water, transportation, fire protection, road maintenance and protection against unauthorized entry, on an "as available basis." As of 1993, the Navy site consisted of two sea surveillance radars, digital and analog

⁵⁸⁹*Days of Challenge*, pp. 71, 79, 154; "Index of Structures, Santa Cruz Island," NAWS, Pt. Mugu; *Draft Inventory*, p. 23; White, *Datelines*, pp. 23, 37; R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc., *Navy Cold War Guided Missile Context: Resources Associated with the Navy's Guided Missile Program, 1946-1989* (Department of the Navy, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, August 1995), p. A-3. A PMR Real Estate Information list in 1965 claimed that the Navy leased 62.8 acres from the Stantons; the figure is puzzling as most accounts state 10.8 acres. If the water facilities at Prisoners Harbor and China Harbor are added to the observation site acreage, the acreage still remains low.

⁵⁹⁰*Draft Inventory*, pp. 26-27; interview by the author with Steven J. Schwartz, Naval Air Weapons Station Pt. Mugu, March 25, 1999.

microwave relay systems, UHF/VHF communications, EATS GRS (Extended Area Test System Ground Reference Station), an automatic weather station, an independent radar imaging facility, a heliport, personnel housing and mess, a power plant and public works facilities. Only three electronic technicians worked on site, and only Monday through Friday. They were joined by three Navy public works personnel (on site 24 hours a day) and contractors who provided food and laundry services. By 1999 the Santa Cruz Island site had been mostly automated, with operators in Pt. Mugu, and used as a communications link and surveillance facility. Radar coverage for testing activities is mostly obtained elsewhere, but SCI provides two types of radar on operational (testing) days: surveillance radar and metric tracking with a microwave beam. The Navy launches only about 350 missiles per year, a drop from the heyday of the 1980s. The Navy installed a massive solar collector on additional land northwest of the compound, which remains operational.⁵⁹¹

Beginning in the early 1980s Navy contractor David Taylor Research Center operated a radar-testing facility called Santa Cruz Radar Imaging Facility (SCRIF), an operation separate from the Pt. Mugu activities, on the eastern portion of the leased area. In 1984 the Center erected a 3,000 square-foot temporary barracks immediately north of the Navy barracks and into the 1990s employed up to 40 people. The SCRIF program was manned by two or three technicians a few days a week except for times of operations five to ten times per year when a staff of 20 to 40 personnel were required.⁵⁹²

Chronology, Names of the Pacific Missile Test Center, Pt. Mugu⁵⁹³

1943-1945	Special Weapons Tactical Test & Evaluation Unit
1945-1946	Pilotless Aircraft Unit
1946-1958	Naval Air Missile Test Center (NAMTC)
1958-1975	Pacific Missile Range (PMR) and Naval Missile Center (NMC)
1975-1991	Pacific Missile Test Center (PMTTC) with Naval Weapons Center, China Lake
1991-	Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division (NAWCWPNSDIV) Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS)

Other Navy Uses, 1951-1959

The Navy made a number of short-term lease agreements with the Stantons in other instances for various purposes. In late 1951 the Navy obtained a Right of Entry permit from the Stantons and sent a U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey team to “establish points of reference on Santa Cruz and other Channel Islands.” This presumably was in conjunction with the Naval Air Missile Test Center, but its particulars are unknown. The government wrote up a lease in 1956 for approximately 12.8 acres of land and water at Near Point adjacent to Posa [Pozo] Anchorage. The lease would run from April 19, 1956 to June 30, 1957 and

⁵⁹¹Dulka, Kurt, Mary Dalke and Larry Barker, *San Nicolas Island and Santa Cruz Island Site Manual* (Point Mugu: Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, October 1993), pp. 19-1, 3, 4, 20-1-4, 21-1, 22-1, 23-1-2, 24-1-3; interview with Steven J. Schwartz.

⁵⁹²*Site Manual*, p. 25-1.

⁵⁹³From White, *Datelines*.

included the tip of Near Point, parts of two beaches, uplands and water area. It is not known if the Stantons ever signed this original lease or if any activity occurred there. A letter dated March 25, 1958 notes that a different lease for the same parcel was signed by all parties, this for a period of only three months. The Navy failed to get any work done in that period and requested a three-month extension. Still, nothing is known of the activities other than the fact stated that the Commander of the Western Sea Frontier was involved and the site would likely be used for testing some aspect of missile detection. The Stantons let a permit to the Navy dated September 6, 1959 for use of Devil's Peak and High Mount, including access rights on the pier and roads, for temporary survey sites. During October, November and December of 1959 the Navy would deliver survey equipment by helicopter to the two sites and perform an unidentified survey task for the U. S. Naval Missile Center at Pt. Mugu. Evidently the Navy made similar arrangements with owners of the other Channel Islands as the accompanying chart prepared for the purpose by the Coast and Geodetic Survey delineated triangulation between all the islands and the mainland. It is likely that this chart was the result of the earlier survey work slated to be performed in 1951.⁵⁹⁴

Other Military Activities

The Department of the Army negotiated with the Santa Cruz Island Company for a permit allowing "right of entry, survey and exploration" for a period of 14 days in late 1957 for radar testing at a site high above Cueva Valdez. No other information about this lease has been located.⁵⁹⁵

General Motors/Mari-Pro Operations: SCARF and SCRIF

A fascinating and somewhat mysterious use of the island took place between 1965 and 1998 with the installation on the south side of Santa Cruz Island of an experimental facility that would, in the words of an interested bystander, "listen to the deeps of Santa Cruz Island Sound." Delco Electronics of Goleta, a division of General Motors Corporation, had a contract with the Navy (operator of the Pacific Missile Test Center) for "underwater research, testing and development and other related research and development activities." The Santa Cruz Island Acoustic Range Facility, known as SCARF, used cameras and underwater sensing equipment for testing the acoustical properties of ships and deep water, in order to obtain acoustic signature for ships and submarines for identification, and aid research in design of ships that would be hard to detect by enemy radar. Another research project, called SCRIF, used a series of radar to obtain signatures of the Sea Shadow, a "stealth" ship or submarine designed to be undetectable on radar systems. The highly classified work was reportedly done at night and required the Navy to restrict all other

⁵⁹⁴Frank F. Mead, Manager, Real Estate Branch to Mr. E. L. Stanton, 2 November 1951; Lease Between Edwin L. and Evelyn C. Stanton and The United States Of America [1956]; R. G. Muench, Public Works Office, Eleventh Naval District to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, March 25 and April 23, 1958; Permit No. NOy(R)-56143 dated September 6, 1959 and Reconnaissance Sketch, Project 40000-894 dated September 1959, SCIF.

⁵⁹⁵Department of the Army, U. S. Army Engineering District, Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles, "Right of Entry, Survey and Exploration Permit" dated November 20 to December 3, 1957, SCIF.

ships and boats from the area. SCARF and SCRIF operated at four locations on the south side between Blue Banks and the Navy base, each labeled with the name of a color: the White site, about half an acre west of the Valley Anchorage; the Blue Site of about two-thirds of an acre located at a high elevation near the Navy base which housed a remote camera; the Green Site, at 750 square feet the smallest of the sites and westernmost and furthest inshore; and the Red Site, of less than 500 square feet about 1.25 miles west/southwest of the White Site, which had a small shed which originally housed optical camera tracking equipment. In 1982 the contract was transferred to Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), which operated under its subsidiary Mari-Pro of Goleta. At the time, the lease was worth about \$90,000 a year to Stanton. Mari-Pro technicians flew regularly to the island to operate the technical facility until the Navy contract ran out and the sites were cleaned up and revegetated in late 1998.⁵⁹⁶

Scientific Study on Santa Cruz Island

Santa Cruz Island has long attracted scientists of many disciplines. As the largest and most diverse of the islands it quickly became a focus of early researchers and, especially in the last 40 years, has become perhaps the most studied of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands.

The U. S. Coast Survey parties that mapped the island between the 1850s and 1870s apparently brought the first interested persons to the island. While Stehman Forney surveyed Santa Cruz Island in 1874, Albert Kellogg and William G. W. Harford of the California Academy of Sciences made botanical collections and discovered four plant taxa, including *Coreopsis gigantea* and *Jepsonia malvifolia*.⁵⁹⁷

Paul Schumacher, an employee of the U. S. Coast Survey, made a habit of spending his off time exploring the California coast for archeological artifacts that he forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution. According to Schumacher, Prof. Spencer Baird of the Smithsonian sent the former surveyor to the islands for an artifact collecting “exploration” in order to supply an exhibit scheduled for the following year at the Centennial Exposition in Washington. Schumacher and his party visited Santa Cruz Island for more than a month in the spring of 1875, noting the island as “probably the prettiest island of the group; in picturesqueness it equals and in vegetation excels Santa Catalina.” With the help of the Navy officers concurrently making a hydrographic survey of the island, Schumacher explored the entire shoreline of Santa Cruz Island:

Our main attention was again directed to finding and examining graves. . . . Although each burying-ground we dug up yielded but poorly in comparison with such places on the mainland, our findings on this island were numerous, and many forms are new to science. We made here a collection of about thirty cases.

⁵⁹⁶U. S. Navy Contract 81-c-1348; Lease dated February 9, 1982 between Santa Cruz Island Company and Mari-Pro; oral history interview with Jack Hundley, June 25, 1991 by Marla Daily, SCIF; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, p. 167; e-mail from Steve Schwartz, NAWS Point Mugu to Dewey Livingston, December 2000. Schwartz wrote that the SCARF required “very quiet waters,” and as the region became busy with traffic the project was moved to Alaska.

⁵⁹⁷Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, p. 41.

Among the reported tons of artifacts he shipped east were a small sandstone cup, a perforated plate, a small mortar decorated with a raised zigzag pattern, abalone shell fish hooks, disc beads, tools and numerous bone ornaments. A Smithsonian Report illustrated these artifacts and others, including a wooden bailing-vessel, a toy canoe and an inlaid decorative knife or short sword made of soft wood. Schumacher also excavated more than 700 skeletons.⁵⁹⁸

Schumacher considered the best results came from Smugglers Cove, Coches Prietos, Alamos (believed to be actually Willows), Pozo and Secret Harbor. While Schumacher was at work, members of the U. S. Geographical Survey under Lt. George M. Wheeler visited the party at Forney's Cove, including the botanist Dr. Joseph T. Rothrock, mineralogist Oscar Loew and the ornithologist/ethnologist Henry Wetherbee Henshaw (one account states that Schumacher was part of Wheeler's party, but Schumacher does not allude to this in his account of the expedition). Rothrock spent his time collecting botanical specimens while Loew and Henshaw recorded general observations on the island flora. Schumacher chartered the Santa Cruz Island Company's *Star of Freedom* to transport his party to his next island destination, San Nicolas Island.⁵⁹⁹

The guide for Wheeler's expedition, Rev. Stephen Bowers, reportedly also made excavations for the Smithsonian during 1875. He returned to the island in the summer of 1877 with a grant from the Smithsonian. Island records showed that Superintendent J. B. Joyaux loaned horses to Rev. Bowers and hired out an island employee for \$1.25 per day during the week of August 27. He reportedly took tons of materials from the island, with much going to the Smithsonian but some sold "by the barrelful on the open market."⁶⁰⁰

In 1875 a group of Frenchmen proposed an archeological expedition to the Pacific Coast under the Ministère de l'Instruction publique, to be financed by one of the party, Alphonse Pinart. His partner, Léon de Cessac would be the one to reach Santa Cruz Island and make collections. Arriving in San Francisco, Cessac made contact with the Santa Cruz Island Company, perhaps with fellow Frenchman Justinian Caire himself, and received an invitation to do research on the island. Cessac excavated sites on Santa Cruz over a four-month period in 1877. His most important find was a series of flint burins, the first examples of such a tool found in California, located in former "established [Chumash] workshops, some on the vast barren plateaus, others in the numerous caves" of the island. Cessac also made natural history collections. After his Santa Cruz Island visit, Cessac worked on other Channel Islands, but encountered interference from rival archeologist Paul Schumacher, according to scholars Henry Reichlen and Robert Heizer:

⁵⁹⁸Charles Rau, *The Archaeological Collection of the United States National Museum, in Charge of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1876), pp. 31-42, 51, 63-69, 72, 88-91; Paul Schumacher, "Some Remains of a Former People" in *Overland Monthly* 15, October 1875, pp. 374-377; Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, p. 98. By coincidence, a National Park Service archeologist working in the 1960s was also named Paul Schumacher.

⁵⁹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 376-377; Wallace E. Smith, "The Reverend Stephen Bowers, 'Curiosity Hunter' of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands" in *California History, The Magazine of the California Historical Society*, Volume LXII, No. 1, Spring 1983, p. 28; Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, p. 42.

⁶⁰⁰Smith, "Bowers," pp. 28-32; records at SCIF.

Schumacher used all his resources to create the greatest difficulties for Cessac and even tried to persuade the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to have the United States Senate pass an act prohibiting the exportation of prehistoric objects. But the Secretary refused to do so and the threat was dispelled.

Cessac, headquartered in Santa Barbara and later San Luis Obispo, amassed a collection of some 4,000 artifacts, which eventually was sent to Paris. Cessac also made an ethnographic study on the islands based on interviews at San Buenaventura Mission with the supposed last surviving natives of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Island and made plans to publish a book on islands archeology. However, his partner and sponsor, Pinart, spent all of the expedition funds and was unable to reimburse Cessac's expenses. Cessac returned to France in debt and soon disappeared, later surfacing as an itinerant scholar and "Bohemian" poet.⁶⁰¹

A list of collections at the Smithsonian taken from Santa Cruz Island was sent to Carey Stanton, which listed: Paul Schumacher, 1875-1876; Rev. Stephen Bowers, 1877; W. A. Cooper, 1878; R. E. C. Stearns, 1884; and E. O. Matthews, 1902.⁶⁰²

University of California botany professor Edward L. Greene spent part of two months on the island in July and August of 1886 as a guest of the Caires. He reportedly worried the Caires by arriving back at the Main Ranch after dark, and did all of his botanizing on foot despite the rough terrain and offer of a mount. Greene made the first extensive botanical collections on Santa Cruz Island, increasing the known flora from five taxa to 321 and finding 20 that had been not been previously described. He provided the Caires with a "valuable" duplicate set of his collections that later disappeared. Other botanical collectors late in the century included Townshend S. Brandegee, who added about 80 taxa to Greene's list, Lorenzo Yates and Henry Chapman Ford of the Santa Barbara Society of Natural History, Francesco Franceschi in 1894, and Luella Blanche Trask in 1900. Trask was an expert on the Channel Islands but her collections were largely destroyed in fires.⁶⁰³

J. Walter Fewkes traveled on a chartered schooner to the island in March of 1887. Making use of Stehman Forney's "excellent" map of the island, Fewkes anchored on the north side and noted the geology (the "fiord" he anchored in: "That water has played an important part in its formation is doubtless true, but, at the same time, the sharp break indicates some other and more violent geologic agency.") and flora (" . . . we noticed little vegetation, but here and there a clump of prickly pears, and small bushes with yellow poppy flowers."). Fewkes noted "many deep basins of pure, fresh water, fed by the sparkling mountain stream from the cañon." He described evidence of Chumash occupation:

The level deposit of soil at the mouth of the cañon must have been a favorite camping place for the Indians who once lived in great numbers on this and neighboring islands, for on the side hill there is a high shell heap where they had thrown the debris of their camp. This shell heap was formed in great part of the shells of a large *Balanus*, *Halitosis*, and

⁶⁰¹Henry Reichlen and Robert F. Heizer, *The Scientific Expedition of Léon de Cessac to California, 1877-1879* (Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility, March 9, 1964), pp. 9-14.

⁶⁰²Catalogue dated October 12, 1973 sent to Carey Stanton, SCIF.

⁶⁰³Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 42-43.

Mussels. On the sides of the rocks above it many Indian inscriptions were cut in the hard rocks across which, at right angles, were other grooves all of undoubted Indian origin.

At other locations Fewkes found an “Indian Cemetery” and decried the fact that, even at this early time, the sites “have long ago been dug into by eastern collectors” and that “flocks of sheep now graze over the graves of the former lords of the island.” Fewkes noted an eagle’s nest on a coastal rock as he explored the sea caves of the north side. With a primary interest in marine biology, he collected specimens in the waters of the north side and traveled as far east as Chinese Harbor. He wrote that “the interesting *Helix*, said to be peculiar to the island,” was “rapidly being exterminated by the sheep.” Fewkes made a number of early observations on the origins of the flora and fauna of the island.⁶⁰⁴

Two years after Fewkes published his articles, Martinette Kinsell described the island’s attractions but more in the line of a travelogue. Her so-called botanist companions (four writers and three artists including H. C. Ford) “filled their portfolios” with 203 plant specimens. Amateur geologists in the party “were busy with notebook and hammer” and collected specimens as well. Kinsell’s published article did provide a fairly early popular account of the natural and cultural history aspects of the island.⁶⁰⁵

Amateur naturalists and various writers continued to visit the island through the turn of the century. Charles Holder, visiting the island around the turn of the century, noted “literally hundreds” of shell mounds and burial places. He reported, “fish-hooks of pearl, the beads of shell, the weapons of artistic design, the gracefully carved cups, the mosaic-ornamented pipes” and steatite from Santa Catalina Island.⁶⁰⁶

The first half of the 20th century saw a great deal of botanical exploration on Santa Cruz Island, no doubt with the blessing of the owners. Prominent California botanist Alice Eastwood visited the island in 1917 and published a paper on island manzanitas. Ranch superintendent Swain’s wife made collections between 1917 and 1919. Other botanists working around this time included Herman Knoche, Olive Day Thacher, Adele Lewis Grant and Marcus E. Jones. Naturalist Ralph Hoffmann studied birds on the island in January of 1920, discovering “several” new species, according to Superintendent McElrath. The company gave him permission to shoot two species of linnets to take to a museum in Los Angeles. Hoffmann became the director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 1923 and made numerous other trips to the island, compiling a flora of the northern Channel Islands that was never published. Hoffmann collected plants after a 1931 fire at Pelican Bay. In late 1930 a party of botanists and their guests made a short visit to Santa Cruz Island seeking samples of *Jepsonia*. Heading the party were Hoffmann and Gertrude Lester Rowntree, a botanist who collected seeds for distribution around the world. W. F. Daniell and Austin Wright also joined the group. Wright wrote an account of the trip in a long letter to his brother John who was the geographer-librarian at the American Geographical Society in New York. Other prominent botanists and scientists traveled to the island with Hoffmann before his untimely death in 1932, including John Thomas Howell, Carl B. Wolf and Dorothy Irma Daniel Cooke. Willis Jepson and

⁶⁰⁴J. Walter Fewkes, “Across the Santa Barbara Channel” in *American Naturalist* 23, April 1889, pp. 209-217, and 24, May 1889, pp. 387-394.

⁶⁰⁵Martinette Kinsell, “The Santa Barbara Islands” in *Overland Monthly*, December 1891, pp. 617-631.

⁶⁰⁶Holder, *Channel Islands*, pp. 269-270.

Herbert L. Mason of University of California at Berkeley also botanized on the island in the late 1920s, as did at least seven others.⁶⁰⁷

The first recorded archeological investigation since Cessac's visit in 1877 occurred almost 40 years later. Leonard Outhwaite surveyed 86 sites for the University of California at Berkeley in 1916, this being the first large-scale survey of the island. David Banks Rogers of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History made a series of three reconnaissance surveys and other excavation trips to the island in 1927. The first two reconnaissance trips, to the north side and western tip of the island, lasted only about two days each and produced little except for laying the groundwork for future excavation. The third reconnaissance was also short and covered coastal areas on the south and east sides including Smugglers Cove and Scorpion Anchorage. Most excavation took place between May and August of 1927, at 19 sites with a focus on burials; Rogers was later criticized for employing unsupervised "sewer diggers" to do much of the labor, and for sloppy record keeping and excavation procedures. After working with Rogers, then having a falling out, Ronald L. Olson of U. C. Berkeley made further excavations on the island in 1928. Olson increased the number of known sites to over 200 and was the first anthropologist to establish a chronology for the prehistory of the island. In 1932 Richard Van Valkenburgh of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History spent a month with a crew of four excavating some 130 burials at Forney's Cove. H. Arden Edwards, apparently working with the Southwest Museum, made a brief excavation near Frys Harbor in 1933.⁶⁰⁸

Carl St. John Bremner investigated the island's geology in late 1929 and his *Geology of Santa Cruz Island* was published by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 1932. His was the first in-depth study of its sort, although W. A. Goodyear had reported briefly on the island geology for the State Mining Bureau in 1890 and W. C. Rand did so in 1930. Otherwise, geological aspects of the island had been covered to some extent by paleontologists and archeologists such as Lorenzo Yates and David Banks Rogers. Santa Cruz Island Company president Fred Caire allowed Bremner and his assistant J. M. Kirby to spend three months on the island (Kirby stayed one month; geologist Dr. W. S. W. Kew, who had produced a geological report of Santa Rosa Island, joined Bremner for a week) mapping the island and examining fossils and rock forms. Bremner described the Santa Cruz Island fault and the geologic changes that reshaped the drainage of the central valley and Cañada del Puerto, and wrote a geologic history of the island.⁶⁰⁹

Botanical collecting on Santa Cruz Island continued through the 1930s until World War II ended virtually all scientific investigations. Collectors included Philip A. Munz, Elizabeth Crow Norland, Le Roy Abrams, Ira L. Wiggins, Howard McMinn, Margaret Dearing, Maunsell van Rensselaer and Ira W. Clokey, who added 41 plant taxa to the previous lists. These people worked mostly out of institutions such as Stanford University, University of California, California Academy of Sciences, Mills College, Santa

⁶⁰⁷Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 43-44; entry of January 26, 1920, in Letter Book, SCIF; Austin T. Wright, "An Islandian on the Islands," Introduction by Lawrence Clark Powell, Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, pp. 73-91, pp. 75-76, 84-90.

⁶⁰⁸Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 99b-116.

⁶⁰⁹Carl St. J. Bremner, *Geology of Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, California* (Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, no date), p. 5.



Plant press blotters dry in the sun in front of an old fisherman's shack at Scorpion Harbor, the temporary home of Dr. Willis Hewatt and Woodbridge Williams while they studied inter-tidal marine life on the island in June, 1939. Photograph ©2002 by M. Woodbridge Williams

Barbara Botanic Garden and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Amateurs visited the island as well, and even island co-owner Fred Caire collected specimens on the island.⁶¹⁰

M. Woodbridge Williams of Pomona College spent about six weeks on Santa Cruz Island in the summer of 1939 studying the land snails *Helminthoglypta ayresiana santaecrucis*, making botanical and marine biology observations with Dr. Willis Hewatt, and taking photographs of the natural conditions. Hewatt and Williams lodged in the abandoned Pelican Bay Camp with the permission of Edwin Stanton. Williams wrote of Evelyn and young Carey Stanton accompanying the scientists while tide pooling, and of his visits to the Main Ranch where Mrs. Stanton would serve him a glass of milk. The expedition was threatened by a confrontation between Edwin Stanton and Hewatt over a potential trespasser—a visiting friend of Williams' from the mainland. Williams wrote that Ambrose Gherini was especially tough on scientists and trespassers, claiming that Gherini once confiscated the results of an archeological dig by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History; Williams saw some of the artifacts in the Scorpion ranch house while there for lunch (Williams wrote that Gherini said to him, "Any man that can hike from Willow Harbor to Scorpion deserves to be fed."). Gherini later denied Williams permission to return to the island for additional photographs. After exploring and collecting snails at Scorpion Harbor, Smugglers Cove, Yellowbanks, Prisoners Harbor and other locations around the island, Williams concluded that the snail lived in numerous habitats and conditions, from sea level to 2,000 feet elevation, and he detailed variations

⁶¹⁰Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 44-45.

in the shell patterns. Williams felt that the *santaecrucis* was a valid subspecies after comparing his specimens to those found on San Miguel Island earlier by Henry Hemphill.⁶¹¹

The Los Angeles Museum commenced a planned five-year Channel Islands Biological Survey in 1939. An interdisciplinary team of scientists working for Dr. John Adams Comstock, the museum's director of sciences, was led in the field by entomologist Don Meadows. The team visited Santa Cruz Island first in August of 1939 as part of its Fourth Expedition, which included San Nicolas, San Miguel and Santa Rosa Islands. Meadows received "a special concession" to work on the island from Edwin Stanton. Included in the party were Adams, Meadows, archeologist Arthur Woodward, zoologists Jack von Bloeker and George Kanakoff, botanist Meryl B. Dunkle, entomologist Lloyd Martin, student biologist Jewel Lewis and cook Russell Sprong. Captain Allan Hancock of the Hancock Foundation provided transportation on his research yacht, *Velero III*. The group arrived at Prisoners Harbor on August 11 to be greeted by Edwin Stanton. The scientists established a camp on the beach west of the pier consisting of canvas tents with cots, a portable laboratory, and a cook tent.⁶¹²

In the nine days spent on the island, the survey members explored less than ten percent of the land. Meadows predicted that it would take five years of "intensive work" to thoroughly survey the natural resources of the island. Heavy vegetation and steep terrain kept the first expedition in the Central Valley, Cañada del Puerto and Prisoners Harbor area, but the team had its most productive collecting time of all the islands, bringing some 10,500 specimens back to Los Angeles. Meadows wrote:

The richness of the fauna and flora of Santa Cruz offered many forms of life not found on the other islands. A conspicuous endemic, quite common around camp, was the large, noisy, Santa Cruz Island Jay. A hybrid Flicker (*Coleptes cafer* x *C auratus*), and a new race of *Peromyscus californicus* were among the specimens collected by von Bloeker. California Brown, Pacific Pallid, and Intermediate Lump-nosed bats were found to be common in the old buildings on the ranch. Seven species of reptiles and two of amphibians were discovered. Spiders and other invertebrates were abundant. Almost 5000 insects were collected. Dragonflies, rare or absent on the other islands, were common in Cañada del Puerto. Coleoptera and Hemiptera were well represented. The last night on the Island approximately 500 moths were taken at light sheets. One hundred and twenty five species of plants, representing over 2500 specimens were collected by the botanist.

Woodward spent time surveying archeological sites "over a small part of the Island" but focused on the large midden at Prisoners Harbor. He found the midden to be the largest he had seen on the islands, more than fifteen feet in depth, and uncovered six burials. After removing some artifacts, Woodward reinterred the skeletons. He also performed tests on a midden at Willows Anchorage on the south side of the island. Woodward considered that the many historic buildings at the Main Ranch "resembled a small town," and noted that many were vacant or used for storage. Overall, he found that the island had already been surveyed and collected which resulted in poor results.⁶¹³

⁶¹¹M. Woodbridge Williams, "Notes on Land Snails from Santa Cruz Island" in *Pomona College Journal of Entomology and Zoology*, March 1940; Woody [M. Woodbridge] Williams to author, June 1 and July 29, 1999.

⁶¹²*Progress Report of The Los Angeles Museum - Channel Islands Biological Survey, Fourth Expedition*, pp. 1-4, 19-21, courtesy of the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

⁶¹³*Ibid.*, p. 36; Chris D. Coleman and Karen Wise, "Archaeological Field Research by Los Angeles Museum: Channel Islands Biological Survey 1939-1941" in *The California Islands: Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary*

A newspaper reported in March of 1940 that the Santa Cruz Island Fox had virtually disappeared from the island. The article stated that a special survey, apparently by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, found no foxes alive on the island. No doubt the foxes eluded the scientists, as the species continued to occupy the island up to the present.⁶¹⁴

The Channel Islands Biological Survey returned to Santa Cruz Island in March of 1941, spending almost two weeks there from a base camp at Pelican Bay. Edwin Stanton required that the participants sign statements releasing him from any responsibility in regards to accidents, and protection of Stanton's property was made clear to the men. Again, Captain Hancock provided his *Velero III* and brought with him marine biologist/photographer M. Woodbridge Williams who had studied snails on the island just previous to the Survey's first visit. George Kanakoff wrote of his investigations at Pelican Cañon, Ironwood Cañon, Prisoners Harbor and Cañon, Ranch Cañon and Rockslide Cañon. He noted that as of March 17, all the bats had been driven out of the winery buildings: "In 1939 (July [sic: August]) there were several 1000. All droppings were removed. Jack [von Bloeker] col. 1 sp. of bat." Reid Moran attended as the survey's botanist. Arthur Woodward did not attend this expedition and so no archeological work was done. The Channel Islands Biological Survey planned another trip to Santa Cruz Island in late 1941 but the outbreak of war in December thwarted the plans. During the war, the survey was abandoned.⁶¹⁵

Island study resumed after the end of the war. Phil C. Orr of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, known for his extensive work on Santa Rosa Island, visited Santa Cruz Island at least four times between 1950 and 1963. Orr made a reconnaissance and a helicopter survey in apparent preparation for a project on the island similar in scale to his Santa Rosa Island work; the project did not occur. Botanist Cornelius Muller of UCSB visited the island after the war and Reid Moran who had previously worked with the Los Angeles Museum's survey returned. One of the most dedicated island researchers, Clifton Smith of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, began a long association with Santa Cruz Island in 1958, as did E. R. Blakely of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden.⁶¹⁶

The University of California's Santa Cruz Island Reserve Field Station (described in a previous chapter) brought numerous researchers to the Stanton portion of Santa Cruz Island beginning in the 1960s, and the 1978 arrangement with The Nature Conservancy instigated even more research, bringing numerous contributors to the knowledge of the island's natural and cultural history including Ralph Philbrick, Lyndal Laughrin, Michael Benedict, Michael Glassow, Albert C. Spaulding, Janice Timbrook, Steven Timbrook, Marla Daily, Mary Hochberg and Steve Junak. Most of the work has followed natural history disciplines but some important ethnographic and archeological work has been accomplished as well. Much of the research has been reported in the occasional California Islands symposia held in Santa Barbara and the resulting publications. Researchers have investigated subjects including botanical, geological, geomorphic, floral, faunal, prehistoric and historical issues and such studies continue to this day. Of great interest is the

Symposium, Dennis M. Power, Editor (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1980), pp. 188-190.

⁶¹⁴Unidentified news clipping, March 19, 1940, LACMNH.

⁶¹⁵John Adams Comstock to Mr. Edwin L. Stanton, January 3 and March 21, 1941; notes from the Twelfth Expedition; "Report of Meeting of Science Division," September 23, 1941, LACMNH; Woody [M. Woodbridge] Williams to author, June 1, 1999.

⁶¹⁶Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 116-121; Junak et al, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, p. 45.

study of the effects of historical grazing and fire on native plant communities, the control of exotic species and the understanding and control of native and non-native animals. A major publication, *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island*, was published in 1995 by the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and the California Native Plant Society with the direct cooperation of Carey Stanton and the staffs of the UC Field Station, Santa Cruz Island Foundation and The Nature Conservancy.

The purchase by the National Park Service in 1997 of the remaining interest in east Santa Cruz Island opened the way for archeological investigations in that section. UC Santa Barbara anthropologist Douglas J. Kennett and three associates (John Johnson of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Torben Rick of UCSB and Don Morris of Channel Islands National Park) produced a paper investigating locations of the Chumash settlements Swaxil and Nanawani. The authors made excavations of potential sites at Scorpion Anchorage and in the Smugglers Cove area and concluded that Swaxil was located at Scorpion and Nanawani at Smugglers Cove and Smugglers Point. Jeanne Arnold, however, who had studied chert quarries on the Montañon and had previously published a report on the villages of the east end, concluded that both villages had been located at Smugglers Cove.⁶¹⁷

Research continues on Santa Cruz Island under the auspices of the National Park Service, The Nature Conservancy, University of California, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Santa Cruz Island Foundation and others. Recent activities include studies of vegetation change, native shrub recovery, fennel and feral pig eradication, prescribed burns, stream fauna, as well as specific studies on individual plant and animal species. Both prehistoric and historic archeology studies continue, and the National Park Service has completed a series of cultural landscape inventories on the east end and isthmus.⁶¹⁸

Shipwrecks

For an island of its size and location at a busy shipping channel, Santa Cruz has seen remarkably few major shipwrecks and no losses of the large transient vessels that used the channel for national and international trade. The record of maritime incidents at the island's shores tend to reflect its popularity with local fishermen and recreational boaters, dozens of whom have met disaster in the coves or nearby at sea as storms or the ill-fated Santa Ana winds would arise. Because small pleasure boats are not always recorded in official reports, a complete listing of boating incidents is impossible. Researchers with records of fishing vessels have had some better luck, but even these often had poor documentation. The following narrative list is largely derived from Morris and Lima's *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment* for the Channel Islands National Park and National Marine Sanctuary, published in 1996:

San Buenaventura (1858). Little is known about the sloop *San Buenaventura* but that she was based in Santa Barbara and that her captain, Vincenzo Panatieri, had a number of aliases including "John Brown" and "Capt. Paisoco." The *Santa Barbara Gazette* reported the tragedy of her demise. On September 13,

⁶¹⁷See the published proceedings of the California Islands symposia for more detail; Douglas J. Kennett, John R. Johnson, Torben C. Rick and Don P. Morris, "Historic *Chumash* Settlement on Eastern Santa Cruz Island" (Draft) for *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, n.d.

⁶¹⁸See Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium, 1999.

1858, the *San Buenaventura* sailed for Santa Rosa Island from her home port. Peter Hammond, an “industrious and respected citizen of Santa Barbara” with a wife and five children, and “native Californian” Miguel Cota of Santa Barbara were passengers. Early in the morning the boat sprang a leak and sank, apparently in the channel between Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Islands. The three men swam ashore to a practically inaccessible beach bounded by high cliffs. The newspaper reported that the skipper

climbed up the steep bluff, and after wandering about the island for two days and nights, naked, hungry and thirsty, reached one of the houses on the island. The others, less fortunate, have not since been heard of. Diligent search has been made upon and around the island, but no traces have been discovered of them. It is supposed that they must have perished at the foot of the bluff, where they landed. The escape of Panatieri is little less than miraculous. The bluff rises to a height of about two hundred feet and is almost perpendicular for the first hundred feet.⁶¹⁹

Chappo and *Helene* (1897-1898). The 20-foot sloop *Chappo*, built in Santa Barbara by William Bates, broke anchor and went ashore at Chinese Harbor on August 15, 1897. The crew of four on this small vessel made shore safely. The 34-foot sloop *Helene*, in use as a guano carrier and laden with a reported two tons of the stuff collected at San Miguel Island, sought shelter for the night from a strong northeaster at Forney’s Cove. Her anchor chain parted and the crew found themselves stranded on an offshore rock. In the morning the crew escaped to shore, getting drenched in the process. They broke into a Chinese camp and waited for a day and a night for rescue; Captain Burtis of the schooner *Santa Cruz* transported the men to Santa Barbara. Captain Ramon Vasquez took ill from the ordeal. Edwards and Company owned the sloop, called a “yacht” in news accounts.⁶²⁰

Sea Lion (1906). A sloop used for abalone fishing and owned by a Japanese company wrecked at Dicks Harbor in October of 1906. The only information on the wreck came from a brief newspaper article, which noted that the sloop had “been engaged in the abalone trade in the channel for some time past. Owing to defective ground tackle, she drifted onto the rocks at Dicks harbor during a heavy blow a day or so ago and broke up in short order.” The crew escaped, apparently unharmed. In February of 1908 Ira Eaton’s 35-foot fishing boat *Irene*, built by Eaton in his off hours, wrecked at Valdez Harbor in a northwester.⁶²¹

Nellie and *International I* (1912, 1918). The 38.8-foot power boat *Nellie*, skippered by Dan Bethune out of San Pedro, encountered a northeast Santa Ana gale and was pushed to the rocks on the east end of the island on December 25, 1912. Bethune and his mate jumped into the heavy surf and spent the night on the rocks. Some Santa Barbara fishermen observed the crew’s distress signals and rescued them. The *International I* was a new 70-foot barge built in East San Pedro and owned by the International Packing Company. On September 13, 1918, a southeast swell accompanied by 40 mile an hour winds pushed the barge ashore at Smugglers Cove; little else is known, but the crew of five apparently survived.⁶²²

⁶¹⁹Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, pp. 149-150.

⁶²⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

⁶²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 121-122, quoting the Santa Barbara *Morning Press*, October 26, 1906, and p. 158.

⁶²²*Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

Unity, *Eagle*, *OK* and *Lion* (1922-1924). The 60-foot fishing vessel *Unity* from Seattle, Washington burned in a fire reportedly caused by a backfire in the engine some 4.5 miles south of Smugglers Cove on August 25, 1922. On January 29, 1923 Frank E. Nidever and his 35-foot fishing boat *Eagle* disappeared during a trip to Santa Cruz Island. Nidever was the grandson of famed channel pioneer George Nidever and his disappearance spurred an extensive search effort. While no sign of Nidever was ever found, fragments of his boat washed up on the north shore of the island, leading investigators to believe that the *Eagle* had been rammed by a large liner seen passing in the channel at the time of Nidever's attempted crossing. A search party turned tragic as one of the boats assisting in the search, the lobster boat *OK*, was lost with its crew, captain Jerry Shively and his mate, Isaac Newton. Both men's bodies were found at Scorpion Harbor more than three weeks later. Speculation arose during the search that boot-legging-related foul play was involved. On the fourth of July the following year the 51-foot gas-powered fishing boat *Lion* stranded somewhere in the vicinity of Santa Cruz Island after dragging anchor in a heavy wind.⁶²³

Wampas aka *Grey Ghost* (1926). The *Wampas*, registered as A-1370 and known in local circles as the *Grey Ghost*, was a fast, 56-foot rumrunner powered by twin 300 horsepower Sterling engines. On November 13, 1926 a Coast Guard patrol boat, CG-254, spotted the *Grey Ghost* off of Coches Prietos on the south shore of Santa Cruz Island and gave chase. The Coast Guard men, under Boatswain (T) L. H. Williams, fired a blank one-pounder and two service charges across her bow. The *Grey Ghost* only hurried on eastward, bringing the officer-in-charge to deduce that she must be loaded with contraband. Williams fired 59 rounds of one-pound charges at the fleeing boat, six of which hit and caused enough damage to slow her down. Crewman Edward O. Caliouette fired ten magazines from a machine gun mounted on the top of the pilothouse, adding to the damage. The *Grey Ghost* turned to shore to avoid sinking and was forced ashore about 1.5 miles east of Valley Anchorage.

The man aboard the *Grey Ghost*, reportedly named George Garvin, fled as the Coast Guard men lowered a dinghy and approached the swamped boat. They found about 200 sacks of imported whisky and noted two 20-gallon oak barrels floating in the surf; examples of the illegal cargo were collected and stowed aboard CG-254. While waiting for backup, the crew attempted to tow the boat off the rocks but failed. Meanwhile two parties visited the shore in search of the escaped rumrunner. A third try, by Caliouette, revealed a still-wet man hiding in the boulders near the wreck; the man was promptly arrested. It took eleven hours for a new Coast Guard boat, CG-259, to arrive from their base at Point Hueneme; it arrived at 11:30 p.m. and relieved the crew of CG-254, who returned to base. The following morning the relief crew removed 50 sacks of liquor from the boat, the men being washed overboard several times by the heavy surf. The crew spent the night at the scene and returned to base on November 15. The *Grey Ghost* broke up on the rocks, with no one attempting salvage. "Frenchy" LeDreau told an interviewer that fishermen salvaged the liquor, and that Garvin was fined only \$200.⁶²⁴

⁶²³*Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

⁶²⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 160-162; oral history interview with Don Meadows, February 22, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #0930.

Typhoon, *Kinkajou*, *Imperial* and *Yukon* (1931-1938). The pleasure yacht *Typhoon* ran out of gas and suffered from torn sails while vacationing on the north side in late June of 1931. Mr. and Mrs. Frank C. Learned, J. E. Knowles and Elizabeth Bakewell abandoned ship after the boat dragged anchor for more than a mile and swam to shore near Platt's Harbor; the latter two almost drowned in the process. The four castaways were rescued by Max Fleischman's cruiser *Haida*; the *Typhoon* drifted away to an unknown fate. Another yacht, the *Kinkajou* owned by Douglas Aircraft Company founder Donald Douglas, drifted ashore in a night wind near Pelican Cove sometime in the 1930s. The crew, who reportedly had been drinking, gathered provisions and abandoned ship, reportedly spending a week with shepherders on the island. The sailors were eventually rescued by a passing fishing boat.

The 54-foot converted tug *Imperial* was working as a sport-fishing boat in late October of 1936 when she beached at Alamos Anchorage on the south shore of the island. The Coast Guard responded to a call through the Anacapa Light Station; the Coast Guard cutter *Calypso* rescued the captain and his three crewmembers. The Red Stack tug *A E Williams* towed her off the beach and she was reportedly salvaged and reconstructed although the vessel had been reported in official accounts as a total loss. The 61-foot diesel fishing boat *Yukon* collided with the purse seiner *Long Island* while fishing for mackerel and sardines in Chinese Harbor on January 6, 1938. The crew of eight abandoned the sinking wooden boat for the *Long Island* and then watched as she exploded and burned.⁶²⁵

City of Sausalito (1941). Little is known of this 78.7 foot wooden vessel. She was licensed for the coastal trade and mackerel fishery. She reportedly burned and exploded at San Pedro Point on the east end of Santa Cruz Island on December 11, 1941. The eleven people on board escaped.⁶²⁶

Billcona, *Aurora*, *Sea Lion* and *Corsair* (1952, 1956). Santa Rosa Island's cattle outfit Vail & Vickers shipped their cattle by tug and barge to Port Hueneme during much of the 1940s and 1950s. Their preferred route took them from Bechers Bay around the sheltered south side of both Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands. On the morning of June 23, 1952 the ex-Army tug *Billcona* ran aground at Morse Point on the southwest side of Santa Cruz Island with its barge loaded with about 300 fattened cattle from Santa Rosa Island. The U. S. Coast Guard responded with a cutter out of Santa Barbara harbor under Chief Thomas J. Naccarato. A news report characterized the rescue of the cattle as a roundup by boat executed by seven "sea-going cowboys." The cattle were forced off the ramp into the ocean in order to save the barge from sinking, requiring the Coast Guardsmen to herd the swimming cattle away from the open sea. The Coast Guard deployed a dinghy from which a few cattle were roped and others towed forcibly to shore. Another tug arrived and towed the barge free, and the fate of the *Billcona* is unclear. Later that year the 79-foot *Aurora* burned while at anchor in an undisclosed location off the island, but was reportedly

⁶²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 126-127, 162-164. The account of lodging for a week with shepherders is implausible, as the ranch did not employ such men; if they had been on the island for a roundup, they would have had easy access to the Main Ranch. Also, the crew was supposedly near Pelican Bay, which for many years in the 1930s was an active resort. The account came from an oral history based on second-hand information.

⁶²⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

salvaged and rebuilt. On February 8, 1956 the 43-foot wooden yacht *Corsair* built in 1911 wrecked somewhere on the north shore of the island and was a total loss. In November of the same year the *Sea Lion*, a Sea Scout cruiser sank about one mile west of Pelican Harbor but the six occupants were rescued.⁶²⁷

Grumman AF-2W Guardian (1954). This U. S. Air Force propeller-driven fighter flew as part of a massive air search for a missing Banshee jet fighter when it developed engine trouble. Lt. John Miller and his crew of two ditched the plane into the water and were rescued after swimming ashore and setting flares. After being prepared to ditch, the plane hit the water at low speed and sank near Gull Island on the south side of the island; divers have located it and found the plane to be in relatively good condition.⁶²⁸

Santa Cruz (1960). The loss of the *Santa Cruz* brought to a close an important and romantic era in Channel Islands history. Justinian Caire commissioned the 64-foot schooner in 1893 as the supply ship for the busy island industries. The *Santa Cruz* hauled sheep, wool, wine and grapes, vaqueros and sheep shearers, cattle, provisions and passengers for 67 years, not only for the proprietors of Santa Cruz Island but for neighbors as well. She was included in the 1937 sale of the island to Edwin Stanton and served his cattle operation until December 6, 1960 when her anchor chain parted in a Santa Ana wind and she left her longtime mooring off the Prisoners Harbor pier to be smashed against the western shore of the harbor. Wreckage in the vicinity has been attributed to the venerable island workhorse of a ship.⁶²⁹

Vineth, *Dolphin IV*, *Georgia* and *Cinnamon Bear* (1961-1966). The 37-foot wooden fishing boat *Vineth* stranded on the beach one mile southwest of Smugglers Cove at or near Cañada del Aguaje on September 1, 1961. Her skipper had put her on autopilot and gone below to fix a meal when the autopilot reportedly malfunctioned. The *Dolphin IV*, reportedly a 26-foot wooden sailboat used for mackerel fishing, burned somewhere between Prisoners and Chinese harbors on December 2, 1962 after a portable cook stove malfunctioned and set the boat ablaze. Both men jumped into the water and swam ashore. A newspaper reported that on November 17, 1964 the 40-foot boat *Georgia*, use unknown, sank while at anchor after being accidentally being rammed by a skiff at an undisclosed cove on the island. A Coast Guard helicopter rescued owner Tony J. Souza and his dog. The 50-foot wooden fishing vessel *Cinnamon Bear* burned at Twin Harbor on August 26, 1966. A former U. S. Navy boat built in 1944, she was engulfed in flames after the galley stove apparently exploded in the middle of the night. The crew escaped. Two 26-foot private yachts, the *Elaine* and the *Trilogy* grounded on the island in 1961 and 1966, respectively, but apparently left no remains and no injuries or fatalities were recorded. Another vessel, the 24-foot sailboat *Whitecap*, wrecked at Smugglers Cove on August 22, 1966. The boat was a total loss and the Coast Guard rescued the two crewmen. Still two other vessels, the *Black Dolphin* of 42 feet and the *Marimari*, 30 feet, stranded off

⁶²⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 167-168, 172-173. The cattle, owned by Vail & Vickers, were rounded up and driven across the island to Prisoners Harbor, then transported on the *Santa Cruz* to the mainland.

⁶²⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 168-172.

⁶²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 173-175.

the island; the *Black Dolphin* met its fate at Chinese Harbor on Christmas Day, 1968 and was towed away; little is known about the *Marimari*.⁶³⁰

Sierra, Joan, Blazenka B and *Jana Dawn* (1972-1978). An unnamed 22-foot sailboat swamped at Scorpion Anchorage in March 1972, resulting in the drowning death of Charles A. Kern. A 34-foot diesel fishing boat, the *Sierra*, stranded at Smugglers Cove on October 24, 1972, but no other information has been found on the incident. On January 11, 1974 a converted fishing ketch used as a yacht and named *Englyn* wrecked in a Santa Ana storm at Forney's Cove. A month later at the same location, the 29-foot wooden fishing boat *Joan* with three persons aboard, foundered on the rocks on February 15, 1974; all three crew members survived. The *Blazenka B*, a 35-foot wooden boat of unknown power and use, burned at Scorpion Harbor on March 27, 1977. Less than a year later a 57-foot wooden fishing vessel called the *Jana Dawn* was destroyed in a storm on February 28, 1978 at Chinese Harbor.⁶³¹

A busy Thanksgiving weekend in the island's coves led to disaster for dozens of yachtsmen as a violent Santa Ana windstorm erupted on November 27 and 28, 1976. Some 35 to 40 private recreational boats sank at various locations around the islands in a storm considered to be the most destructive Santa Ana on record.⁶³²

The salvage activities of William Petersen and his friends at Scorpion and Smugglers Coves left remnants of various craft in those vicinities. Petersen worked on three derelict minesweepers with the intent of salvaging their valuable non-magnetic metals. Al Kidman towed the 133-foot minesweeper *Spirit of America* (possibly of the original name *Peacock*) to an anchorage off Scorpion in the early 1980s; she reportedly broke loose and sank into 60 feet of water where she is an attraction to divers today. One night a huge minesweeper, the *U. S. S. Reaper* (MSO-467), apparently broke off from a Navy tow line and grounded at Smugglers Beach; her chance arrival on the beach, supposedly ignored by the Navy and Coast Guard, was seen as a boon for Petersen, who

contrived to turn two heavy metal iron girders into a kind of lance with which to pierce the sides of the wooden hull. He made holes at four-foot intervals along the whole length of the vessel. Through these holes, we would place our Molotov cocktails, the incendiary devices to distribute and control the projected fire evenly.

. . . We placed six flares in each of the holes, which we had prepared down the length of the ship, securing them to plastic bags filled with diesel fuel. Finally, we drenched the area around each of the cavities with gas. We lit torches on the end of two six-foot poles, and torched off the ignition centers in quick succession.

Running for shelter, Petersen and Michel Ravenscroft watched as the flames consumed the hull. They spent the next days collecting the semi-precious metals in the form of nuts, bolts, screws, bulkhead doors, porthole frames and a heavy sonar box; Michel Petersen estimated the take at fifteen tons. Transportation of the heavy materials proved to be a problem and the drums of metals stayed on the island for a year as

⁶³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 139-141, 175-177.

⁶³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 144-146, 178.

⁶³²*Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

prices dropped by half for such metals. Petersen and Ray Cummings towed the *U. S. S. Prime* (MSO-466) from San Pedro to Scorpion Harbor. Marla Daily wrote that

Petersen pulled the *Prime* onto the beach during a high tide and tried to burn her. She was so waterlogged, she wouldn't burn. Weeks later, an internal fire set by Michel succeeded into burning her in half. Her nonferrous metals were salvaged, and her large remaining parts of bow and stern washed in and out of the bay with the seas until finally they did not return.⁶³³

⁶³³Petersen, *Once Upon an Island*, pp. 91-104 and footnotes by Marla Daily p. 191.

Overview of Significance

The extraordinary history of Santa Cruz Island has been written about for over a century. It spans the eras of Mexican rule in California, the Gold Rush and settlement of the new state, the growth of agriculture and social history, and the progress of the twentieth century. The activities on the island ranged from ranching to viticulture to fishing and sealing, with recreation and science figuring prominently as well. All of these activities are prominent themes in the developmental history of the state of California. The creation of one of the first fine-wool sheep ranches of any importance in California by James Barron Shaw and the island owners of the 1850s and 1860s is a significant part of California history. The rise of Justinian Caire, a resilient immigrant from Europe, in California commerce was lifted by his development and operation of the remarkable Santa Cruz Island Company ranch, where over a hundred skilled and unskilled Italians, French, Barbareños and others labored in creating and maintaining a landmark agricultural operation. The architecture chosen by Caire, the methods of raising livestock and crops, the employment patterns, the rustic but fine San Francisco- and Santa Barbara-based social climate at the Main Ranch, all contributed to this unique entity.

The Caire family split in a series of events in the 'teens and 'twenties, with one part of the family retaining ownership of a small part of the island, the east end. The largest part of the island was sold to Edwin Stanton, a successful oilman and manufacturer from Los Angeles. The Gherinis of the east end continued in the family's tradition of sheep ranching, while Stanton switched to raising fine beef cattle. The Stanton family operated their island ranch for fifty years, until the death of Dr. Carey Stanton in 1987. The Gherini family ceased sheep ranching in 1984, ending more than one hundred years of family involvement in stock raising.

The island ranch in many ways typifies California sheep and cattle ranching, yet its unique locale and subsequent patterns of operation raise it above the common coastal ranch. The Caire, Gherini and Stanton Ranches have been found to be significant for their contribution to agricultural growth and innovation in California.

The Navy base on Santa Cruz Island may have historical significance in the context of the Pacific Missile Range and national defense, but the building complex is not owned by NPS.

Archeological remains of military, fishing, ranching and other historical endeavors on the island may be eligible for the National Register as archeological sites.

Statement of Significance and Context

The Santa Cruz Island Ranching District is locally significant under Criterion A as one of the earliest sustained ranches on Santa Cruz Island, with a long history of land use from the rancho period through the modern era. The ranch is also locally significant under Criterion C as a rare example of vernacular French Alps architecture on the west coast of the United States. The ranch falls under the “Developing the American Economy” thematic context in the area of “Agriculture, Animal Husbandry (Cattle, Horses, Sheep, Hogs, Poultry)” and “The Cattle Frontier, Ranches,” as well as the “Expressing Cultural Values” thematic context in the area of “Architecture, Vernacular Architecture.”

The period of significance of the Santa Cruz Island Ranching District is 1855 to 1955, a period that commences with the early Shaw period, includes the majority ownership of Justinian Caire and the significant widespread development of the island as a premier sheep ranch and winery, continuing through the ownership of the east end by Caire heirs Maria and Ambrose Gherini, and also the early period of Edwin Stanton’s ownership culminating in the construction and use of Rancho del Norte in 1952-55.

Sheep ranching was the primary land use by James Shaw, followed by Justinian Caire and his sons who ran the Santa Cruz Island Company from 1880 to 1937. The practice was continued by the family of Caire’s granddaughter Maria Gherini on the east end of the island until 1984 when active sheep ranching ceased. During the 1940s Edwin Stanton, buyer of the Caire portion of the island in 1937, converted the ranching operation on the remaining 90 percent of the island from sheep to cattle. Stanton continued the traditional uses of Prisoners Harbor and the historic livestock boat *Santa Cruz* and developed Rancho del Norte as the focal point of cattle operations on the isthmus. While neither the Gherinis nor the Stantons maintained the level of sustainability or economic viability achieved during the Caire era, both continued livestock operations in a traditional manner and contributed to the agricultural economy of Santa Barbara County. This allowed a remarkable continuity of use on Santa Cruz Island, as livestock ranching proved to be the major activity for 134 years. The district represents the initial ranching developments on Santa Cruz Island by Caire and his successors as one of several ranches on California’s Channel Islands—a unique and specialized livestock raising location.

The property’s agricultural history can be seen in the extant cultural landscape features that can be located across the island. The ranch buildings and planting constructed during the 1880s-90s Caire development period exhibit their European Mediterranean influences through their use of European styles and floor plans (white stuccoed masonry, quoins, hipped roofs, wrought iron grillwork, interior bake ovens) executed in local materials of stone, brick and lime plaster, by European craftsmen employed on the island. The choice of raising olives, wine grapes, and sheep also reflects traditional French and Italian occupations, which the owners and their workers would be quite familiar with. Plantings of eucalyptus, Italian Stone pine, and Monterey cypress were common in Mediterranean Europe as they were in California, due to the similar climates and spread of these trees following the California and Australian gold rushes.

Four building complexes (Prisoners Harbor, Rancho del Norte, Scorpion Ranch and Smugglers Ranch) include two unique and intact masonry dormitory/kitchen/bakery buildings, a one-of-a-kind brick warehouse, as well as various outbuildings, all dating from the nineteenth century; and a bunkhouse at

Scorpion and ranch complex at Rancho del Norte dating from the twentieth century. Connecting these building areas are numerous features that were essential to the operation of the livestock ranches: complex fencing systems that enclose former pastures and cultivated areas and once provided transport corridors for sheep; water systems developed over 150 years to accommodate the changing needs of the ranchers, including springs, wells, pipelines, troughs, tanks and reservoirs; and a system of roads and trails that date from the earliest development of the island into the 1950s. The east side of the island is also the site of over two hundred nineteenth century check dams and remains of extensive retaining rock walls, all of which contributed to slowing erosion caused by grazing on the steep terrain and show the workmanship and toil of Caire's immigrant laborers. More than one hundred rock piles scatter the east end, remnants of manual clearing for cultivation and pastures. These historic resources reflect the initial and extensive development of the island in the late 1800s and the adaptation during the 1940s and 1950s to evolving uses of the island.

These features, which possess cohesion of purpose and historical integrity, represent the important livestock industry of California, which had its start with the Spanish missions of the late 1770s and blossomed during the Gold Rush and early statehood. The ranches contributed to the local and state economy through depressions, wars and during the unprecedented growth of post-war America. Until the end of ranching on the island in 1987, the ranch was operated under the traditional system of *vaqueros* (Spanish: cowboys) on horseback tending cattle, which would be shipped to and from the mainland using a unique system of wooden cattle boats and barges.

The landscape of the Santa Cruz Island Ranching District exhibits the characteristics of a late nineteenth/early twentieth-century sheep ranch particularly unique to the Channel Islands. While the physical condition of the ranch is fair, the ranch landscape remains much as it did during its period of significance of 1855-1955. The vernacular landscape continues to demonstrate the aspects of remote ranching through the rise and collapse of sheep ranching in California by maintaining the majority of the landscape characteristics.

The ranching district remains intact in its original location. The local resources and skilled methods used to construct the features, particularly in the design, materials, and workmanship associated with the buildings and stone walls, are still apparent. The isolation of the Channel Islands from mainland development and the surrounding islands has preserved the remarkably intact setting of the ranch. The extensive remaining historic fabric in combination with the setting retains the feeling of the ranch during the period of significance. An association with the Caire, Gherini, and Stanton families and the vernacular landscape of the Santa Cruz Island Ranching District is clearly evident through the buildings and structures, circulation patterns, planted vegetation, and organization of the ranch.

The Santa Cruz Island Ranching District retains integrity according to the National Register of Historic Places' standards, which define integrity through location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Contributing landscape characteristics include natural systems and features, spatial organization, vegetation, cluster arrangement, buildings and structures, circulation, small scale features, topography and archeology. The island ranch, however, does not retain its historic land use. Contributing landscape features that demonstrate the link of the property to historic ranching activities include a variety of residences and outbuildings, storage caves, wells and windmills, corrals, fencelines, telephone poles, troughs, water tanks, dry-laid stone masonry structures, roads, orchards and pastures.

Context

California's important place in American history includes its leading role in westward expansion and its longtime contributions to the national economy through agriculture. The first industry in California, predating even the American period, was stock raising for purposes of providing food and clothing. This industry grew to become one of the hallmarks of California's growth during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and helped it maintain its position as the country's leading agricultural producer since the 1950s. On Santa Cruz Island, the owners and their employees developed a large sheep ranch and winemaking operation that evolved and contributed to these industries, especially on a local level as the largest sheep ranch in Santa Barbara County. The owners did so against the odds of operating from an island some twenty-five miles offshore of the southern California mainland.

Making the largest land grant in Santa Barbara County, the Mexican governor granted Santa Cruz Island in 1839 to Andres Castillero, who would take a prominent place in California history through his development of the New Almaden quicksilver mines near San Jose. In 1853 Dr. James Barron Shaw was hired to manage the island property and make it productive. Shaw immediately stocked the island with sheep. So began a period of 132 years of sheep ranching on Santa Cruz Island. A diverse group of San Francisco businessmen bought the island in 1869 and constructed the first substantial and permanent pier on the central California coast. By 1880 one of the original investors, a Frenchman named Justinian Caire, assumed majority ownership and commenced development of the island into a remarkably productive and picturesque agricultural operation.

While sheep provided wool and meat from the earliest days of the Spanish missions in California, not until the Gold Rush of 1849-1860 did sheep ranching grow as a Western industry. Events of that period brought not only thousands of people to California but also the eyes of the east coast and other parts of the world looking to exploit the new state's material riches. What would be called the state's "other gold"—agricultural products—came into prominence as the state's major industry and its contribution to the growth of the country during the industrial revolution and 20th century. The Santa Cruz Island enterprises, which gained fame in the national press, contributed to the state's economy and reputation as a premier region for various agricultural products.

Significant sheep production in the United States began in the 1830s and 1840s bringing about changes in ranching processes and product focus. For example, Spanish Merino, bred by the Caire family, were introduced into this country for their wool rather than meat. With this new emphasis, the east coast woolen mills developed new manufacturing techniques that, especially during and after the Civil War, created a demand and spurred a boom in sheep ranching in the American West. The Gold Rush brought immigrants from all over the world to California, including French and Basque who arrived with sheep ranching skills from their homelands. By the early 1870s, Los Angeles became a major sheep and wool market, and the statewide sheep industry enjoyed a boom that lasted into the 1880s when it peaked.

Under the management of James Barron Shaw between 1853 and 1869, the Santa Cruz Island sheep ranch was apparently the first in the region to focus on high-grade wool and meat products involving the importation of the best breeds of sheep from Europe and the east coast. Santa Cruz Island became known

as California's finest sheep ranch, giving impetus to the development of high quality sheep ranches elsewhere in the state. The years of Shaw's enterprise coincide with the dramatic rise in sheep ranching in the state; by 1860 the island supported some 100,000 head. A scarcity of cotton during the Civil War dramatically increased the need for wool, feeding the boom in California.

Natural conditions played a major role in the success of the sheep industry on the California coast. Conditions were excellent for grazing and the Channel Islands provided rangeland free of predators. Although a drought in 1862-1864 devastated the California livestock industry, sheep made a remarkable rebound and took over some of the range formerly grazed by cattle. The health of the sheep industry leveled out after the boom-and-bust 1870s as the west settled into its permanent status as the dominant wool-growing region of the country. California consistently ranked second behind Texas in numbers of sheep and wool clip. By the time he took control of Santa Cruz Island in 1880, Justinian Caire had barely missed the wool boom but his ranch proved to be the largest sheep ranch on the California coast and, as smaller outfits turned from sheep to cattle, the island's output dwarfed that of any other ranch in Santa Barbara County. Caire's employment of over a hundred laborers and specialists, mostly Italian and French immigrants, and the distinctly European architectural styles, gave Santa Cruz Island a unique flavor among the nineteenth century settlements of California.

Architectural influences varied during the period of significance. The early Caire-era buildings are more reminiscent of European architecture than California, with the *cucina/dormitorios* at Scorpion and Smugglers exhibiting massing, detail and materials common to the French Alps and northern Italy, home of the island owner and immigrant craftsmen who built the structures. The builders used local materials including stone, lime and island-made bricks and adobes. The 1914 bunkhouse at Scorpion reflects the utilitarian needs of the period, being a simple, gable-roofed wood frame building of pleasing design not uncommon to coastal California ranches. The 1952 buildings at Rancho del Norte feature a ranch house designed by notable southern California architect H. Roy Kelley.

Through the booms and busts of the livestock industries in California, the Caire family survived through diversified production, including wool, beef, wine, fruit and nuts, in addition to sustainable gardens, orchards and flocks of fowl that decreased the family's need to import goods from the mainland. As the market for wool faced the challenges of the twentieth century, sheep ranchers organized more efficient wool marketing organizations that allowed individual raisers greater advantage in dealing with New England-based wool buyers, and demands created by the two World Wars supported the industry through the first half of the twentieth century. While the majority of the Caire family exited the wool business, and the island, in 1937, the Gherini family (Caire descendants) continued production on the east end and were the last wool producers on the Channel Islands. Following World War II, agriculture entered a period of focused production, which allowed a rancher to expend all his energy into creating one high-quality product, evidenced by Gherini's transfer to sheep-only operations and Stanton removing the sheep to begin a cattle operation.

The sheep industry of Santa Barbara County decreased in importance throughout the twentieth century, and by 1950 sheep provided only a fraction of the county's livestock output. However, demand for wool remained relatively stable and the Gherini family continued to provide product to the market, all while employing the traditional methods of production. By the 1980s the 17 western states produced 82 per

cent of the nation's wool crop. At the time of cessation of the sheep operation in 1984, Santa Cruz Island was one of only a few sheep ranches remaining on the southern California coast.

Edwin Stanton's purchase of the major part of Santa Cruz Island from the Caires in 1937 brought a major shift in agricultural production on the island. After trying for a short time to continue the sheep operation, he decided to switch to beef production. At the time, the beef industry in California was growing rapidly, with Santa Barbara County among the top ten beef producers in the state.

Cattle ranching is considered to be the oldest industry in California. The missions, pueblos and presidios of early Alta California kept herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. A demand for hides and tallow in the eastern United States and Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century brought income to Mexican land grantees and settlers of various backgrounds. The focus of the cattle industry changed with the Gold Rush and statehood, eliciting a need for beef and dairy products, while a continuing need for wool only increased with the Civil War. The cattle industry bloomed especially in Southern California on the Mexican-era ranchos. A drought in 1863-64 devastated the state's livestock industry and contributed to the breakup of the ranchos while fostering, with the aid of rancher-influenced land laws, huge corporate cattle-and feed-raising, slaughter and marketing operations. Although the sheep industry faltered by the turn of the century, the cattle industry continued to grow and has contributed in a major extent to the state's agricultural economy for more than 150 years.

The Stanton Ranch was a major part of Santa Barbara County's cattle industry between the 1940s and 1980s and, at 54,000 acres was the largest in size. Most large local beef cattle ranches, such as the 34,000-acre San Fernando Rey Ranch and the 28,000-acre Bixby Ranch, operated as cow-calf farms with three to four thousand head. Neighboring Santa Rosa Island exceeded Stanton's cattle numbers on similar acreage. Santa Barbara County, while never a leader in California's beef industry, nevertheless held a position among the top ten or twelve cattle producers throughout the twentieth century and usually led production in coastal Southern California. California became the nation's largest agricultural producer by 1948, with cattle the major commodity of the state's production. California cattle production followed only Texas and a few other Western states in economic importance nationwide. Stanton's Santa Cruz Island ranch proved to be among the last of the large ranches in operation in southern California, as most of the prominent cattle ranches such as the Irvine Ranch in Orange County and the Hollister Ranch on the Santa Barbara County coast fell to subdivisions. Its greatest significance in relation to the cattle industry lies in the period during the 1940s and 1950s as California's feeder cattle industry boomed. While historic resources such as buildings, tree plantings, dry-laid stone structures and circulation routes remain from the Caire era, the ranch gains much significance in its evolution into a prominent and successful cattle ranch during this middle part of the twentieth century.

Livestock ranching in northern Santa Barbara County took a downturn in the 1930s with the development of row crop farming, a result of improved transportation opportunities, organized marketing and irrigation. Military acquisitions of coastal ranches around Point Conception to the northwest also contributed to the demise of many family ranches, although mostly dairies; beef cattle ranching continued in the Santa Ynez Valley, along the coast between Vandenburg Air Force Base and Goleta, and on Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz islands. The industry revived during and after World War II. While the number of cattle and value per head steadily rose in Santa Barbara County during the 1940s and 1950s, the acreage

devoted to stock raising dipped from 610,000 acres to 426,000 acres between 1955 and 1958, and continued to decline through the 1960s and 1970s.

Per capita consumption of beef in California more than doubled between 1940 and 1970, and the number of cattle on state farms reflected this rise, although national growth of cattle numbers did not match that of California's. Prices for beef off the farm rose almost 400 percent during the same period, with the most dramatic growth between 1940 and 1959. The industry took a dramatic downturn during the 1970s, which opened a period of instability that lasted two decades.

A science- and economy-driven revolution in production took place in the 1950s as cattle fattening in feedlots became popular with surpluses of grain and dwindling quality grazing land. Cattle feeding started in the 1930s but exploded after World War II, focused especially in the Midwest. In the twenty years following the war, the number of cattle on feed jumped by over 600 percent. Edwin Stanton followed this trend, establishing a large cow-calf ranch, where cows are raised and maintained to produce calves for sale to beef producers for feedlot finishing.

Most historic California ranches operated in a similar fashion that changed little since its beginnings as an industry, but few remained into the 1980s with integrity such as that found on Santa Cruz Island. Phases of economic expansion in California, especially during post-war booms, caused the breakup of most of the large old ranches, as family-run operations gave way to subdivisions and corporate ownership. For example, the decades following World War II saw explosive growth in the state that led to the decline of cattle ranching as a family enterprise, as real estate-oriented land and cattle companies purchased many of the remaining large acreages, to be operated under temporary leases to ranchers while awaiting development. During this period, ranch buildings deteriorated or were torn down. The typical layout of house, barns, supporting structures, fenced fields, rangeland, water distribution systems, cattle control structures was often fragmented with the coming of new uses to the property. Edwin Stanton's ranch on Santa Cruz Island saw changes that only reflected the evolution of cattle ranching in a working landscape. While retaining most of the nineteenth century structures dating from the Caire period, Stanton constructed a few buildings specific to the needs of his cattle ranch, specifically Rancho del Norte on the isthmus. The Gherini Ranch survived the changes of the twentieth century with few alterations, and during its tenure during the latter part of the period of significance it was little different from the Caire operations of the century before.

Historic Resources

The Gherini Ranch

Buildings and Structures at Scorpion Ranch

At the time the National Park Service obtained full possession of the Gherini Ranch in 1997 much of the ranch complex was intact. The “adobe” and “bunkhouse” formed the center of the historic complex but of particular interest was the blacksmith shop, which still contained old equipment and tools of the ranching era. Severe storms in early December 1997 washed away the smithy and another old outbuilding, damaged the bunkhouse, and altered the landscape of the ranch. Much effort and money has been spent in repairing the damage. The following are the remaining buildings and structures at Scorpion Ranch. These resources form part of a National Register-eligible historic district on the east end of Santa Cruz Island.

Masonry Ranch House or old *Cucina/Dormitorio* (contributing)⁶³⁴
IDLCS 059652

Laborers and craftsmen of the Santa Cruz Island Company constructed a large and permanent masonry building at Scorpion Ranch in late 1886 or early 1887. The building would act as a kitchen and dining room for the employees of the east end of Santa Cruz Island, and would house some of the employees in a dormitory taking up the upper floor. Masons constructed a built-in bake oven (not part of the original plans) that would supply the east end with bread, a staple of the Italian and French immigrants who worked on the island at the time. The first known map of the ranch showing the new building labeled it a “cucina/dormitorio” (kitchen/dormitory). The structure was similar to a number of two-story masonry buildings constructed at the Main Ranch, Christy Ranch and other “out ranches” on the island.

It is difficult to pinpoint an exact date of construction; the dates of 1886 or 1887 are generally accepted. The structure did not appear on a detailed map of the buildings at Scorpion Ranch dated December 1885. A plan for the building is dated 1886, but the construction date was not filled in by the draftsman. A ranch foreman’s diary entry dated November 11, 1887 noted “work on building attic in new house,” leading one to determine the construction date as some time before November, 1887. The original 1886 plans called for a four-room building: a kitchen and dining room on the ground floor and two rooms upstairs. The plan showed a steeply pitched shed roof with three protruding dormers set symmetrically across the upper façade. A bakery was added on the west side after these plans had been drawn, throwing off the symmetry of the dormers.⁶³⁵

⁶³⁴The building is commonly referred to as the “adobe” or “ranch house.” It is not truly an adobe building, and the author is reluctant to call this building a house as its historic function was as a cooking and serving building with dormitory-style housing in the upper floor. It never acted as the owners’ or foreman’s residence but held its importance as a utilitarian facility.

⁶³⁵“Scorpion Ranch Cuisine et Salle a’ manger,” 1886, courtesy of Mary B. Brock; various historical material courtesy of John Gherini.



The masonry building at Scorpion Ranch, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Construction of a new roof on the Scorpion masonry building revealed rafter seats from the original, lower roof configuration, seen above the bakery, October 1997. *Channel Islands National Park*

Laborers first had to remove a previous building from the site and excavate the toe of a steep hillside to accommodate the new building. Workers cut a nearly vertical wall in a midden area and excavated foundation trenches for the walls that were filled carefully with rock. The building rose with walls 20 inches thick, composed of local stone and mortar (lime kilns had been constructed nearby), brick shipped from the mainland and/or the island brick manufactory at the Main Ranch, and a form of adobe brick which appeared as a low-fire, soft brown clay brick. The walls were coated with plaster, made smooth on the south and east elevations but left rough at the north (rear) and west. It was painted with white limewash.⁶³⁶

The Scorpion building had three rooms downstairs and two upstairs, which were reached by an exterior stairway located on the east end of the house. Its thick walls were constructed of a combination of local low-fire brick, rock, standard brick and lime mortar. The building had a steeply-pitched shed roof, unlike any other masonry building on the island, with a parapet wall of even steeper pitch on the west side. The builders left a number of rough stone quoins protruding from the west wall, no doubt to accommodate a future addition.

Probably soon after construction was completed, the shed roof was raised at the south elevation to enlarge the upstairs rooms, resulting in a decrease in the slope of the roof. Lifting the roof in this manner required the framing and exterior shingling of a wedge of wall space, creating a curious look to the building. This vertical addition included altering the three windows facing the creek (southeast), which were originally dormers protruding from the steeper pitched roof and became windows half set in the masonry wall and half in the new wood frame insert. The date of this modification is unsure, but the journal entry noted above, dated November of 1887, indicated work in the attic; the original configuration could be called an attic while the modified one created three full-height rooms. It is also possible that the roof slope was changed during the original construction of the building.

A map dated February 1892 depicted the improvements in the valley by that point in time. The mapmaker labeled the new two-story adobe building as “Forno, cucina salle a manger & dormitorio” (in Italian and French: oven, kitchen/dining room & dormitory).⁶³⁷

The crew at Scorpion Ranch used the building for its intended purpose. An unknown number of men lived upstairs, and the number of laborers on the east end eventually decreased. By 1920, the Scorpion Ranch acted as the sole residence for east end workers, and so those headquartered at Smugglers would have been added to the mix at Scorpion. Downstairs, the kitchen and dining room acted as a gathering place for all employees, regardless of whether they lived in the building or not. The bake oven was used regularly to provide bread for the employees.

The Scorpion bake oven is the only one remaining on the island. Similar ovens may have existed in the two story structures at Smugglers Ranch, Christy Ranch and elsewhere on the island. The indoor oven, a dome-shaped structure constructed of brick and mortar, sits above an arched stone firebox and occupies the rear third of the two-story room. The exterior of the oven is covered by whitewashed lime plaster, as are the walls of the bakery room. A chimney protrudes from the front portion of the oven, but only a

⁶³⁶Park archeologist found the foundation in one area to be composed of small beach cobbles; the bakery floor was brick laid on soil and shell midden.

⁶³⁷Map No. 92, Scorpion Ranch, Febbys 1892, courtesy of John Gherini.

portion remains, as the rest of the chimney was damaged and removed due to moisture damage from roof leaks. Shelves line the walls on either side of the oven, and a partial ceiling projects from the front of the room as far as the bake oven.

At an unknown date between 1918 and 1939, workers changed the access to the upper floor of the building and added a window in the west upstairs room. They removed the stairway and landing on the east end of the building, cutting off the six-inch-by-eight-inch landing beams flush with the masonry wall, and transformed the former doorway into a window to match others in the building. A hole was broken into the back wall and finished as a new doorway, although the style of previous (original) doors and windows was deviated from: the doorway had a straight rather than flared opening, finished with plaster and with a door framed into the opening. The configuration of the stairway at this point has not been accurately determined. The new door may have been reached by a bridge from the opposite bank, where a short trail offered access. Existence of a small shower shed at the rear northeastern corner of the building preceded the stairway in place now. While the shed was in place, the stairway ascended to a bridge linking the doorway with the opposite bank.

The workers also, probably at the same time as the stairway remodeling, broke another hole in the rear wall to the west, creating a window in the west upstairs room. This window was also designed differently than the originals, being wider, with an arched top, and with straight sides on the opening. Carpenters installed a double hung (with counter weights), wood sash window. Evidence remains at both locations of the breaking of the wall, where the roughly-executed openings were patched into finished wall openings.

The Ambrose Gherini family took over operation of the sheep ranch on the east end in 1926 as a result of the partition of the island. The family evidently made use of the adjacent wood frame house as their residence and continued the use of the masonry building as an employee residence and kitchen/dining room, although discontinued use of the bake oven. Photographs from the period between 1930 and 1980 show few changes to the house, and financial records do not indicate any major work. It is evident that the Gherinis made repairs as necessary but did not undertake any major projects on the building, finding it sound and durable. Income from the island ranch was not great, and so little was expended on anything not entirely necessary.

The only changes in the masonry building noted in historical photographs in this period were the replacement of some doors over time, and the removal of the bake oven chimney in the 1950s. Curiously, the remaining kitchen chimney was altered: the arched brick chimney top was reoriented, perhaps to improve the efficiency of the chimney during windy periods.

As the Gherinis had not occupied the island for many years but used it as a sheep outpost that saw activity mainly at roundup time, the buildings had fallen into disrepair. Beginning in 1979, incoming ranch operator Pete Peterson and his crew made various repairs. They installed a makeshift shed porch roof over the kitchen doorway, repaired the walls and floors and installed new sinks, a washing machine and a stove with a metal chimney, making the place habitable. When they left, however, the building remained in need of major repairs.

NPS planner Bruce Craig evaluated the building in December of 1983, near the end of the Petersens' stay there. He noted that the structure "appears sound" and wrote that the kitchen had a linoleum floor, a wood burning stove and a modern refrigerator. The floor of the dining room remained with a concrete

surface, and shelves lined the north wall. The bakery was used at the time for storage. Upstairs, Craig noted the plank floors and original hardware on the doors.⁶³⁸

Beginning in 1984 Duane Owens rehabilitated the adobe by installing new roofing, repairing the warped floor upstairs, and painting the walls and floors. He eliminated mice and installed beds for at least ten guests upstairs. Downstairs, he installed new cabinets and appliances and covered the concrete floor with red tiles; this may have necessitated raising the step into the building. Owens replaced the upstairs windows with casement sash, and eventually replaced or altered the stairway behind the building. The Owens' left after the park service completed acquisition of the property in the spring of 1997.

Since 1997, the National Park Service has performed needed work on the building. In October of 1997 the entire roof was replaced, with the older 2x4 rafters replaced with 4-by-4s. At the time, the metal chimney and porch roof installed by Peterson were removed, and the brick chimney repaired. NPS used the building for a ranger residence and kitchen. The flood of December 1997 brought water into the building but caused no apparent serious damage. Silt deposited during the storm and previous events necessitated raising the first floor door thresholds requiring a person entering the rooms to step down a few inches into the room.

In 2000 the building was no longer used and was partially gutted of all non-historic fixtures, revealing details of construction and in preparation for rehabilitation. A Historic Structure Report of the Scorpion ranch house was completed in 2001, and provides further structural details and recommendations.⁶³⁹

National Park Service preservation specialists from Santa Fe carried out rehabilitation and seismic retrofit of the building in 2004-2005. The park subsequently installed exhibits in the building to serve as the island visitor contact station.

Owners' Residence/Bunkhouse (contributing)
IDLCS 059653

This late-Caire-era building has been recently referred to as the bunkhouse but was called the owner's or superintendent's house in the 1920s and that is the apparent purpose for its construction and early use; even the most recent owners used it as their lodging, rather than the adobe. Like the adobe, its exact date of construction is elusive. Park documents list the date of construction as 1918, while old Gherini documents use the date 1914. Documentation shows a similar building under construction in mid-1918 at the Main Ranch and does not mention one being built at Scorpion, although the presence of carpenters is noted. The house appears in a map dated March of 1918, indicating that it was in place at that time. It is presumed that the house was constructed some time between 1914 and 1918.

⁶³⁸Bruce Craig, "Preliminary Historic Resources Study of Eastern Santa Cruz Island." Channel Islands National Park, December 1983.

⁶³⁹*Scorpion Ranch House, Historic Structure Report* prepared by Architectural Resources Group, 2001.



Owners' residence or bunkhouse at Scorpion Ranch following rehabilitation, 1999.
 Photograph by Dewey Livingston

The owners' residence was built on the site of the original house at Scorpion Ranch, which may have been built prior to 1856. In March of 1885 a work crew enlarged the old house, adding a room on the north side with a concrete and a wood frame shed addition on the north side. The plan called for floor. A plan dated October 10, 1904 showed a two-story masonry house with a gable roof, a porch on the south side reducing the height of the building by eliminating the upper floor; it is not known whether this work was accomplished. Archeological excavations performed in 1998 revealed a portion of the foundations of the original building and its addition, called the "underhouse" by the park archeologist. A well-finished cobblestone courtyard and walkways were also uncovered, under about two feet of soil deposited over the previous 80 years. Evidence was found indicating that a flood might have damaged or destroyed the old house. The builders of the new house sank concrete piers in line with the old foundation and constructed the new frame house in the same location of the old.⁶⁴⁰

The house was thirty feet square with board and batten siding. It had a shingled gable roof with three brackets under the eaves at the gable ends. A porch was added on the south side, which was eventually partially infilled with a bathroom and storage room. A pair of narrow, three-light double doors led from the porch to the common room. A door was located on the north side facing the lane, probably acting as the main door to the house. Most windows are two-over-two double hung wood sash, and at the upper parts of the gable ends are two, six-light attic windows.

⁶⁴⁰"Scorpion Ranch Residence," 1904, courtesy of Mary B. Brock; See Don P. Morris, "A River Runs Through It: Historical Archaeology in Scorpion Valley, Santa Cruz Island" in *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999. Morris writes that mainland carpenters constructed the bunkhouse in the summer of 1918. Further study indicates that the bunkhouse being constructed at that time was apparently at the Main Ranch.

The house had six small bedrooms, a common room and a small entrance or mudroom. Walls are board and batten, while the partition walls are sheathed in 3-inch grooved paneling. Quarter-round trim is found as detailing in all rooms.

For many years, a door on the east side of the house opened into an additional room. A photograph taken about 1981 (reproduced in Petersen, *Once Upon an Island*, p. 44) shows this addition clearly as a shed-roofed structure with board-and-batten siding and two small windows visible. It was practically barren of paint at the time of the photograph. The addition was removed some time between 1984 and 1988.

The house was used for ranch workers and family until after 1984 when Island Adventures used it as a rental bunkhouse. Duane Owens rehabilitated and decorated the house and landscaped the grounds. The house was included in the Gherini family's reservation of use and occupancy and has been used by the Gherini family and visiting park staff. The flood of December 1997 pushed the house off its foundation, moving it about 25 to 30 feet east. After excavating and documenting the "underhouse," crews built a new cinder block foundation and stairway to the front door, effectively raising the house by a few feet. The back porch was rebuilt with enclosed bathroom and shower on either end. The new foundation was placed some six to eight feet further east and slightly south of its former location, to avoid damage to the "underhouse" foundation.

The house is in good condition and possesses historical integrity, despite the alterations of 1998.

Implement Shed (contributing)

IDLCS 059651

This may be the same structure depicted on the 1892 plat of Scorpion Ranch as a forge, and in 1918 as an implement shed after another blacksmith shop was constructed near the sheep corrals. The shed measures 10 feet by fifteen feet with a 6-foot extension wall making the rear wall 21 feet long. It has a steeply pitched gable roof with long wood shingles. Two door openings provide access, the eastern of which has a vertical-board door. The walls are of two different styles, leading one to believe that the shed was modified at some time, perhaps using parts of two buildings or two walls were totally rebuilt. The west and front (south) walls are horizontal boards while the east and rear are board and batten. The framing of the east wall also suggests an early modification. The shed had been leaning to such an extent that it took on the name "leaning shed" among park employees. In 1999 a crew rehabilitated the shed and made archeological investigations, which reinforced the theory of early use of the building as a forge.⁶⁴¹

Outhouse (contributing)

IDLCS 059674

Early maps (1885, 1886 and 1892) show a tiny, unidentified structure in this location, and none of the maps identify the presence of a "water closet" or outhouse, leading this author to believe that this is a very

⁶⁴¹See Sam Spaulding, "Scorpion's Blacksmith Shop" in *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.



The meat house at Scorpion Ranch, 1999. The building has since been repaired and stabilized. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The Dairy Cave, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

old structure. It measures 6 feet four inches square, with a shingled, steeply pitched gable roof. Its walls are composed of three-foot-long shingles nailed to a simple structure with square cut nails. It has a narrow and low door with a screened area above for ventilation. Two toilet holes are cut into the bench inside, and it has a dirty wood floor.

The outhouse is in good condition following repair and stabilization. NPS crews replaced damaged siding and roof shingles, and removed dirt from around the base of the structure. It stands as one of the obscure but important features reflecting daily life on an active 19th-century ranch.

Meat House (contributing)

IDLCS 102104

This small structure may be the same depicted in the Santa Cruz Island Company plat of Scorpion Ranch drawn in March of 1918 and designated as a slaughterhouse. The building is a shed with a shed addition and another addition of a porch. The primary structure measures 9 feet by ten feet, with a corrugated metal shed roof on wood rafters. It has narrow board and batten siding, the east wall once having been replaced with plywood with metal screening above. The north facade has a two-foot by two foot screened window. The west side has a recent plywood door and a two foot by 2.5 foot window with screen broken out; a simple added porch roof of poor construction follows the roof line and is held by only one post. The south wall's board and batten exterior forms the interior wall of the addition. The 8.5-foot addition (on the 9-foot elevation) has walls of vertical boards except for the west side in which the boards are horizontal. It has a metal shed roof with pole rafters. Apparently the addition was made from salvaged materials.

The building was in poor condition at the time of the December 1997 floods, and the event resulted in intensive soil contact from silt deposition. In 2002 a preservation crew stabilized the meat house, replacing the east wall with board and batten, repairing the door and removing soil from the base.

Dairy Cave (contributing)

IDLCS 059657

One of two natural caves in the south-facing hillside of Scorpion Valley, the dairy cave is the one closest to the beach. It is constructed out of the eastern portion of a double cave. The opening was originally about nine feet wide and has been filled with a developed wall with stone, bricks and mortar with a wood frame door and two small windows. The doorway is 5.5 feet high by 3.5 feet wide. The window on its left measures 12 inches by 14 inches, has some framing remaining and was once screened; the window to the right is 12 inches by 15 inches and has no frame. Square cut nails are evident in the construction. The interior of the dairy cave measures about ten feet wide by eleven feet deep and is rough-sided rock. Ruins of racks are found on the right-hand (east) wall. The floor has probably been filled by silt but the extent is not known.



This storage shed/kitchen, shown in 1998, was reconstructed in 1999. The non-historic shed on the right has been removed. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The masonry building at Smugglers Ranch, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

The cave may have been used in prehistoric times, and was developed by the Santa Cruz Island Company by 1885 or possibly earlier. A work diary noted the act of enlarging a cave at Scorpion, but it was not clear which of the two storage caves was being described. The cave possesses historical integrity, and further information about its use and significance could potentially be obtained through careful excavation of the floor area and the ground outside the doorway.

Potato Cave (contributing)
IDLCS 059658

This large cave, used for storage of potatoes and other items, is located a short distance east of the adobe building, behind the old implement shed. It has an entrance infilled with stone and mortar, with a brick lintel over a sturdy door frame and a window one-foot square. The interior measures roughly 22 feet wide and 22 feet deep but is irregular in shape. There is a hole in the roof, which may be the main source of the sediment that has filled much of the interior space.

The cave possesses a high level of integrity and information could be yielded through careful excavation of the floor area and the ground outside the doorway.

Storage Shed/Kitchen (non-contributing)
IDLCS 059654 (obsolete listing)

This new building replaced a similar one that the park service attempted to repair in early 2000. The former structure appeared to be at least 75 years old, apparently being the same as one shown on the 1918 Swain plat, and had been used as a storage shed for a number of years. The former building measured 14 feet by 20 feet, had board and batten siding, a corrugated metal roof covering an earlier shingle roof, and a number of windows, some boarded up. No foundation was evident and the hillside behind was pushing the building causing deterioration of the rear wall. The shed showed evidence of dry rot and missing fabric, but was a likely candidate for stabilization. Had the former shed survived, it would have been included as a contributing structure in a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The existing building is not historic, but should be preserved as a reconstruction.

Lime Kiln

A lime kiln was excavated into the hillside upstream from the ranch complex. The remains of the structure comprise approximately eight rough courses of basalt blocks set into the hillside, with the upper courses forming a beehive shaped covering. The structure measures approximately 4 feet high, about 3.8 feet wide and 4.2 feet deep. It was likely constructed at the time of the construction of the ranch house to provide lime for mortar and plaster.

See descriptions below, organized by feature type, for additional historic features at Scorpion Ranch, including wells, roads and vegetation.

Buildings and Structures at Smugglers Ranch

Masonry Building (contributing)

IDLCS 059665

The interesting and picturesque *cucina/dormitorio* at Smugglers Ranch was built in 1889 and served as an outpost for workers occupied with the fruits and vines at Smugglers Cove and the sheep and cattle in the Aguaje and Potrero Llano. After more than 60 years of neglect the Island Adventures Club returned the building to productive use in 1984, whose members and those of other groups used it for rustic-style lodging.

Santa Cruz Island Company workers built the ranch house at Smugglers Cove in 1889, perhaps finishing the job in 1890. W. A. Goodyear visited Smugglers Cove in 1889 or 1890 and reported the construction of a new house, “as yet unfinished,” with cornerstones exhibiting small impressions suggesting fossil leaves. He also noted the “young plantation of fig and olive trees, and a vineyard.” The construction of this building followed the completion of a similar building, with the same function, at Scorpion Ranch.⁶⁴²

Construction of the building required cutting back the steep and rocky hillside as a quarry to provide building materials. Island owners may have planned a larger house at first, as the masons left stones protruding out of the west end wall to anchor an additional wing. The structure was built of stone, “island adobe” (low-fire bricks) and lime mortar, with thick walls on a stone and mortar foundation. The two-story residence had a wood-shingled hipped roof, although the west side showed the plan for additional floor space as it was cut off as a gable. Two brick chimneys with arched tops exited the roof. The house measured 21 feet by 40 feet and had three rooms on the bottom floor, each with an exterior door, and three above. The three ground-floor rooms acted as a dining room, kitchen and bake oven, similar to the house at Scorpion and practically identical to, although in reverse, the house at Christy Ranch. The upper rooms, each with their own doors, were reached by a stairway behind the house. The easternmost door perforated the wall at a lower elevation than the following two; one entered the door to find stairs (or perhaps originally a ramp) leading to a small room that sat above the oven room. The other two upstairs rooms were plain. The westernmost one featured a built-in bookshelf in a niche that may have been designed to be a future doorway into an addition. Workers slept upstairs.

The exterior of the house was, as with other Caire buildings, reminiscent of European architecture. Carefully quarried quoins (as opposed to the rough blocks used in the Scorpion building) supported and decorated the corners, and were left unpainted while the remainder of the house was limewashed white over its plaster finish. Five six-over-six double-hung windows were painted a dark color. The builders incised a sundial in the stucco over the central door in front. A stone or cement plate with the date of construction “1889” was mounted above the door within the sundial.

Island workers used the building for a number of years as they tended the olive groves, walnut trees and the livestock, but within less than twenty years Smugglers Ranch was practically abandoned. It is

⁶⁴²Goodyear, “Santa Cruz Island,” pp. 155-170.

likely that the olive and walnut orchards did not produce a profit, and the livestock could be tended from Scorpion Ranch. By 1909 the foreman or other workers at Scorpion regularly traveled to Smugglers Ranch to operate the pump and water the livestock. The ranch appears to have been relegated to the role of watering station for southeast end cattle and sheep.⁶⁴³

A plat map of Smugglers Ranch made in January of 1919 showed a full complex of buildings remaining there. The masonry building was noted as dining room-kitchen-bake oven with stairways on the rear of the building. Leslie Symmes visited Smugglers Ranch in 1922 but found it had been abandoned for “some years.” He noted the “well built, two story stone house, a good well and cement troughs.” By the time the Ambrose Gherini family took possession of the ranch in 1926, the buildings at Smugglers Ranch had been abandoned for at least five years and perhaps up to twenty. Gherini’s son Pier later claimed that during the litigation amongst the Caires, facilities on the east end of the island had been allowed to fall into disrepair.⁶⁴⁴

Early in the Gherini years, Earle Ovington made the first airplane flight to Santa Cruz Island, bringing an “air mail” letter to Ambrose Gherini. On April 18, 1928, he inscribed his accomplishment in pencil on the interior wall of the bakery at Smugglers Ranch. Other people wrote graffiti on the walls of the room, with at least one inscription dating to 1893, and much from the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁴⁵

Little detail is known about the condition of Smugglers Ranch at the time the Gherinis took possession except that the building needed work. Gherini proposed rehabilitating the abandoned house at Smugglers Ranch and stationing a man there to watch the sheep in that vicinity. He noted that during 1928 a man had to make two trips daily to the ranch to water the sheep, and that unwatched, the sheep in the area suffered from poaching by fishermen and others. Gherini enlisted a fisherman and his wife who had been camping at San Pedro Point to repair the house and “make it habitable.” The extent of this work is unknown, but very little money was expended on the project.⁶⁴⁶

In the 1930s Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, a granddaughter of Justinian Caire, planned to remodel the masonry building at Smugglers Ranch into a comfortable residence, probably for the family’s use while visiting the island. Between 1934 and 1937 she hired two architects, each of whom submitted different plans for the renovation. San Francisco architect John H. Powers drew a plan, dated February 16, 1934, which would expand the house on the front and north sides, with a sun room attached to the south side. John H. Ahnden, also of San Francisco, proposed an addition on the rear and extension of both ends of the house on his plans dated March 1, 1937. For reasons unknown, neither plan was implemented and the house remained under only occasional use. However, for at least one year the family kept a “Smuggler House Account” in the business books, amounting to \$213.42 in 1938.⁶⁴⁷

The house was occupied for an undetermined amount of time during the late 1920s but apparently saw little or sporadic use until 1984. A man named Charlie Ersepki acted as caretaker during a period around

⁶⁴³Eaton, *Diary*, pp. 148-149; Letters, S.C.I.C., June 12, 1918, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History #0923.

⁶⁴⁴Plat Showing Buildings, Etc. at Smugglers Ranch, January 1919, courtesy of John Gherini; Symmes, *Report*, pp. 56-58; Pier Gherini quoted in Warren, *Agriculture*, pp. 37-38.

⁶⁴⁵Earle Ovington to Miss Pearl Chase, February 10, 1933, copy in Toll Report, CHIS.

⁶⁴⁶National Trading Company, Copy of President’s Report of Scorpion Ranch Operations for the year 1928, courtesy of John Gherini.

⁶⁴⁷Plans in central files, CHIS; Balance Sheet, 1938.

the middle of 1939, having been photographed there by marine biologist Woodbridge Williams. Two photographs of the house taken some time after 1947 show the house undergoing repairs; in one, scaffolding made of tree poles has been erected on the facade of the house and work is underway on the roof. The other photo shows evidence of vandalism and graffiti, and masonry repairs. A couple appears in the photographs, giving the impression that they were living in the house at the time. Radio logs noted that the building was reroofed in 1953. A photograph taken by William Girvan in 1960 focused on the facade of the building, showing the crude hour glass, date plate, intact original windows and center door, and a chimney; the east and west portions of the facade are not visible. Additional masonry repairs had been made. At an unknown date, the bake oven was removed, revealing original wall construction.⁶⁴⁸

NPS planner Bruce Craig evaluated the Smugglers ranch house in late 1983. Craig wrote that the building was “abandoned, dilapidated and has been terribly vandalized as well as gutted.” Craig noted the historical graffiti and a chute in the bakery from the second floor. He wrote of a cloak rack on the south wall and a storage rack on the east wall of the dining room, which had a cement floor. The stairs on the rear were “in badly deteriorated condition.” The rooms were empty.⁶⁴⁹

The building saw temporary use by crews drilling for oil on the island in 1965 and 1966. Oil workers cleaned up the house and replaced the rear stairway with a makeshift set of stairs that remained in place for about 18 years. The crew lived in the building for an undetermined length of time. Beyond that time, the Gherini family used the house occasionally, for “a couple of overnights,” according to Tom Gherini.⁶⁵⁰

Jaret Owens of Ojai contracted with the Gherini family in December 1984 to operate The Island Adventures Club out of the old ranch at Smugglers Cove. Guests arrived by a chartered plane and stayed in the two-story house, and later at Scorpion Ranch as well. An early brochure noted the conveniences available at Smugglers’: solar lights, hot water, shower, two refrigerators, stove, barbecue, a flush toilet, two pit toilets. Owens constructed a stone patio with a barbecue in front of the house and fitted the house with ten beds. Sheds were constructed on the east and west sides of the house. The western shed housed two bathrooms, a hot water heater, propane tank and storage batteries for the solar energy system.⁶⁵¹

Owens and his father Duane worked for some five months making the Smugglers house into a “comfortable and enjoyable” lodging place for hunters and visitors. They replaced the dangerous stairway at the rear and remodeled the small room above the bakery, installed terra cotta tile on the downstairs floors (retaining the original cement floor in the bakery) and provided new cabinets, sinks and furniture. The old double-hung windows were replaced with casement windows, and the doors were replaced. The men replaced the original exterior cement wainscot along the front facade with a layer of mortared beach rock.⁶⁵²

The National Park Service took over the property in April of 1997, installing a part-time ranger for a short time at Smugglers Cove. Some repairs were made to walls, most notably in the bakery and along the tops of the second-floor rooms (to rodent-proof the building) in 1999. In 2000 the non-historic shed on the east side of the building was removed.

⁶⁴⁸Photographs courtesy of John Gherini and M. Woodbridge Williams.

⁶⁴⁹Craig, “Preliminary Historic Resources Study of Eastern Santa Cruz Island.”

⁶⁵⁰Interview with Tom Gherini.

⁶⁵¹Brochure for Island Adventures, circa 1985, SCIF; Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*, pp. 210-211, 228.

⁶⁵²Duane Owens to Members of the Gherini Family, May 10, 1987, CHIS files.

In 2008 Channel Islands National Park replaced the hunt club restroom on the west side of the ranch house with a new building housing three restrooms and a battery closet for the photovoltaic system. In 2012 the park completed the rehabilitation and seismic retrofit of the building under a contract with Schipper Construction. The non-historic casement windows and stone facing along the bottom of the façade were removed and the exterior of the building was restored to its historic appearance.

The NPS goal is to reuse the building to retain a connection to the island's ranching history and character. A Historic Structure Report of the Scorpion ranch house was completed in 2001, and provides further structural details and recommendations.⁶⁵³

Lime Kiln

A lime kiln was excavated into the hillside across the creek from the ranch house. The structure is stone-lined and measures approximately 6 feet high and 4 feet wide. It was likely constructed at the time of the construction of the Smugglers ranch house to provide lime for mortar and plaster.

See descriptions below, organized by feature type, for additional historic features at Smugglers Ranch, including wells, roads and vegetation.

Ruins and Sites, East End

Barn Foundations (contributing)

At least ten large hay barns (sacateras) and horse stables once existed on the east end and none still stand. In most cases, the locations are well documented and remains can be found of many in the form of dry-laid stone foundations. Eight barns or sacateras acted as storage buildings for newly cut hay. All were built by the Santa Cruz Island Company between 1878 and 1918. The barns performed an important function as the east end provided most of the grain feed for the island's livestock operations. Two stables, one each at Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches, housed the horses needed for the island operations. Nothing remains of these stables. Remains in the form of stonework on the ground have been found at the sites of five or six of the eight barns (one site is impossible to verify). Those not found are the Nos. 102 at Campo Maximo (Grande) and one at Scorpion Ranch on a site obliterated by the 1997 flooding. The latter barn had been dismantled by Gherini employees in 1976.

Sacatera No. 104, Campo Toros

The stone foundations of the 1886 sacatera at Campo Toros (Buck Pasture to the Gherinis) can be found near Cavern Point, south of the foot trail that leads southeast from the point and northeast of the empty oil company reservoir. The foundations show that the barn was oriented with its ends facing east

⁶⁵³*Smugglers Cove Ranch House, Historic Structure Report* prepared by Architectural Resources Group, 2001.

and west. The dry laid stones remain in position and form two square units, indicating the presence of a breezeway between two large rooms under one roof. The western section measures 38 feet (the width of the barn) by 32 feet; part of the floor is laid with stones, likely accomplished in one of the projects mentioned in early diaries as “laying stones on barn floor.” the north section being ten feet in width and the south 14 feet. A breezeway ten feet in width separates the west section from the east, which is 38 feet square and has a full stone floor. Some wood posts are evident along the west section of the north wall. Overall, the barn measures approximately 38 feet wide by 80 feet long.

As a ruin, the Campo Toros sacatera foundation is in good condition. The stones remain in place or close by, and the size and footprint of the barn is easily evident. Vegetation hid the foundations only slightly; increase in brushy vegetation will obliterate the foundation from view and possibly cause damage as stones are displaced by woody growth. Occasional burning or weeding of the site would provide some protection and an opportunity for interpretation at this popular destination.

Sacatera No. 105, Campo Cruce

Stone foundations remain of the barn built in 1886 to hold feed cut in Campo Cruce above middle Scorpion Canyon. The foundation is hard to find unless one knows where to look, in the southeastern portion of the field before the slope drops off towards the south. The foundation consists of low lines of dry laid stones forming two squares; like the Toros barn, this barn was divided into two rooms with a breezeway between. The barn was approximately 90 feet long and 32 feet wide and was oriented with the ends facing east and west. The two rooms measured 40 feet long by 32 feet wide, the width of the barn overall, and the space separating them measures ten feet wide. The northeastern corner exhibits evidence of a stone floor; remains of a stone ramp are found on the east end, indicating presence of a door on that side.

As with the barn ruins at Campo Toros, the foundation is in good condition as a ruin, as the extant stones reveal the size and layout of the old sacatera clearly. At the time of the survey, grasses hid the foundations from a distance but the structure was easily measured and examined; heavier vegetation coverage will eventually obliterate the foundations from view.

Campo Grande Hay Barn, circa 1917 (Sacatera No. 107 site, 1886)

Two barns stood on this site, one built in 1885 and the other as a replacement in 1917. Whether the two shared foundations is not known and is unlikely. No other stonework was found in the vicinity during the field survey and this author would conjecture that the stones from the earlier sacatera were used in construction of the new one. The barn measured about 70 feet by 52 feet (measured at 66 feet by 44 feet according to the 1918 map) and was not apparently divided as the others had been. A perimeter foundation of dry laid stones is connected lengthwise by a wide row of stones, like a floor, lengthwise in the center. As with the other sacateras, the barn is oriented with its ends facing east and west.

This barn site is located near and to the south of the old road, now trail, to Potato Harbor and until recently, the Campo Grande airfield. It is a grassy area and the ruin is in good condition although growth of shrubs may eventually hide and/or damage the remains.

Sacatera No. 103, Campo Maximo (Grande)

The ruins of this old sacatera built in 1886 are located east of Potato Harbor on the trail to Coche Point; in fact, the trail bisects the foundations. Like the other older barns, the structure was divided into two rooms separated by a ten-foot wide breezeway. The stone foundation walls show that the barn was approximately 45 feet wide and 90 feet long, each half of the building being 45 feet by 40 feet.

Sacatera No. 106, Campo Alfalfa, 1878

Campo Alfalfa occupied the bottomlands of upper Scorpion Valley, before the canyon closes into a small gorge. This barn was long-lived, having been built very early in the development of Scorpion (1878) and remaining until sometime after 1954. According to the 1918 Swain map, the barn measured 67 feet by 44 feet. Remains in the form of scattered stones, perhaps corners of the barn, are found at the location but a measurement cannot be taken because of heavy vegetation. It is recommended to temporarily clear the area of vegetation in order to record any remains of the barn.

Sacatera(s) in Fields No. 203 & 201 (Smugglers Field)

A long pile of stones north of the Smugglers airfield may be the remains of the barn here although the pile has the appearance of having been moved to the site more recently, perhaps in the clearing of the airfield. The row of stones is about 90 feet long. A map of the fields here dated December 1885 show a "road to sacatera" in Field No. 203 but the building itself is sketched in as if an afterthought. Another site, southwest of the airstrip and across a barranca near the road as it begins its descent to Smugglers Ranch, is composed of a rectangular layer of stones measuring 45 feet by 66 feet. It lies on a slope and so the floor is not level, and the masonry work is not particularly good although time may have damaged the ruin. This site does not correspond with any recorded barn in the S.C.I.C. records, although the 1885 map mentioned above has also a sketched-in structure near this location in Field No. 201. The stonework at both sites fits with the typical sizes of 19th century sacateras but the ruins do not exhibit clear-cut evidence of being the documented structures at the location.

Oil Drilling Rig (non-contributing)

Abandoned remains of the mid-1960s oil drilling activities remain on the east end. The well site, which developed into a water well, is located above the high elevation point of the Scorpion-to-Smugglers Road, or adjacent to the old junction of the original Main Ranch Trail and its successor. The site is marked by a metal tower, an abandoned metal modular building, and debris. The ground has been disturbed but no

activity has occurred on the site for three decades. The site has interpretive interest but does not meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places. Related resources include the abandoned road from the well site down into Scorpion Canyon, the road from the ranch up to Cavern Point, the abandoned pipe line from the well to Cavern Point, and a shallow reservoir, now dry, at Cavern Point.

Bomber Crash Site (non-contributing)

In 1949 a Marine Corps fighter plane crashed on the east slope of the Montañon, killing the pilot, Jess Thierry. Although some debris has been removed, the site is scattered with pieces of metal including structural materials, engine parts and sheet metal. No large pieces were found during a brief survey in 1999. The site is located almost one mile west-southwest from the abandoned oil rig on the Main Ranch trail. Collecting of debris by visitors for souvenirs should be discouraged; the site acts as a silent and unmarked memorial to Capt. Thierry.

Rock Walls and Check Dams

IDLCS 059700 (contributing)

Rock Retaining Walls, Scorpion and Smugglers Creeks

In the 1880s and 1890s Italian laborers spent hundreds of days building stone retaining walls in the creeks, in many cases changing the direction of the creeks in hopes of holding back waters during flood periods and protecting grain fields and buildings. Sections of rock walls lined Scorpion Creek from near



Dry-laid rock retaining wall in creek at Smugglers Ranch, 2000. This wall shows recent repairs by NPS. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

the beach to well into Alfalfa Field, a distance of almost a mile. The labor involved in the works is staggering to realize. The men also built an extensive network of check dams in the barrancas and creek drainages to stem erosion. Evidence of these walls and check dams is found in many places on the island.

The retaining walls in Scorpion Creek have been mostly destroyed or covered by debris as a result of winter storms such as the one in December of 1997. The retaining wall in the creek near the residential area was damaged in 1997 and repaired by park crews in 1998. No sign of the long wall adjacent to the upper campground has been located. A section of wall on the north bank of Scorpion Creek above the upper campground measures 45 feet long; the creek has changed course in this vicinity.

A portion of the rock retaining wall in Smugglers Creek, built in the early 1890s, remains on the north side of the creek, but most of the original wall has been damaged, destroyed or buried by storm events. The remaining visible wall is constructed of dry laid stones and is approximately 150 feet long and three to four feet high.

R. N. Tufnell of The Dry Stone Masonry Conservancy noted that the creek bank retaining walls have suffered damage as a result of floods and tree roots.⁶⁵⁴

Check Dams

Check dams, low stone walls built across waterways to trap silt and interrupt water flow, were observed by the author in two locations, but more than 200 check dams have been documented in many other areas of the east end. One set is found in the gulch that drains into the lower campground, adjacent to the old road and current hiking trail to Cavern Point and Campo Cruce. Another group was found in the upper elevations of a drainage north of the abandoned oil rig. The author found one, with mortared stonework, in a feeder creek near the upper campground, in the flats very close to the main creek. Reportedly dozens of check dams are found in the San Pedro Point area. In the gully east of and behind the house at Smugglers Ranch is a series of masonry check dams; at least three are visible, the largest being from six to nine feet high.

Tufnell noted that the check dams have been damaged due to a lack of maintenance and renewal; Tufnell wrote of “major damage or the total loss of a majority of the several hundred check dams that were built during the early years.”⁶⁵⁵

The walls and check dams are indicative of the intensive labor Justinian Caire put into the development of his island ranch, and of his care for the protection of resources; he was aware of soil erosion and its consequences and, being in an industry where erosion is often widespread, put his men to work in trying to remedy the situation. The remaining walls and check dams are an important part of the story of Santa Cruz Island, and should be protected and restored.

⁶⁵⁴R. N. Tufnell, “Report on the Dry Stone Structures of East Santa Cruz Island” (Dry Stone Masonry Conservancy, Kentucky, 1998), [p. 2].

⁶⁵⁵Ibid.



A check dam behind the Smugglers ranch house, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Rock Piles

IDLCS 059664 (contributing)

Potrero Llano (later Scorpion and Smugglers fields) is scattered with large piles of rocks pulled from the fields during the latter part of the 19th century by Santa Cruz Island Company laborers. The practice of clearing fields of stones is an ancient one, as the collision of stone against plow has been the bane of the farmer all over the world. Curiously, the fields cleared of stones were not ones known for tilling, but were, according to extant records, a grazing field or potrero. The only section of the area in question known to have been tilled is the southern part, designated as Field No. 203. True, removing stones will also improve grazing land but the curiosity is in the amount of labor to attain this end. A likely scenario would be that the fields were planned for tillage as an expansion of the grain production on the east end, and perhaps some actually occurred. The fine and helpful maps produced between 1885 and 1892 of the east end leave a gap after the latter date. The 1925 partition map outlined four small areas of cultivation. But no evidence has been found that the Potrero Llano was ever a *campo*.

The piles are scattered across hundreds of acres in the mesa lands between Scorpion and Smugglers Ranches. Park service staff attempted a count and came up with over one hundred. The piles are usually large (one measures about 40 feet in diameter and is about six feet high), but a number of smaller ones exist. They have been stacked carefully in most cases, creating an evocative shape leading some visitors to think that they were more than a pile of rocks but had some symbolic or spiritual purpose.

These stone monuments to the labors of the largely Italian work force illustrate the vision of Justinian Caire: put all of one's energy into the successful development of the island and spare no labor or expense. It may also reflect the possible lack at times of important work when the labor force was large; perhaps the men cleared stones from the fields when there was nothing else to do. The stones are perhaps the most fascinating feature of the east end's cultural landscape and unique to it, and should be preserved in place,

an activity requiring little effort or funding. Interpretation of the piles would add a layer of understanding for the curious public.

Roads and Trails

Valley Road (contributing)

While people have traveled the valley floor since the area was settled in the 1850s, the route has changed in various ways depending on the state of the creek. No doubt the earliest route up the canyon followed the creek, perhaps crossing it here and there. Early maps indicate a road but it is not known to what extent this road was developed. When Justinian Caire took over management of the ranch in 1880, thus began the development of well-thought-out roadways on the east end. Various maps show the valley road on one side of the creek or the other. The most established route appears to be one following the north side of the drainage from the beach to the ranch, then continuing on the north side until crossing in the upper valley before ascending the steep hill towards the Main Ranch. At one point the road crossed the creek twice in the vicinity of the current lower campground, but realignment of the creek in the 1880s allowed the road to traverse the valley without a creek crossing. Past the concrete reservoir, the road originally hugged the north slope to allow optimum use of the bottomlands, but the road was rerouted some time in this century to its current alignment.

While the exact routes of the valley road have changed over the years, it has been an important artery from the landing to the ranch, then to the hayfields, Smugglers and the Main Ranch. Its condition and historical integrity are fair.

Main Ranch Trail (contributing)

IDLCS 102101

Of utmost importance to the occupants of Scorpion Ranch was the trail to the Main Ranch, which was a journey of almost a day on horseback. The ranch foreman made weekly trips to the Main Ranch to report on activities on the east end, and at times other employees made the trip. The trail appears on the earliest maps of the island; there is little doubt that the trail was in use in the early 1850s if not earlier. It was likely the major prehistoric route across the island as well. The upper elevations of the trail were so rugged that the route was never developed into a wagon road. Shipment of goods continued by sea. Today the upper part of the trail is used occasionally by park staff and hardy hikers.

The original route to the Main Ranch left the valley road at a point east of the upper eucalyptus grove in the Alfalfa Field. It ascended a steep hogback ridge, following a wing fence line in later years, to the back of the major ridge falling off the Montañon (near today's abandoned oil rig). At this point the trail took a steady climb up the ridge, making a turn to the left and then right to make the summit of the mountain. It then descended a precipitous ridge into the isthmus of the island and on to the Main Ranch.

As of this writing the lower section of the old trail, between the valley floor and the oil rig, has been abandoned but is readily evident. The lower section of this part is very steep and prone to erosion. After joining the current trail near the oil rig the trail is in the form of a rocky road, passable by four-wheel-drive vehicles to an elevation of about 1,400 feet. Beyond this point it is a foot or horse trail only, although an ATV could make the trip. The summit affords a magnificent view of the island; at this point one crosses the old Gherini/Caire and NPS/TNC boundary into the isthmus territory.

The Main Ranch trail has exceptional importance in the history of the island. With the roads from Prisoners Harbor and Christy Ranch it was one of the three most important land routes of commerce on the island, being in use from the 1850s or earlier into the 1920s. The trail today possesses excellent historical integrity and makes for a fascinating hike. Its physical condition varies: the lower section, having been abandoned to most travel but used as a sheep corridor for many years, has areas of erosion and footing in some places is poor for the inexperienced hiker. The remaining part of the trail is a fine hiking trail.

It is recommended that the trail be marked as a historic route for island visitors. The trail provides a perfect trek route where hikers could leave Scorpion Ranch with backpacks, hike the trail to the isthmus for simple camping accommodations, then on to Prisoners Harbor or, if possible, to the Main Ranch and beyond. The lower section is probably too steep for adaptation to a public hiking trail but could be bypassed by the nearby oil road grade that leaves the valley floor a short distance upstream and joins the old route part way up the ridge spur.



North end of road between Scorpion and Smugglers, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Original Road and 1885 Variation to Smugglers Ranch (contributing)

Laborers constructed a road to Smugglers Ranch in 1885. The original route, seen in Forney's 1875 survey of the east end, left the Main Ranch trail as it reached the main ridge to the Montañon, heading east and southeast to Smugglers Cove. The 1885 road started in the Alfalfa Field across the creek from the west end of the eucalyptus grove, taking a steady grade up the side of a steep ridge and switching back to eventually reach the mesa lands overlooking Scorpion Valley. This section required a great deal of grading and some masonry retaining walls in the upper elevations. The road passed through the northern part of Potrero Llano and joined the old route to Smugglers. The first mile or so of this route was replaced by 1892 by a route directly out of Scorpion Ranch, perhaps because of unstable hillsides. The old route remains but hasn't been used in a century. Rock walls are visible from across the valley. The old route is in poor condition but retains historical integrity.

Second (Current) Road to Smugglers Ranch (contributing) IDLCS 059661

Within ten years after the construction of the 1885 Smugglers Road another route was tried, as evidenced by an 1886 map showing a dotted line leaving Scorpion near the beach to join the new road in the upper mesa lands of Potrero Llano. Prior to or in 1892, laborers and stonemasons cut a winding road out of the very steep hillside directly south of the Scorpion residences, using rock walls (IDLCS 059663) to build up a filled roadbed in the gaps. These dry-laid walls, two of which are more than 100 feet long, reach a height of 12 feet and are the largest example of stone masonry on the east end. The relatively steep road made a sharp turn as it reached the mesa and took an easy grade through Potrero Llano to its meeting with the older road which continued on to Smugglers Ranch. The road remains in use today as the only vehicle route to Smugglers Ranch. In three places the alignment has changed slightly: the first a shortcut near Delphine's Grove which has been closed; the second on the descent to the air field near Smugglers, where a steeper and straighter alignment has replaced a few switch backs; and a slight variation in the fields above Smugglers Ranch west of the olive groves.

The Smugglers road is generally in good condition and is maintained by the park service as an important access road. The stone retaining walls in Scorpion Valley were damaged in the 1997 storm but repaired. They were repaired again after storm damage in 2005. The road possesses a high degree of historic integrity.

First Road to Cavern Point and Campo Maximo (contributing)

Seen on an 1875 map and easily traced today, this road left Scorpion Valley near the concrete reservoir, cutting up the gully and splitting east and west near the top. The east branch went a short distance to the sacatera at Cavern Point. The west branch continued through Campos Cruce and Vallata to Campo Maximo where three sacateras were located. The road was rerouted by late 1885, the old route to Cavern Point being retained. Today the road up the gulch is largely washed out, and upon reaching the

level mesas overlooking the channel is mostly obliterated. A public hiking trail up the gulch follows part of the old road. While its condition is poor and historic integrity fair, it is recommended to avoid disturbing the remaining features of this very old route. Caire-era check dams can also be seen in the drainage along this route.

Second Road to Campo Maximo and Beyond (contributing)

By December of 1885 a new road had been built to Campo Maximo, leaving the valley upstream from the old route. This route took a relatively easy grade along the side hills above the Alfalfa Field, location of today's upper campground. About two-thirds of the way to the summit, at an elevation of about 300 feet, the old road to the Campo Cruce sacatera cuts off to the east, still discernible in the grass. The road continues uphill to the mesa, where it joins the older route as it passes along the top of the bluffs overlooking the Channel. It passes through a gate into Campo Maximo, location of one of the airfields (pilots used the roadway for landings), and on to Potato Harbor. An extension of the road then makes a few turns and ascends the hills to Coche Point; it turns into a trail for an ascent up the northwestern flank of the Montañon. This upper road and trail from Potato Harbor to Montañon has not appeared on any maps or documents found during research.

The old road to Campo Maximo, built circa 1885, remains in good condition and is used as a hiking trail. It was an important route to one of the major hay growing areas on the east end and its many barns. Its historical integrity is excellent. The extension to Coche Point and the Montañon contributed to the ranching operations on the east end but documentary evidence of it is sparse. The route is a fine hiking trail and if marked as such would provide an excellent loop hike for visitors.

From the Campo Maximo road above Alfalfa Field one can see a road trace that climbs the hill across the small side valley from the Campo Maximo road. The author has found no documentation about the construction or uses of this long-abandoned route.

Road into Aguaje (contributing)

This road leads south out of Smugglers Ranch to the Aguaje pasture and appeared on maps made in the 1870s. The current route is slightly different from the older one, having been constructed with heavy equipment sometime before 1954. It makes a deep cut up the hillside across the creek and upstream of the house to reach the relatively level mesa lands, where it then follows the older route and a sheep wing. The oldest map of this area showed the road heading south above the coastline to beyond Yellowbanks, then ascending a ridge to the Montañon where it joined the main trail to the Central Valley.

Oil Company Road (non-contributing)

In 1966-1968 an oil company graded a road from the well on the Montañon to the valley floor. This road remains although it has been abandoned for many years. It leaves the valley at the upper end of the Alfalfa Field and joins the historic old Main Ranch Trail on a spur ridge that leads to the oil well site. The road has no historical significance but could be adapted as a hiking trail as an alternate to the historic Main Ranch trail (see Main Ranch Trail above).

Road to Cavern Point (non-contributing)

This road was built by one of the oil companies involved in exploratory drilling on the ranch in the mid-to-late 1960s. It leaves the valley floor at the sheep corrals, turns to cross a drainage and arrives at a swale where the new park staff housing is located. The road continues up to the Cavern Point area, terminating near the oil company reservoir. It has no historic significance, but has administrative importance as the route to the park housing area and to Cavern Point.

Fences, Gates and Corrals

IDLCS 059662 (contributing)

Extensive fencing systems remain on the east end, some dating to the 1870s or earlier. The intact sheep “wings” or corridors of double fence lines provide information on the methods of sheep ranching in use on the island in the 19th and 20th centuries and are the last remaining on the entire island. The fencing systems possess a high level of historic integrity and in many cases are in fair to good condition. While undergoing maintenance and replacement over the years, much of the fencing contains materials dating back to the 1920s and 1930s if not earlier. The location of the fence is the most important aspect of this kind of resource. They are an integral part of the Caire and Gherini ranch landscape and of an importance equal to that of the extant buildings.

The typical extant fence has mostly wood posts, about five feet high and 12 feet apart, composed of a mixture of split redwood, split or small unsplit utility poles (probably the old phone line poles), newer 4x4 lumber and commercial metal posts. In some areas poles or tree branches have been used. The presence of metal posts or 4x4 lumber indicates repairs made as late as 1984. Three-foot side wire mesh was used to make the fences sheep-tight, the usual type being a 5-inch mesh. A strand of barbed wire, sometimes two, was strung six inches above the top line of mesh. Below the mesh, if it doesn't touch the ground, a 1 by 8 board was nailed to the bottom of the fence posts and the mesh affixed to this. Posts tend to stand for a long length of time unless the wire is removed or broken; in essence, the wire will often hold up the fence posts even as the posts rot underground.

The older gates were constructed of wood planks, usually 1x6. Five horizontal boards, forming the length of the gate, were stabilized by three or four vertical boards, one in the center, one on the latch end

and two on the hinge end. Two boards attached diagonally provided lateral strength. One typical old gate found on the ground at the top of the sheep wing above Coche Point measured 12 feet long by 4 feet high.

Fence Lines Extant in 1875

The oldest fence line on the east end of the island that remains enclosed what was called the Potrero Llano, the vast pasture of San Pedro Point. U. S. Coast Survey topographer Stehman Forney surveyed a fence running from Scorpion Canyon to near Smugglers Cove, at a time when only a small complex of buildings existed at Scorpion. Another fence enclosed what would later be termed Campo Maximo and even later Campo Grande on the north shore. Of the former fence line, the Caires and Gherinis continued to use this boundary division, only veering from its line in the vicinity of the Smugglers airfield, where it was changed around 1885 to turn south and south east to avoid a new cultivated field. This fence remains in place today, albeit with materials dating from circa 1927-1983. The posts are largely old split redwood with additions of milled 4x4 and steel posts; barbed wire and wire mesh are used as the fencing material. The latter fence mentioned at Campo Maximo was partially changed by 1885 when the western part was expanded to the south. By 1918 the eastern fence line had moved to the south, even further enlarging the field. A cross fence which eventually separated Campo Maximo from Potrero Vallata and was noted in the 1870s was moved a short distance to the east by 1918, where it remains today.

These two fence lines described in the preceding paragraph are the oldest remaining on the east end and among the oldest on the island. Their fabric has changed over the years to a combination of old and newer wood posts and recent metal posts, and barbed wire and wire mesh. The fences are in fair to poor condition, with some missing wire, fallen posts and general deterioration.

Alfalfa Field

This enclosure was laid out in the 1880s as Field Nos. 104, 105, 106 and part of 110. By 1918 the fields had been collected into one that acted as a holding pasture for sheep from the southern pastures until 1984. The fence lines depicted in the Swain map of Alfalfa Field drawn in March of 1918 remain with few exceptions. Some short sections have been washed out by storms and slides in the upper valley, while most of the creekside fence is gone between the upper and lower campgrounds. Of the remaining fencing, much is overgrown with tall grass and shrubs but is identifiable. Overall, the condition is poor but the historical integrity is fair to good.

Smugglers Fences (contributing)

[part of] IDLCS 059662

Portions of the fencing depicted in the 1918 Swain map are extant. Two parallel fence lines of post and barbed wire rise from the valley immediately east of the ranch house in a northerly direction (the fence closer to the house veers towards the west as it ascends the steep hillside) and the other remains a straight line to cross the road (which passes through a gate) at the upper olive grove to meet an east-west fence

line. These two fences formed the beginning of the sheep wing leading to Scorpion Ranch; the wing narrows near the top of the hill, then travels over the hills for a distance of over two miles. Two fences on the east side of the Smugglers yard remain, but were not documented in Swain's map.

The extensive wing fence from the Aguaje remains, entering the valley steeply from the southwest. This wing extends over a mile to the southeast, meeting a pasture fence, which divided the Aguaje pasture from the Mountain Pasture.

Other Single Fence Lines

Besides those mentioned above and exclusive of wing fences, at least five other fence lines can be found on the east end that are of historical interest.

1. San Pedro Point. At some time before 1929 a straight fence was installed cutting the vast Potrero Llano in two. Curiously, it follows a similar angle and location of the line of the partition between Tracts 6 and 7 established by Frank Flournoy in 1924; the families never officially made a division between their east end holdings, however, and the line was never enforced. Any correlation between the fence line and the partition is unknown. Nonetheless, the fence divided what the Gherinis called the Scorpion Field to the northwest and the larger Smugglers Field to the southeast. The fence remains in place as it has for over 70 years and appears to be in fair condition. The road to Smugglers Ranch passes through a gate in this fence near the East Point USCS marker.

2. Montañon and Mountain Pastures fence. This isolated fence runs approximately four miles from near Sandstone Point on the southeast shore in a northerly direction, enclosing the two Aguaje pastures (a cross fence divided the two), then veers northwest towards and then around to the west of the Mountain Pasture above Coche Point. This writer could not visit all parts of the fence line but observed that much if not the entire fence remains in fair to poor condition. On the mid- to northern portion much of the fence is gone although scattered posts are found both standing and on the ground in the northern areas above Coche Point.

3. Lower Potato fence. The Gherinis created the Upper and Lower Potato Pastures in an area south of Campo Grande. The Lower Potato Pasture acted as a holding pasture for sheep due to be shorn or shipped, deposited there from the wing off the north side of the Montañon. The remaining fencing, of mostly old wood posts and wire, is in fair to poor condition, with much wire and most posts remaining in place.

4. A short length of fence ascends the hill behind the concrete reservoir in Scorpion Valley but does not make a complete enclosure. It was once part of the eastern fence enclosing Campo Cruce and Potrero Vallata.

Sheep Wings

The double lines of fence which have been called punta mangas, chemin de corridas or, most commonly, wings, acted as a corridor in which to drive sheep to the shearing area at Scorpion. Four wings, totaling about five miles in length and averaging 20 to 30 feet or more in width, funneled sheep from the distant Aguaje and mountain pastures overland to Scorpion Valley in a remarkable and costly network of



Sheep wing connecting Smugglers Ranch with Scorpion, 1999. This photograph was taken looking northwest from a location between Smugglers Cove and the airfield. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

fencing and gates. These remain, having been improved and used up until the last roundup in 1984. Most if not all were installed by the Gherini family between 1926 and the 1940s.

The most distant wing brought sheep from the Aguaje Pasture on the southeast side into Smugglers Ranch where a holding pasture and water were available. The wing also acted as a dividing fence between the Aguaje and New Field (the old Aguaje Quebrada). From Smugglers a new wing continued to guide the sheep along the west side of the Smugglers and Scorpion Fields, following the old Caire fence lines of the 1870s and 1880s. Upon reaching the Main Ranch trail above upper Scorpion Valley, in the vicinity of the more recent oil well, the wing was joined by one coming down from the Montañon and descended into the valley along the old trail, abandoned as the route to the Main Ranch by the 1920s.

The wing from the Montañon was about a mile in length and commenced at a holding pen on the mountainside, at the location of the bomber wreck. It followed the old Main Ranch trail to its meeting of the Smugglers wing near the oil well. The fourth wing brought sheep from the Mountain Pasture (the old Rinconada) and Upper Potato. It started at a location on the upper slopes of Coche Point and descended into a steep part of upper Scorpion Canyon before making an easy descent down the ridge top to Alfalfa Field in Scorpion Valley.

The wings remain in fair to poor condition but their historic integrity is good. The wings illustrate the methods developed to efficiently move the wild and tame sheep, an advance from the days of the colorful corridas of the 19th century. The remaining wings are unique on the island and should be preserved and interpreted.

Corrals

A sheep corral complex remains at Scorpion Ranch west of the building complex. The corral is constructed of wood posts and boards. The corral was constructed by NPS in the 1990s to accommodate the sheep removal. One of the historic wool sack scaffolds remains from the earlier shearing complex and should be preserved.

Pastures and Fields (contributing)

During the Gherini tenure on the east end, uses of the land changed only slightly but many of the pasture names changed or were translated. Campo Maximo became known as Campo Grande, both having the same meaning. Potrero Llano, which had stretched from Scorpion to Smugglers Ranches, was divided into Scorpion Field and the larger Smugglers Field. The old Potrero Vallata (originally named Reforma) and Campo Cruce became known as Wether Field. Campo Toros changed to Buck Pasture, an English translation of the original. The Aguaje region on the southeast side retained its name but was divided into #1 and #2 and the higher elevations designated as the New Field and the Montañon Pasture. To the north, the Gherinis divided the old Rinconada into the Upper and Lower Potato Pastures on the north and the larger Mountain Pasture rising on the north flank of the Montañon.

The Gherinis continued to raise hay but apparently limited its production to the northern part of the property, largely in the old Campo Cruce and Campo Grande.

Practically all of these above mentioned fields are intact with their fencing systems, with the exception of the division between the Buck Pasture and Wether Field. The west side of the Mountain Pasture is open due to downed fences as is the western part of the New Field. Overall though, with the fencing systems largely intact, the historic integrity of the east end fields and pastures is good. Little evidence remains of the cultivation practices save for the rock piles and occasional low berms indicating the edge of once-plowed fields. Preservation of the fencing systems will also preserve the measured divisions of the old pastures and *campos*.



This developed cave was depicted on a nineteenth-century map of Smugglers Ranch, located in the bank behind and to the east of the masonry building. It was evident well into the following century but its entrance has disappeared.
Courtesy of John Gherini

Water Systems and Erosion Control

Scorpion Wells and Windmills (contributing)

IDLCS 059656

The Santa Cruz Island Company dug at least four wells on the east end, three at Scorpion and one at Smugglers (described in the Smugglers Ranch section). At Scorpion, laborers developed two wells before December of 1885. It is likely that the well closest to the ranch complex was developed in the 1850s to provide water for the residents there. The lower well was a rock-lined cylindrical pit, depth unknown. Company employees pumped the well with hot air pumps, by hand and with windmills. The lower well provided water to the buildings and the sheep corrals. The upper well, located upstream of the current lower campground, was also a rock-lined well which fed a stone-and concrete reservoir nearby, and concrete troughs for the livestock. This well was also pumped by hand and with a hot air pump, but no windmill stood here. A third well is located near the lower well. The wells were unavailable for inspection at the time of the author's survey visits to the island. R. N. Tufnell of The Dry Stone Masonry Conservancy observed that they are similar in design, of good craftsmanship, and approximately six feet in diameter and 15 to 20 feet deep. Tufnell noted their condition as good.⁶⁵⁶

A new wood windmill constructed by the park's preservation crew in 2012 replaced the 1975 corroded steel windmill above the lower well. The steel windmill replaced the original, wooden windmill. While the windmill is less than 50 years old, it represents at least the third windmill to stand in this location and is therefore an important part of the cultural landscape. Another windmill stands at Smugglers Ranch and is discussed in that section.

Scorpion Concrete Reservoir (contributing)

IDLCS 102103

The Santa Cruz Island Company constructed a stone and concrete reservoir in 1885, early in the development period at Scorpion Ranch. The reservoir was fed by the nearby well; pipes transported water to the ranch complex down the valley. In 1920 a carpenter installed a wood frame structure over the reservoir. Over time the structure deteriorated until collapsing into the abandoned reservoir in the 1970s or 1980s.

The reservoir is nestled into a rocky hillside that had to be excavated to some extent to accommodate the structure. It is constructed of stones and mortar and is lined with cement plaster to make a smooth and watertight basin. It measures 16 feet by 19 feet and is about 6 feet deep; the walls at the top vary from 1 to 1.5 feet thick. The cement shows cracks but the structure appears to be in good condition. Tracings of a name and date are visible in the concrete on the back wall of the reservoir. The reservoir is one of the oldest extant structures from the Caire era and represents an important aspect of island life, that of water development, storage, distribution and preservation. It is recommended that the reservoir be repaired and preserved.

⁶⁵⁶Tufnell, [p. 2].

Scorpion Water Tanks Site (contributing)

Laborers cut a bench out of the southern hillside to accommodate water storage tanks adjacent to the foot of the road to Smugglers Ranch. The site appears on the 1918 Swain map of Scorpion, with two tanks depicted. The tanks are gone but the flat area remains, supported by a rock retaining wall.

Smugglers Well, Windmill and Troughs (contributing)

IDLCS 059666

The Smugglers well is a beautifully crafted underground structure. Skilled stonemasons laid a cylindrical stone wall in the well with a unique system of flat, protruding stepping-stones in the form of a spiral staircase leading to the bottom of the well. The well appears to be in good condition but this author was not afforded time to thoroughly examine the structure. R. N. Tufnell of The Dry Stone Masonry Conservancy wrote that the well is approximately six feet in diameter and 15 to 20 feet deep. He paid special attention to the protruding stone steps, noting that this feature, “whilst known in Europe, has not been previously observed by the Dry Stone Conservancy in the United States.”⁶⁵⁷ It is kept with a locked cover for safety and is no longer used as a water supply. A new well has been developed a short distance upstream on the site of the old stable. A metal windmill stands above the old well and is not in operating condition. It was evidently installed in the early 1930s. A concrete trough in the corral southeast of the house, depicted in the 1918 map and a 1939 photograph, was destroyed when an NPS maintenance crew installed the present septic system for Smugglers Ranch. It measured about three feet wide by about 30 feet long. It is recommended to preserve and protect the well. The windmill should also be preserved if not repaired. All of these components of the Smugglers water system are significant and deserve attention.



Looking into the well at Smugglers Ranch, one sees the fine masonry work and unique stepping-stones into the well. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*

⁶⁵⁷Tufnell, [p. 2].

Developed Springs (contributing)

Water being a necessary commodity in any southern California ranching operation, the owners exploited any water source they could find. The only natural springs known to this author are two or three located in the Aguaje area. The author did not visit these springs and cannot describe them; they are no longer in use.

Dams (no longer extant)

Only three dams were constructed on the east end, two by the Gherinis (one in Scorpion Valley and the other at San Pablo Point) and one by an oil company at Cavern Point to store water during and after an oil drilling operation. Sometime in the 1930s or 1940s, ranch crews constructed an earthen dam across the creek in Scorpion Valley, in the upper end of the Alfalfa Field upstream of the hay barn. A photograph shows a horse-drawn dumper depositing dirt on the dam, while the ranch tractor stands nearby with an unidentified piece of equipment in tow, perhaps a compactor. The dam provided a shallow reservoir of water and was apparently full in 1954 when an aerial photograph was taken. No information other than the photos has been uncovered. A search for the remains of the dam revealed nothing; it was likely destroyed by one of the many floods in the canyon.

In the early 1950s the Gherinis constructed another earthen dam across a drainage south of Hungryman Gulch near San Pedro Point. Using heavy equipment to move earth and compact it, the dam appeared to be solid. Photographs reveal a spillway with a concrete wall and a fair amount of stonework. Soon after construction the dam washed out in a storm and was not rebuilt. The small reservoir shows in a 1954 aerial photograph of the ranch.

The most recent attempt at holding water was the construction in the late 1960s of a shallow reservoir at Cavern Point, site of an exploratory oil well and the end of a water pipe from another well on the Montañon that produced only water. The work could hardly be called a dam, as it is more of a berm and excavation to hold water imported from a distant source. Apparently the reservoir did not hold water, or the line from the well was abandoned. The earthworks remain, rarely contain water and have no historical significance.

Landings and Anchorages

Scorpion Harbor is the major and best anchorage and landing on the east end. It was marked on early Coast Survey maps and charts and has seen schooners, fishing boats, pleasure yachts and landing craft; today it is a popular anchorage for boat visitors to the island. Landing, traditionally done with skiffs on the beach, has been improved with the installation in 1999 of a dock, making use of the old concrete pier remaining from previous Gherini family piers. Smugglers Cove is also a popular anchorage but poses more difficulties in getting ashore; it also was marked on early Coast Survey maps and charts, which also noted the availability of fresh water there. No pier has ever existed at Smugglers Cove. Other anchorages and

landings include Potato Harbor (noted as “Boat Landing” in the 1875 map), Hungryman Gulch (for lobster fishermen), Yellowbanks Anchorage and Middle Anchorage, all popular with pleasure boaters and fishermen.

Airfields

Air travel in small planes commenced in 1928 when Earle Ovington landed on the east end for the first time. He reportedly spent time scouting the ideal landing sites that were then designated in the Campo Grande between Potato Harbor and Cavern Point, and Smugglers Field between that ranch and San Pedro Point. The Gherini family and visitors used both airfields during the time of their ownership. The Campo Grande field, which developed along an old roadway dating back to the 1870s, has not been used since 1997; the Smugglers airfield, a graded dirt runway approximately one-third mile in length, was abandoned in 2001.

Vegetation

One of Justinian Caire’s more visible legacies is the numerous groves of exotic trees found around the island. Caire intended to create pockets of arboreal splendor and imported dozens of species of trees, mostly decorative. He had them planted with forethought and care, and his employees maintained the trees for at least the first decades of the island operation. Many of the species were planted with a function in mind: the eucalyptus provided windbreaks and wharf pilings; the walnuts and other orchard trees provided a marketable commodity and provisions for the island work force; and the olives as an experiment that, had it succeeded, might have led to the planting of thousands of acres on the east end. As has been discussed previously, Caire planted hundreds of acres in grapes, but none of these survive on the east end.

Eucalyptus Groves (contributing)

Island employees planted blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*) in many locations on Santa Cruz Island and exercised great care in their cultivation. Early diaries record the planting, feeding and watering, and cultivation of eucalyptus trees in the 1880s, and the harvest of their trunks for wharf piles in the 1910s. Eucalyptus are found in at least five locations on the east end of the island:

1. A large grove occupies over an acre in the flat lands upstream from the ranch complex and now serves as shelter for the lower campground. The oldest of these trees may date to the 1890s. Early maps show this area designated as Field No. 102.
2. A row of old eucalyptus trees lined the older road up the valley beyond the concrete reservoir at the northern edge of the lower Alfalfa Field, designated as Field No. 104 in the early maps. These trees, with massive trunks, hug the toe of the north hillside and appear to be some of the oldest in the valley. The

road once ran behind the trees, between them and the hillside, but the route was changed 50 or more years ago. Other eucalyptus trees are found in the vicinity and a small grove across the creek.

3. A grove was planted as a contained plot within Alfalfa Field, designated as Fields No. 105 and 106 in early maps and measuring 1.36 acres by 1918. It is the location of the upper campground today.

4. Five or six old trees are found in the Potrero Vallata northwest and west of the upper campground. One set, windblown and partly dead, stands on a steep hillside near the old boundary between Potrero Vallata and Campo Maximo.

5. A grove of eucalyptus fills part of the bottomland at Smugglers Cove between the settlement and the beach.

The eucalyptus groves have evolved over the years from being tended and controlled plantings to wild forests. The groves have spread, although not extensively, and younger trees have volunteered making the groves a mix of young and old trees. Over the years, flood activities have damaged the groves, especially the events of December 1997, which caused the destruction of much of the lower grove and the campground within it. While the trees are an important feature of the cultural landscape on the east end, a measure of control through selective cutting would be desirable to retain the core groups of trees in their historic locations and to enhance forest health.

Monterey Cypress (contributing)

Monterey cypress trees, native to California but not the south coast and islands, were popular for use as windbreaks around the turn of the century. They are found at Scorpion Ranch in three locations:

1. A long line of Monterey cypress lined the lane from the beach landing to the adobe residence, forming a welcoming entrance to the ranch. In their heyday in the 1930s and 1940s the trees formed an unbroken row along the board fence and land, culminating in a grove east of the adobe. The latter grove appears to be composed of older trees and may have been planted between 1890 and 1900, while the trees on the lane seem to be approximately 70 to 80 years old. A number of gaps are found in the lane row.



Cypress trees known as Delphine's Grove, located south of Scorpion Harbor, 1999 view to east. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

2. A disorderly grove of Monterey cypress shaded the wide part of the valley at the sheep corrals and blacksmith shop. These were planted some time around the turn of the century. A number of the trees closer to the creek were destroyed in the 1997 flood.

3. Delphine Caire, one of Justinian's daughters, took great interest in the trees of the island and reportedly planted a number of groves about the island between 1880 and 1925. One such is referred to as Delphine's Grove and is located a short distance south of Scorpion Ranch adjacent to the road to Smugglers. The grove of Monterey cypress covers less than an acre and acts as a landmark from the water, as it stands on a grassy hillside. The trees appear to be in good condition considering their age. A small masonry platform with lime mortar lies just west of Delphine's grove. Its use is unknown.

In general the Monterey cypress on the east end are old and in need of attention. Their importance as features of the cultural landscape is great and their preservation is essential. It is recommended that the gaps in the lane be filled by young trees, preferably from the same stock.

Fruit Trees (contributing)

The Santa Cruz Island Company, as part of its diverse agricultural activities, planted orchards of various fruit on the east end. All that survive are walnut, olive and fig trees, the latter in very few numbers. Walnut trees, harvested by both the Caires and Gherinis, remain standing at Smugglers Ranch but in depleted numbers. The olive groves at Smugglers have survived more than 100 years in the location, the boundaries of the orchards hardly changing except through mortality and a small degree of volunteer spreading. One lone olive tree was found within the wing fence in the Aguaje pasture about a mile southwest of Smugglers Ranch. Of the fig trees, only a handful remains, with about eight at Scorpion and



The olive orchards on the northern slope at Smugglers Cove. Note the eucalyptus trees in the valley bottom, foreground. Looking northeast, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

a small number at Smugglers. No sign has been found of the peaches and other fruits planted on the east end in the 1880s.

As with all historic trees on the island, it is recommended that an expert examine the remaining trees and advise on their health and preservation. The olive trees appear to the untrained eye to be alive and well. The fruit trees are an important part of the history of the island, even more so with the vineyards gone. A restoration plan for the cultural landscape of the east end should include the preservation and interpretation of the olive and walnut groves.

Other Vegetation

A qualified person who could provide an inventory and recommendations for preservation should study the cultural vegetation on the east end of Santa Cruz Island. Many other trees and plants exist at Scorpion and Smugglers that are beyond the scope of this document. Most of the grasses on the hillsides are not native to the island but were cultivated for forage or are weeds that traveled to the island. Release from grazing is now resulting in denser grass growth, invasion by fennel and other weeds, and restoration of native shrubs and trees. As grazing will not be returned to the island, the open range historic landscape will lose integrity as time goes by.

The Isthmus

Prisoners Harbor

Of the many historic places on Santa Cruz Island, Prisoners Harbor is the oldest and, to many, the most fascinating; its importance to the history of the island is indisputable. A triangle-shaped area of flat land and a straight, ½ mile line of beach, called La Playa by the Caire family, faces the protected harbor that is punctuated by the long, reconstructed pier. The triangle of land is in fact the mouth of Cañada del Puerto, the largest stream on the island, which drains the Central Valley. Shaped by centuries of erosion deposits, the land is a meeting place of stony alluvial soil and beach habitat of sand and marshes.

Once open to the forces of nature that would reshape the beach, the stream, and the lagoon that once lay in between, the harbor lands were temporarily tamed by the efforts of Justinian Caire as he developed the island ranch beginning in 1880. Storms and flood challenged his family's work, and by 1960 nature began to get the upper hand. Today, natural processes are reclaiming Prisoners Harbor as wetland restoration has replaced the cattle corrals and the marshy lagoon of old reappears.

Much of man's work remains, however, and the entrance to Santa Cruz Island still gives the visitor a strong impression of the past efforts of the Caire and Stanton families. The pier, lookout, brick warehouse and stands of imported trees greet visitors with an impression of the historic ranch entrance.

Prisoners Harbor Pier (non-contributing)

IDLCS 102085

The pier at Prisoners Harbor is known to be the oldest pier site in Santa Barbara County. The NPS-constructed pier at Prisoners Harbor replaced a 1944 wood structure, which replaced a similar one destroyed in a storm. The original, similar pier in this location dated to 1869. It underwent semi-regular maintenance for almost 85 years, including a major renovation in 1920, until being practically destroyed by storms in 1942 or 1943. The new rebuilt pier was higher and slightly shorter than the original. Since that time, the pier has been repaired a number of times, including those done by the U. S. Navy in 1966, 1970, 1972, 1975 and 1986. The last repair activities occurred in the summer of 1993 but the pier fell into disrepair in the following years. NPS replaced it with a similar structure in 2001.

Warehouse (contributing)

IDLCS 102089

Justinian Caire had the warehouse (often called the magazine) built from native island brick and stone in 1887 to act as a storage facility for island goods awaiting shipment as well as for incoming cargo. His granddaughter Maria Rossi Gherini related a story, unconfirmed, that her grandfather



A view of Prisoners Harbor, 1998. The metal roof of the warehouse shows on the left; the pier has since been replaced. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



The warehouse at Prisoners Harbor, 1999, which has since been repaired. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

built the warehouse in response to a low wool market at the time; he would store the wool there until prices rose.⁶⁵⁸

The pre-1887 map (no. 7) noted above showed a location for a proposed new warehouse, which was subsequently built as recommended, although fill needed to be brought to the warehouse site from a hillside borrow pit located east towards the creek; a low area in front of the proposed warehouse had to be filled as well to replace a bridge on the railway system used for transporting goods to and from the pier. The text on the map noted: “We propose to fill in the space [where the warehouse will be located] . . . “ and spoke of a warehouse being “so much needed at the port while developing ranches east and west of said port.” The writer, addressing the labor of moving fill from point W to point A (locations on the Caire maps were typically keyed to letters of the alphabet), noted that “wheelbarrows are probably a slow process; would Mr. Bassette study a more speedy way to do the work? For instance, could we not use the railway track itself to a certain extent . . .?” The map also showed plans for running a water pipe from a pump at the rear of the old warehouse to the kitchen and pier, and plotted the railway line from a location beyond the old warehouse to the end of the pier. A subsequent map, Number 8, showed the warehouse to be built, of two rooms with the railway track passing in front of it. The map also depicted a fisherman’s house on the beach west of the pier.⁶⁵⁹

The warehouse rose as a two-room building with two parallel gable roofs, as if two plain, rectangular buildings had been joined side-by-side. It measured 54 feet on the facade and rear, and 45 feet on the sides. Brick-faced rubble walls with lime mortar, 20 inches thick, rose above a three-foot high rubble foundation and a solid brick wall with an arched passageway separated the two storerooms. Two doorways with sliding wood doors faced the harbor, while two smaller doorways faced the cliff at the rear of the building. Both sets of doorways featured arched openings made square by the insertion of lintels and filled with brick. A wood frame, shingled roof protected the building’s contents from the elements. The double gable roof required flashing in the gutter between the gables; photographs indicate that the flashing extended approximately half a foot from the edge of the shingles on the front. The builders imbedded a carved plaque in the brick facade at the upper part of the west gable; it reads: 1887. This handsome building saw regular use and maintenance for exactly 100 years as a storage facility for barrels of wine, large sacks of wool, hay, boats and equipment.

The warehouse was the first brick or brick-faced structure known on the island. Its construction has been described as crude in comparison to the brick work completed later on the island ranch buildings. Caire apparently used semi-skilled masons to build the warehouse. Island employee records indicate three masons working on the island at the time of the warehouse construction: B. Delaini (employed from August 1884 to June 1887), Pio Maianti (January 1886 to January 1888) and Antonio Rabboni (March 1886 to August 1891). The masons were paid \$20 per month. Previous to the construction of the warehouse, the Santa Cruz Island Company employed a brickmaker named Alphonse Colin, who worked from April to October 1886. The company had constructed a brick kiln at a site near the main ranch and a

⁶⁵⁸Mrs. Ambrose Gherini, “Santa Cruz Island,” p. 8.

⁶⁵⁹SCIC Maps No. 7 and 8, SCIF.

lime kiln in the Cañada del Puerto near Prisoners Harbor. Caire employed numerous pick and shovel workers and laborers during the mid-1880s.⁶⁶⁰

Iron rings were mounted in the brick at the rear of the building, apparently as tie-ups. Iron or steel reinforcing rods, held in place by two-foot rods acting as large cotter pins, were installed at the exterior corners of the building; it is unclear whether this feature was part of the original building or added later. The two doorways were constructed as arched openings but then squared with sturdy wood lintels and infill of a single layer of larger bricks measuring about four by eight inches each; although this feature appears to be a later addition, undated plans for the building show the lintels in place. Rolling doors were installed, possibly by altering the existing doors; it is not known whether these are original or an early alteration. The doors include small, screened windows and cut-out inserts for smaller hinged doorways. They are stenciled, “S. C. I. C. San Francisco” and have been inscribed by employees and visitors with graffiti. The oldest inscription mysteriously appears to read, “1881.” A cross in the style of the Santa Cruz Island Company’s wine label artwork dates from 1891. Three names, dating from 1909-1910, are identified as company employees from that period: Joe [Jose] Bermudez (1892-1971), who worked on the island as a carpenter and on the schooner crew from 1909 to past 1921; Fred Narvaez, employed in 1908-1909); and Mike [Miguel] Garcia, employed in 1909.

Santa Cruz Island Company records show the importance of the warehouse and indicate that it was in constant use. In July of 1916 the ranch foreman wrote that “the brick warehouse is full and we will be obliged to put some in the storeroom opposite the house.” Later that year he wrote that “there were but two sacks of lamb’s wool this year and we were unable to locate them without taking all the wool out of the warehouse.” In May of 1918 workers had stored 135 puncheons of wine totalling 23,000 gallons: “The warehouse is so crowded that it will probably be better to wait until the wine is out of the way before hauling the wool down . . .” The railway system that reached the end of the pier reportedly operated and served the warehouse until at least 1920.⁶⁶¹

For most of the warehouse’s life, a set of corrals and a livestock scale stood on the west side of the building. The livestock scale is seen in most pictures of the warehouse; it was a wood frame open shed with a gable roof and a Fairbanks livestock scale installed over a brick pit. In 1957-1958 the Stantons constructed corrals across the roadway from the warehouse, but did not move the scale house until around 1970.⁶⁶²

With the end of the Caire winemaking and sheep shearing era in 1937, the warehouse came into use as a general storage building. During World War II, when the military operated strategic facilities on the island, Army and Navy men reportedly vandalized buildings at Prisoners Harbor; it is not known whether the warehouse fell victim to the vandals. It may have been during the war that the wood shingle roof was replaced with corrugated metal sheeting. In the early 1950s Edwin Stanton kept an old boat in the warehouse, and a later photograph depicts baled hay stacked in the west storeroom.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶⁰Ledger, Employees, SCIF.

⁶⁶¹ Santa Cruz Island Company Letter Book, SCIF.

⁶⁶² Oral History interview with Carey Stanton, November 1, 1980 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

⁶⁶³Ibid.; e-mail to Marla Daily from Ted Green dated March 19, 2001, SCIF.

In or around 1958 a Mr. Green, who did construction and general repairs for the Stantons, installed a new corrugated aluminum roof on the warehouse with aluminum sheeting. With help of the ranch crew, he stripped off the rotten parts of the old metal roof, evidently leaving the original wood framing elements. Considered to be a 20-year roof, the materials remained in place for over 40 years, allowing damage to the interior walls of the warehouse after the roof began to fail, as early as 1980. In 1969 Dr. Stanton paid the Weeks Construction Company of Ventura \$420 for pointing and repairs of all masonry at the ranch; a project that likely included the warehouse.⁶⁶⁴ The hardware for the sliding doors was replaced about 1990.⁶⁶⁵

As with other brick ranch buildings on the island, the Stantons at an unknown date painted the doorway openings with a band of white paint that accented the arches, and also decorated the corners of the building creating the look of false quoins. In 1980 Dr. Stanton commented on his feelings about the building: “So this really marvelous storehouse, called the Magazine . . . [is] still extremely useful!”⁶⁶⁶

Following the transfer of the property to The Nature Conservancy after Dr. Stanton’s death, the warehouse continued to be used for storage. Little maintenance was done on the building and leaks in the deteriorating roof allowed rainwater to soak the central wall of the warehouse, causing continued erosion and structural damage. After National Park Service ownership commenced in 2000, the roof was repaired and the damaged portions of the central wall were rebuilt.

The National Park Service installed a modern restroom building next to the southeast exterior wall. Water pipes are located at the northwest corner of the building. To the rear, brush and young elms are crowding the small yard.

NPS historical architect Paul Neidinger prepared a Condition Assessment and Preservation Plan for the building in 1999. A Historic Structure Report for the building has been completed by an architect and a structural engineer, including recommendations concerning repairs and reuse. Further information is available in that report.⁶⁶⁷

The warehouse at Prisoners Harbor is a contributing resource within a proposed Santa Cruz Island Historic District. This building played an essential part in the commerce and activities of the island ranch, acting as the storehouse for the island’s goods awaiting shipment to the mainland. The warehouse also possesses architectural significance as a good example of the European-styled vernacular architecture of Justinian Caire’s Santa Cruz Island Company. This structure was the latter entity’s first known brick building of many constructed on the island using native materials and exhibiting the self-sufficient ways of Caire’s enterprise. The warehouse possesses historic integrity and historical significance.

The warehouse is a prime candidate for restoration or rehabilitation, which could allow its future use as a warehouse or simple interpretive facility. Adaptive use should be looked at carefully. Any designs that would detract from the building’s humble origins as a wool and wine warehouse should be avoided.

⁶⁶⁴Oral History interview with Ted Green, January 19, 2000 by Marla Daily; Dean Weeks file, invoice dated December 23, 1969, SCIF.

⁶⁶⁵ Lyndal Laughrin to Ann Huston, Jan 23, 2001.

⁶⁶⁶Oral History interview with Carey Stanton, November 1, 1980 by Marla Daily, SCIF.

⁶⁶⁷*Condition Assessment and Preservation Plan*, prepared by Paul Neidinger, June 18, 1999.



The corrals and scale house at Prisoners Harbor, looking northeast, 1999. Note the encroaching vegetation. The corral complex has since been removed for wetland restoration and the scale house moved back to its former location next to the warehouse. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Corrals and Scale House (contributing)

IDLCS 102090

After restocking the island with cattle, Edwin Stanton commenced replacement of sheep handling facilities left over from the Caire regime. At Prisoners Harbor, Stanton removed virtually all of the sheep pens and constructed cattle pens for sorting and loading cattle to the pier. The corrals were abandoned after 1988.

The corrals were laid out in accordance with the needs of the cattle operators and the limited space available at La Playa. The corrals formed an awkward shape, which reflected the need for herding the livestock into a progressively narrow chute for loading on the pier. The corrals were at their widest at the spot where cattle enter after being driven from the surrounding pastures. Three large pens gave way to a series of smaller ones, amongst which were located a squeeze chute for vaccinating, dehorning and branding, and a scale house. The complex then narrowed into a row of pens, about twelve feet wide, divided into compartments for distribution into similar compartments on the schooner. A chute for truck loading exited the second pen from the pier; it was reportedly rarely used. All of the pens had at least one wooden gate.

A section of corral fence extends across the road east of the magazine; a wide gate stood here, but has been removed. This marked the formal entrance to the Stanton Ranch.

The corrals were sturdily constructed of railroad ties and heavy, two-by-eight (actually 1 1/2- by seven-inch) boards, all painted white. Gates, which numbered almost thirty, were all of wood construction.

Situated between the two large western corrals was a metal water trough, and on the east side was a metal squeeze chute with narrow wood chutes and gates leading to and from it.

The scale house was located on the northeast edge of the corrals, connected by a pen to the corral structure. It is an open-sided, gable-roofed building measuring eighteen by nine-and-a-half feet. It is largely constructed of four-and-a-half by five-inch posts and two-by-eight boards, holding the “floating” weight floor, which is framed in four-by-fours. A six foot wide by four foot deep shed extension juts off the center northeast side of the structure, holding a narrow plywood locker which holds the weighing console. The roof is corrugated metal. The scale house was not used in the later years of the cattle operation, apparently not being of satisfactory design and accuracy.

NPS repaired and repainted the corrals in the early 2000s. However, with lack of use, marshy areas formed in the vicinity of the scale house and shipping pens, undermining the fencing and leaving some posts dangling in the damp air over the marshy pits. The exotic Kikuyu grass (*Pennisetum clandestinum*) also invaded the entire corral area. Young willow and acacias began growing in the southeast corner of the corrals, nearest the creek.

In 2011 NPS removed the corrals, the berms at the mouth of the creek and excavated soil and silt on the corral site in order to carry out a large wetland restoration in that area. This project followed several years of hydrological monitoring, planning and studies to determine whether and how a wetland could be successfully reestablished. Plantings of willows and other native vegetation on the site and the freshwater pool have drawn birds, insects and other wildlife to the location.

Lumber and gates from the corral complex were salvaged and the park’s preservation crew used these materials to construct a corral exhibit in the general location of the early sheep corrals, west of the warehouse building. The old scale and scale house were moved back to their pre-1970 location by the warehouse, and the squeeze chute, loading chute and metal watering trough were incorporated into the new corral exhibit.

Lookout (TNC Property) (contributing)

Called Harvey’s Lookout by The Nature Conservancy in memory of staff member Harvey D. Carlson, this very old wood frame building acted as an observation post overlooking the harbor during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. By some accounts, it was built before the Caire period, leaving the possibility that it is one of the three oldest buildings remaining on the island (the others being the house at Christy Ranch and the Superintendent’s House at the Main Ranch on TNC property). The lookout, located on a promontory above the pier and magazine, afforded a sweeping view of the harbor and channel and allowed the observer to report visitors, scout passing vessels (with a spyglass now in the collection of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation) and prepare island crews for loading or unloading cargo. The lookout is reached by a narrow trail and is equipped with a museum exhibit about Santa Cruz Island. It is owned by The Nature Conservancy. In 2006 NPS preservationists repaired, reroofed, and repainted the building.



The lookout at Prisoners Harbor, which is owned by The Nature Conservancy.
Photograph by Dewey Livingston

Vegetation (contributing)

Before Europeans settled Santa Cruz Island, the harbor probably looked much like nearby coves although on a larger scale. Early surveys and maps show a beach with a brackish lagoon or estuary, and a meandering stream draining the Cañada del Puerto and Central Valley. Native vegetation including live oak and pine, shrubs and grasses covered the surrounding hills and bluffs. Settlement changed the landscape dramatically, most predominant with plantings of various trees. At its height as the gateway to the Caire Ranch, “La Playa” was a carefully landscaped “garden spot” with imported trees, gardens and lawns.

Today the most noticeable feature is the stand of eucalyptus trees forming a row from near the pier to the magazine. Closer to the pier, on the beach, remains a single Italian stone pines; more of these were formerly growing on the midden on the east end of the site and had spread to the hillsides to the east of the canyon, and above and west of the beach. Various species of acacia and honey locust planted near the corrals and warehouse were removed prior to and during the wetland project. In the 1940s or 1950s a handful of American elms were planted by the entrance gate between the warehouse and adobe residence; these have died and been removed. An island cherry can be found behind the magazine, and a young coast live oak shades the restroom east of that building.⁶⁶⁸

It is beyond the scope of this study to make detailed landscape and vegetation recommendations. It is the author’s judgment, however, that key imported vegetation be considered part of the historic scene and

⁶⁶⁸Basic identification of plant species was obtained on site, November 8, 1999, from Lyndal Laughrin, manager of UCSB Field Station.

therefore preserved. This vegetation should not be allowed to spread, and current invasion from nearby mature trees should be removed. The vegetation with potential historic importance is the mature eucalyptus, stone pines and cork elms.

Sites

In its heyday, Prisoners Harbor was a busy place with numerous structures and vegetation features. Of approximately nine buildings, only two stand today. The large adobe and stone residence was removed in 1960, and a barn, kitchen and various sheds all were removed or destroyed during the last 50 years. A portion of the stone retaining wall lining the creek was uncovered during excavation of the new wetland pond, indicating that the wall is buried and still intact. The site map depicts the location of structures at Prisoners Harbor. The author could locate no sign of these structures. A combination of ground change caused by flood events and the presence of thick vegetation prevents all but a specific archeological investigation.

The largest building at Prisoners Harbor was the residence at La Playa. It was built at an unknown date, probably during Dr. Shaw's tenure, and was apparently also used as a warehouse. The only photographs found of this building show a one-and-a-half story rectangular building with hipped roof and two dormer windows facing a flagpole and the beach. A porch that echoes the hipped roof shades the entire lower facade of the house. Around 1886 Justinian Caire had the building enlarged and remodeled into a Mediterranean-style residence, office and storehouse, creating an appearance similar to residences found on other areas of the island. The roof was raised to create a full two-story house, the dormers removed, and a balcony added to the facade with wrought iron railings. The house was tripled in size, first with a matching addition with a hipped roof creating a twin-gabled roof, similar to the nearby warehouse. A long wing was added to the rear that ended in a firewall gable. Attached to this was a wood frame, gable roofed building that acted as a storehouse. The overall effect was a true L shape, the top being the storehouse and the bottom the facade of the house facing the harbor. An exterior stairway led to the second story of the residence in the crook of the ell. A garden, enclosed by a wrought iron fence, stood off the front of the house.

Scrutiny of photographs suggests that the wood frame section on the rear was an older building, and that Caire had the adobe building extended to join this warehouse. Photographs of the rear of the building with shed removed, taken in January 1960, give the appearance that the rubble wall of the new house was constructed flush against the older frame building.

The building served as the entryway to the ranch and home of the port manager. A kitchen stood across the road from the house; this is shown in many different forms in various photographs, first as a shed-roofed, board and batten building and later as a gable roofed building. An 1892 map and contemporary photograph shows the kitchen as an ell shaped building formed out of two sheds. Behind the kitchen stood a gable-roofed shed or barn that appears in a circa 1869 photograph. It apparently was replaced by a two-story barn featuring a dormer window that may indicate that ranch workers lived in it. A bridge connected the opposite sides of the creek, and allowed access to the road leading to the isthmus and east end.

By 1960 these buildings had been removed or destroyed. The residence was demolished in January of that year after Navy-engineered creek diversions had flooded the house and damaged it beyond repair. The frame structure burned in the early 1960s. No remains can be seen of any of these early structures. The Caire-era well remains and is of similar stone-lined construction with projecting stone steps to the well at Smugglers Ranch. An apron of concrete at the creek crossing was probably built by the Navy.

The most important site is the huge Chumash midden at the mouth of the creek. It has been fenced off to prevent pig damage.

Hunting Club Camp at Prisoners Harbor (non-contributing)

The Santa Cruz Island Club used a camp area at Prisoners Harbor during the 1960s and '70s for bow hunters and, in the off-season, families and campers. The club developed a site near the large Chumash midden that included a long bunkhouse/kitchen and outdoor camping and eating areas. A berm protected the camp from flooding in the adjacent creek. After the club disbanded, the building was removed and the site is partially overgrown. A 75-foot-long concrete slab marks the building site, while the berm and round stone barbecue pit remain in place.

Rancho del Norte

Located on a once-grassy bowl between Prisoners Harbor and Chinese Harbor, Rancho del Norte is one of the newer developments on the former Stanton Ranch. Reached by road from the Navy Road and by trail from Prisoners Harbor, the site consists of a small house, two sheds, corrals and water developments. A Level II Cultural Landscape Inventory was completed in 2002 for the Rancho del Norte complex. Please refer to that document for more detail.⁶⁶⁹

Ranch House (contributing)

IDLCS 102092

Prominent Los Angeles architect H. Roy Kelly (1893-1989) designed this compact ranch house for the Stantons in 1952. The house sits on a knoll overlooking Chinese Harbor, although the porch and front door face south towards the hills of the island. Rancho del Norte acted as the headquarters for cattle ranching operations on the eastern part of the Stanton Ranch; besides the house, a set of corrals, sheds and a watering trough were constructed. The house and corrals saw seasonal use until 1987 when they were abandoned upon Carey Stanton's death. The Santa Cruz Island Foundation raised money through its Joseph Fidler Walsh Fund and organized a restoration of the deteriorated house, which took place in 1995 and 1996. The Foundation now assists the National Park Service in maintaining the house, which is used for events and lodging.

⁶⁶⁹*Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II: Rancho del Norte* prepared by National Park Service, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, 2002.

Jesus Ildefonso, a vaquero working for Carey Stanton, recalled that Carey Stanton used Rancho del Norte to doctor and brand one-year-old calves; it was not a shipping point. Cowboys gathered at the ranch, spread out to gather cows and their calves, and brought them into the holding corrals. The calves would be separated and brought through the squeeze chute where they were branded, vaccinated, and if necessary, castrated. Vaqueros stored any necessary supplies for doctoring the calves and any adult cows in the medicine shed. Edwin Stanton's employee Blaine Powers originally lived at Rancho del Norte. The house was lit and heated with propane (now solar). Stanton kept 10 to 15 horses there, using the ranch as an outpost for travel farther east. By the 1980s no one lived there.⁶⁷⁰

The house measures 18 feet by 30.5 feet and sits on a concrete foundation. Its lapped wood siding, reportedly redwood, is painted white, while the trim is yellow. The windows are two-over-two double hung wood sash, custom made for the restoration project. The house has a shed roof with composition shingles. A concrete slab porch wraps around the south (5 feet wide) and west (9.5 feet wide) sides of the house, all protected under the shed roof. A wood frame wall encloses the north side of the west porch, acting as an extension of the north wall. Two doors provide access to the interior of the house: a front door on the south elevation and a side door to the pantry on the west. The house has five rooms: a combination kitchen/dining room which also acts as a living room with a wood stove; two bedrooms, one with four bunks; a small bathroom and a walk-through pantry. The interior walls are knotty pine.

The Rancho del Norte ranch house is in excellent condition and is maintained regularly. The restoration was done sensitively. The house possesses excellent historical integrity. The house is a significant component of the Stanton Ranch, being the final development of the ranching operation in which the most important Potrero del Norte grazing fields obtained permanent outpost for executing ranch functions. The house is also a significant example of the work of H. Roy Kelly, who also designed the new ranch house (the “Phoenix House”) at the Main Ranch in 1950.

It is recommended that the Rancho del Norte ranch house be preserved and maintained at current levels.

⁶⁷⁰Information from Jesus Ildefonso, Keith Herold, Marla Daily and Lyndal Laughrin.



The house designed by H. Roy Kelley at Rancho del Norte, looking northeast, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Rancho del Norte corrals and sheds, viewed to the northwest, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Corrals and Sheds (contributing)

IDLCS 102095

West of the ranch house, in a flat swale, sits a complex of corrals and two sheds. Beginning in the early 1950s the Stanton ranch hands collected cattle here for treatment and shipping. The corrals have been unused since 1987, but have been partially maintained with basic repairs and weed control. The corrals consist of three large enclosures, the largest of which measures roughly 60 feet by 66 feet and the smallest 24 feet by 90 feet, and a series of alleys and pens. A small shed measuring 8 feet by 12 feet stands in the center of the corral complex, and a large metal-roofed shed measuring about 17 feet by 92 feet occupies the eastern edge of the complex. The small “medicine room” shed has been remodeled into a sleeping room. It sits on a concrete foundation and has a shed roof with red roll roofing, lapped siding, a shed roof, a door with a window, and a six-over-six double-hung window. The interior has been remodeled with knotty pine to match the main house. A metal squeeze chute stands east of the medicine room. The large shed, used for sheltering horses and/or calves, has a corrugated metal shed roof and walls on three sides; the west side opens to a series of six pens. In 2012 NPS removed the solar panels from the roof of the ranch house and constructed a new photovoltaic system over the north end of the long shed. The inverter and batteries are housed within the shed. The corrals are constructed of horizontal boards nailed to sturdy wood posts. A ramp chute allowed loading of cattle onto trucks for shipping. All of the gates are wood and hung with metal hinges. Overall, the complex of corrals and sheds measures about 100 feet by 180 feet.

The corrals are in fair condition. Their historical integrity is excellent. It is recommended that the corrals and sheds be repaired and maintained as an example of a working out ranch with well-thought out functionality. The remodeled medicine shed has lost some integrity as its original function has been replaced and the interior has been changed.

Vegetation at Rancho del Norte (contributing)

The surrounding grassy hills of the Potrero Norte became covered with thick fennel growth after cattle were removed in 1987. The Santa Cruz Island Foundation keeps the Rancho del Norte enclosure mowed although the fennel is outcompeting the grasses. The lawn area surrounding the ranch house has a number of trees, including citrus, blackwood acacias and Peruvian pepper trees, all planted by the Stantons.

The overall landscape of Rancho del Norte and Potrero del Norte will benefit from eradication of the invasive fennel. It is recommended that the grasslands surrounding the ranch complex be maintained by mowing or grazing in order to retain the pastoral historic landscape of the area. The exotic trees at the ranch house have historic value for their association with the Stantons’ ranching activities and should be retained.

See the Level II Cultural Landscape Inventory, completed in 2002, for more detail.



The Navy site on Santa Cruz Island, on land retained by The Nature Conservancy.
Photograph by Dewey Livingston

Navy Base (non-contributing)

The Naval Air Missile Test Center observation station, constructed in 1950, has been retained by The Nature Conservancy as an inholding, therefore its structures and features will not be evaluated in detail here. Located at a formerly 1500-foot summit (which was graded down to a series of flat building sites resulting in a lower elevation) midway between the main ranch and El Montañon, the facility consists of a large barracks, a large temporary barracks, transmitter building, receiving building, metal water storage tank and tower, miscellaneous outbuildings and antennae, a massive solar collector array, pads and foundations, chain link fencing, and a temporary communications site on the east side of the complex. The Navy Base is a prominent landmark on Santa Cruz Island, visible from sea and many locations on the island and from the mainland.

Ruins and Sites on the Isthmus

Campo China (contributing)

The old road leading from the ridge down to Chinese Harbor makes a series of switchbacks to a small, protected swale before making its final descent to the beach. Along this lower part of roadway is some wood debris and remains of an old fence dating from the Caire era, and an old trail that leads east to the benches above the eastern part of the beach. The road continues to the beach, passing more cultural



Site of an old cabin in Chinese Harbor, marked by a eucalyptus tree. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

debris on a small bench at the water's edge. A short distance west from the road's end at the rocky beach, in a cove, is a large eucalyptus tree (about 45 feet high and with an approximately 4.5-foot diameter base) that marks the site of a fisherman's cabin. Driftwood and debris have mixed with any remaining wreckage, making it difficult for the untrained eye to determine what is historic fabric and what is driftwood. The site contains potential historic archeology, and a midden denotes prehistoric use of the site. East of the road's end is a series of benches on an otherwise steep slope. Two trails from the old road provide access to the area, once the site of a small Caire-era out ranch called Campo China. A small steel trough, fed by a nearby spring, was the only object found there in November of 2000. These benches and cove site may retain historical information about prehistoric occupants, activities during the Caire era and Chinese fishing, the activity that may have given this area its name.

WWII Coastal Lookout Camp Site (contributing)

The U. S. Navy leased an undisclosed site on Santa Cruz Island from Edwin Stanton in 1942 for a manned coastal lookout site. The lookout station camp was located at an oak grove on the side of a knoll about one third of a mile east of Mt. Pleasant; the main road cuts through the site. The site features a number of excavated and leveled areas to accommodate tents or temporary barracks, and an unusual concrete pad measuring four by five feet that may have been a shower. The rough-surfaced concrete pad has a deep drain or indentation; its exact use can only be speculated. A canvas refrigeration box can be found deeper into the woods. Men stationed here would have traveled the short distance to Mt. Pleasant, which afforded a panoramic view of the channel and ocean, to observe incoming aircraft and vessels.

Roads and Trails⁶⁷¹

Main Ranch to East End (contributing) IDLCS 102101

By the end of the Stanton era dozens of graded dirt roads crossed the isthmus of Santa Cruz Island. From the earliest cross-island trail a circulation system developed to the point that the ranch foreman in the 1970s could travel over much of the pasture land on both sides of the ridge in a jeep. Some of these roads followed the pioneer routes between the main ranch and Prisoners Harbor to the east end of the island.

The earliest trails documented on the island are found in the U. S. Coast Survey sketches by William Greenwell in 1857 and the map by Stehman Forney, who surveyed the island in 1873 to 1875. The main route across the isthmus led from the main ranch in an easterly direction up the ridge to Valley Peak, thence along the main ridge of the isthmus to Mt. Pleasant. East of Mt. Pleasant the trail descended gradually into the Corrales Viejos Pasture in Cañada de Sanjon Hondo where it crossed both forks of this stream and then ascended back to the ridge top. A map circa 1880 depicts a road bypassing this canyon crossing, staying on the ridge line as it veers south to the later site of the Navy base, then veering north again to join the old trail which heads east; this bypass was the precursor to the presently-used route to the east end. The trail followed the top of the ridge easterly and north easterly, rounding knolls and swales, until the final, craggy descent across No Man's Land to the summit of El Montañon and the subsequent descent to the east end ranches.

The old route generally remains, although it has been altered in numerous sections and abandoned in others. In most cases the trail, which tended to stay to the highest points on the ridge resulting in numerous up- and down-grades, has been bypassed with graded routes that follow the side hills, leaving the ridge top route abandoned and in places difficult to trace. In other areas, notably the eastern part of the isthmus, the trail has been replaced on site with a graded road. In the Corrales Viejos Pasture east of Mt. Pleasant the old trail has been abandoned and is difficult to trace due to fennel growth. The portion of the original trail with the highest degree of integrity is the ascent of El Montañon, passing the old Campo Mielquieres, where the full character of the 19th century trail is revealed: cut rock is evident in the steeper outcroppings and no sign of modern development is seen. This portion of the trail is only accessible by hikers, as a vehicle cannot traverse the rugged and narrow route.

The major bypasses of the old trail were in place by 1940, as revealed on aerial photographs from that date. In 1950 the Navy constructed a 2/3-mile bypass of the trail and subsequent road west of Mt. Pleasant, which followed a 1,200- to 1,250-foot elevation contour and eliminated the ridge top route for that distance.

A description follows of the original trail as traveled west to east, distances approximate: 1/2 mile from Valley Peak (elevation 1345) to the Sur Road junction, a minor graded road follows the original route closely, except for final descent to the junction which has been passed by an easier grade which veers north

⁶⁷¹When a road's condition is noted here as fair to poor, it reflects the fact the typical old ranch road on Santa Cruz Island is poorly maintained or abandoned. This situation leaves portions of roads in poor condition and others in fair to good condition, depending on factors such as geological stability, erosion, drainage and vegetation encroachment.

then south; 3/4 mile from the junction towards Mt. Pleasant, the graded road, improved and maintained by the Navy, follows the original route closely; from a point 6/10 mile to the Mt. Pleasant pond the trail is bypassed by the 1950 Navy Road, while the original trail had been graded to road width before 1940 and follows it almost exactly until the descent to the pond, where the newer road veers north with a switchback, and the original trail descends into a swale south of the pond and then ascends to the pass between the two peaks of Mt. Pleasant where it rejoins the pre-1940/Navy road; between Mt. Pleasant and bench mark 1201 (1-1/4 mile direct, about 2 miles by road), the original trail continued east and down into Corrales Viejos/Cañada del Sanjon Hondo drainage (junction to old Prisoners Harbor Trail to left at bottom of trail), crosses two forks and then makes a steep ascent to the bench mark, while the later road (first noted circa 1880, improved by the Navy in 1950) follows the ridge top in a half-loop to the south, circumnavigating the watershed of Cañada del Sanjon Hondo; 2-1/4 miles from bench mark 1201 to Loma Pelona junction near bench mark 1349 follows the old trail almost identically; 1-1/2 mile to the top of El Montañon (elevation 1,581) is largely the original trail, unchanged except for recent ATV activity which has created a narrow two-wheeled path in the lower parts. Despite the modern improvements, the route retains integrity as the important and little-changed route of travel between the central and east parts of the island.

Prisoners Harbor to Corrales Viejos (contributing)

Another 19th century route left Prisoners Harbor and ascended the north face of the ridge, contouring around ridges and drainages through the Potrero de Capones Grande (later Lake and del Norte pastures) until meeting the main trail at Corrales Viejos northeast of Mt. Pleasant. This trail was documented on maps dated circa 1880 and (partially) 1919. This route had been superseded by 1940 with a graded dirt road that apparently followed a similar route, and was called the Laguna Seca Road. Fennel growth has made attempts to trace the older route virtually impossible. The graded road remains, and is now known as the Del Norte Trail. The road retains integrity although is often clogged with fennel growth.

Prisoners Harbor to Ridge (contributing)

At least two routes were used between the pier and the top of the ridge to the south. In 1874 a trail or road apparently climbed the ridge directly east of Cañada del Puerto to the summit of Valley Peak where it joined the main west-east island trail. Later (by 1880) the trail took a more easterly course, crossing Eagle Canyon and making the last half of the ascent in a similar location to today's Navy Road. By 1940 this route had been graded into a dirt truck road, and was improved with drainage and grade adjustments by the Navy in 1950. Now a section of the major Navy Road route, it meets the junction of the Sur road at the top of the ridge. This road is in good condition and possesses a high level of integrity as the Navy Road, but few traces of the 1880s trail could be found. Traces of the earlier route to the west remain as a graded but unmaintained jeep road, which is impassable in the lower reaches.



A former road, now used as a trail, near Rancho del Norte. Note the thick stands of non-native fennel, which impact both natural and cultural resources on the island. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Ridge to Rancho del Norte (contributing)

The current road to Rancho del Norte, built about 1952, roughly follows a road marked on Forney's 1875 map leading into Cañada del Muro, but makes an abrupt turn east at about 800 feet elevation to soon join an older (pre-1940) road to the Rancho del Norte site. The 1875 road does not appear on other maps, and the 1952 Norte road does not appear on the 1943 USGS quadrangle. The original route to the Norte site begins on the old Prisoners Harbor-to-east-end road and makes a circle around the 920-foot knoll that sits west of Campo del Norte. Only the southern and eastern part of the circle remains passable. Although fennel constantly threatens passage and causes bank erosion on these roads, they possess integrity and are in fair to poor condition.

Ridge to Chinese Harbor (contributing)

A road, which appeared on the 1943 USGS quadrangle, descends in a northerly direction from the ridge road at a point almost a mile north of the Navy base to the north shore at Chinese Harbor. Little is known of the origin of this road; a house existed at the harbor site in 1890,⁶⁷² ruins of another building can be found near the foot of the road, and the road appeared on aerial photography dated 1940, proving it to be more than 60 years old. Features found along this road include a watering station and a fenced seasonal pond. The upper half of the road is passable with four wheel drive vehicles but the lower portion, which was built with much labor and switchbacks steeply to sea level, is in poor condition. The road possesses

⁶⁷²Map No. 73, Pipeline at Campo Chino, July 1890, SCIF.

integrity, is significant as a ranch road and as the only developed route to Chinese Harbor, and contributes to a proposed Santa Cruz Island Historic District. Two roads intersect the Chinese Harbor road: the lower route to Prisoners Harbor, and a route that ascends the east side of Cañada del Sanjon Hondo in an easterly direction to meet the ridge road near the foot of the Montañon.

Ridge to Loma Pelona Pasture (contributing)

This road appeared on the 1943 USGS quadrangle. A second road, located to the west, formed a full loop between the ridge and Pila Moullet; it was marked on the map published by the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden in 1995 but has been out of use for many years and was not surveyed. The former road passes through the old Loma Pelona Pasture, used by the Caires and Stantons. It begins at the ridge road adjacent to the easternmost *pila* on the isthmus and descends in a dramatic route almost to sea level. The major destination of this road was Pila Moullet, and old watering site used by both the Caires and Stantons. The road is in fair to poor condition although is easily accessible by four wheel drive vehicles. The road possesses integrity, is significant as a ranch road that accessed an important watering spot, and contributes to a proposed Santa Cruz Island Historic District.

Ridge to Cañada de Calera (contributing)

This road was apparently built between 1943 and 1949 by the Stantons to reach the water storage tank at Cañada de Calera. The road leaves the ridge trail at the Loma Pelona junction, descending gradually to the north and northwest. It branches at about 750 feet elevation, the east fork terminating at a water tank and the west road following the hogback ridge and ending at a steep bluff overlooking Chinese Harbor. The road is in fair to poor condition, possesses integrity, is significant as a ranch road that accessed an important water source, and contributes to a proposed Santa Cruz Island Historic District.

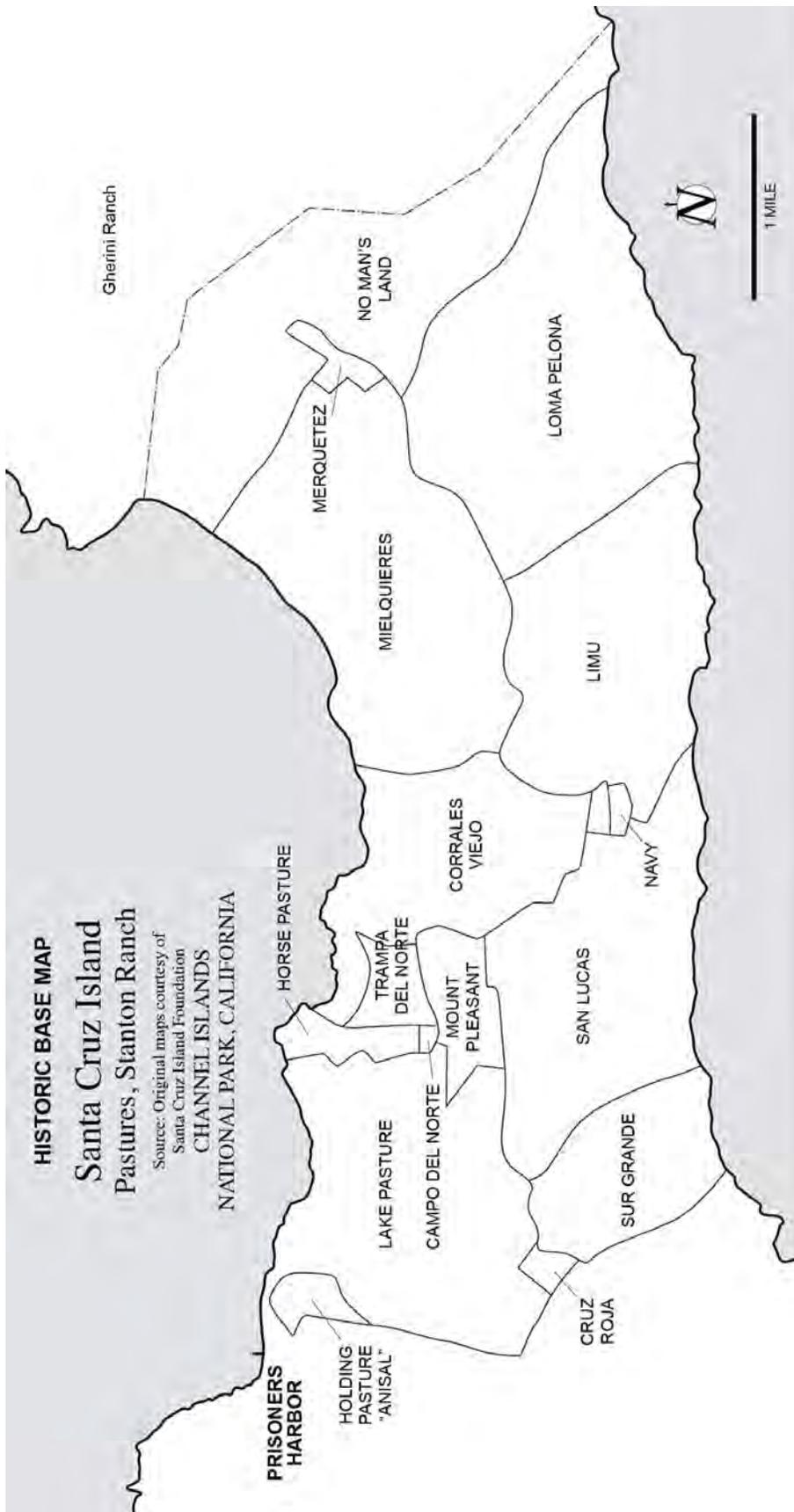
Other Roads and Trails

A number of other routes are marked on the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden map, but most are in poor condition from lack of use since 1987. Roads lead to the San Lucas and Limu Pastures, Los Pinos del Sur and into Montañon Canyon on the south side, and to the Mielquieres Pasture and China Pines on the north. These abandoned roads reflect the Stanton cattle ranching era and appear to be in poor to fair condition; without a thorough survey, their integrity cannot be assessed.

Fences and Gates, Pastures and Fields

IDLCS 102096 (contributing)

The extensive fencing systems from the Stanton era remain mostly intact on the Santa Cruz Island isthmus. The Nature Conservancy repaired nearly 100 miles of fencing across the island during the early



1980s as part of the sheep removal project. Unfortunately, much of this system is lost in the vast forests of fennel and may be threatened by fennel removal programs that would require burning.

Fencing appears on Forney's 1875 map, on the circa 1880 Caire map, on the 1919 Potrero Norte map, and on various Caire maps of pastures and water systems. It appears unlikely that much of the Caire-era fencing remains, and any remains would be difficult to locate because of the fennel growth. Superintendent Swain's 1919 fencing of the Potrero Norte pasture was followed closely by the Stantons, who replaced and added much fencing in the 1950s. Maps exist of the Stanton-era fencing on the isthmus, and most appears to be extant; in many cases, the fencing is in good condition considering that it has been unmaintained for almost fifteen years.

The typical fence style of the Stantons features railroad tie or split 4x4 posts at intervals, spaced by standard steel fence posts, strung with two or three rows of barbed wire and three feet of 5-inch wire mesh. The mesh, unnecessary for cattle containment, must have been constructed at great expense to accommodate and contain the feral sheep remaining on the island; it would have also been more effective for containing calves. Stanton had sturdy H-braces constructed at regular intervals, with the standard H supported by diagonal braces on each side. Wood plank and some metal gates are found on the isthmus.

Fencing is most evident today along certain roads; for instance, much of the length of the east-west road is lined with a fence. The roads tended to traverse terrain that mirrored the geographic needs of fencing, and provided convenient access to fences for building and repair.

The fence lines on the isthmus enclose specific pastures, each with a particular function and name. During the Caire era, the isthmus was divided into pastures named Potrero de Capones Grandes, Potrero del Norte, Barrancos Blancos, Campo Chino, Little Ranch and others. On the ridge above and east of Prisoners Harbor, three small fields were named Campos Primero, Segunda and Tercero. The latter fields became the Stantons' holding pasture for cattle waiting for shipment from the pier below.

The Stantons divided the isthmus into eight large pastures and six small ones. The large areas were, west to east: Lake Pasture, bounded west by a fence heading south from Prisoners Harbor, south by the ridge, east by the Campo del Norte and north by the channel, including the drainages of Eagle Canyon and Cañada del Agua; Sur Grande, bounded west by a fence near the Sur road, south by the ocean, east by a fence on a ridge line, and north by the ridge top, including the Three-Fork Canyon drainage; San Lucas, bounded west by the Sur fence, south by the ocean, west by a jagged line of fence to the Navy base and north by the ridge in the Mt. Pleasant vicinity, including the southern Mt. Pleasant drainages; Corrales Viejos, bounded west by the Campo del Norte and Mt. Pleasant pastures, south by the jagged San Lucas fence and Navy base, west by a fence east of Cañada del Sanjon Hondo, and north by the channel; Limu, bounded west by a fence including the Navy base, south by the ocean, east by a fence running down a remarkably straight-backed ridge adjacent to Los Pinos del Sur and on the north by the ridge; Merquitez (Mielquieres), bounded west by Corrales Viejos, south by the ridge, east by the fence near Cañada de Calera at Chinese Harbor, and north by Chinese Harbor and the channel, including most drainages into the harbor; Loma Pelona, bounded west by Limu Pasture, south by the ocean, east by the long fence line in Montañon Canyon and north by the ridge; and No Man's Land, the desert-like western slopes of the imposing Montañon.

The smaller enclosures were: the holding pasture on the small ridge east of Prisoners Harbor; Cruz Roja, a small trap located west of the Sur/Navy roads junction; the Campo del Norte horse pasture, a narrow enclosure that ran from Rancho del Norte to the channel; Trampa del Norte east of Rancho del Norte; and Mount Pleasant, east of Rancho del Norte and north of Mt. Pleasant itself; and a small trap at Merquitez in the east, sandwiched between the larger Merquitez pasture and No Man's Land, actually divided into two enclosures. No Man's Land may have acted as an overflow area for Gherini sheep, known for trespassing from the east end through the difficult-to-maintain boundary fence. All told, the fence lines on the isthmus measure about 20 miles, not counting the boundary fence on the east.

The Rancho del Norte complex is surrounded by fences of barbed wire and wood posts. Much of the fencing is lost and possibly damaged in the heavy fennel growth. Caretakers of the ranch complex have kept the fennel cut back to the exterior fence line. Gates are wood and in fair to poor condition. The house enclosure at Rancho del Norte has been recently extended to the east about 35 feet.

In the Sur-Valley Anchorage area, a fence separating Sur Chico and Sur Grande is extant to the cliff edge. It is built of steel posts with some wood posts, barbed wire and steel mesh wire. The bottom portion is in fair condition. A new fence, separating The Nature Conservancy property and its donation to NPS, runs almost parallel east of the older fence until crossing it towards the west near the bottom.

A typical Stanton-era fence section can be found west of Loma Bonita, composed of wood posts at the H-brace, steel posts with every sixth post being wood, with three-foot wide steel mesh topped by two or three strands of barbed wire. The mesh wire kept calves in.

The Stantons' ranch manager Henry Duffield, whose physical disability prevented him from getting in and out of his jeep to open and close gates, constructed the bump gate on the ridge road at Rancho del Norte junction. This type of gate, which opened when gently bumped by the jeep's bumper, was also found on Catalina Island.

Three seasonal water catchments, "Kloppenber Lake" near Mt. Pleasant, Laguna Seca and China Pond were fenced, to prevent heartworm from wet hooves. A partial fence surrounds part of the Agua del Muro tank and pump house site.

Overall, the eradication of fennel would greatly improve access to the fencing for repair and maintenance, although burning of fennel may damage or destroy the fences. The fences have historical significance as components of the ranching operation, and their integrity is good. It is recommended that the fennel be removed without damage to the fences, and that the fence lines in the vicinity of Rancho del Norte be repaired and maintained as part of the historic ranching landscape.

A number of scratching posts (or rub posts) are found in the pastures; those found by the author are mentioned in the descriptions of the watering troughs following. These are large vertical posts covered with projecting nails and an attached chain, allowing cattle to scratch so that they wouldn't rub against fence posts and weaken them.



Poles remain from the “mag line” that stretched from the east to the west ends of the island. This location is near Loma Bonita Tank, in background. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

“Mag Line”

Numerous poles remain from the “mag line” constructed for Justinian Caire during the 1880s and maintained by the Stantons. For the most part, the remaining poles can be found following fence lines along the ridge of the isthmus, portions of the line connecting the Main Ranch with the east end. See the Cultural Landscape Inventory for more information.

Water Systems

IDLCS 102098

Wells (contributing)

The Santa Cruz Island Company, or its successors, dug a well at Prisoners Harbor near the house that was located there. Early photographs show a windmill at the site. The well remains and has been covered, with a trap door allowing visitors to see the interior. It is a rock-lined well and a contributing feature to the site.

The Navy drilled a well at Prisoners Harbor in the mid-1950s after finding that the supply from Chinese Harbor did not suffice. The Stantons made full use of the new water supply, constructing concrete troughs in at least five locations in the isthmus and metal storage tanks to supply them through miles of galvanized pipe. Availability of the water may have inspired the development of Rancho del Norte in 1952, as a large metal tank was located above that site during its construction.

No other wells have been noted on the isthmus of the island.

The Navy well remains in use at Prisoners Harbor; it is located on TNC lands. The galvanized pipeline from the well to the Navy Base and the various troughs and tanks remain in place, mostly buried, and maintained by the Navy. Pipelines to the cattle troughs have been abandoned.

Developed Springs, Storage Tanks and Water Systems

Only a few water sources proved to be reliable for stock raisers on the isthmus. An early Caire map dated March 1886 noted an “emplacement fouille pour trouver de l’eau” (location to find water) in the drainage east of Cañada de Sanjon Hondo north of the later site of the Navy base. Another map, dated July 1890 details a water system at Chinese Harbor, although it is not known whether this was ever developed. The map shows an intake in the drainage west of No Man’s Land (probably Cañada de Calera), with a pipeline and reducer leading westerly along a “steep side-hill” to troughs above the house site at the west end of Chinese Harbor. The map noted a faucet at the troughs, and an “old pipe” on the western end of the system (that may have been connected to the emplacement noted in the 1886 map as they were in the same drainage). Pipe sizes ranged from one to two inches. It was recorded in 1949 that Edwin Stanton used a 2 1/2 inch pipeline from this source, or a nearby one, to pump water to the pastures on the ridge of the isthmus. The Navy took an option on this supply but instead drilled a well at Prisoners Harbor.⁶⁷³

A spring-fed trough, serviced by an “old pipe line,” was located in the Agua Muro drainage at Potrero Norte, according to a map dated March 1919.⁶⁷⁴ This feature is in the vicinity of Rancho del Norte and is described below. The same map noted a source called Triangolo Spring north of Mt. Pleasant, as did a circa 1880 map which noted “Agua Triangolo” but did not specify the exact site of the spring.

In these older systems, surface springs were tapped and the water sent by gravity to a holding tank, from which water would be pumped to a storage tank at an upper elevation for distribution by gravity to troughs and Rancho del Norte.

The water systems described below possess integrity and are significant parts of the ranching operations of either or both the Caire and Stanton eras.

Agua del Muro Tank and Water System (contributing)

This old water source was exploited by the Caires during the 19th century and maintained throughout most of the 20th century. It appears to have been the most prolific spring on the isthmus. The Stantons made improvements in the 1940s or early 1950s, mostly by installing a storage tank and delivery system. It appears that this water source originally supplied the large tank at Loma Bonita, which in turn

⁶⁷³Parsons-Aerojet Company, *Real Estate Plan, Santa Cruz Island*, 1949; Maps in the collection of SCIF.

⁶⁷⁴“Santa Cruz Island Co., Plat of Potrero Norte,” March 1919, SCIF.



Ruined pumphouse and tank at Agua Muro near Rancho del Norte, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Abandoned tank at Cañada Calera near No Man's Land. The abandoned road (now a trail) to the site can be seen in the background. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*

fed water to Rancho del Norte and numerous troughs. This delivery system was replaced after 1953 when the Navy drilled a well at Prisoners Harbor in order to provide a more reliable supply for their operations, which was shared by the ranch owners. Water continued to be piped by gravity from Agua del Muro to Pila Laguna Seca.

The spring itself is located in a steep canyon about half a mile west/southwest of Rancho del Norte. It is accessed by two trails: one narrow and steep foot trail leaves the Rancho del Norte road a short distance above the switchback and leads straight to the spring; the other, almost a road at four to six feet wide, can be followed from the pump house and tank site at a steady grade up to the spring. A third trail may lead from the spring to upper elevations, but dense vegetation halted further survey. The spring has been captured in an approximately 8-foot square redwood box with a plank top, which has been covered with fallen rocks and dirt. It is surrounded by a fence constructed of pipe, boards and wire. During a survey visit in November of 2000, water was running from the spring. Erosion was evident in the area, and a combination of dense vegetation and eroded ground prevented close scrutiny of the spring. Pipelines were evident between the spring and water tank, including lengths of old 3-inch iron pipe below the trail and larger widths of pipe that follow along the trail.

A fence partially surrounds the tank and pump site, which is reached by an abandoned dirt road from the western road that connects Rancho del Norte with the old Prisoners Harbor road. The water tank is a bolted, galvanized steel tank, approximately 22 feet in diameter and eight feet high. It features a ladder to the roof and a level gauge, and was full at the time of the survey.

The pump house is a 10- by 12-foot wood frame building with corrugated metal siding and flat corrugated metal roof, on a concrete slab foundation. It has a window and a door, a broken cabinet and intact pump. The engine that drove the pump is gone. Two tanks, one for diesel fuel, are found outside the building with supply pipes connecting the building. About half of the corrugated metal is missing and the wood is deteriorated. The pump house is in poor condition.

Loma Bonita Tank (contributing)

This large water tank, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located on a broad hilltop overlooking the Santa Barbara Channel and Pacific Ocean. It is situated adjacent to the obsolete ridge road about 1/3 mile west of Mt. Pleasant and 1/8 mile south of the modern ridge road. Water from this tank supplied Rancho del Norte and a number of troughs along the ridge including Pila Quatas, Pila Ventosa and Pila Triangolo. The water source was northwest of the tank, at Agua del Muro, and was pumped up to the tank at Loma Bonita from a holding tank. The tank is constructed of bolted, galvanized steel in two sections, about 22 feet in diameter and 16 feet high, with a convex steel top and resting on a stone foundation. It has a ladder, intake pipe and a level indicator.

Loma Pelona Tank (non-contributing)

This galvanized steel tank has been disassembled and mostly removed. Its remains are located on the south side of the ridge road about two miles directly east/northeast from the Navy base. All that remains

are eight panels from the once-bolted tank, a circular stone foundation, four anchor bolts imbedded in concrete, and various hardware. A 1.5-inch pipeline remains that fed a small trough located less than half a mile down the slope to the northwest. This tank also supplied Pila China, Pila Figueroa, Pila Moullet and Pila Merquitez.

Cañada de Calera Tank and Water System (contributing)

Cañada de Calera is the drainage farthest east before the looming Montañon ridge cuts off the isthmus from the east end of Santa Cruz Island. The canyon drains northwesterly into Chinese Harbor. During the Stanton era, commencing in the late 1940s or early 1950s and to serve not only the cattle operation but also the new Navy site, water was obtained here and delivered by gravity to a holding tank in an isolated location in the canyon; the water was then pumped uphill as far as the Navy base. The site is reached by a narrow dirt road that leads north/northwest from Pila Merquitez down to the narrow shelf cut into a steep hillside to accommodate the tank and pump apparatus.

The tank, a welded galvanized steel cylinder with a conical roof, measures 14 feet in diameter and about eight feet tall. It is painted silver, is rusted and is full of holes, with a ladder, capacity gauge, pipe outlets and an intake pipe. Nearby is a concrete stand for a fuel tank, the ruins of a corrugated metal and wood pump house, and various examples of hardware, pipes, cables and debris. In the canyon below, pipes can be seen.

Pilas (Water Troughs)⁶⁷⁵

Edwin Stanton continued the use of traditional Spanish-language place names, as he laid out a new water system on the isthmus in the early 1950s. Distribution of water resources in a well-planned layout helped to decrease erosion and impacts on riparian areas and improved the health of the livestock. Water was delivered by gravity through a network of galvanized pipes to a trough, or in Spanish, *pila*. Most of the concrete troughs were constructed using standard forms and were almost identical. In a few places, metal troughs made from halved steel tanks were used. Each *pila* was filled through use of a toilet-style float valve, located in the center of the trough to protect it from damage by nuzzling. The rising float closed the intake when the trough was full. Concrete aprons surrounding the troughs kept the ground dry, which helped avoid cattle diseases. A board barrier surrounded the trough, attached to steel poles imbedded in the rim, which allowed cattle to drink but kept the livestock out of the water. All of the troughs on the isthmus were abandoned after 1988, although one at Rancho del Norte has been rehabilitated. Being made of concrete and steel, the troughs have survived abandonment in reasonable condition. All of the troughs possess integrity and contribute to the historic district.

⁶⁷⁵The water system was described and documented during a field interview with Jesus Ildefonso, former vaquero for Carey Stanton, November 12, 2000. The place names Ildefonso used were likely ones in use throughout the Stanton period.

Pila Laguna Seca (contributing)

This trough, completed by the Stantons on February 22, 1955, is located directly east of the fenced-in Laguna Seca, a small seasonal pond situated about 1/3 mile east of the Navy road and about a mile west of Rancho del Norte. The trough provided water to animals in the Lake Pasture, and was accessed by a dirt road now known as the Del Norte Trail but referred to as the old Prisoners Harbor road in this document. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 6-inch thick walls about 19 inches high; this pila did not have a board livestock barrier as seen on the other troughs on the isthmus. A 4.5-foot wide concrete apron surrounds the trough. The construction date, "2-22-55" is engraved in the smooth-finished cap of the concrete walls. The trough is empty and in good condition, perhaps the best example of those remaining on the isthmus.

Nearby, on the west side of the Laguna Seca enclosure, is a cattle rub post comprised of a 12-inch thick utility pole set in the ground with a heavy chain held off at an angle. The six foot tall post has been studded with nails, allowing a satisfying relief from itches, while the chain allows cattle to rub their necks and backs.

Troughs at Rancho del Norte (contributing)

The Rancho del Norte provided a gathering place for cattle and a watering place as well. Water stored in a tank at Loma Bonita above the complex is fed by gravity to the site. Red Craine built two concrete water troughs at the south part of the complex prior to 1952. Both are located south of the ranch house, one on the east edge of the Rancho del Norte enclosure fences and one at the south central portion. Both are typical 12- by 16-foot concrete troughs with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, with 2 by 8 board barriers attached to steel posts set in the corners of each trough, and are surrounded by five-foot wide concrete aprons. The east trough is empty and in fair condition, while the central trough holds water and is maintained by the Santa Cruz Island Foundation. Fennel in the vicinity is cut regularly so there is no current vegetative impact on the troughs.

Pilas Quatas (contributing)

The Stantons installed this double water trough in the early 1950s. The troughs are located on the south side of the ridge road approximately 1/3 mile east of the top of the Sur road, at the junction point of three pastures: Sur Grande, Lake and San Lucas. Pilas Quatas are comprised of a metal tank or container cut in two and laid side-by-side to form two metal troughs, measuring five by seven feet each, about two feet high. Pipe rails surround the troughs and act as dividers to keep the livestock in their designated pastures. A concrete slab was poured as a platform on the north side (Lake Pasture) of the troughs. A board fence forms small enclosures on the Lake Pasture and Sur Pasture sides, each with a gate, which controlled cattle access to the troughs. The San Lucas Pasture offered full access to water. Three fence lines radiate away from the troughs, as the divisions between the aforementioned pastures. In late 2000, there was no water in the troughs, which were in fair condition.



Pila Moullet, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



A cattle rub, one of a few found on the isthmus, 1999.
Photograph by Dewey Livingston

Pila Ventosa (contributing)

This trough, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located on a knoll off the north side of the ridge road about half a mile east of the Sur road junction; it is on the southern edge of Lake Pasture. It is accessed by a short dirt road. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, with a 2 by 8 board barrier attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. The trough is empty and in fair condition; fennel is growing between the trough and apron, causing separation.

Nearby is a cattle rub post as described above.

Pila Triangolo (contributing)

This 1950s-era trough, installed by the Stantons, takes its name from an old spring marked on the circa 1880 map of the area. The spring, located about .2 miles west of the trough, was dry and very eroded when visited in November 2000. Pila Triangolo is situated on a knoll a short distance north of the ridge road at the intersection of the fences outlining the Mt. Pleasant, San Lucas and Corrales Viejo pastures, approximately .3 miles east/northeast of Mt. Pleasant itself. An abandoned dirt ranch road passes the trough complex as it descends into Corrales Viejos to connect with the old Prisoners Harbor road. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, with a partially extant 2 by 8 board barrier attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. The trough is empty and in fair condition; fennel and other vegetation is growing in and around the structure, causing enlargement of cracks in the concrete work. Pila Triangolo is placed so that livestock from three different pastures can water there without escaping their designated pasture. Two corrals were built adjacent to the trough, and a saltbox and a rub post remain in the northern corral. Remains of the island phone line can be found attached to the south fence of the corrals. The 2-inch pipeline from the water source at Loma Bonita can be followed along a narrow roadway around the north side of the peak erroneously called Mt. Pleasant and into the seasonal lake known as Kloppenberg Lake; older remnants of 2.5-inch iron pipe can be found along this route as well.

Pila Navy (contributing)

The Stantons installed this double water trough in the early 1950s. The troughs are located at the north edge of an enclosure directly north of the Navy base. Pila Navy is comprised of a metal tank or container cut in two and laid side-by-side to form two metal troughs, measuring five by seven feet each, about two feet high. A 2-inch pipe rail surrounds the troughs and acts as a divider to keep the livestock in their designated pasture. A pipe leads south towards the water source at the Navy base, although the trough was originally fed from the Loma Pelona tank, located to the west. In late 2000, there was no water in the troughs, which were in fair condition.

Unnamed Pila at Chinese Harbor road junction (contributing)

Local informants could not recall a name for this trough system, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s and located on the north side of the ridge road at the junction of the old road down to Chinese Harbor. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, does not retain its float valve, and had a 2 by 8 board barrier attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough; most of the boards are gone. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. The trough is in fair condition and, unlike most of the other similar sites, there is no problem with invasive vegetation. Across the ridge road are a salt house, two metal frameworks of unknown use, and a 20-foot long wooden molasses trough.

Pila China (contributing)

This trough, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located in a level pasture on the road to Chinese Harbor, about half a mile below the ridge road junction; it is on the eastern edge of Corrales Viejos, and was accessible to livestock in the Merquitez Pasture as well. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, retains its float valve, and had a 2 by 8 board barrier attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. A double corral surrounds the trough, although many of the posts are gone. Pila China is in fair condition.

Unnamed Pila in Corrales Viejos (contributing)

This trough, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located in Cañada Sanjon Hondo in the center of Corrales Viejos, a short distance north of the old Prisoners Harbor road. At the time of the survey in November of 2000, it was surrounded by a dense stand of fennel and difficult to find. The trough is not of the standard size and make of the other concrete troughs on the isthmus. It measures 8 by 12 feet with 6-inch thick concrete walls about 20 inches high. A 3.5-foot wide concrete apron was poured too wet and has odd patterns on its surface. A series of five-foot-high pipes was mounted around the edge of the trough but did not show evidence of supporting barrier boards as with other troughs on the isthmus. The float valve is intact. The trough is in fair condition.

Pila Figueroa (contributing)

This trough, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located off the north side of the ridge road about one and a third miles directly east/northeast of the Navy base. This trough was split by fences to serve the animals in three pastures: Merquitez, Limu and Loma Pelona. A separating corral and a holding pasture flank the trough on the east and west sides. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, retains its float valve, and once had a 2 by 8 board barrier

attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough; most of the boards are gone. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. The trough is empty and in poor condition.

Pila Merquitez (contributing)

This trough, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located at the east end of the ridge road at the location in which that road becomes a trail leading over the Montañon to the east end of Santa Cruz Island. The 12 by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, retains its float valve, and once had a 2 by 8 board barrier attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough; most of the boards are gone. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. The trough is empty and in poor condition. A fence encloses the trough system. Nearby, outside the enclosure to the east, are the ruins of a salt house.

Pila Moullet (contributing)

This watering spot no doubt takes its name from Jules Moullet, Santa Cruz Island Company's superintendent as of 1890. This concrete trough, installed by the Stantons in the early 1950s, is located near the bottom of a road that leaves the ridge road at its east end. The 12- by 16-foot concrete trough was constructed with 5-inch thick walls about 20 inches high, retains its float valve, and once had a 2 by 8 board barrier attached to steel posts set in the corners of the trough; most of the boards are gone. A five-foot wide concrete apron surrounds it. The trough is empty and in poor condition, with deteriorating corners and encroaching vegetation. The 1.3-mile long, 1 ½-inch galvanized steel pipeline from Pila Merquitez to Pila Moullet appears to be intact.

Dams

No man-made ponds have been observed on the isthmus by this author, but a number of natural, seasonal pools have been located or spoken of. Lyndal Laughrin of UCSB has told of vernal pools that may exist in the Loma Pelona pasture in the southeast part of the isthmus. Coast Survey Sub-Assistant William Johnson mapped numerous natural pools in 1859, including two above the later site of Rancho del Norte and two in the hills above Chinese Harbor. A pond in the Lake Pasture is a natural feature and was noted as such in Johnson's survey. The pond, called Laguna Seca, is dry in the summer and fall months.⁶⁷⁶

It seems to have been generally thought that the seasonal pond at Mt. Pleasant, called Kloppenberg Lake (after a man based at the Navy station) by Dr. Stanton, was formed by the construction of the Navy Road around 1950. However, U. S. Coast Survey Sub-Assistant William Greenwell mapped the "laguna" in 1857 (in relation to the benchmark set at nearby Mt. Pleasant), and the pond was noted as a "water hole" on a 1919 ranch map. The trail between the main ranch and the east end passed the pond on the south until

⁶⁷⁶Interview with Lyndal Laughrin by the author, November 8, 1999; U. S. Coast Survey, *Map of a part of the Island of Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara Channel, California*, Surveyed by William Johnson, 1859, NA-CP, RG 23.

being replaced sometime before 1940 by a graded road that descended the ridge to the west with a switchback, passed the pond on the north and curved around its east side to the saddle between the north and south peaks of Mt. Pleasant. This pond, which has been fenced for many years, is dry in the summer and fall months. While the Navy indeed enlarged the road opposite the pond with fill, it has had no apparent effect on the pond itself.⁶⁷⁷

Vegetation

Most historic vegetation on the isthmus of Santa Cruz Island is located at Prisoners Harbor and Rancho del Norte and has been discussed above. Much of the non-native vegetation was brought to the island, intentionally or not, with the ranching operations. Fennel is widespread and invasive, and is not historically significant in its present form. The historic open range landscape retains no integrity due to the release from grazing in 1987, and subsequent vegetative growth with extensive growth of chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitats.

The only other notable example of alien vegetation found is a eucalyptus tree at Chinese Harbor, marking the onetime site of a fisherman's cabin. The tree is in poor condition but may be historically significant in the context of a larger cultural landscape.



A view into Cañada del Puerto at Prisoners Harbor, circa 1890.
Courtesy of the descendants of Frederic F. Caire

⁶⁷⁷“Santa Cruz Island Co., Plat of Potrero Norte,” March 1919, SCIF; 1940 aerial survey photo, CHIS; interview with Jesus Ildefonso by the author, November 12, 2000; correspondence with Peter Schuyler.

Summary list of historic buildings, structures and features potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

The Gherini Ranch (East End)

Buildings at Scorpion Ranch

- Masonry Building (old *Cucina/Dormitoria*)
- Owners' Residence (Bunkhouse)
- Implement Shed
- Outhouse
- Meat House
- Dairy Cave
- Potato Cave

Buildings at Smugglers Ranch

- Masonry Building

Ruins and Sites, East End

Barn Foundations

- Sacatera No. 104, Campo Toros
- Sacatera No. 105, Campo Cruce
- Campo Grande Hay Barn, circa 1917
- Sacatera No. 103, Campo Maximo (Grande)
- Sacatera No. 106, Campo Alfalfa, 1878
- Sacatera(s) in Fields No. 203 & 201 (Smugglers Field)

- Collapsed "wine cave" at Smugglers

Rock Walls and Check Dams

Rock Piles

Lime Kilns at Scorpion and Smugglers ranches

Roads and Trails

- Valley Road
- Main Ranch Trail
- Original Road and 1885 Variation to Smugglers Ranch
- Second (Current) Road circa 1892 to Smugglers Ranch
- First Road to Cavern Point, Campo Maximo and Potato Harbor
- Second Road to Campo Maximo and Beyond
- Road into Aguaje

Fences, Gates and Corrals

- Fence Lines
- Sheep Wings
- Scorpion shearing pen remnants

Pastures and Fields

Mag Line Poles

Water Systems and Erosion Control

- Scorpion Wells, Windmill and Troughs
- Scorpion Concrete Reservoir
- Scorpion Water Tanks Site
- Smugglers Well, Windmill and Troughs
- Developed Springs

Landings and Anchorages

Abandoned Airfields: Smugglers and Campo Grandes

Vegetation

- Eucalyptus Groves
- Monterey Cypress and other historic trees in Scorpion Valley
- Delphine's Grove

Olive Orchard at Smugglers
Walnut and Fruit Orchard at Smugglers
Fig trees at Scorpion and Smugglers

The Isthmus

Prisoners Harbor
 Lookout (TNC Property)
 Warehouse
 Scale House, loading chute, squeeze chute, troughs
 Well
 Vegetation (partial): eucalyptus, stone pines, yerba mansa
 Fencing remnants

Rancho del Norte
 Ranch House
 Corrals and Sheds
 Vegetation

Ruins and Sites on the Isthmus
 Campo China
 WWII Coastal Lookout Camp Site

Roads and Trails
 Main Ranch to East End
 Prisoners Harbor to Corrales Viejos
 Prisoners Harbor to Ridge
 Ridge to Rancho del Norte
 Ridge to Chinese Harbor
 Ridge to Loma Pelona Pasture
 Ridge to Cañada de Calera
 (all others)

Fences and Gates

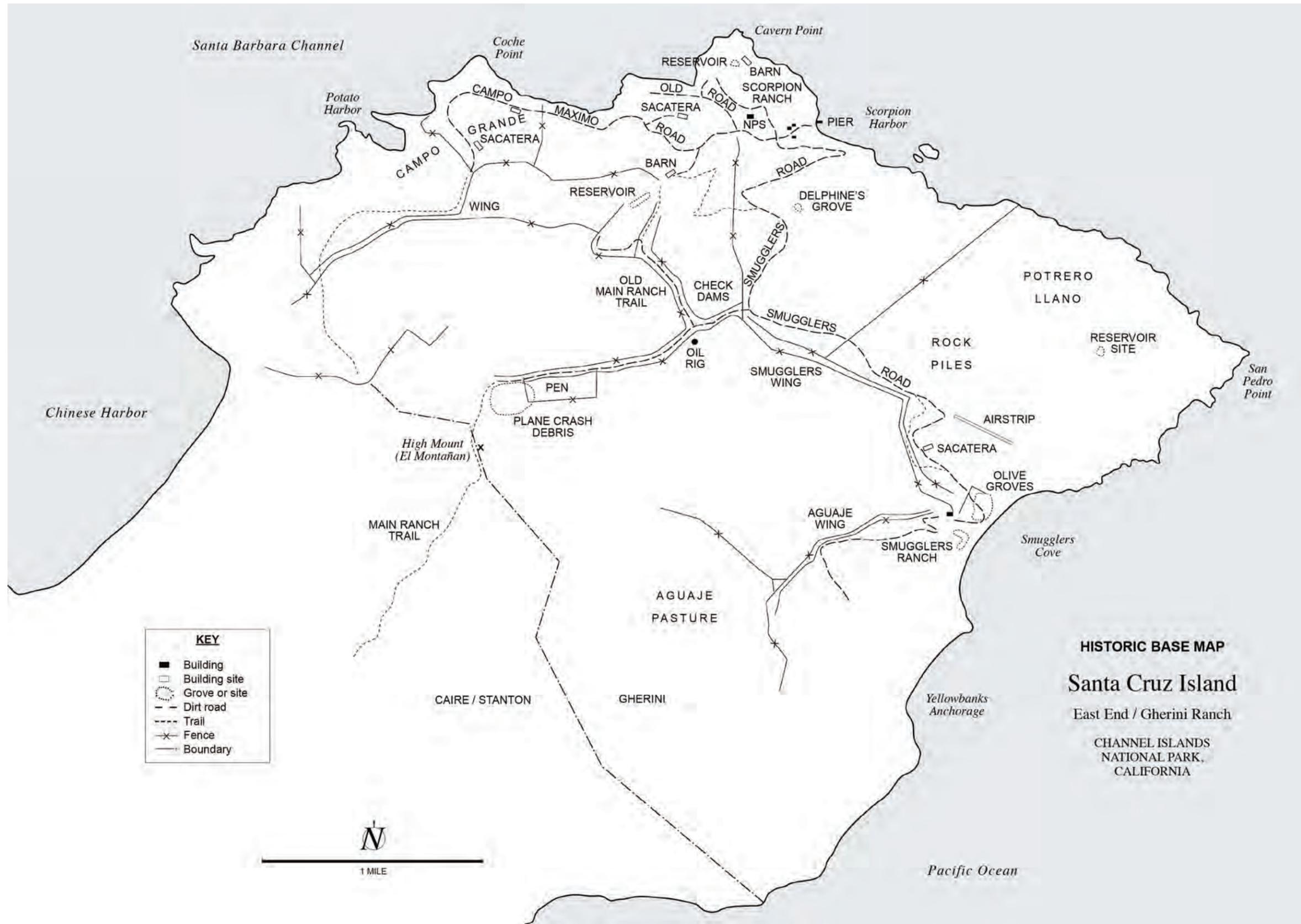
Pastures and Fields

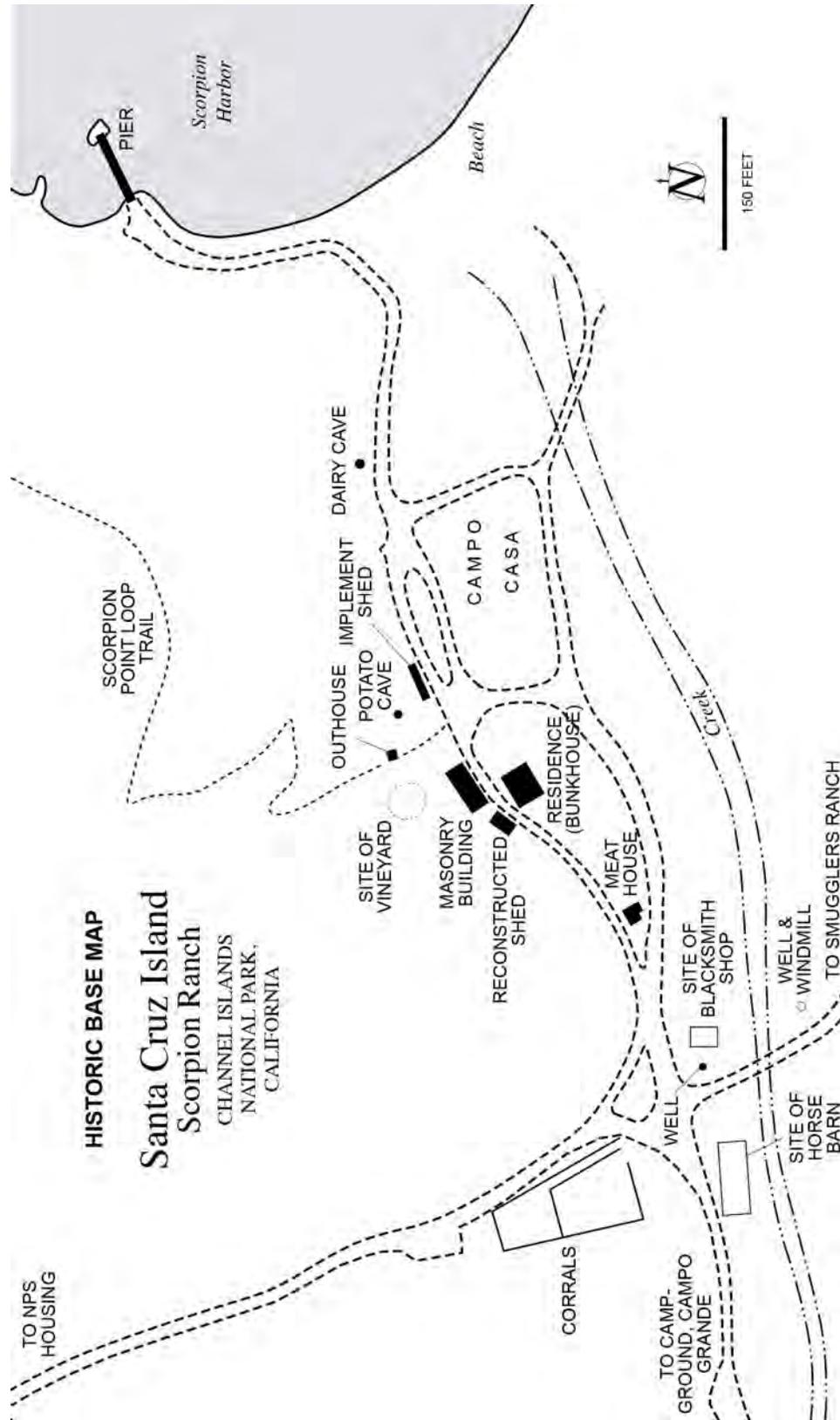
“Mag Line” poles

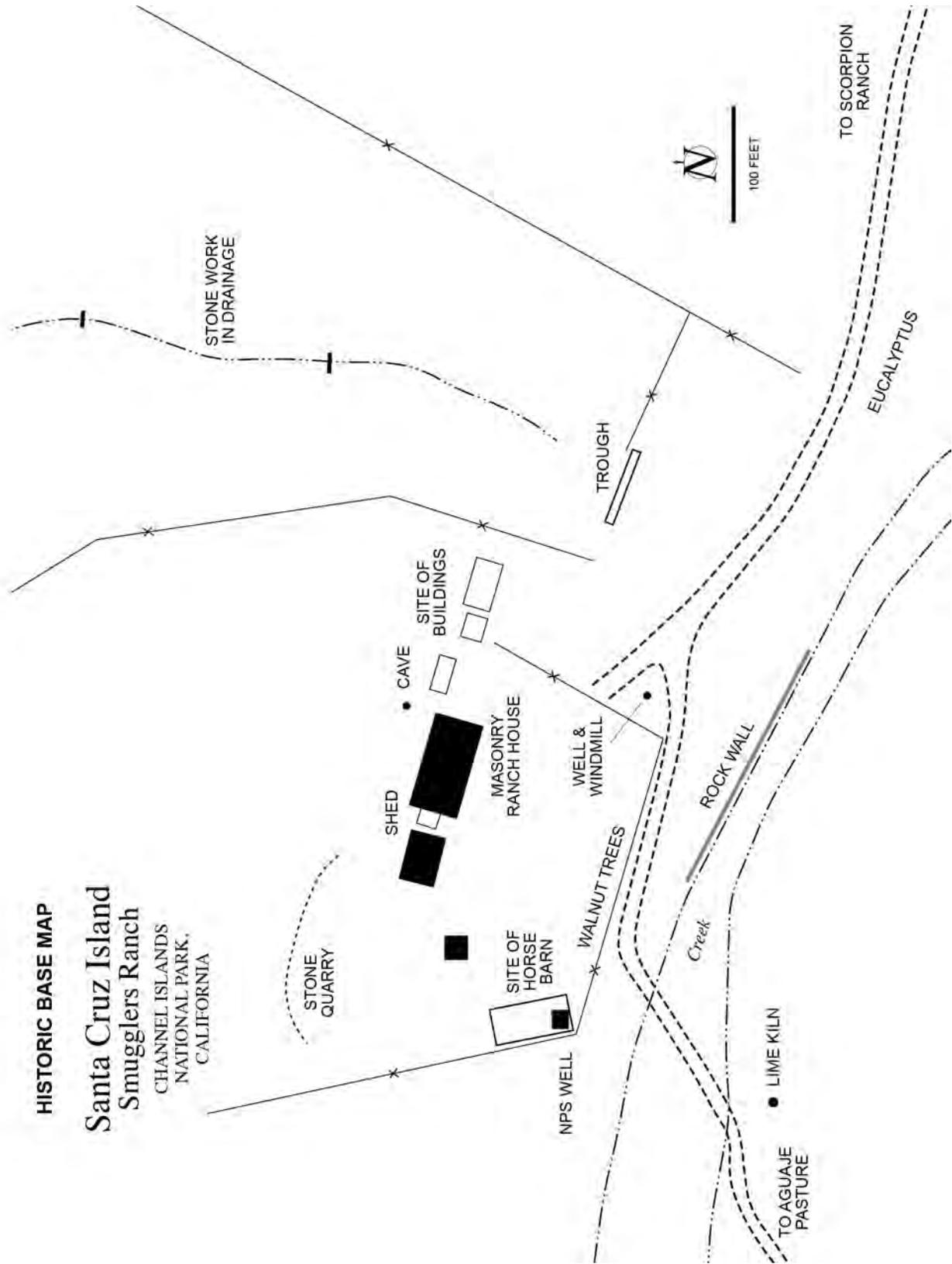
Water Systems
 Wells
 Developed Springs
 Water tanks, pipelines and troughs (*pilas*)

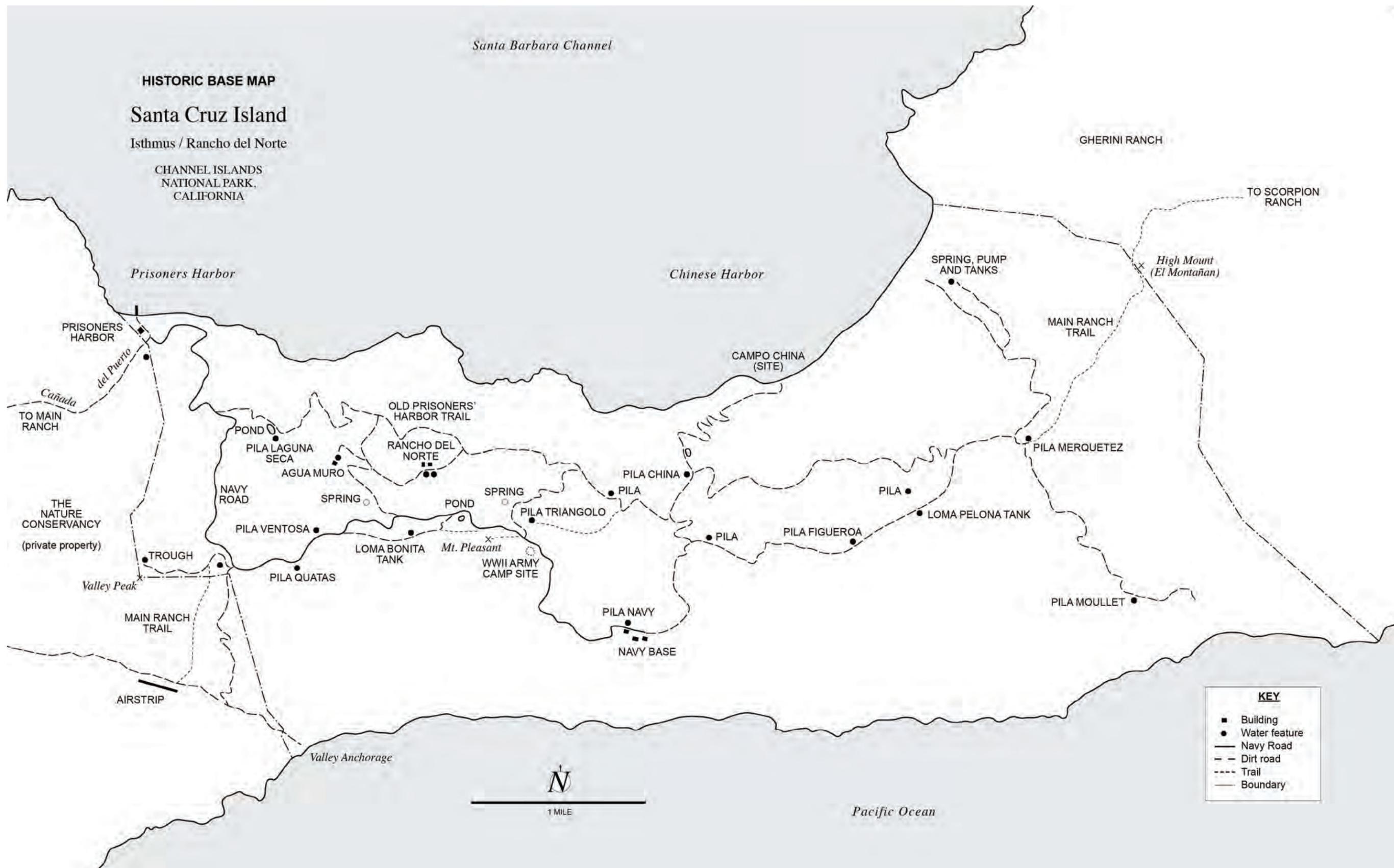
Vegetation
 Eucalyptus tree at Chinese Harbor

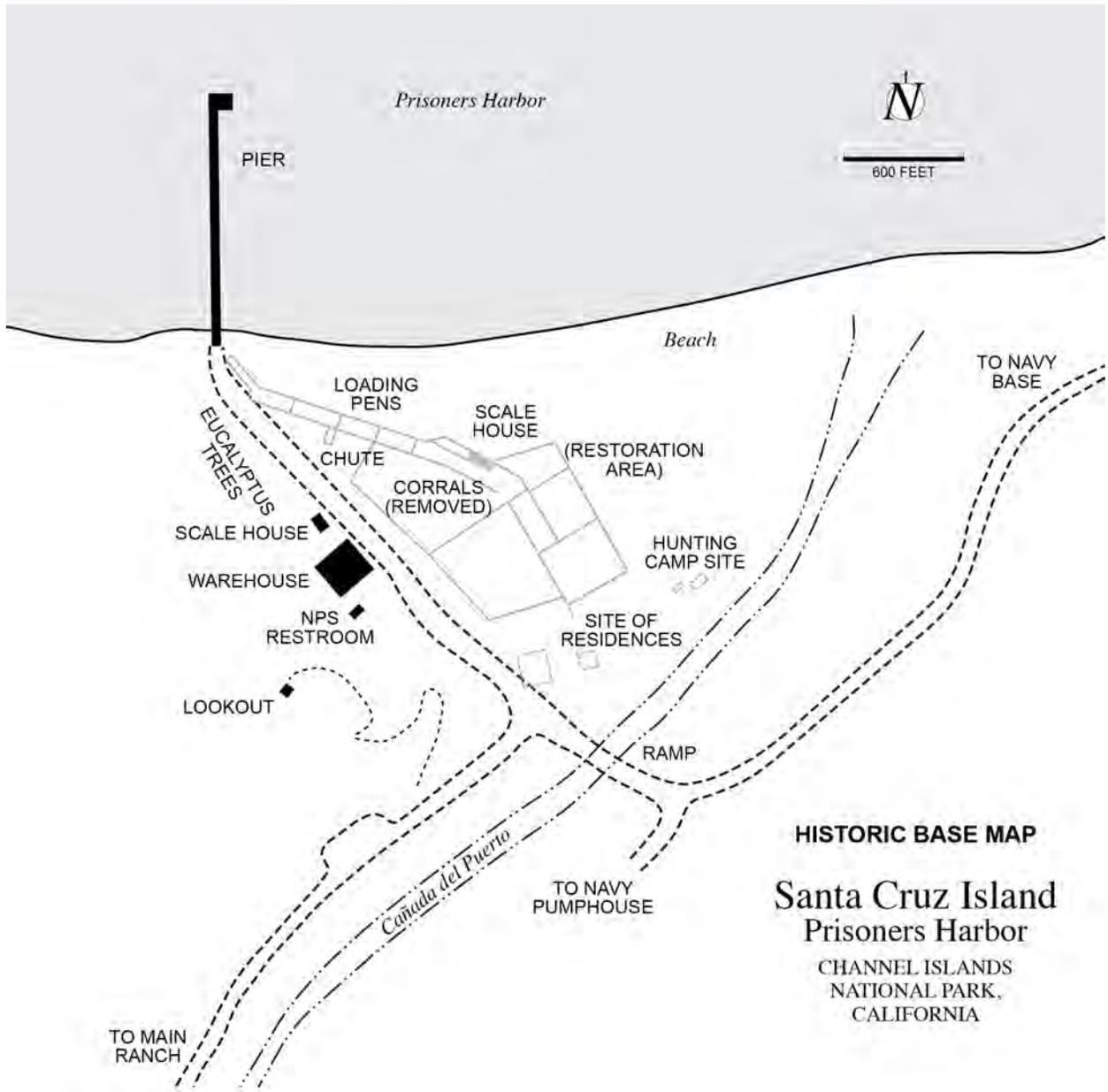
[blank page]











[blank page]

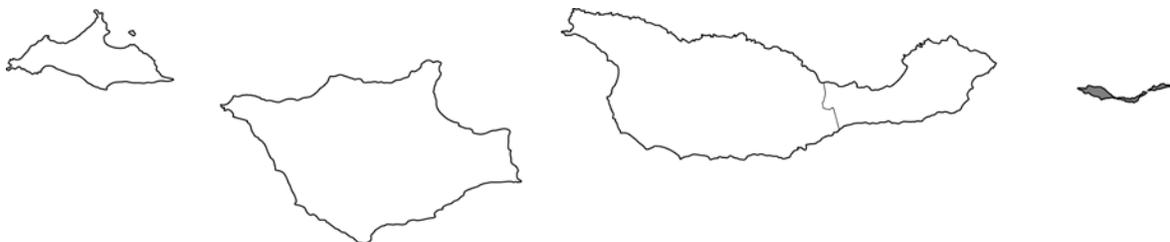
Section 5

ANACAPA ISLAND



*Up out of the water rose the 7,000-pound boat,
her crew and passengers. The boom swung us into a
custom-made cradle and our 50-foot flight to Anacapa ended.*

Charles Hillinger, 1956



Physical Description

Anacapa Island is a narrow group of islets six miles long, running in a roughly east-west orientation. Its segments are the peaks of the easterly extension of a submarine ridge that is composed of Miocene Conejo Volcanics and interbedded San Onofre Volcanics. It lies thirteen miles from Port Hueneme on the California coast. Anacapa Passage is a deep channel of up to 31 fathoms and separates Anacapa proper by five miles from Santa Cruz Island to the west. The island is actually composed of three segments—East, Middle and West Anacapa—which have led it to be called the “Anacapas” in some of the literature. Each isle is unique; however, they have in common precipitous cliffs that drop off directly into the sea, especially on the south or seaward side where erosion has been strongest. East Anacapa was described by the sportsman/writer, Charles Holder, in 1910 as a

great tilted mesa reaching out into the sea. A piece had been cut out of it, and the isolated portion formed a vast sea arch through which a large yacht doubtless could sail The coast is a maze of strange caves eaten into the rock. Many of the caves are beneath or just at the surface, and are constantly hissing and growling like living things, and spouting water in great white flocculent masses with the marvelous force of compressed air.¹

Both East and Middle Anacapa have some fairly level areas at their tops, but West Anacapa differs in that it is wider and rises to an altitude of 930 feet in the form of a peak. The former two reach only to 325 (middle island) and 250 feet. The East islet is about 106 acres, and the West almost 450 acres, the entire system totaling 699 acres or slightly more than one square mile.

The island has a relatively diverse flora, which includes at least 150 indigenous plants (24 of which are endemic) and numerous introduced species. Relatively few faunal species have been documented, but include at least 69 species of birds, four of mammals, two of reptiles and one of amphibians. As with the other islands, marine mammals and shellfish prosper on Anacapa. Sheep grazing has been nonexistent on the island since about 1938 allowing vegetation such as the giant coreopsis to recover. The developed portion of the island is the east end of East Anacapa, where a Coast Guard light station has operated since 1932.

History of Anacapa Island²

Prehistory and Contact

Compared to the other Northern Channel Islands, Anacapa Island has seen limited archeological research. Twenty-seven prehistoric sites have been recorded, most of them located on Middle and West

¹Charles Frederick Holder, *The Channel Islands of California: A Book for the Angler, Sportsman, and Tourist* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1910), pp. 185 and 187. For descriptive data above, see J. H. Lipps, “Late Pleistocene History of West Anacapa Island,” *Bulletin Geological Society of America*, LXXV, pp. 1169-1170.

²This section is a revised version of text concerning Anacapa Island by Roberts, 1979.

islands. The name Anacapa comes from the Chumash word ‘*Anyapax* or *Eneepah*, meaning false view or mirage. Thus, Anacapa is the only one of the eight Channel Islands to maintain its aboriginal name.³

Radiocarbon dating indicates that the island was occupied as far back as 5,000 years ago. There are no known named Chumash villages on the island, and archeologists believe that the island supported seasonal encampments rather than permanent habitation.⁴

Few accounts have surfaced regarding prehistoric life on Anacapa. In the early 20th century, anthropologist John Harrington extensively interviewed a Mission San Buenaventura Chumash man, Fernando Librado, who related a story passed on orally through generations claiming that eight families traveled to Anacapa Island after a civil war on the mainland. They settled on the north side of the middle island and dug a hole to catch water; seepage at Indian Cave on the north shore of West Anacapa also served as a source. According to the story, the eight families left Anacapa for Santa Cruz Island and eventually spread to all the northern islands, being the first Chumash on the Channel Islands.⁵

European explorers passed the island but apparently never landed there. Cabrillo sighted Anacapa Island in 1542 and learned from nearby Indians that the island was uninhabited. Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño must have sighted Anacapa Island in 1595; he wrote of the islands of Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz as being “bare and sterile,” with “two or three small ones [islands] near them,” and then mentions “the easternmost island” which may have been Anacapa. Cermeño sailed on to Santa Monica Bay from the islands. As with Cermeño, Vizcaíno’s records were confusing as regards Anacapa. Ascensión’s account of the voyage clearly described the Santa Barbara Channel and refers to the “first [island] of the channel” as Santa Barbara but seems to be meaning Anacapa. It was near this island that a canoe propelled by four Indians approached the ship from the mainland, a distance considered too far to be today’s Santa Barbara Island. The maps of Vizcaíno’s expedition were also confusing, with San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz fairly well rendered but with another large island, too large to be an accurate portrayal of Anacapa, east of Santa Cruz. Off the east coast of this large island appeared three tiny islands. Bolaños noted “three farallones” to the east of Santa Cruz Island which no doubt were the Anacapas.⁶

Miguel Costansó with the Portolá expedition recorded West Anacapa as Falsa Vela or False Sail because of its similarity to a ship at sail, and the two others as Las Mesitas or “small table hills;” another account of that era by Juan Pérez named them Islotes de Santo Tomás. Vancouver, who affixed the

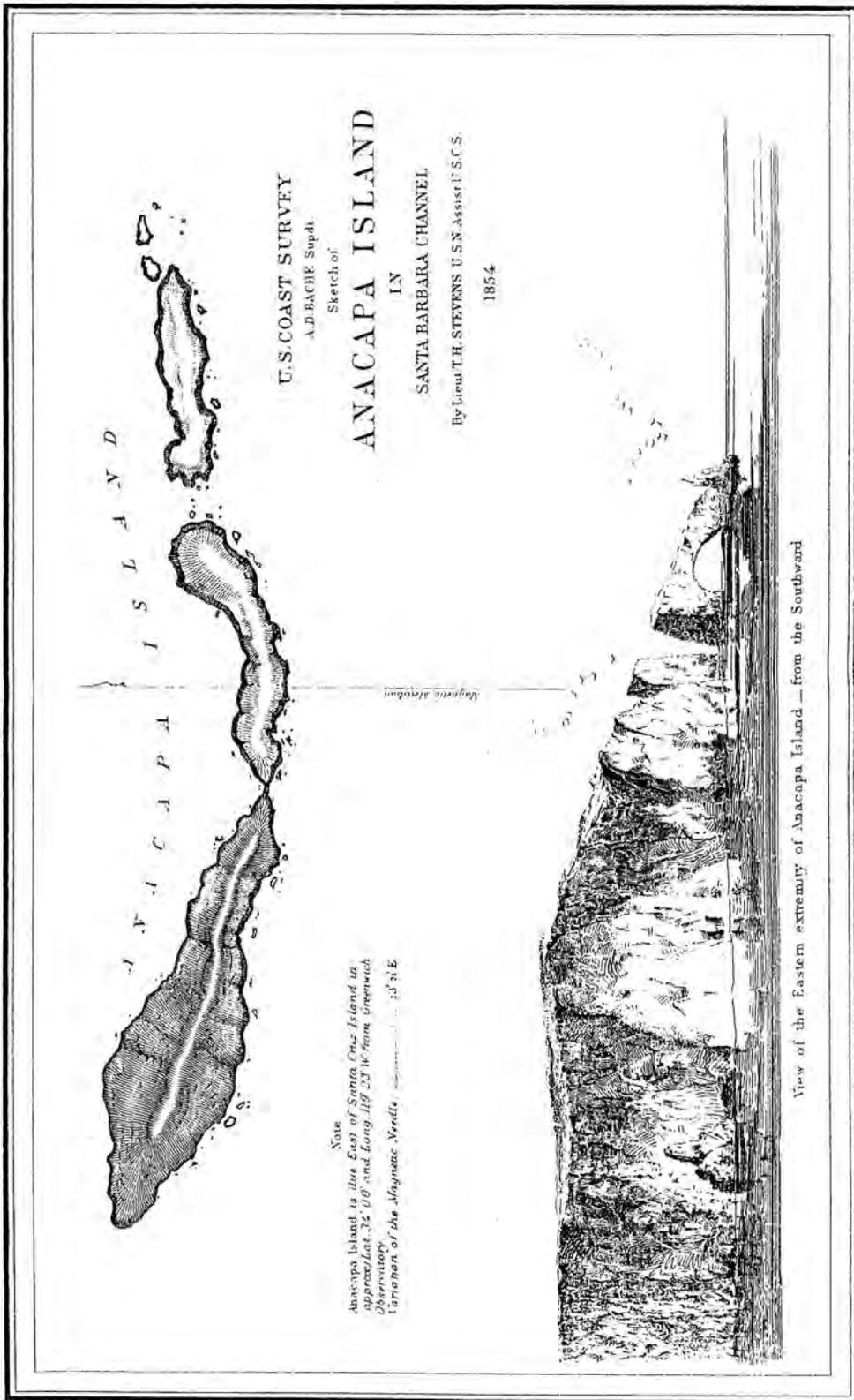
³ Glassow, Michael A., Editor and Compiler, *Channel Islands Archaeological Overview and Assessment* (National Park Service, December 2010).

⁴ Rick, Torben C. “A 5,000 Year Record of Coastal Settlement on Anacapa Island, California.” *Journal of California and Great Basin Archaeology*, Vol 26, No. 1, 2006, pp. 65-72.

⁵ *Ventura Weekly Free Press*, March 30, 1888, VCMH; Michael A. Glassow, *An Archaeological Overview of the Northern Channel Islands Including Santa Barbara Island* (Tucson: Western Archaeological Center, National Park Service, 1977), p. 50; Travis Hudson et al, Ed., *The Eye of the Flute: Chumash Traditional History as Told by Fernando Librado Kitsepawit to John P. Harrington* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1977), pp. 14, 100.

⁶ Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986), pp. 147-148; translation in Henry R. Wagner, “The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595” in *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 1, April 1924, pp. 17-18; Henry R. Wagner, “Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century” in *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. VII, No. 4, December 1928, pp. 352-354 and footnotes 138, 140, 145, pp. 388-389.

PLATE No. 616-A



James McNeil Whistler showed his artistic talents by adding flying birds to his 1854 rendering of Anacapa Island, to the disapproval of his superiors at the U. S. Coast Survey. *Channel Islands National Park*

accepted final names to the Channel Islands, called Anacapa *Eneapah* and recorded it as Enecapa on his chart. Not until 1854 did the present spelling appear on a map. No account of a landing on the island has been recorded prior to Coast Survey work in the early 1850s. The size and relative unimportance of the Anacapas left them largely unrecorded for a period of 250 years.⁷

European Settlement of Anacapa Island

The Mexican Government did not grant any part of Anacapa to private individuals during its administration of the island and thus the whole became part of the public domain of the United States in 1848. President Franklin Pierce issued an Executive Order on September 11, 1854, reserving the entire group of three islets comprising Anacapa for lighthouse purposes. A second Executive Order on January 26, 1867, issued by Andrew Johnson, reserved 20 acres each of certain lands on the West Coast for lighthouse purposes, including Anacapa Island, or a portion thereof. Various opinions were put forth; yet in practice, the entire island remained reserved for lighthouse purposes since the 1867 Order did not specify that any part of the reservation declared by the 1854 Order had been relinquished. Thus, in effect, the first reservation governed all matters of title and use of the island, and this was confirmed in a Department of the Interior opinion letter of July 16, 1901. Still, occasional maps to the contrary were drawn—such as the 1873 General Land Office map which showed only the ends of Anacapa but the whole of Santa Barbara Island in red and described the red areas reserved.⁸

The earliest known description of Anacapa by an American was an unsigned document among the U. S. Coast Survey logbooks dated September 1853. The writer recommended a landing on the north side of Middle Anacapa as the most practical to use in climbing up to the top. He described the remains of an old house there. The log entry was probably made by either Captain E. O. C. Ord or Assistant William Greenwell who traveled among the islands on the *Frolic* that year.⁹

H. Bay Webster hunted seals on Anacapa for five years beginning in 1890 with his schooner *Happy*, which he had purchased in San Francisco. He claimed that there had been only one shack on the island in 1884, that of a Chinese fisherman. He recalled to Don Meadows of the Los Angeles Museum that the seal hunters extracted oil using two large copper kettles near the shore of the middle island. Webster made seal oil, which was used in place of linseed oil, but only made 20 cents a gallon from a mere 15 to 20 gallons per season. He sold his last skins to a glue factory for 75 cents per 100 pounds. Webster then spent time at Santa Barbara Island where the northwestern point is named for him. Webster would return to Anacapa and spend ten years there as a sheep rancher.¹⁰

⁷Nomenclature information from Erwin G. Gudde, *California Place Names, the Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 10.

⁸Index of Transactions Affecting Interest in or Use of Coast Guard Property,” June 28, 1966, 11th CG, L&P; Letter B. Herman, General Land Office to Secretary of the Interior, File 757E, 1911, RG 26; Willis Drummond, General Land Office to George H. Elliot, Lighthouse Board, Jan. 7, 1873, File 757E, 1911, RG 26, NA(DC).

⁹“Anacapa” p. 54, GA Series 941, RG 23, NA(CP).

¹⁰Oral history interview with Don Meadows, February 22, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH # 0930. Meadows interviewed Webster in 1940 and read from his notes for the recording.



Elliot's camp was perched on a steep hillside on Middle Anacapa Island. The trail and eucalyptus trees remain. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



A group of prominent artists and naturalists, including Lorenzo Yates and artist Henry Chapman, posed at the beach on Middle Anacapa Island, with Elliot's Camp in the background. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*

Newspapers reported occasionally on events at Anacapa. In 1890 the *Ventura Free Press* reported that a party of boaters visited the island, encountering an encampment of Chinese abalone hunters and fishermen. “Great piles of abalone shells and dried fish gave evidence of their work,” wrote the reporter. The visitors employed a Chinese fisherman to row them around the island to the east island where “after a climb of nearly two hundred feet the party found themselves on a large mesa covered with rusty looking weeds. Here were found quantities of sea gull’s eggs, which were speedily appropriated, and the party returned to the schooner laden with eggs and shells.”¹¹

An abalone hunter named Captain Warner reported while on a trip to the mainland in 1873 that he had found “an exceedingly rich specimen of gold-bearing quartz” which he would further investigate. Apparently nothing came of the discovery, but in 1895 gold fever swept the island again. That July newspaper reported that the schooner *Restless* had returned with a party of prospectors, including Mr. Storke of Santa Barbara, who had made an excavation over eight feet deep and found rock that “was full of metal.” They returned with half a ton of rock that would be assayed in San Francisco. Two weeks later John Reseigh reported that “the Anacapa strike is a big thing,” which he expected to give an average of \$14 per ton, greater than what mines in the gold country of California were providing. Reseigh, reported to have had 53 years’ mining experience, was shopping for mining equipment with which to develop the Anacapa Island mine, for which he was willing to “risk everything.” Obviously, nothing ever came from this effort, either.¹²

Sheep Ranching

According to Bay Webster who had been a seal hunter at Anacapa in the 1890s, George Nidever had run sheep on the island and sold to a man named Mills, but he may have been confused with events on San Miguel Island. Webster recounted how Mills tried to chase him off the island the first time he came but that they later became good friends. According to Webster, Mills sold out to E. E. Elliot around 1885; indeed, Elliot had a sheep camp on the island around that time as evidenced by photographs in the Santa Barbara Historical Society collection. Elliot constructed a number of buildings on the middle island that became known as “The Houses” and planted eucalyptus trees that remain. He eventually abandoned his operation due to problems with poaching by fishermen. Elliot apparently had no government lease.¹³

The earliest lease recorded in lighthouse files was that awarded to Louis LeMesnager by the Department of Treasury for \$25 a year beginning April 1, 1902. According to Webster, LeMesnager may have started leasing on the island as early as 1897. Fire destroyed records of the 18th District Lighthouse Service in 1906 at the time of the great earthquake and fire in San Francisco, so only the Lighthouse Bureau Records, which shed no further light on LeMesnager or his lease, are extant.

Charles Holder, who visited the islands at about this time, called it a sheep ranch and reported that several hundred animals found sustenance there even in the summer. A herder volunteered that although

¹¹*Ventura Free Press*, May 30, 1890, VCMH.

¹²*The Daily Independent*, July 12 and 25, 1895, SCIF.

¹³Oral history interview with Don Meadows, quoting Webster.

there was no water, there was an abundance of fog. The moisture from this was soaked up by the sheep's coats and in the morning they licked each other to obtain water, a somewhat dubious story heard on other islands as well. In the spring, Indians and Mexicans were hired by the sheep owners to go to the island and shear the sheep.¹⁴

Popular writers have drawn from Holder's writing, which even claimed that ranchers from Ventura owned the island. The latter was not true, of course, since the Lighthouse Service was given a proprietary interest in the island and could not sell it. The man who accompanied the shepherd with whom Holder conversed claimed to be a State Senator. The so-called owner may have been LeMesnager or ranchers of Ventura simply using the island without legal entry.

Ranchers used Middle Anacapa for the main headquarters of their sheep operations. The livestock were landed on the northwest side of the island. Sheep survived on Anacapa year-round, but on a marginal basis. The island is verdant after the rains, but like a desert it is extremely dry and lacking in forage a large part of the year.

To improve forage, sheep ranchers reportedly introduced exotic grasses. As on the other sheep-grazing Channel Islands, a *matanza* was held periodically wherein many sheep were killed in order to save the rest from starvation. By the 1930s the hungry sheep had destroyed most of the native plants useful to them and had begun to eat the endemic *Astragalus miguelensis*. From this many sheep died, taking the profit out of sheep herding on Anacapa and helping to bring to an end the destruction of the island's flora.

In the early 1960s a one-room shack stood on Middle Anacapa with a tarpaper roof, which collected run-off water for the cistern below it. Francis R. Holland, Jr., a National Park Service Historian, wrote in 1963 of a rusty old fence on Middle Anacapa and an old drift fence far up mountainous West Anacapa.¹⁵

H. Bay Webster

The Department of Commerce and Labor leased Anacapa Island to H. Bay Webster of Ventura on April 1, 1907, for \$31 a year. The lease read "All the Island of Anacapa . . . consisting of three islets . . . and known as the Anacapa Light Reservation . . . for grazing and farming only." He could place on it no permanent buildings, and the lease noted that previous shepherders had left an old cistern. Webster bought 40 or 50 sheep on the island from previous lessee LeMesnager and another 250 merinos from the Caires on Santa Cruz Island. Webster increased the herd to about 600 through breeding but depredations by fishermen, eagles and drought resulted in continuous losses.¹⁶

Heaman Bayfield Webster, a former island seal hunter, long-time Ventura resident and assistant postmaster there under his father, established residence on the middle island with his wife Martha and two sons, Morris and Harvey. They built or reused five shacks to each of which they affixed a name: Camp Felicity, Camp Simplicity, Camp Capacity, Camp Intensity and Camp Necessity, the latter being an

¹⁴Holder, *Channel Islands*, p. 188.

¹⁵M. B. McKusick, "Introduction to Anacapa Island Archaeology." Annual Report, Archaeological Survey, Department of Anthropology-Sociology, University of California Los Angeles, 1939, p. 76; Holland, "Mission 66," Vol. III, D, p. 17; interview, E. R. Blakeley, January 10, 1978.

¹⁶The leases are held in File California 3, RG 26, NARA-DC; oral history interview with Don Meadows.

outhouse with a toilet flushed by sand. Camps Felicity and Simplicity had roofs, floors and furnishings while the others were less substantial. The location was apparently the one occupied by Elliot in the 1880s, marked by eucalyptus trees. Webster constructed a water storage tank, which he kept filled with water imported from the mainland in five-gallon cans. The family spent summers and two winters on the island tending the flock of sheep, and a caretaker stayed during the Websters' absences. The Websters welcomed vacationers who arrived in their own boats or on one of Bay Webster's charters. Early on the newspapers referred to him as the "King of Anacapa Island." In the fall of 1911 Webster set up a school in a tent for his children, and hired a governess for them. "He is pretty sure that he is the first man to ring a school bell on the island," wrote a reporter, "which he calls a strip of rock six miles long and something over an inch wide."¹⁷

Webster was fond of Indian artifacts and noted two village sites on the middle island. He found artifacts and remains on all three Anacapas, including a skull with an arrow through it, and a mortar in the "dripping cave" on the west island.

Webster obtained his income from tourism and wool sales. He sold no more than 50 sheep during the ten years on the island but concentrated on breeding and shearing. He herded the sheep from the west island towards the east where they were sheared, either hog-tying them for the inter-island trip in a boat or forcing them to swim the distance.¹⁸

H. Bay Webster was awarded the lease again on April 1, 1912, but only for Middle and West Anacapa since a light had been installed on East Anacapa. He bid \$381 a year, just 75 cents over his nearest contestant, Ira K. Eaton. He reportedly kept several hundred sheep there in 1917. During this period, Mr. E. G. Ruggles of the Lima Bean Growers Association of Oxnard, California, asked to lease East Anacapa Island in order to extract guano deposits from rocks off the eastern end. Since this was near the site of the unwatched light tower, his request was denied.

A year before his lease expired, Webster tried to obtain a longer lease so that he could feel justified in making extensive improvements. Having been informed of the limits of authority over the length of the lease held by the Department of Commerce, he wanted to have a bill introduced before Congress to make the term of the lease twenty-five years. This came to naught and in 1917, after the usual advertising, he bid \$381 again but lost to Ira Eaton of Santa Barbara who bid \$607.50. Eaton, who became a known rumrunner and was proprietor of the well-regarded Pelican Bay Camp on Santa Cruz Island, reportedly had a storage place for illegal liquor on Anacapa. Eaton was awarded the lease a second time in 1922 for \$676 per annum. At this time, Superintendent Rhodes expressed doubt about leasing the island again, and indeed no lease for the period 1927 to 1932 appears in the archives.¹⁹

¹⁷Karen Jones Dowty, "The Websters on Anacapa" in *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 21-24; unidentified news article dated October 31, 1907, SCIF; *Santa Barbara Independent*, September 30, 1911, SBMNH #2877E. Dowty's information came largely from interviews with Harvey Webster, son of H. Bay Webster.

¹⁸Oral history interview with Don Meadows, quoting Webster.

¹⁹See leases and letter Rhodes to Commissioner, January 27, 1913, File 757E, 1911, RG 26, NA(DC); C. M. Gidney, Benjamin Brooks and Edwin M. Sheridan, *History of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties California* Volume I (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1917), p. 463.



Frenchy's Camp on West Anacapa Island was pictured on this post card, labeled "Webster Bay." Middle Anacapa Island dominates the photograph. *Santa Barbara Historical Society*



Frenchy with two visitors in July of 1939. *Channel Islands National Park*

A public notice, “Sale of Rock at Anacapa Island Lighthouse Reservation, California” was issued by Superintendent Rhodes on November 26, 1926. It asked for sealed bids on the sale of approximately 160,000 tons of rock to be taken from the reservation. Middle and Western Anacapa, it recited, were leased for grazing and farming and those industries should not be interfered with. “The point or points at which the rock is quarried must be approved by the Government and the lessee of the reservation.” All buildings and equipment had to be removed within 60 days after the expiration of the period of two years allowed for the removal of the rock. The only bid received was for \$10, and Rhodes advised not to take it for rock that was presumed to be worth up to \$10,000.²⁰

C. Fay Chaffee and Others

C. Fay Chaffee leased the middle and western Anacapas on April 1, 1932, for \$760 a year. Like previous lessees he could use it only for grazing and farm purposes. He could erect no permanent buildings on the land or in the water, and all structures he did construct had to be removed within two months from the date of the expiration of his lease. Chaffee’s lease is one of the few complete leases in the archives. The clause regarding removal of structures was probably common to all of them and would help explain why so little remains in the way of human improvements. Even the fallen fences were left in violation of the leases.

Neither was the lessee permitted to do any excavation or to cut trees. Chaffee’s lease had the usual clause preventing him from sub-leasing. Nevertheless, on June 8 of the same year he entered into contract with J. M. Johnson of the Redlands Investment Company, according to which he gave

. . . the exclusive right and privilege of the free and unrestricted use of the said leased Island for the purpose of the propagation, for the entire period of the said lease, of any and all game birds and the selling of the same and of the granting of the privilege to any and all individuals of the right to hunt for and to kill such game birds on such terms and under such conditions as the second party shall impose, subject to the approval of the Lighthouse Division of the United States Government It is agreed that . . . the second party agrees to not in any way compete with or conflict with the fishing business enterprises of the first party [Chaffee].

Johnson’s American Game Bird Company intended to stock the island with game birds and to conduct an extensive reforestation program planting such trees and plants as supposedly once grew there before their destruction by grazing. Chaffee’s enterprise, it appeared, was to be that of conducting fishing parties over to the island, and both would share the costs of a suitable boat landing. The agreement, although Chaffee claimed it not to be a sub-lease, was rejected. In July, Johnson made formal application to buy Middle and West Anacapa, bidding \$2,000; the property, however, was not for sale.

Chaffee’s lease expired on April 1, 1937, and Rhodes wrote to him in June requesting that he remove his buildings and other property from the island if he had not already done so. The lighthouse keeper at Anacapa Island had notice to inspect the property and report upon the removal. Keeper C. R. Coursey

²⁰File 757E, 1926, RG 26, NA(DC).

replied in July that Mr. Chaffee had run no livestock on the island during the term of his lease but that he had erected buildings. One was occupied by two radio operators from the Coast and Geodetic Survey boat *Pioneer*, who expected to be there all summer. A second was occupied by one Charles Johnson, erstwhile “Mayor” of Anacapa Island, who had lived on the island for about five years. Mr. Johnson asked Coursey to solicit Rhodes for a permit allowing him to remain on the island. In return, he offered to be an unofficial caretaker of buildings and to discourage wild parties on the island. Coast and Geodetic Survey backed up their request with a letter asking that they be allowed to use the existing eighteen by twelve foot building and a shack five by eight which they had put up. They promised to remove them both when they left unless instructed otherwise.

H. Bay Webster recalled a slightly different story to Don Meadows. He claimed that two men named Dabney and Allen succeeded Chaffee and built the cabins at what would be called Frenchy’s Cove as a pleasure resort. It was they who were evicted when the island became a National Monument in 1938. Raymond LeDreau moved into the cabins after they left, presumably. Webster described other inhabitants of the island before 1930. Carl Corvelein, a Swede, lived at East Fish Camp in a lone shanty on the rocks. Webster called Corvelein a friendly and talkative man. Raymond “Frenchy” LeDreau recalled that his friends Al Derby and Merle Allen built cabins at the Elliot sheep camp where Webster later lived. LeDreau described the cabins by number. Chaffee, planning to construct a sea wall and pier at the landing for a resort, had evicted LeDreau from the island in 1932 although he returned later. According to LeDreau, Derby and Allen built a cookhouse on the site of the old chicken shed in 1932 and two cabins in 1934. Another cabin, called number two, had a concrete floor laid by Webster’s father-in-law and was added to by fisherman Fred Peterson. He described the old Webster home as a three-room house that was blown down by a heavy northeaster before 1940. Cabin number three had been occupied by an Italian fisherman named Augustine Cusani; later, in 1931 according to LeDreau, a fisherman named Ivor Steen committed suicide with Frenchy’s knife, and some suspected Frenchy of murder. Longtime fisherman Charlie Johnson died of old age in another of the cabins in 1938; he had evidently been allowed to stay by Rhodes, or perhaps was a squatter.²¹

Since Lighthouse policy was to keep the landscape free of shacks, equipment, and human debris brought on the island by lessees, it is presumed they selected removal. Rhodes made the usual request to lease the island again in 1937 for a five-year period, but the Commissioner of Lighthouses advised against it, giving as cause the Act of August 27, 1935, 49 Stat. 885 (Public No. 351). That statute dealt with disposal of unused property by government agencies. Rhodes was instructed to file a form reporting on the surplus area of Anacapa; and as the matter progressed, we know that the property was declared excess and in 1938 fell under the administration of the National Park Service. Most sheep were then removed from the island when the ranching period came to an end, but in the 1960s a few were said to serve as mascots to the lighthouse personnel.²²

Ranching was not the only commercial activity on Anacapa prior to 1938 as even from the earliest recorded times we read of a fisherman’s or lobsterman’s hut. An egg-picker’s cabin sketched for an article

²¹Oral history interview with Don Meadows, who read from notes of his interview with Raymond “Frenchy” LeDreau on August 23, 1940, SBMNH.

²²In a videotaped oral history interview, Alice Grimes noted that there were three sheep on East Anacapa in the early 1960s.

in *Harpers Magazine*, 1898, with an arch shaped rock in the background may have been on Anacapa. The article informs us of the eggs of several island birds, such as the cormorant, which were considered useless for human consumption but describes the gull egg as palatable. It claims that it became known in the 1850s that the Channel Islands were repositories of edible eggs. At the same time, San Francisco suffered a shortage of eggs but had plenty of gold. Many people came to the islands to gather eggs, quarreled over sites, and competed with birds who at times raided each others' nests.²³

Raymond “Frenchy” LeDreau

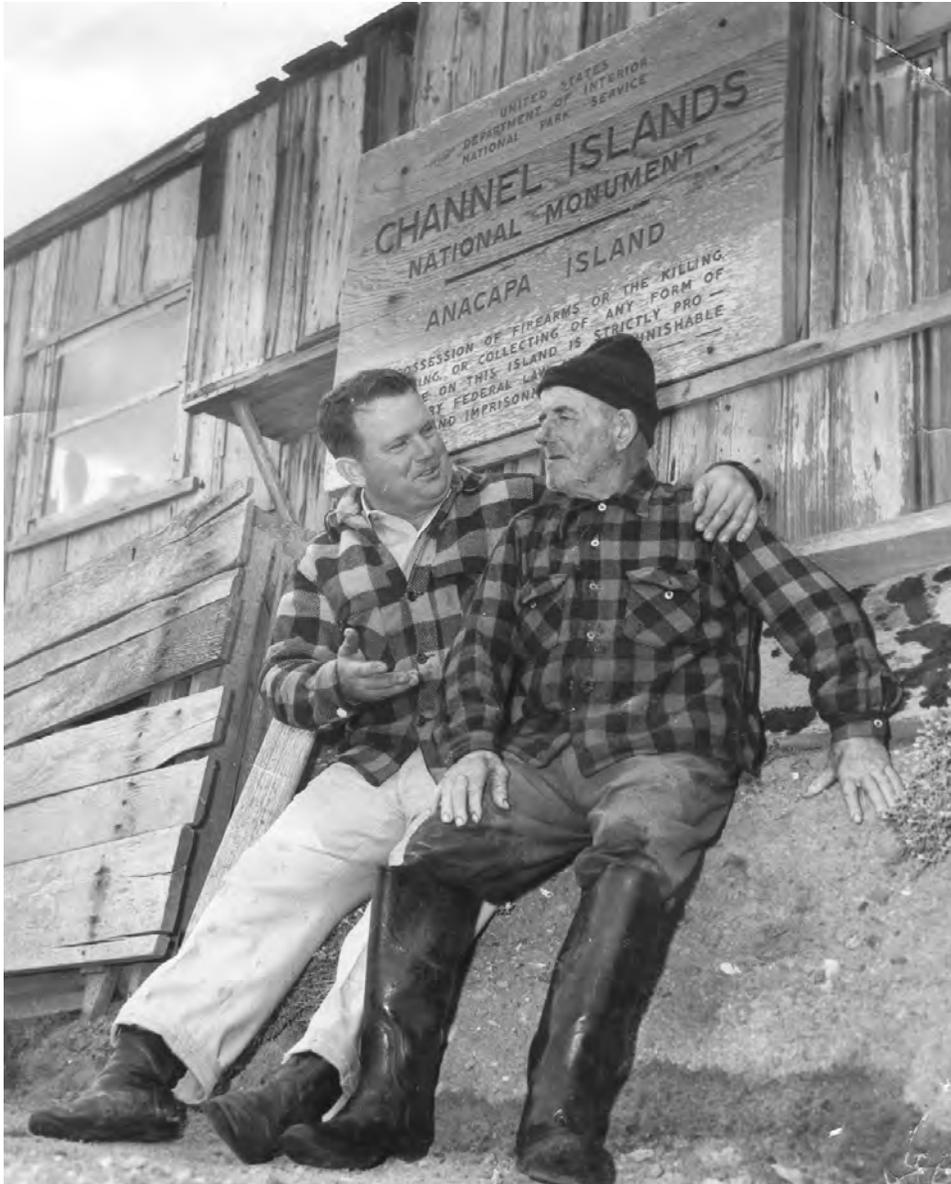
Best known to Anacapa visitors and National Park Service personnel was Raymond “Frenchy” LeDreau, an emigrant from Brittany, France, who arrived on Anacapa in 1928 prior to the establishment of the National Monument. LeDreau had studied for the priesthood but became disenchanted with the church and so took to the sea. He reportedly joined the U. S. Navy and fought in the Spanish-American War. While on leave in California he met a woman named Emma and married, producing three children. His wife died in the 1918 flu epidemic and in his grief LeDreau took up fishing, drinking and the life of a hermit. After settling on Anacapa he built or adopted several huts perched on a ledge overlooking what would be called Frenchy’s Cove. With no natural water source, he gathered rainwater in barrels, and collected driftwood for fires. LeDreau focused his energies on lobster fishing, for which he constructed wood and wire traps held afloat by empty wine bottles. He sold fish to passing Larco Company boats, and Larco grubstaked him in the off-season. He acted as a popular host to fishermen and island visitors on boats, as related by historian Karen Jones Dowty:

In his customary red flannels and a three-day stubble on his face, Frenchie would be stoking the fire from a wood pile that housed his colony of semi-wild cats. Beer and wine would be passed around. The sea stories would start and so would another day in Frenchie’s Cove.²⁴

Friends old and new brought him food and supplies in return for lobster, abalone and conversation. He was an educated man, apt to discuss literature and sing an aria in a tenor voice. LeDreau also served as watchman over caches of liquor temporarily stashed in certain caves and the chicken coop on the island during prohibition and made “good money.” LeDreau told Don Meadows about the time when a purse seiner loaded with 1,000 cases of Scotch whiskey approached the island in need of storage, so LeDreau

²³John E. Bennett, “Our Seaboard Islands” in *Harpers Magazine*, ILVII, p. 861.

²⁴Karen Jones Dowty, “Frenchie” in *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 25-26. Dowty spelled his name Frenchie while most sources use Frenchy. LeDreau told Don Meadows that he preferred being addressed as Raymond.



Raymond "Frenchy" LeDreau and a visitor, circa 1950s. *Channel Islands National Park*

showed the crew a large cave near his camp. For three days' storage he received five cases of whiskey, fifty dollars and an equal amount worth of supplies.²⁵

LeDreau's livelihood could have been threatened by the creation of Channel Islands National Monument in 1938 but for his beguiling character and interest in the island's natural history. When park service biologist Lowell Sumner visited Anacapa that year to evaluate its resources, he found that LeDreau exhibited an accurate knowledge of and interest in the pelicans and other wildlife, and suggested that he be

²⁵Ibid., pp. 27-28; Sidney E. Lang, "The Frenchman of Anacapa Island," from unidentified magazine, copy at SCIF; Francis R. Holland, "Master Plan for Channel Islands National Monument Mission 66 Edition," June 1963, 429512, NPS Records, NA(SB), p. 17; oral history interview with Don Meadows.

given some sort of minor custodianship and authorization to warn away would-be egg collectors. “Mr. LeDreau was exceedingly friendly and helpful to the investigating party. He is undoubtedly a conscientious well meaning person who would be happy to assist in the preservation of the various features of the island.” The only drawback was Frenchy’s cats, but Sumner dismissed their dangers to wildlife by explaining that they were well fed by their master. “In any event,” wrote Sumner, “it is recommended that the livelihood of Mr. LeDreau not be interrupted and that he be allowed to remain on the island as long as he desires.” By 1941 LeDreau was receiving copies of Superintendent Scoyen’s letters and called an informal caretaker. Park personnel established camp with him when they visited the island, stayed in his cabins, and used his rowboat and outboard motor. LeDreau chased off vandals and reported on happenings at the island during the early years of the national monument. The only other inhabitant on the island as of June 1939 was a lobster fisherman named Cal Vollin who was said to have lived there for many years. For years Frenchy’s cabins appeared in photographs of the cove area and his presence became known farther afield.²⁶

Sidney Lang of Bakersfield visited with Frenchy LeDreau in 1950 when he and friends established camp for a week at Frenchy’s Cove. Lang considered LeDreau to be a hermit who enjoyed company:

We invaded his privacy without notifying him or seeking permission. This seemed to please him rather than perplex him. From the first he was friendly and helpful. He greeted us with all of the expressions of happiness of which a Frenchman is capable short of kissing us on the cheek. He made us feel that we had been long expected and that he was glad we had arrived.

Lang described LeDreau’s bouts with alcohol, his expertise at locating fishing spots and his dirty cabin, where the walls “were nearly obscured by smoke from the kerosene stove and lamps and the grease from many skillets of sea food.” But Frenchy had a fine view of the ocean through the shack’s window, and his personality made up for any shortcomings in housekeeping. Lang wrote that LeDreau’s attire

seemed to fit his situation but did not invite close association. His cap, shirt and pants were stained, spotted, and glazed from toiling with things of the sea. Long underwear gasped for fresh air where loose buttons and shirt sleeves allowed it to escape. It took only minutes to find that his character contrasted with his outward appearance.²⁷

The National Park Service allowed LeDreau to stay as a caretaker into the 1950s. Superintendent Scoyen visited with Frenchy in the fall of 1950 and then wrote to his superiors that “Mr. Raymond (Frenchy) LeDreau still maintains residence on the island. Neither Frenchy nor his shack show any change, except that additional junk has accumulated around the place . . . I think all are agreed to leave the old Frenchman undisturbed.” A bureaucrat in the San Francisco office agreed with Scoyen’s assessment, writing that LeDreau “does a little lobster fishing and is quite old, and may well be permitted to end his

²⁶Letters, Scoyen to John Comstock, Jan. 6, 1941; Memorandum, Victor H. Cahalane, Acting Chief, Wildlife Division to Dr. Russell, et al, August 14, 1939, quoting Sumner report of June 28, 1939; Report, Superintendent Tobin to Scoyen, Oct. 28, 1941; NPS Records, Box 202302, NA(SB).

²⁷Lang, “The Frenchman.”



The original Anacapa Island Light, a steel skeleton tower located at a lower elevation than today's lighthouse. *Channel Islands National Park*

days there. His cabin is clean, but the surroundings should be better policed . . .” Raymond LeDreau continued to act as the caretaker and greeter at Anacapa until, at age 80, falling from the cliff near his shack, sustaining severe injuries. He was reportedly found semi-conscious and bloody by passing fishermen, who took him to the mainland for treatment. He apparently returned to his cove but the park service decided that it would be in his best interest to leave the isolated island and so, after 28 years on Anacapa, Raymond “Frenchy” LeDreau was taken to Santa Barbara where he lived for several years and died in 1962.²⁸

Anacapa Light Station

Lighthouses have been administered by several different Federal government agencies during the period under study here. Prior to 1852, the Fifth Auditor of the U. S. Department of Treasury was responsible and he operated through the local collectors of customs, which helps to explain why the Channel Islands received so little attention until Los Angeles Harbor developed. In 1852, a Lighthouse Board was created and California fell into the 12th and last district. In 1903, this was transferred from the Department of Treasury to the Department of Commerce and Labor; when the latter department split, Lighthouses fell to the Commerce Department.

In 1939 the Lighthouse Bureau went out of existence and all aids to navigation were transferred to the U.S. Coast Guard, which had been created in the Treasury Department in 1915. During World War II, the Coast Guard, and thus Navigational Aids, operated under the Department of Navy; both were transferred back to the Treasury Department in 1946. The Coast Guard was transferred to the Department of Transportation in 1967 and then to the Department of Homeland Security in 2002.

The wreck of the *Winfield Scott* in 1853 directed attention to the need for a navigational aid on Anacapa Island almost as soon as it had become United States property. An Executive Order, September 11, 1854, reserved the entire island. Charles Hillinger wrote that when members of the U. S. Coast Survey team visited Anacapa that year they reported that it was an ideal but impossible site for a light station. Quoting a report, Hillinger wrote, “It is inconceivable for a lighthouse to be constructed on this mass of volcanic rock—perpendicular on every face, with an ascent inaccessible by any natural means”²⁹

Nevertheless, in 1868 the Lighthouse Board requested funds from Congress. The maritime needs of the West Coast were still unfamiliar to the eastern administrators, but to satisfy the clamor for an aid, Congress financed a much less expensive mainland station at Point Hueneme. This began operation in 1874. Coastal shipping, and especially the toll in lumber schooners finally convinced the Bureau of Lighthouses to authorize a temporary acetylene light for the south side of the easterly entrance to the Santa Barbara Channel on October 17, 1911.

After selecting a site with the help of Bay Webster, a fifty foot skeleton metal tower went up on the tip of East Anacapa some fifty feet east of the present structure. The light was on a ten second cycle, one

²⁸Superintendent [E. T. Scoyen] to Regional Director, February 13, 1950; Assistant Regional Director to Regional Director, February 15, 1950, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files, 1932-53, Cabrillo 501 to 660-02, Box 15, NA(SB); Lang, “The Frenchman.” Personal communication, Marla Daily.

²⁹Charles Hillinger, *The California Islands* (Los Angeles: Academy Publishers, 1958), p. 105.



The landing cove in September 1930, before construction of the stairs. *Channel Islands National Park*



Blasting the trail between the landing dock and upper east island, April 30, 1931. *Channel Islands National Park*

second light, and had a luminous range of twenty miles in clear weather. It could be left unattended for 187 days. In addition, a whistling buoy was anchored 5/8ths of a mile off the east end of the island.³⁰

A permanent lighthouse needed authorization by Congress and pressure continued for a better aid to navigation along the Channel. The American Association of Masters, Mates and Pilots claimed that nine-tenths of all vessels trading up and down the Pacific Coast were passing inside the islands of the Santa Barbara Channel. They wanted a fog signal as well as a light. On February 28, 1921, the tank steamer *Liebre* grounded on the east end of Anacapa Island directly under the light and sustained damages estimated at about \$40,000. Local inspectors at San Pedro reported to the director of the Coast and Geodetic Survey that no fog signal existed on the island and further that the east end whistling buoy was not in operation when the ship grounded since it had capsized.³¹

In 1928 the Bureau of Lighthouses allotted funds for fog signal and radio apparatus for Anacapa as well as boats and miscellaneous improvements for the water supply, sanitation, and grounds improvement. This was but the beginning of funds for one of the last major lighthouse complexes to be built on the West Coast. The Bureau of Lighthouses' Annual Report for 1929 gave an estimated total for the entire project of \$186,000.00. It included station residences, service buildings, hoisting derricks, a fog signal, and a radiobeacon. Bids for contracts to work on the roads and landing facilities were opened for contracts on January 15, 1930, and the Roth Construction Company turned in the lowest bid, \$28,950.

The Department of Commerce looked over the bids, had the Roth Company investigated, and found that its activities had been limited to small buildings in San Francisco and also that the company had on record liquidation damages and incompetence reports in regard to contracts with the War Department. Roth had no financial resources, no experience in heavy rockwork, and no floating equipment. Commerce suggested that the Bureau take the next lowest bidder (\$37,000), as it would cost less in the long run. It passed this decision along to the Lighthouse Superintendent Rhodes in San Francisco.

On February 27, Superintendent Rhodes wired the Commissioner in Washington D.C. that the Roth bid had been accepted and secured with a bond of the U. S. Fidelity and Guaranty Company. Irving C. Roth was instructed to go to work, as early completion of the station was urgent. The Secretary of Commerce discussed the case with the Comptroller General and was told he could not cancel the contract.

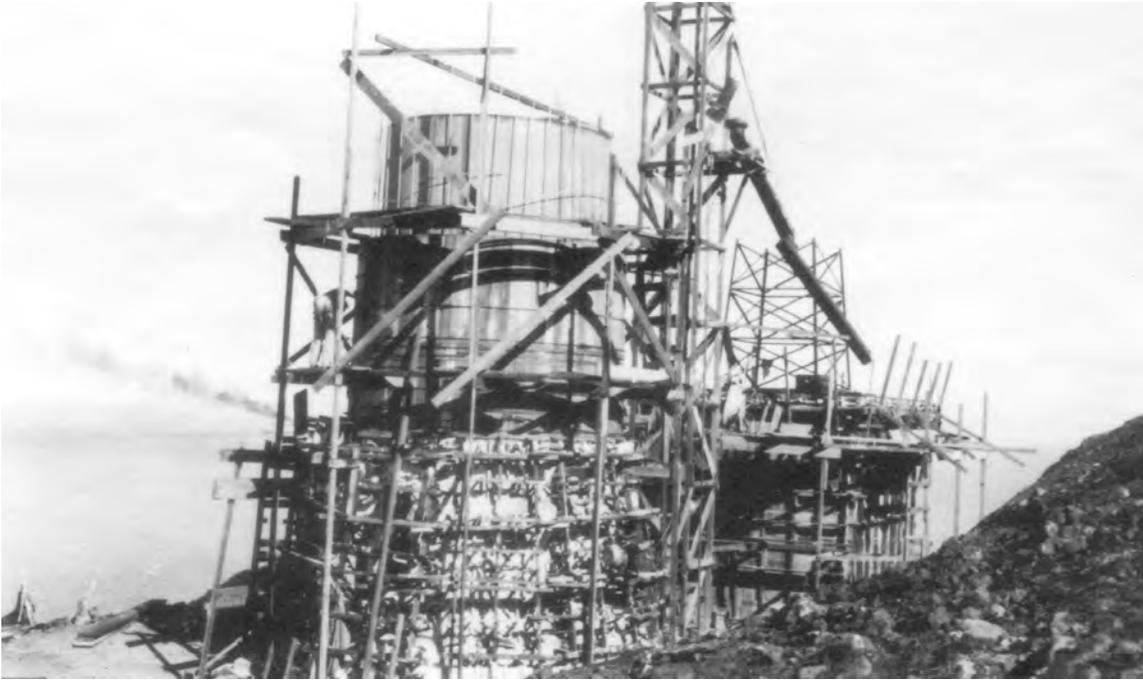
Part of the task involved crushing island rock, and delays in this by April 30 brought Roth the news that he would be levied damages. Roth had not even commenced active work in May and was having all sorts of difficulties in landing men and equipment.³² The records showed, for example, that

on the morning of May 15th Mr. I. C. Roth, of the Roth Construction Company, with six men, started from Point Mugu for Anacapa Island in a 50-foot launch for the purpose of landing supplies and inaugurating the work on the Island. It appears that after landing three men on the Island the small dory used for landing purposes was swamped and lost,

³⁰“Memoranda on Lighthouse Island . . .,” p. 2; Jim Gibbs, *West Coast Lighthouses* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1974); “Recommendation as to Aids to Navigation,” p. 50; 9-26-1911; Lighthouse Bureau Correspondence, File 757A, RG 26, NA(SB); *Ventura Free Press*, March 17, 1911.

³¹Duenbeck to Capt. W. A. Moffett, USN, 8-16-1911, 757-E, RG 26, NA(SB).

³²Letter, Office of Inspector, 18th District Lighthouse Service to Commissioner of Lighthouses, April 6, 1921; letter in File 757A, 1932, RG 26, NA(SB). See 757A for all documents and correspondence relative to construction of the lighthouse complex in the 1930s.



The lighthouse tower rises in the foreground as the fog signal building is framed in the rear, November 31, 1931. *Channel Islands National Park*



Light station water tanks, June 4, 1931, before the tank house was constructed to protect them. *Channel Islands National Park*

and that the launch itself was disabled and carried away from the Island by the strong wind and heavy seas which prevailed at that time. The party in the launch was adrift for a day and a night, having drifted ten miles to the southward of the Island. They finally made temporary repairs to the engine and returned to the mainland, from which point they telephoned the Coast Guard at San Pedro, and the Coast Guard boat was sent from that place to rescue the three men who had been marooned on the Island for more than thirty-six hours without food, water or shelter. The damage to Roth's launch has not yet been repaired, but, in the meantime, he has chartered a Japanese fishing boat and landed a few supplies and a small amount of material and equipment on the Island.³³

In June, Roth had only eight men on the island, no boat of his own, and no hoist. His men had to land everything with a small derrick erected by the Lighthouse Service to hoist small accumulators up a sheer cliff one hundred and twenty feet in height. In spite of warnings that all material had to be inspected, Roth brought out cement, sand, and galvanized pipe by barge, ignoring inspection. It took five days for all his men and all the barge crew to unload it; then the pipe and cement were found not to be up to specification and they were thus rejected by H. A. Lang, the Government's inspector on the island. Meanwhile, the workers began to complain of no pay, inadequate water, poor food, and inadequate housing.

An inspection by the State Division of Housing and Sanitation upheld the complaints, and Roth was ordered to install a floor in his cook tent, provide bathing water, and other improvements. When Roth applied for the first payment due under his contract in July when the job was to be 30% complete, an inspection showed no progress. In August steps were taken to cancel the contract that by this time had set back completion of the light station by some six months. Since bondsmen on Federal contracts are first responsible to the government for the full amount of the bond, U. S. Fidelity and Guaranty Company could supply nothing to cover payrolls. By November Roth was keeping up his correspondence from the Ventura County Jail where he was serving time for violation of various labor laws.

Before the contract went out for bids a second time, certain revisions were made which included the construction of a 30,000 square foot cement rainshed, or collecting pad for rainwater, behind the proposed tank house structure scheduled for construction in 1932. Carpenter Brothers of Beverly Hills made the low bid (\$36,490) and began work in December where Roth had left off. The work proceeded satisfactorily, it would appear, as no correspondence to the contrary was found in the Lighthouse files. Two gasoline-engine-operated hoisting derricks were installed: the lower derrick was situated on a rock platform approximately 15 feet above mean low water level, had a 40 foot boom, and five ton capacity. The upper derrick was placed on a rock platform, had a 50 foot boom, and four ton capacity. Both were designed to make a lift of 80 feet per minute.

With this equipment installed, public notices were published in newspapers up and down the coast for bids on the buildings in the complex. M. W. Lippman of Los Angeles got this contract with a bid some \$15,000 below his competitors. For \$74,595.30 he contracted to build (in four months): one light tower, one powerhouse, one oil house and one fog signal building, all of reinforced concrete; also four lighthouse keepers' dwellings, one tank house and one general service building, all to be frame and stucco

³³Supt. Rhodes to Commissioner of Lighthouses, June 11, 1930, 757A, RG 26.



The Anacapa Lighthouse and fog signal building shortly after completion. *U. S. Coast Guard*

construction, with terra cotta tile on all roofs excepting the tank house, which was to have rigid asbestos shingles.³⁴

Lippman's bid was accepted in April, but the following March the work was still incomplete. Lippman blamed the delays on the weather, but it had been ideal during the four months specified for the contract and had not rained until December. His bid was too low and his proposed time schedule too short; with his crew, it would have taken that long on the mainland to build the houses alone. In addition, there were two contentious factions in his crew: Mr. Lippman and his friends versus his partner, Mr. McWilliams, and his friends. On one occasion, Mr. Lippman arrived on the island with the Sheriff of Ventura County for the purpose of ousting McWilliams and his party.

For the late finish, Lippman had to suffer liquidated damages under terms of the contract. Inspector Lang reported that his orders to comply with specifications were often ignored. He would then reject the work; as a result of this practice, the workmen began to come to him directly for orders instead of going to the foreman. Questions were then raised as to whether Lang had overstepped his lines of authority and this raised a third area of contention. Yet all obstacles were at last overcome and the island light was fitted with an third order English-made lens equipped with a 2000 watt electric lamp (600,000 candle power), placed on a 60 second cycle with three flashes and visible for twenty-three miles. On February 15, 1932, crews placed the lantern room on the top of the tower. Keeper Frederick Cobb lit the Anacapa Light for the first time on March 25, 1932. It would be the last new light station established on the California coast. Crews removed the old skeleton tower erected in 1911, leaving only foundation pads.³⁵

Funds had been allotted for fog signal diaphones and their installation in late 1931. Power would be generated on the island. The powerhouse was equipped with three 2000-gallon fuel oil tanks. Technicians set the two-tone diaphone to blast for three seconds on a 30 second cycle. The resonators of the diaphone were depressed slightly in order to counteract the usual upward bending of the sonic beam.

The *S. S. Golden Sun* of the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company reported in 1933 that this was one of the best fog signals it had ever experienced. On the negative side, however, the *S. S. Lightburne* reported that the

Anacapan [sic] fog signal is 3 second blast and 27 second silent and Pt. Hueneme fog signal is 4 second blast and 26 seconds silent period, consequently naturally having expected to make Anacapa we thought had done so and hauled ship NE'ly. to pass light to Starboard hand. About this time fog lifted slightly and we seen that fog signal was on Pt. Hueneme and proceeded on our voyage accordingly.

Comment in question is that since the blast and silent per periods of the Lights mentioned have a difference of only one second it is confusing in identifying either in a fog.³⁶

At this, the Port Hueneme characteristic was changed.

Another negative commentary reached the Lighthouse Service on September 22, 1933, when the *Beulah Port* grounded on the south side of Anacapa Island near the west end of the rainshed and less than

³⁴"Request and Authority to Purchase," March 28, 1931, 757A.

³⁵Ralph and Lisa Shanks, *Anacapa Light Station*, unpublished manuscript.

³⁶Letter, G. R. Putnam to Hydrographer, Navy, Sept. 15, 1934, File 757A.



The landing cove at Anacapa Island provided no safe place to dock a boat, so the Coast Guard boat was raised to a platform with a derrick. *Los Angeles Times* photo (1955), *UCLA Special Collections*



A Lighthouse Service tender pays a visit to Anacapa. *U. S. Coast Guard*

1,000 yards from the fog signal. The keeper reported the fog signal in operation, but the vessel was badly damaged.

A radiobeacon on Anacapa had been much in demand, and the Shipowners' Association of the Pacific Coast complained August 10, 1931, that the Naval Radio Compass Station at Point Hueneme was to be discontinued on October 1. They wanted the Commissioner of Lighthouses to arrange for temporary installation of a radiobeacon at Anacapa Island so that radio direction finder service could continue uninterrupted. In response, the Lighthouse Service Airways Radio Division purchased an ESCO 1000-watt rotary converter for temporary use with the Anacapa beacon until the permanent rotary converter could be delivered. In 1932 the permanent radiobeacon was set up to transmit on 286 kilohertz with the code dash, two dots, dash. When this interfered with the Navy's Fleet communications, it was changed to 314 kh.

In 1931 Superintendent H. W. Rhodes requested a 26-foot whaleboat with trunk and cabin to serve as a launch. To meet the problems of landing the craft, he had it equipped with special hoisting gear so that it could be hoisted upon arrival at the island onto the lower landing platform. Of this Charles Hillinger's account is memorable:

Perpendicular cliffs shot straight up more than 250 feet from the water. Embedded in the rock 50 feet above the surging surf was the lower landing platform, our target and arrival point. Seated in the engine house on the landing platform when the utility boat arrived was the boatswain's mate 1st Class, the officer in charge of the station.

The power was switched on, the heavy boom swung out over our boat and a steel derrick hoist cable and hook lowered. One seaman grabbed the hook and inserted [it] in a midship eye while another secured guiding lines at the bow and stern which were fastened to the landing. Screeching power echoed throughout the cave-locked cove as the powerful hoist was thrust into the lift gears.

Up out of the water rose the 7,000-pound boat, her crew and passengers. The boom swung us into a custom-made cradle and our 50-foot flight to Anacapa ended.³⁷

This facilitated bringing in supplies for the keepers from the town of Ventura some sixteen miles distant. Weather permitting, the station boat went to the mainland twice a week.

Life at the Anacapa Light Station proved to be unlike that at most stations in the country. While a number of other lights had been placed in isolated and dangerous locations, Anacapa enjoyed a combination of isolation and danger with reasonable proximity to civilization. For instance, the wife of assistant keeper Rex Coursey fell and seriously injured herself in 1934. Radio calls for help were met with a response from the battleship *California* that was nearby. The ship rapidly appeared, Mrs. Coursey was lowered to the landing and taken to the mainland. The quick response saved her life, according to doctors at the hospital. Not all lighthouse men were attracted to the station, however. Point Hueneme keeper Ole Lunden, a veteran of challenging light stations, was offered the same position at Anacapa and, after visiting the island, declined the offer. Another new keeper (called officer-in-charge after the Coast Guard took over the Lighthouse Service in 1939) reportedly arrived with his wife only to have their launch be stuck swinging in the air as the derrick stopped working mid-operation. The officer and his terrified wife

³⁷Hillinger, *The California Islands*, p. 106; the 50 feet is somewhat of an exaggeration.



A portion of the housing complex at Anacapa Light Station. *U. S. Coast Guard*

spent their welcome dangling over the swells in the landing cove, not knowing what would happen. Finally the problem was fixed and the couple made it ashore, but the wife reportedly refused to use the derrick again, denying herself shore leave, until she left the island for good.

With its new residences and equipment, life at Anacapa could be better than many other stations that typically had 19th century buildings and infrastructure. The complex resembled a neighborhood, with houses flanking a central road that led to the utility buildings and lighthouse. A photograph taken in 1951 showed the “Main Street” lined with rocks painted white and neat fences around the residences. Typically, six men lived at the station, some with families. During the Coast Guard years, a man typically made a two-year tour of duty, moving on to another assignment at the end of the Anacapa tour. The stucco mission revival houses could be found on any suburban California street except for the distance from a shopping center. Island residents occupied their time at work, fishing, hunting rabbits, searching for artifacts. By 1951, television had come to the island.³⁸

The Anacapa Light was extinguished during the Pacific Coast blackout in 1942 and housed some of the personnel detailed to the Coastal Lookout Station established there. During the war the Coast Guard

³⁸Shanks, *Anacapa Light Station*; Santa Barbara News Press, July 16, 1951, USCG.

moved from the Department of Treasury to the Department of the Navy. Coast Guard personnel manned Anacapa throughout the war. Watch was maintained in the watch room of the tower. The light returned to normal operation in 1945.³⁹

In 1940 the station was synchronized for distance finding, but in 1961 this latter feature was discontinued. The Navy, which had taken charge of the light station and all Coast Guard installations during the war, placed a cement plug in a sea-eroded tunnel under the landing and braced a rock cliff above the lower hoist house in 1943. Post-war improvements followed. In 1961, the Coast Guard modernized the Station by converting to AC power, replacing the fog signal system, and furnishing with electrical appliances. But in 1962 a new plan was outlined to convert Anacapa Island Light Station to an unattended operation in two phases and to establish a rescue facility at Point Hueneme Light Station.

A major reason for the change was missile firings from Point Mugu. Experience had been gained at Point Arguello where personnel were often required to spend many hours a week in a shelter. Such confinement was particularly difficult for dependents. Thus in phase one the dependents would be removed from Anacapa Island and the complement of men reduced to five. In the final phase the radiobeacon would be moved to Point Hueneme Light Station, all personnel would be removed, and equipment for an unattended operation would be employed. The 30-foot utility boat used at the Station would be transferred to Point Hueneme and in its place the Station would be assigned an 18-foot launch. Automation of the station would cost over \$70,000 but save many multiples of that in the years to come.⁴⁰

The Civil Engineering Structural Alteration request issued February 4, 1966 called for radio and generator changes, for extension of the boom at the upper hoist, and for security fencing around the Fog Signal and Lighthouse. The removal order included the following: Radiobeacon tower and equipment, lower hoist, and the demolition of all buildings with the exception of the Fog Signal Building, Light Tower, Oil House, and upper hoist house. The Commander, 11th District Coast Guard approved the order with minor changes, and plans went ahead to demolish three of the dwellings, the engine equipment building, shops, and water tank house during Phase One. Work orders went out to San Pedro's Terminal Island Coast Guard Base and in May 1967, the Base Industrial Crew demolished three of the houses. With a target date of November 15, 1968 for completion of Phase Two, orders were drawn up for work to begin October 7, 1968 on such tasks as burning the hoist house on the lower landing, disposing of the lower derrick and hoist equipment, burning the Service Building, converting the power building to emergency quarters for servicing personnel, and burning the Quarters building. On September 24, 1968 N. S. Merrill, Coast Guard, received a call from Superintendent Donald M. Robinson, Channel Islands National Monument. Merrill informed him of the Phase Two schedule, and Robinson said the National Park Service (NPS) would like to assign personnel to the island and to use the buildings then scheduled for destruction. Merrill explained that in the original review of the Board of Survey for the three quarters buildings (Spanish style residences), the Department of the Interior, U.S. Navy, and other agencies had been

³⁹Memo, W. H. Lassing, District Operations to District Communications, Dec. 30, 1941, A6-3 Codes & Signals, 1941-44, Operations, 11th Dist., NA(LN); interview, Com. (Ret.) W. S. Clark, USCG, Feb. 14, 1978; Memo, Jan. 1, 1945, 11th CG, L&P.

⁴⁰Memo, J. V. Spelman, Engineer July 29, 1943; H. M. Williams to Com. 11th, Aug. 24, 1961 and Memo, Com. 11th, July 11, 1962, "Anacapa File," 11th C. G., Aids to Navigation.



A Coast Guard keeper polished the lens in the Anacapa Lighthouse in the 1950s. *Los Angeles Times photo (1955), UCLA Special Collections*



A Coast Guard radioman at work at the Anacapa Island Light Station. *U. S. Coast Guard*

contacted and none of the agencies showed any interest in Anacapa. Robinson replied that the administration had changed and that the NPS was now very interested in maintaining personnel in those quarters at Anacapa. Meetings began, the Coast Guard pleased that the NPS would be on the island to afford their equipment greater security. On February 3, 1970 a “License and Agreement” between the NPS and Coast Guard was signed and put into effect. Meanwhile, the last Coast Guard personnel to be stationed on the island left.⁴¹

The NPS and Coast Guard would have joint custody and use of the unimproved land areas of East Anacapa, of the wharf, hoist house and hoist. The NPS would have exclusive occupancy of the quarters (residence) and the service building, the east portion of the powerhouse, and could use the living quarters portion (the west) when the Coast Guard did not occupy it. The NPS would have custody and use of the entire water and sewage systems including the water tank building once scheduled for destruction. The three-bedroom stucco residence had been vacant since 1962, although occupied for thirty years prior to that. It, like the other buildings in the complex, had been allowed to fall into disrepair. The plaster was badly cracked and nearly all the picture windows had been shattered by passing boatmen armed with high-powered rifles in need of a target. On October 29, 1969 Superintendent Robinson, an electrical engineer, and several rangers reviewed the utility facilities at East Anacapa and made an estimate of the cost of putting them in usable condition. The residence needed the most repairs, and this eventually took the form of an asbestos shingled exterior. The dock facilities were in only fair shape, the iron rails and steps requiring the most rehabilitation. List of Classified Structures (LCS) Field Inventory Reports executed for the buildings in 1976 showed all but the tank house and derrick building to be in good condition, and a 1997 update of the LCS echoed the earlier report. The Coast Guard removed the original third-order Fresnel lens in 1990, replacing it with a plastic lens. The Fresnel lens is now on display in the NPS visitor center on the island, formerly the General Services Building.⁴²

The Coast Guard property on East Anacapa Island was transferred to the park service in 2009. The Coast Guard continues to maintain the aids to navigation.

Military Uses

Point Mugu: Naval Air Missile Test Center

Point Mugu began to figure prominently in the history of the Northern Channel Islands after World War II, thus a brief summary of their post-war activities is essential to this report. The Navy’s efforts in missile technology date back to the early 1920s, but budget considerations, as in all branches of the armed forces, held back development. The World War II V-1 and V-2 rockets of the Germans generated a new

⁴¹John Marten, “Trip Report,” May 26, 1967; “Memo for the Record” Signed R. C. Blaschke, September 26, 1968; “Memo” signed N. S. Merrill, Sept. 24, 1968; “Agreement” in “Anacapa” File, Aids to Navigation.

⁴²Memo, Electrical Engineer, Western Region to Regional Director, Nov. 3, 1969, NPS Records, 443838, NA(SB); List of Classified Structures, CHIS.



Aerial view of the Anacapa Light Station, December 6, 1963. Note the layout of the residences, upper left, and the rainshed, lower right. A radio tower is seen in the lower left. *U. S. Navy photograph, Channel Islands National Park*



Undated view of the light station, looking west. *Channel Islands National Park*

attitude and in 1944 the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics recommended that a missile test center be established for the Navy. Gathering together men who had been working with rockets during the war, the Navy set up what they called a Pilotless Aircraft Unit at Mojave, California and acquired land at Point Mugu. The first missile launched at Point Mugu was the Loon. It crashed into the surf seconds after leaving the launch pad on January 7, 1946. Ten months later the Navy established the Naval Air Missile Test Center (NAMTC) with an adjacent Sea Test Range stretching thousands of miles out over international waters. Radio gear was taken to San Nicolas Island, and \$70 million eventually went into laboratories and a communications network. Late in 1946 the first of a group of German scientists arrived at Point Mugu and were integrated into the organization. Expansion in 1947 was slight, but on May 1 the Loon was tested again, this time launched from a submarine, the first launching of this kind.⁴³

On May 7, 1947 the Navy Department's Bureau of Yards and Docks asked the Coast Guard for permission to establish an observation post on Anacapa Island for tracking test missiles launched from the then Naval Air Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, California. The Navy needed one and a half acres of land for the observation post. The parcel of land lay on the southerly side of East Anacapa roughly between the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Triangulation Station "Anacapa Light" and the Pacific Ocean. The Navy requested a permit to use the area together with the dock and equipment and to be permitted to improve the dock and lifting gear so as to permit safe handling of five-ton loads. The Navy asked also for the right to use and to maintain roads connecting the site with the dock. Permission was granted by the Coast Guard and with the same provisions required by their leaseholders: that all equipment is removed and the property restored to its original condition after it had served its purpose. Attention was called to the logistics of water supply. The Navy could use the tanks and facilities. To pump 20,000 gallons and retrieve the hoses required four hours. No Coast Guard housing was available for the Navy. The permit was signed on September 25, 1947. The Island Facilities Officer at the Naval Air Station, Point Mugu, set up a temporary theodolite station and Dallas hut on the site. This was a station for a phototheodolite, a device that takes a series of pictures of an object traveling in space and accurately gives its position in space relative to time. In 1947 the device was manually operated. The person tracking the target would look through a high-powered telescope to be sure the phototheodolite was directed toward the proper object. It was time synchronized, giving an accurate record of the time and direction in which each picture was taken. In 1949 plans went forth for sorely needed expansion at the site. Island Facilities asked for buildings and tracking instrumentation estimated to cost \$215,000, but the project had low priority and the outbreak of the Korean War caused its disapproval. In 1951 the complement of the site averaged only two men from the Range Instrumentation Department who did their own housekeeping as well as technical work. Radar installations were not essential on Anacapa because the longer ranges available with the newer radars on the mainland and Santa Cruz Island made it possible to cover the necessary area from those sites. The 1947 permit was renewed in 1952 with a provision to build a temporary tower, and was renewed again in 1957 and 1962. However, by 1964 the instrumentation had been removed from the island, leaving the then Naval Air Missile Test Center (see below) with theodolite stations only on San Nicolas Island and at Point Mugu.⁴⁴

⁴³Al Frascella, News Release, Sept. 29, 1971, Hdq. Pacific Missile Range (PMR), Public Affairs Files.

⁴⁴J. E. Cochran, Yards and Docks to Com. 11, Navy, May 21, 1947; "Permit" signed Cochran and Farley, C. G., 11th C. G., Aids to Navigation; interview, Paul Foster, Air Space Liaison Officer, PMTR, Dec. 5, 1977; Fleet Air

Pacific Missile Range

The Naval Air Missile Test Center was reorganized to become the Pacific Missile Range and Naval Missile Center on June 16, 1958. In the spring of 1958 Camp Cooke had been divided. The northerly sixty-five thousand acres became Vandenberg Air Force Base. The southerly twenty thousand acres became the Naval Missile Facility, Point Arguello, California and a component of the ever-expanding range facilities of Point Mugu. The Sea Test Range extended from Point Mugu over the Pacific Ocean to Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. The Secretary of the Navy assigned the Range a mission:

To provide range support for the Department of Defense and other designated government and civilian agencies engaged in guided missile, satellite, and space vehicle research, development, evaluation and training programs.⁴⁵

The mission is quoted here as it defines the responsibility of Point Mugu in regard to San Miguel Island in accordance with the Departments of Navy and Interior Agreements of 1963. The Pacific Missile Test Center has historically retrieved recoverable jet powered targets in the vicinity of Anacapa Island. From March 27 to May 31, 1964 the Navy was granted permission by Channel Islands National Monument to conduct tests on the southwest side of Middle Anacapa. Targets were attached to parachutes 300 yards offshore and missiles were launched. Some missiles landed on the island as a result of misfire and were retrieved. Also, some personnel came on the Island for photographic assignments. Impact holes created by missiles were hand-covered. Anacapa has suffered limited impact from Range activities, and Point Mugu has turned instead to the other Channel Islands under its direct authority.⁴⁶

National Park Service at Anacapa Island

Development progressed slowly on Anacapa after the National Park Service took over management of the island. World War II interrupted any plans and in the early years staff, located at distant Sequoia National Park, focused on keeping hunters and vandals at bay. Obviously finding a personal liking for island resident “Frenchy” LeDreau, staff allowed him to remain living on the island in his shack and act as an informal park custodian. “Mr. LeDreau exhibited an accurate knowledge of and interest in the pelicans and other wildlife, and it is certain that he would be glad to assume its protection if given such authority,” wrote park biologist Lowell Sumner. “If possible Mr. LeDreau might well be given some sort of minor custodianship or at least an authorization to warn would-be hunters or egg collectors, the latter (in the case of nesting eagles) constituting more of a menace than the former.” Sequoia Superintendent E. T. Scoyen visited Anacapa in May of 1940 for apparently his first time. He explored West and Middle Anacapa,

Command, West Coast, Historical Report, 1951, Center for Naval History, Washington DC; NAMTC, Project IT-3, 1949, Public Affairs, PMR; Renewal Permits in 11th C. G., L & P.

⁴⁵Quoted in Raymond S. Nelson, Jr., “Point Mugu—Genealogy of a Missile Range,” March 15, 1962, Public Affairs, PMR, p. 27.

⁴⁶Telephone conversation with Paul Foster, Pacific Missile Test Center, May 24, 1979; White to Yards and Docks, San Diego, March 27, 1964, CHIS.

posted signs warning against poaching and banded pelicans, and was transported around by Raymond LeDreau. Scoyen expressed newfound enthusiasm about the island, being awed by the wildlife especially.⁴⁷

Requests to establish fish camps on Anacapa Island came in regularly and were routinely refused since they clashed with NPS basic policy to protect wildlife and marine life. Francis T. Weighill began his overtures for a lease of this type on West Anacapa on November 22, 1949. Weighill was President and principal stockholder of a corporation called Hueneme Sport Fisheries, Inc. He had been operating a sightseeing and fishing trip service from Port Hueneme in and about the Channel Islands for some years. He argued that the Santa Barbara Channel was treacherous, that winds blew up quickly, and that often small boats could not get back to the mainland and had to seek shelter at the islands. People sometimes had to stay for several days without food or water or housing since the Lighthouse personnel had no equipment to help boats in distress nearer than Santa Barbara. As an example, Weighill might have mentioned the woman reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, March 18, 1946, who was marooned on Anacapa for fourteen days after a sudden squall sank the 50-foot fishing boat she had gone out on with her husband and a friend. The latter two drowned, and she survived, in part, because the Coast Guard had stocked Frenchy LeDreau's cabin with emergency rations. Weighill requested permission to make a landing place for small craft, build shelters or huts, and bring in fresh water and a radiotelephone.

Superintendent Scoyen, of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks headquarters, made a trip to Anacapa Island on Weighill's *S.S. Vellron*, a 98-foot boat, and came away with the feeling it was worth trying. In the first place, it would provide extensive sports fishing off the coast. Then, too, it would provide day sightseeing cruises around the island. Weighill explained that he wanted to buy a surplus ship, beach it at Frenchy's cove, and thus provide housing facilities for those caught in a storm or who desired to stay overnight. Regional Director O. A. Tomlinson liked the idea, and on May 27, 1950, NPS announced that Weighill had a five-year permit. According to Weighill, the government would cut trails, level off mountain peaks for observation points, and possibly establish an aquarium. The principal recreation area would be West Anacapa's central portion. Within a month Weighill had formed the Anacapa Island Company and began to sell shares at \$500 each. The Oxnard Chamber of Commerce wrote to NPS asking for information with which to supply investors. Regional Director Tomlinson answered that Weighill's permit forbade him to grant any interest in connection with the permit to another party. In fact, Weighill had never discussed the formation of a company.

Assistant Superintendent Carlson met with Weighill, who explained that since he needed more operating capital he had formed the new company. It would raise \$500,000 and then be absorbed into the older corporation. Envisioning the many people involved as stockholders and managers, the NPS handed the matter over to their Concessions Division for investigation. On July 7, 1950, Scoyen suspended the permit. The Korean War broke out June 25, 1950, and Weighill advised that war conditions made it impossible for him to expand his business; in fact, he suspended his whole sports fishing operation at the end of the summer.

⁴⁷Memorandum, Victor H. Cahalane, Acting Chief, Wildlife Division to Dr. Russell, et al, August 14, 1939, quoting 6/28/39 Sumner report; RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files, 1932-53, Cabrillo 501 to 660-02, Box 14, NA(SB).

During 1952 Weighill set forth a new set of plans. His concession permit (still not cancelled) ran until December 31, 1954, but his ideas were grandiose and he lacked the funds to carry them out. Analysis of his concession permit showed the land assigned to him on Middle and West Anacapa and interestingly it included “one temporary government structure on West Anacapa Island consisting of a frame building approximately 14’ x 18’ and containing no equipment.” The building is no longer there and no other documentation in reference to it has been seen. Regional Director Lawrence C. Merriam cancelled the permit February 28, 1953. That May, Lowell Sumner, Park Biologist, made an inspection tour of Anacapa and observed that it offered possibilities as a unique marine exhibit. For that reason, he counseled, the park service should keep the door open to the right kind of concession operator who could provide transportation and simple shore facilities so that the public could enjoy the island’s natural features.⁴⁸

Proposals continued to come in to develop the Frenchy’s Cove area near the northeast end of West Anacapa. In 1957, Park officials went into considerable discussion over plans to seek out concessionaires to provide a dock, boardwalk, ferry landing, dwelling, and warehouse facilities. In a pilot study of the island in 1959, Frenchy’s Cove was selected for a headquarters since it was a site that had been established as a development area under Mission 66. Seasonal rangers arrived on Anacapa on June 15, 1959, and went to work setting up the area so that it resembled an area under the protection of the Park Service. Debris at Frenchy’s Cove was piled on the beach and burned: about 1.5 tons of debris and 1,000 pounds of cans and bottles were punctured and hauled out to sea about a mile and dumped. Of the four shacks, one was completely demolished since it was judged an eyesore. Usable lumber from it was used to construct an outhouse. The other three were given temporary repair.

Not until July 1959 was Anacapa Island opened to visitors with ranger service provided. Positive publicity caused visitor numbers to rise dramatically by the end of summer: the ranger counted 103 boats with 427 passengers, and 93 campers, 48 of whom stayed for more than five days. “Sport fishing around the island is persisting at top speed,” the superintendent wrote, “with an average of six boats in sight at all times.” He later expressed that “this visitation could be increased tenfold if there was a suitable landing for a boat to come alongside.” In 1960 Anacapa still had only a seasonal ranger. No facilities development was contemplated due to the lack of funds.⁴⁹

Anacapa Island continued to be popular with private boaters and visitors arriving on boats operated by Island Packers, the first transportation company to operate as a park service concession beginning in 1968. Incoming superintendent Bill Ehorn found “a mess” in leftover belongings and equipment from the Coast Guard, and began a concerted cleanup effort beginning in 1974, resulting in improvements for visitor access and resource preservation. Ehorn installed Nick Whelan as the first permanent ranger on the east island. The park service closed the west island to the public, setting it aside as a research natural area. When the island became part of Channel Islands National Park in 1980, facilities for visitors to East Anacapa remained few. A small campground had been built and a minimal trail system took visitors to overlooks. Landings were allowed at Frenchy’s Cove on the west island despite the bulk of that island being closed. The 1980 GMP created a 9,894.5-acre Natural Zone, much of which was designated an

⁴⁸“Analysis of Concession Permit I-36 np-175”. All the Weighill permit correspondence is in File 900; Part II, NPS Records, NA(SB).

⁴⁹Monthly Narrative Reports, July 14, September 15 and October 13, 1959, RG 79, Superintendents Monthly Reports 1958-59, NA(SB).

Ecological Reserve. A Historic Preservation Subzone covered all land areas due to the archeological resources present, with a 7-acre Preservation/Adaptive Use Subzone on the developed East Anacapa Island. A route would be established on the middle island for ranger-led walks, although this would not involve trail building activities. The campground would be eliminated when larger camping facilities were created on East Santa Cruz Island, according to the plan.⁵⁰

At the time of this writing, Anacapa is the second-most-visited island of the Channel Islands National Park, after Santa Cruz Island. A small visitor center offers interpretive materials and visitors can go on guided walks led by Island Packers personnel or park naturalist volunteers. The park offers a live underwater program in which video of a park diver in the Anacapa Landing Cove is transmitted to monitors on the landing as well as over the internet, and visitors are able to interact with the diver. The lighthouse itself is off limits, but visitors can walk on island trails to the popular overlook on the west end of the east island. A primitive campground is popular with campers.

The only major changes to historic structures on the island have been the removal by the Coast Guard of three houses, the radio tower and equipment and various utility structures such as fuel tanks and concrete bases, and alterations to the lower landing dock. Of the latter, the small boathouse and hoist near the bottom of the stairs have been removed, and the site where the Coast Guard launch was kept now hosts a metal canopy and a small building holding dive equipment and other supplies. The park service rebuilt the concrete stairway in 1999, and replaced the metal staircase in 2010.

Scientific Study on Anacapa Island

Anacapa Island did not attract the number of scientists as the other northern islands did. Visits tended to be brief and in many cases poorly recorded. French natural historian Leon deCessac visited an unknown location on Anacapa during his archeological expedition to the islands in 1877 or 1878. Cessac reportedly removed artifacts from “one little village” but records are mostly nonexistent. His contribution to knowledge of the island rests in being apparently the first to note prehistoric occupation. Lorenzo G. Yates collected on Middle Anacapa Island in the 1880s. He was interested in both archeology and natural history, and spoke publicly about his findings on the islands. Yates published an article in *American Geologist* in 1890, and his collections can be found at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.⁵¹

David Banks Rogers, curator of Anthropology and Paleontology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, made a reconnaissance of the Channel Islands during the 1920s and visited Anacapa on an unknown date. He theorized that the settlements on Anacapa were only temporarily occupied by Canalino populations. The Ninth Channel Islands Biological Survey, sponsored by the Los Angeles Museum, came to Anacapa for two weeks in August of 1940, but few records have been found of this extensive investigation. Participants in the survey included mammalogist Jack von Bloeker, entomologists Christopher Henne and Don Meadows, botanist Meryl P. Dunkle, and George Kanakoff, who wrote in his

⁵⁰Oral History interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston; U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Channel Islands National Park, *General Management Plan [for] Anacapa, Santa Barbara, San Miguel Islands*, Volume 1, 1980.

⁵¹Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 54-57.

field notebook of visiting all three islands, including the light station. He noted a “goose-neck barn” on the middle island and met Raymond LeDreau.⁵²

Phil C. Orr applied for permission in 1950 to visit Anacapa to study the caves and evidence of occupation. His trip was authorized on August 15 but the trip did not occur until March of 1956. Orr, representing the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, had been focusing his work on Santa Rosa Island at the time. On East Anacapa he and two crewmembers reportedly excavated three human burials at 4-AnI-1. His was the first systematic survey of the east island. Later, Orr made a brief visit to Fish Camp at West Anacapa. In 1958 the University of California Los Angeles sent archeologists Marshall B. McKusick and F. J. Clune, Jr. to East Anacapa for two to four days as part of the Channel Islands Research Project. The two retraced Orr’s steps and confirmed earlier data. The expedition field notes can be found on file at UCLA, and the annual report of the expedition was published in 1959.⁵³

McKusick returned to Anacapa later in 1958 to survey Middle and West Anacapa. Charles Rozaire of UCLA joined him to excavate AnI-8 with a crew of archeologists. McKusick attempted to construct the only known chronology of occupation on the island. Materials brought from the island were deposited in the collection at UCLA. Rozaire returned to Anacapa in 1961 on an outing sponsored by the Sierra Club, where he independently made a cursory survey of Middle and West Islands. Rozaire again came to the island in 1962 and 1963 on a survey sponsored by the Nevada State Museum. He made foot surveys of all three islands attempting to correlate past surveys.⁵⁴

Clement W. Meighan of UCLA excavated AnI-2 in 1970, returning to the campus with 16 artifacts and 26 faunal fragments. Archeologist Roberta Greenwood of Greenwood and Associates was contracted in 1977-1978 to perform an archeological survey of Anacapa and other northern islands, resulting in the nomination of the Anacapa Island Archeological District.⁵⁵

Documented natural history studies of Anacapa Island have been relatively few. The major efforts were by the National Park Service while the island was part of the National Monument, and more recent and substantial studies by park staff. The visit by the Channel Islands Biological Survey in 1940 provided an in-depth look at the island but the results were filed away during the war after the expeditions were scrapped. Meryl B. Dunkle, a member of the Biological Survey, published a flora of the islands in the national monument in 1942, including Anacapa Island. J. H. Lipps published a study of the late Pleistocene history of West Anacapa in 1964. R. L. Banks studied terrestrial vertebrates on Anacapa and published his findings in 1966.⁵⁶

⁵²*Ibid.*, pp. 57-58; field notes and records at LACMNH. Rogers (1868-1954) was a noted anthropologist whose work with the Smithsonian Institution brought him to Santa Barbara in 1923. He made extensive explorations of the Channel Islands. Between 1924 and 1938 Rogers worked for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, where he formed the anthropology department. *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White Publishers [1961]).

⁵³Phil C. Orr to O. A. Tomlinson, Regional Director, May 29, 1950, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files, 1932-53, Cabrillo 501 to 660-02, Box 15, NA(SB); Nomination form, Anacapa Island Archeological District, 1979; Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁴Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 63-69, 74-76.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 76-77; Nomination form, Anacapa Island Archeological District, 1979.

⁵⁶Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 49-51.

More recently, Steve Junak of the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden has been especially active in the study of the flora of Anacapa Island, having published three papers since 1979, including work with Ralph Philbrick and F. G. Hochberg. Channel Islands National Park has continuously pursued research and restoration, including the recent program to eradicate non-native rats from the island, improve conditions for nesting seabirds and remove iceplant from East Anacapa.⁵⁷

Shipwrecks at Anacapa Island

Anacapa Island, while surrounded by relatively calm waters when compared to those west of it, experiences dangerous fogs and Santa Ana winds. A number of vessels wrecked on or near the island although only one seemed to have been related to pilot error. The wreck of the *Winfield Scott* in 1853 was the most important of the Channel Islands shipwrecks. The following accounts are mostly derived from Morris and Lima's *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, published in 1995.

Winfield Scott (1853). Westervelt and MacKay of New York built the *Winfield Scott* in 1850 for a route between New York and New Orleans. Named for the commanding general of the U. S. Army, Mexican War hero and presidential nominee, the 225-foot steam paddlewheeler began travel between the east and west coasts when she joined the New York and San Francisco Steamship Line in 1852. She set a record for that route (via Cape Horn) of less than 49 days. She then took passengers between Panama and San Francisco, usually in overcrowded conditions. In July of 1853 the *Winfield Scott* was sold to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company.

Loaded with over 300 passengers and crew and a reported \$1 million in gold bullion (some accounts put the figure at \$2 million), the *Winfield Scott* departed San Francisco on December 1, 1853. The next evening Captain Simon F. Blunt chose to pass through the Santa Barbara Channel to save time, but in a dense fog crashed into Middle Anacapa at full speed at 11:00 in the evening. Apparently Blunt had turned southeast thinking he had cleared Santa Cruz or Anacapa Islands. Purser Watkins gave this account, which was published by the *Alta California*:

The ship's bow struck first, staving two holes in the bow; then, in backing off, her stern struck and knocked away her rudder. Most of the passengers had gone to bed but they came on deck in alarm. They could only look out into a thick fog and see nothing of the land. After losing the rudder, the ship drifted off the island a few hundred yards and then was swept back to strike the shore again with her bow. She had already taken on much water and now sank up to her guards.

The Captain immediately sent out a boat to see where he could land the passengers. The purser reported that a little island separate from the main one was nearest and that the passengers could be placed on it for the night. The next morning the passengers, some mail, and the treasure were taken onto the main island. Captain Blunt stayed cool, provided bedding and provisions for the passengers, and moved among them unceasingly in his efforts to make them comfortable.⁵⁸

⁵⁷See the published proceedings of the eight California Islands Symposiums, held since 1967.

⁵⁸*Alta California*, December 7, 1853.

After being brought from the small pinnacle some 200 yards offshore to the island in the ship's boats, the large group camped on the island for up to a week. The *California* saw smoke from the passengers' fires and rescued the women. It returned on December 9 and, in heavy swells, removed the rest of the passengers, leaving the ship's company on the island who attempted to save mail, baggage, furniture and some machinery from the wreck. Other boats appeared for salvage opportunities, including that of Captain Horatio Gates Trussell, who used wood and two brass thresholds from the wreck in the construction of his Santa Barbara home.

On the 10th the steamer *Southerner* hove into sight and landed provisions for the officers and crew. Up to that time, the *Winfield Scott* had not been broken up by the action of the waves. When the *Republic* arrived the next day, however, the midship was sunk and Captain Blunt gave up all hope of saving her or getting her off the ledge. The crew went out to the ship and saved what they could before boarding the *Republic* for San Francisco. Some time later, the side-wheeler toppled off the ledge and sank. The valuable cargo was apparently saved although the lure of gold still attracts divers, who are prohibited by federal law from disturbing the wreck site.

In 1894 and during World War II major salvage took place on the *Winfield Scott*. One firm blasted the wreck in order to remove hundreds of large copper bolts and much of the iron machinery. The wreck became popular to sport divers who are now prohibited by antiquity laws from removing any artifacts. The wreck of the *Winfield Scott* is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The wreck scatter was surveyed in June of 1990 by park archeologist Don Morris and a crew of volunteer divers. The scatter is considered to be small for such a large vessel, with the bow and stern missing. The most prominent piece of wreckage is purported to be the port paddle wheel, which stands above the bottom.⁵⁹

Pearl (1891). This small sealing sloop, 33 feet in length, had apparently been leased out for a camping trip at Frenchy's Cove in September 1891. Captain Troop had transported an Austrian couple to the island and while all were ashore camping, a windstorm caused the boat to wreck. With no provisions, a sheep provided food until another sealing vessel arrived two days later. No remains of this wreck have been located.⁶⁰

Labor (1924). The 59-foot purse seiner *Labor*, owned by Van Camp Sea Food Company as part of its San Pedro tuna fleet and loaded with three tons of barracuda, broke its mooring and drifted onto the south shore of Anacapa on October 2, 1924. The captain had attempted to start the engines but found the propeller fouled with kelp. The eight-man crew survived. Wreckage has not been located.⁶¹

⁵⁹Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56 (Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996), pp. 19-24; Eugene D. Wheeler and Robert E. Kallman, *Shipwrecks, Smugglers and Maritime Mysteries of the Santa Barbara Channel* (Ventura, California: Pathfinder Publishing, 1984, revised 1989), pp. 27, 31.

⁶⁰Morris and Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, p. 113.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

Bar-bee (ca. 1920-1933). The Bar-Bee wreckage was located in 2008. It lies in 130 feet of water, approximately 450 meters south of West Anacapa. The observable wreckage consists of a large engine block and associated debris.

Louise Ray (1937). The Italian Food Products Company of Los Angeles owned a 63.8-foot purse seiner. Her skipper, Antone Stanovich, reportedly rammed the boat into the *California II* in a rage, although the wreck report stated that he had fallen asleep. The *Louise Ray* stranded at an unknown location on Anacapa Island and her crew of nine was rescued by the Coast Guard cutter *Aurora*.⁶²

Grumman Avenger (Military Airplane, date unknown). Divers had long known the existence of this World War II-era torpedo bomber but park service divers did not reach it until 1995. No records have been located to explain the wreck, which lies north of the gap between East and Middle Anacapa at a depth of about 120 feet. The Grumman Avenger, built by Grumman Aircraft Corporation and Eastern Aircraft between 1942 and 1944 (estimated), was the most common torpedo bomber during the war, figuring in the Battle of Midway in 1942 and other events of the war. Park archeologists found the wings and fuselage, the radial engine and other parts, but treasure hunters had removed most of the collectible parts.⁶³

Equator (1949). At almost 93 feet long, the *Equator* was the largest fishing vessel known to have sunk at the northern Channel Islands. Under skipper Nick Trutanich of San Pedro, with a crew of five and loaded with frozen fish from Central America, the *Equator* struck rocks off Anacapa on July 2, 1949. The Coast Guard buoy tender *Blackthorn* received a distress call at three in the morning and arrived just in time to rescue the crew, according to a newspaper report, “scant minutes after they were thrown in the ocean.” The vessel was probably salvaged; only the propeller and shaft have been located, near East Fish Camp.⁶⁴

San Giuseppe (1950), *Del Rio* (1952) and *Louise D* (1955). The wood-hulled trawler *San Giuseppe* had been converted into a purse seiner by its new owners, the French Sardine Company (later Star-Kist). She was off the south side of Anacapa when a fire started in the engine room. Flames spread to the entire 79-foot vessel as the crew rescued the valuable net. The Coast Guard responded but the *San Giuseppe* was a total loss. Channel Island Salvage Corporation reportedly saved the gear and engine during the following two weeks; no remains have been found. The purse seiner *Del Rio* saw duties as an auxiliary minesweeper during World War II before she was returned to her owner. The 78-foot wood-hulled vessel caught fire on October 28, 1952 about three miles off the Anacapa light and was destroyed as its crew of 11 escaped to nearby fishing boats. The burning boat drifted to the island near Frenchy’s Cove, where a massive engine block and other debris have been found. *Louise D*, a 41.5-foot fishing boat, burned and sank between Santa Cruz and Anacapa Islands on September 2, 1955. A passing boat rescued the two men aboard.⁶⁵

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 134-138.

Pinocchio and *Island Packer* (1969), *Shamrock* (1977). The 30-foot yacht *Pinocchio* stranded on West Anacapa on August 16, 1969. Her skipper was rescued. That December, the tour boat *Island Packer* broke down with two aboard off the island. The Coast Guard cutter *Judith* came to her aid, attaching a towline just as the anchor line parted, but the tow bitts failed and the 52-foot boat wrecked on the east island. The 50-foot yacht *Shamrock* burned and sank about one-quarter mile south of Anacapa Island on March 12, 1977.⁶⁶



U. S. Coast Survey monuments on Anacapa Island, circa 1960s. *Channel Islands National Park*

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 177-179; Kirk L. Connally, "Island Packers" in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, pp. 46, 49.

Historic Resources

Anacapa Island contains three properties entered on the National Register of Historic Places: the entire island as the Anacapa Island Archeological District; the wreck and site of the steamship *Winfield Scott*; and the Anacapa Island Light Station. Roberta S. Greenwood, contract archeologist, prepared the nomination form for the archeological district in 1978 and included discussion of both the *Winfield Scott* and potential historical archeology. The nomination noted 26 known prehistoric sites. NPS maritime historian James Delgado of the Western Regional Office nominated the *Winfield Scott* in 1983. Both nominations are archeological in nature and will not be discussed in detail here with a few exceptions. The sites of Frenchy's shacks, the Elliot sheep camp and various survey markers will be discussed, but these sites do not appear to possess historical significance or integrity.

Anacapa Island Light Station

The Anacapa Island Light Station, consisting of its lighthouse, fog signal building, landing facilities and the complex of five remaining buildings constructed by Lippman are all in good condition and possess excellent historical integrity. Various extant landscape features such as the rainshed, roads and walkways tend to be in fair condition and in most cases tell an important part of the Anacapa story. The Anacapa Island Light Station was entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. Previous nomination forms had been submitted by Walter Evens, Chief Logistics and Property Branch, Eleventh Coast Guard District, with help from NPS Historical Architect Henry G. Law who completed the statements on physical appearance and significance. In 1989 Jack Bookwalter, a student at Sonoma State University, submitted a multiple property nomination for the light stations of California, including Anacapa, which stands as the register entry. Twelve buildings and structures listed as contributing resources in the nomination form are: lighthouse tower; fog signal building; assistant keeper's residence; general services building; tank house; derrick building; oil house; power house; lower landing; upper derrick landing; landing stairway; and concrete watershed (rainshed).

Upper-elevation Light Station Buildings and Structures

Lighthouse (1932)

Structure # 311, IDLCS 09042

The Anacapa Lighthouse is a 39-foot concrete cylindrical tower topped with a railing and lantern room in which the beacon is located. The lantern room is composed of an iron framework with crossing diagonal muntins and glass; the roof is a conical metal structure with a ball vent. The light fixture is a class three plastic lens and electric lantern mounted on a metal base. The reinforced concrete tower has a number of windows, eight around the circumference near the top and three at various levels on the side of the tower allowing light into the interior which features a spiral metal staircase. The entrance doorway



Anacapa Island lighthouse and fog signal, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Buildings complex on Anacapa, looking east, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

protrudes from the base of the tower. The tower is on a poured concrete foundation and appears to be structurally sound and in good condition. The lighthouse possesses a high level of integrity but for the loss of the Fresnel lens. It is recommended that, if the lighthouse is ever decommissioned, the original third-order Fresnel lens is returned to the light tower lantern room.

Fog Signal Building (1932)

Structure # 312, IDLCS 09043

The original diaphone fog signal once stood on the roof of this sixteen-foot-square, one-story building with a hipped tile roof, but now the automated electronic device is less conspicuous. The roof is topped by a square metal tower on which the signal equipment is mounted. The equipment consists of two horns about six feet high off the top of the short tower and an array of solar panels. A modern, vented metal door provides access to the interior. The addition of the solar rack detracts from the historic character. The building is in good condition and, save for the lack of original equipment, possesses historic integrity.

Assistant Keeper's Residence (1932)

Structure # HS-1-C, IDLCS 09044

This three-bedroom house is the last remaining of four, this being the southeastern of the former quadrangle. Its Mission Revival design is seen in the red tile roof, stucco exterior and arched entranceway. The interior also has architectural features such as carved rustic beams, wrought iron structural elements, fireplace, arched doorways and brass fittings. A new tile roof was installed in 1983. The San Valle tile was carefully selected to simulate the original tile, which has since been crushed for use on the walks. The job included installation of new roof flashing and replacement of some of the gutters and down spouts. Crews removed the asbestos shingles, which had for ten years sheathed the original stucco walls. The house is well maintained and its historic integrity is intact. It is recommended that some effort be made in reconstructing the stuccoed privacy walls enclosing the front of the house. While a landscape study has not been performed, it is evident from historic photographs that the lighthouse-era plantings were limited to a few ornamental plants and iceplant, all limited due to the extremes of weather, poor soil and lack of water.

Power House (1932)

Structure # 307, IDLCS 09045

This utility building, which provided power to the light station, was also built in the Mission Revival style with tile roof and white stucco walls. It measures 25 feet by 53 feet and has a two-level gable roof with an arch-topped chimney at the roof-step, or center of the roof space. The building has four rooms including a small apartment that originally served as the radio room, a shop and the original generator room, which comprises most of the floor space. It is well maintained, in good condition and possesses excellent historical integrity. The power house also received a new tile roof around 1980 as well as new roof flashing and replacement of some of the gutters and down spouts.



The assistant keeper's residence, view to southeast, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Oil House (1932)

Structure # 309, IDLCS 09046

In this building, located at a higher elevation than the other ones in the complex, the light keepers stored fuel and flammable liquids. It is built of reinforced concrete and has a flat roof surrounded by a two-foot parapet. A single door provides access and six metal sash, wire mesh-glazed windows, three to a side, look north and south. The entrance door has been replaced with a metal roll-up door. A large solar array mounted against the rear of the building and extending above the roof and large round antennas on the roof detract from its historic appearance. The oil house is in good condition and, if the solar panels and antennas were removed, would possess good historic integrity.

General Service Building (1932)

Structure # 304, IDLCS 09047

This attractive building now serves as a visitor center/museum and bunkhouse. Also designed in the Mission Revival style, it is rectangular (actually I-shaped) and has a gable roof with two perpendicular gable roof sections on the east and west ends. The museum is located in the west room and a smaller adjacent room features the original Fresnel lens from the light tower; the east room is now a bunkhouse for transient island staff; a fire cache, storage and bathroom occupy the center of the building. A covered porch is at the rear, enclosed on three sides by the building's stucco exterior walls. This building also received a new tile roof around 1980 as well as new roof flashing and replacement of some of the gutters and down spouts. It is well maintained, in good condition and possesses excellent historical integrity.

Tank House (1932)
Structure # 310, IDLCS 09048

The Coast Guard constructed this building to shelter two large redwood water tanks to preserve water quality and protect the tanks from rodents and weather. The high, one-story building has tall arched windows, an arched doorway and a circular window in a protruding gable, giving it the look of a church. Unlike the other buildings nearby, it has horizontal board siding, but has a compatible red tile roof, installed around 1980, which was originally asbestos/concrete shingles. Sometime prior to 1982, the building was sandblasted, which damaged the wood siding and allows fungus and mildew to build up. The two 50,000-gallon redwood water tanks, built by the George Windeler Company in 1932, serve as the only source of fresh water on the island and are presently in use and in good condition. Overall the building is in good condition and well maintained. It possesses good integrity.

Rainshed (1932)
Structure # 613, IDLCS 09049

The 30,000 square foot rainshed, a cement slab of irregular shape a short distance behind the tank house, was shaped to funnel rainwater down to the water tanks. Other light stations with similar water supply problems, such as Point Reyes, took advantage of rainsheds like this. It was only irregularly used because of the amount of guano deposited by seabirds and now serves as an emergency heliport. Construction of the rainshed required installation of a berm on its northwestern end. The concrete surface, now cracked with vegetation and damaged by sinkholes, has been patched with tar. A curb wall at the down slope edges of the rainshed ranges from one to 2 1/2 feet in height. A six-inch galvanized pipe exits the drain and a valve can be found about 35 feet from the drain. The rainshed is in fair condition but possesses excellent historic integrity.

Flag Pole (date of construction unknown)
Structure # 000, IDLCS 59673

The origin of this flagpole is unknown; while the 20-foot high galvanized pipe pole may date from the origins of the light station, the concrete base was replaced in 1997 by park service workers who inscribed the date. The flagpole features a cross span with cables reaching the base, which is fortified by boards.

Roads (1932)

The station road leads from the upper landing at the top of the stairs to the light tower and fog signal, passing the residence and utility buildings. A branch leaves in a southwesterly direction from behind the power house and visitor center to the tank house and rainshed. The road is no longer maintained for vehicular traffic and is used as a trail. It is in fair condition and its historical integrity is fair.



Road to the lighthouse, now a trail, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



A drainage culvert on the road to the lighthouse, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Historic Vegetation

Further study is needed to determine the extent of lighthouse-era vegetation and details about its use. Native vegetation has reclaimed much of the east island, but iceplant is found in numerous areas. Traditionally, iceplant was planted to reduce open dirt areas and erosion, and as an easy and pleasant groundcover. The iceplant was likely planted as ground cover in the residential area, but has spread to much of the east island. The park is working toward eradicating iceplant from the top surface of the east island.

Walkways and Foundations at Razed House Sites

Concrete walkways and foundations remain as reminders of the three other houses that once formed a square compound. It is recommended to retain the walkways and foundations as an illustration of the physical scope of the former light station complex. The walks and foundations are in fair condition and partially obscured by low vegetation.

Concrete Plaques

A series of commemorative concrete plaques were made by Coast Guard employees and placed in various locations around the light station. They are somewhat crude but commemorate such events as the bombing of Pearl Harbor or a man's presence on the island. The plaques are historically interesting and should be documented, protected and preserved.



One of the plaques imbedded in the ground near the light tower, 1998. Apparently both Knowles and Dunn were from Taft, California. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Drainage Structures

A system of rock and concrete drains and culverts exists in the development area but is mostly obscured by vegetation. They are located along the road from the landing to the residential area, around the buildings, and along the road to the lighthouse.

Landing-related Structures

The much-photographed stairway, landing and derrick hoist at East Anacapa reflect the ingenuity of the Lighthouse Service in providing access to their lighthouse installations. It is reportedly the only remaining Lighthouse Service derrick landing system that is available for the general public to observe on the west coast. This landing system deserves preservation in its entirety, and any needed repairs or rehabilitation should be performed as close to restoration as practical.

Derrick Building (1932)

Structure # 306, IDLCS 09050

The small derrick building at the top of the landing stairs has a wood-shingled gable roof, horizontal board siding painted white, large industrial style windows and doors, and rests on a concrete slab that comprises the upper derrick landing. It remains in its original use, as a control room, winch house and equipment shed for the large derrick which sits next to it. The building is in good condition and possesses excellent historical integrity.



The upper derrick and building, 1998. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Upper Derrick Landing (1932)
Structure # 320, IDLCS 09051

Materials were (and still are) landed on this concrete slab with the large metal derrick or crane mounted at its edge. The irregular-shaped bench is cut out of the slope and retained with a concrete wall facing the landing cove; it covers approximately 2,500 square feet and is in good condition with excellent historical integrity. A new addition at the northwest corner of the upper landing provides a paved entry to the trail leading to the light station and includes a drain.

Landing Stairway (1932, replaced in 1999 and 2010)
Structure # 320, IDLCS 09053

The stairway is a combination of concrete stairs set into excavated areas on the cliff and a metal industrial stairway. The concrete steps were reconstructed in 1999. The metal stairway was replaced in 2010, with a slight reconfiguration to better accommodate visitor access.

Lower Landing (1932)
Structure # 319, IDLCS 09052

The lower landing area has been altered over the years but retains its basic function and physical aspects. It is composed of a sturdy wooden dock with a concrete stairway to the concrete landing. A 1980s wood dive building occupies the south end of the landing, covered by a large overhang for deflecting falling rocks. Water pipes are bolted to the cliff, leading up to the light station. The lower landing possesses fair historic integrity and is in fair condition. It is recommended that any further development of the site be done with materials and design compatible with the other components of the landing area.

Ruins and Potential Cultural Landscape Features

East Anacapa Island

The Anacapa Island Light Station forms a developed historic landscape. The district possesses integrity, although a number of minor features are no longer extant. The landscape is largely composed of buildings, structures, circulation patterns and small-scale features. The limited amount of data on historic landscaping is discussed above.



View from the Channel, showing the site of Elliot's sheep camp on Middle Anacapa, 2001. The remains of the trail and eucalyptus grove are evident. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*

Middle and West Anacapa Island

Middle Anacapa was the central location for the sheep raising operations in the 19th and 20th centuries. The earliest structure reported here was a house and a landing in 1853. E. E. Elliot operated a sheep ranch from this site in the 1880s; the remaining eucalyptus trees may date from that period. H. Bay Webster ran his sheep and tourist operation from the site as well. Roberta Greenwood reported the remains of a dock or landing, a cistern, building foundations and trash dumps. A large building stood at East Fish Camp in the 1930s, but this site has not been surveyed in recent years.

On West Anacapa, Frenchy's Cove provides the major potential for historic archeological finds, although removal of Frenchy's shacks may have been more thorough than an archeologist would desire. A trail remains at the site of Frenchy's habitation. Also reported on the west island are a sheep landing facility, a seismograph station, markers for aerial surveys, and a U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey marker tripod. These have not been recently surveyed.

These types of resources have potential for historical archeology investigations and may well yield important or interesting data on the primitive existence of early European settlers on the island. It is recommended to pursue such research. No actions for further administrative protection are necessary as the sites are covered in the Anacapa Island Archeological District and are so protected. Park Service personnel and planners should be discouraged from "clean-up" activities without first seeking the advice of park cultural resources staff.

List of Contributing Historic Resources

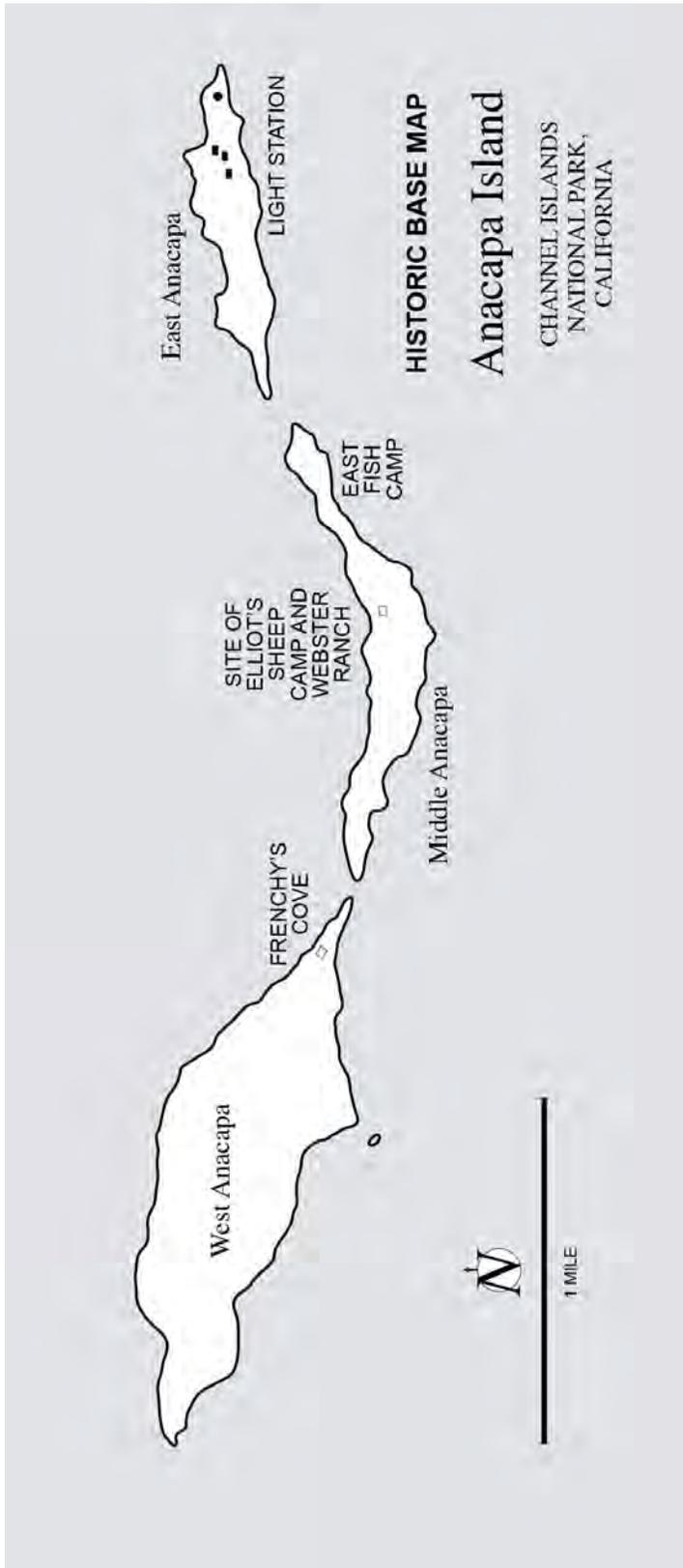
East Anacapa Island

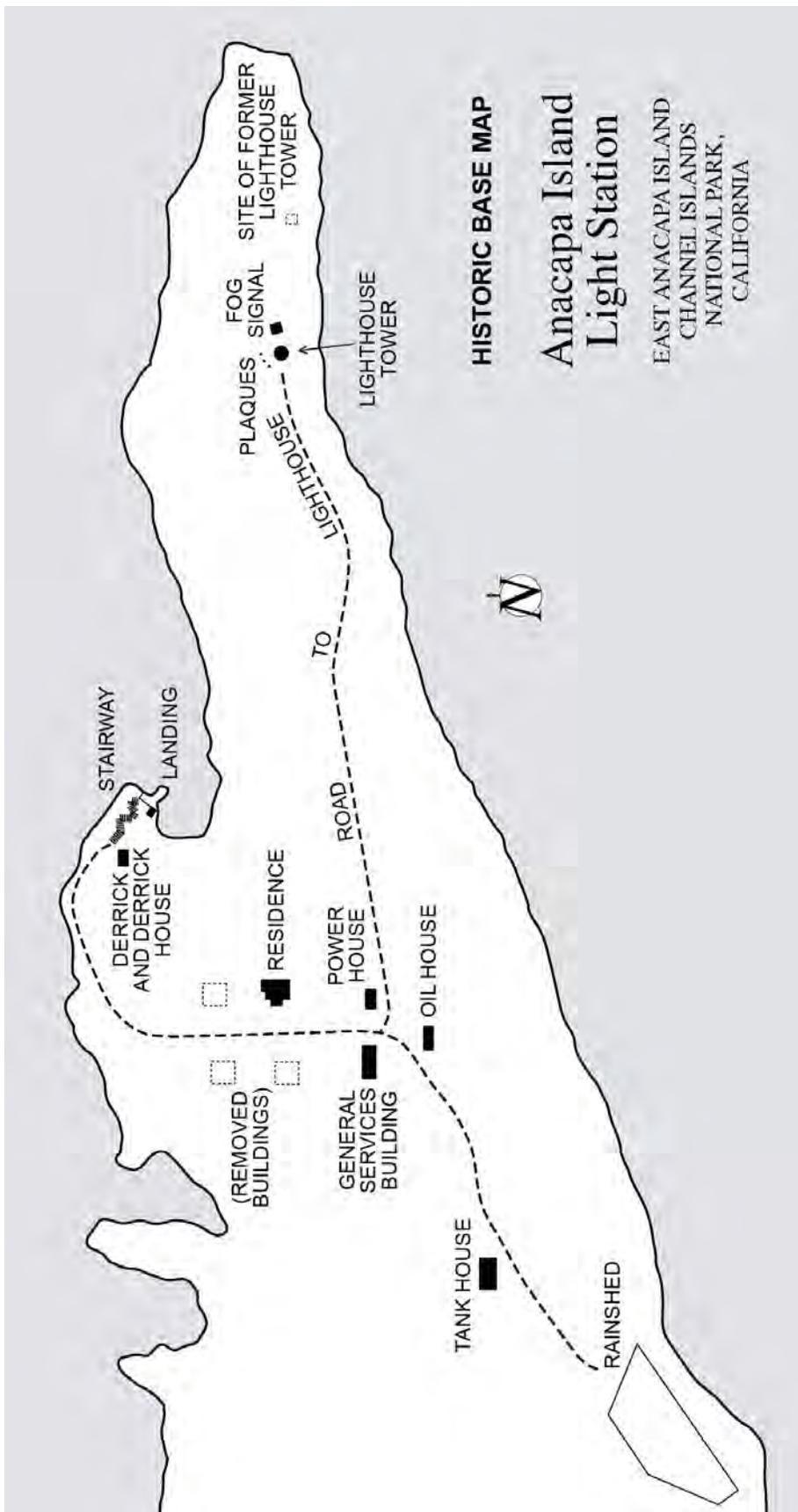
Lighthouse
Fog Signal Building
Assistant Keeper's Residence
Power House
Oil House
General Service Building
Tank House
Rainshed
Flag Pole
Roads
Walkways and Foundations at Razed House Sites
Water and Drainage Systems
Concrete Plaques
Derrick Building
Upper Derrick Landing
Lower Landing



Lower landing on Anacapa Island, 1930s. The lower building and derrick have since been removed. *Channel Islands National Park*

Historic Base Maps





[blank page]

Section 6

SANTA BARBARA ISLAND



We had a sled on the track that we let up and down with a long rope. That was all volcanic rock we had to drill to cement those spikes in for the track. Talk about workin'. We done it all with pick and shovel. The tracks went right up over the top of the hill. We used the sled for getting everything heavy to the top of the island or back down.

Buster Hyder



Physical Description

Santa Barbara Island, the smallest of the Channel Islands, is a compact landmass of 638.72 acres, approximately one square mile. Located 24 miles almost due west of the northwest tip of Santa Catalina Island in the Southern California Bight, it is 38 miles from the mainland, and centrally located in relation to the eight Channel Islands. While geographically closer to Los Angeles, it is within the boundaries of Santa Barbara County. Surrounded by precipitous palisades on all sides, the island sits alone in the sea with only little Sutil Islet and Shag Rock to the southwest and northeast respectively to keep it company. Few beaches are found on the island, and those that are prove rocky and often treacherous to reach. Geologists consider that an uplift resulting from volcanic pressures created the island; it was probably submerged until only the last several hundred thousand years.

Yet for all this drama at its edges the island has a romantic pastoral quality at its upper reaches when it is green and verdant, with rolling slopes and a wide saddle between two peaks (Signal Peak, 634 feet and North Peak, 562 feet in elevation) that are easily scaled. These “peaks” form the high points of a north-south ridge with broad grassy terraces on either side, which abruptly halt at the ever-present cliffs. The soil on the eastern terraces is remarkably soft and has shown to be fertile while the areas exposed to the incessant west-northwest winds have almost no soil to speak of. A few areas of badlands give the impression of a desert. The only suitable boat landing is found on the northern part of the east side. The climate is mild although both high temperatures and thick fogs are seen at times in the summer; the average annual rainfall is twelve inches.

Humans have had a dramatic impact on the flora of Santa Barbara Island. Several unique plant species, such as *Eriogonum*, *Platystemon* and a species of *Dudleya* are found on the island, but a period of grazing by sheep and a longer, more damaging one by feral rabbits have pushed many endemic plants to the background. According to botanist Ralph Philbrick, between 1940 and 1970 the native *Suaeda*

californica, *Dudleya*, *Coreopsis gigantea* (called tree sunflower by earlier botanists) and others have been drastically reduced and largely replaced by the invasive exotic ice plant *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* and annual grasses dominated by *Hordeum* (barley grass) and *Avena* (wild oats). Philbrick counted 96 species of endemic and non-endemic plants on the island in 1970. Ongoing efforts by botanists and biologists to restore the island have met with much success, although the extent of the invasion of exotics and the few but serious areas of erosion have proved to be a formidable opponent.¹

Santa Barbara Island has only one native terrestrial mammal: the island deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus elusus*). A small bat has been collected but is considered to be a migrant. The island night lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*) is the only reptile found on the island, while there are no snakes or amphibians. Insects are plentiful, and at least seventy species of birds are seen on the island. The cliffs and steep canyons provide ideal nesting habitat for marine birds such as the California brown pelican, Xantus' murrelet, three kinds of cormorants and others. Land birds such as the American kestrel, the barn owl and the Western meadowlark nest here. Bald eagles have been reported. The endemic Santa Barbara Island song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia graminea*) is thought to have gone extinct in the years after a fire destroyed its habitat in 1959, a situation no doubt exacerbated by the Hyder family's destruction of the native coreopsis.

The island's remote beaches and islets provide important habitat for pinnipeds. California sea lions are seen all around the island joined in smaller numbers by harbor seals and Northern elephant seals. Sea otters once thrived here but were hunted to near extinction in the 19th century. The setting for all this is spectacular with the lucky visitor afforded many views of breathtaking beauty.

It comes as no surprise that Americans who came west would want to own and exploit little Santa Barbara Island, to take freely from its marine bounty, put livestock on it, farm it, or use it as a target or defense for powerful weapons. People tried all of these and more, only to be thwarted by Santa Barbara Island's difficult access and no natural water supply.

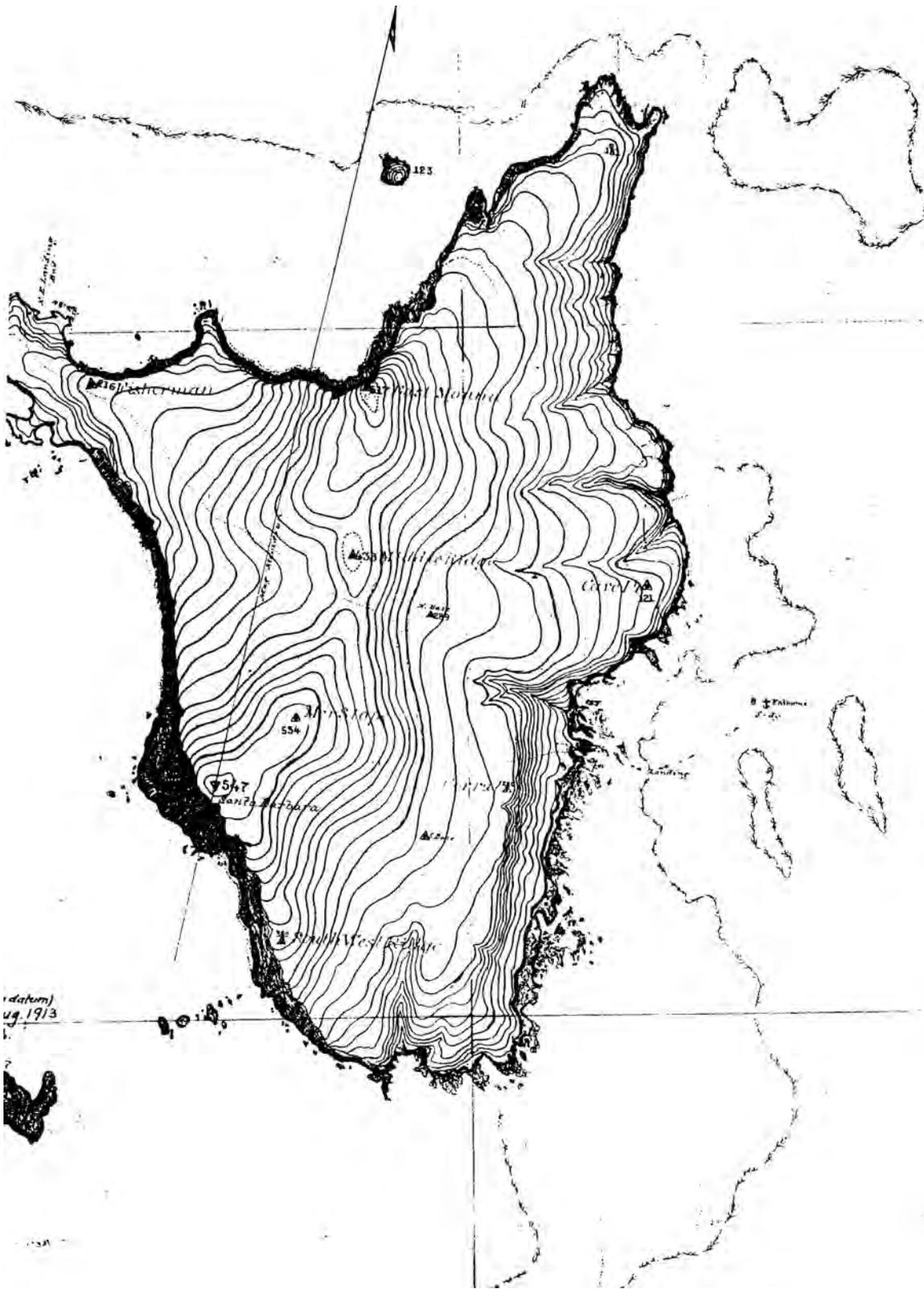
History of Santa Barbara Island²

Native Occupation and Contact

Santa Barbara Island evidently did not support any permanent settlements of natives. Lack of water would be the major reason for this, although the few terrestrial resources would contribute to its unproductivity as well. But, as with the other islands, Santa Barbara Island had a rich marine life and this is what would have drawn southern California Indians to the island on a seasonal basis to fish, harvest shellfish, hunt pinnipeds and manufacture tools. Recent studies have suggested that occupation of the island dates back at least 4,000 years, and probably more. Early European explorers did not land on the island, and so no information has surfaced on island occupancy from those sources. The explorers did see the small island, but it did not receive much documentation. Cabrillo's chroniclers dubbed the southern

¹ Ralph N. Philbrick, "The Plants of Santa Barbara Island," in *Madroño*, Volume 21 (5), part 2, 1972, pp. 329, 353.

²This section is a revised version of text concerning Santa Barbara Island by Roberts, 1979.



Detail of 1871 U. S. Coast Survey map of Santa Barbara Island. *National Archives*

islands, including Santa Barbara, the “other islands of San Lucas.” Cabrillo’s successor Ferrer may have seen Santa Barbara Island on February 18, 1543, when out seeking other islands southwest from Santa Cruz. Sebastian Vizcaíno named the island in 1602. The 1769 Portolá expedition’s ship *San Antonio*, according to the account of Fr. Juan González Vizcaíno, sighted Santa Barbara Island on March 29, calling it “smaller and apart from the others.”³

Early History

Author Thomas Jefferson Farnham provided the earliest known account of Santa Barbara Island. After sailing along the California coast in 1839-1840 he wrote a book, *Travels in California*, in which he mentioned the island and its immediate neighbors and noted that they were all “densely populated with goats.” Santa Barbara Island came under the possession of the United States in 1848, became part of Santa Barbara County in 1850, and yet by 1853 no person had claimed it as their property. Therefore the U. S. Government owned the island. No Mexican land grant had been allowed, and no leases had been recorded. A congressional appropriation of August 31, 1852, authorized funds for a hydrographic survey of the offshore islands and provided that “all leases of any of said islands, or of any part of either of them outstanding, shall be regarded as without authority and void.” In 1853 a U. S. Coast Survey Assistant, Captain E. O. C. Ord mentioned “the small rocky [island] of Santa Barbara,” and used its lower north peak that year in executing triangulation for the mapping of the California coast; he erected a wooden signal post on the summit. A commissioner of the General Land Office called the attention of the island to the U.S. Lighthouse Board while the surveys were taking place.⁴

The Coast Survey sent a topographer to Santa Barbara Island in February 1871 who set another survey signal (this time on the higher summit) and several stations, established a baseline and produced a topographic map. The signal consisted of a granite block with the letters U. S. C. S. carved on the surface, a pole of Oregon pine 32 feet high with sturdy braces, and a 40 gallon oak barrel mounted at the top, all painted black. The signal survived what the topographer described as “the heaviest S. E. storm known on the coast for 5 years” and he predicted that it would survive until the wood decayed. The resulting map showed a trail leading from a landing and corral south of Graveyard Canyon to the saddle, then northwest down to a structure, presumably a cabin, at the tip of Webster Point. The map notes a “N. E. Landing” there (curiously, that is the northwest corner of the island) and called it “bad.” The mapmaker ignored the landing that would later become the commonly used one. The topographer placed ten survey monuments. He named one Corral, usually an indication that stock raising was or had been present. Another, near the

³Erlandson, Jon et al, “4,000 Years of Human Occupation on Santa Barbara Island, California” in *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 14:85-92; Harry Kelsey, *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986), p. 147; John R. Johnson, *An Ethnohistoric Study of the Island Chumash*, Thesis, University of California Santa Barbara, December 1982, pp. 14, 36.

⁴Thomas Jefferson Farnham, *Travels in California* (Oakland: Biobooks, 1947), p. 199; Section 3950 of the Political Code of California; John Wilson, Commissioner, General Land office to Thornton A. Jenkins, Esq., Secretary of the Light House Board, November 11, 1853, courtesy of James Lima, MMS. Other references of goats on the island have not been found. Farnham, a lawyer born in Vermont in 1804, led an expedition to Oregon and California in 1839, and wrote a number of books on the subject after returning east.

northwest cabin, had been named Fisherman, no doubt in honor of the occupant of the structure. Kelp beds surrounded the island. The topographer miscalculated the elevations of the two summits by up to 85 feet, but otherwise did a fairly good job of topographic mapping considering the tools he had at hand. No doubt Signal Peak got its name from his triangulation signal; whether it lasted as long as he predicted is not known.⁵

In 1873, A. W. Chase, a U. S. Coast Survey Sub-Assistant, reported to Superintendent Benjamin Pierce and gave him a description of the signal for primary triangulations erected on Santa Barbara Island. His maps and drawings also supply the topography of the island. His recommendation for landing was located south of the present landing cove.

In approaching the island of Santa Barbara, should the wind be favorable, it will be best to anchor off the E. side. Inside the kelp bed you will get 8 fathoms, sandy bottom, you will see a fisherman's hut (white washed) on the rocky shore. Pull for that. When approaching the shore, you will see a narrow channel between two rocks awash. Pass through that and land on the North Western face of the rocky ledge just below the hut. Unless the sea be very smooth this land, the best on the island, will be difficult.⁶

While no leases had been recorded on the island previous to 1909, people did occupy the island. In *The Land of Sunshine*, published in 1897, J. R. Britton made a number of interesting observations about the island. Comparing its profile to that of a camel, he wrote that “upon the higher hump stands the decaying beacon of the U. S. Coast Survey.” He noted “a narrow shelf where a crayfisherman has built a hut of lath and canvas,” and scattered skulls and hooves of sheep, remnants of a past business venture: “For a time they thrive; but a dry year came, the grass withered, and visiting fishermen found the poor brutes too weak from starvation to stand.” Britton reported that those not dead had been removed from the island. As to the current business on the island, he wrote,

On another shelf across a deep chasm is a wooden trough and trying-pot of cemented stone about which hangs an odor of seal oil, for within a decade Santa Barbara Island has been a favorite sealing place. The cows and pups lived here and the bulls came down from the north in the autumn to remain until spring. The sealers shot the bulls in the water with rifles. At low tide the pups were clubbed in the ocean caves. Finally the hunters began killing the cows; and as a result the animals are now so nearly exterminated that the industry is practically abandoned.⁷

Fisherman and seal hunter H. Bay Webster, profiled in the Anacapa Island section, lived on Santa Barbara Island as a squatter in the 1890s. He built a cabin on the northwest point of the island that now bears his name, Webster Point. Entomologist Don Meadows interviewed Webster in 1940. According to notes of the interview, Webster had a shack near the arch on Webster Point in 1896, and recalled “abundant” cats living on the island until disease diminished their numbers. Webster spoke of an Indian camp near the point where he found a mortar and pestle. Webster was at home with the elements, going

⁵U. S. Coast Survey, “Santa Barbara Island,” 1871.

⁶A. W. Chase, “Descriptions of Stations,” 1871, GA 941, RG 23, NA(CP).

⁷J. R. Britton, “Our Summer Isles” in *Sunshine, A Magazine of California and the Southwest*, Charles F. Lummus, Ed. Vol. VII, No. 5, October 1897, pp. 192-194.

barefoot and having interests in other islands, mainly Anacapa where he ran sheep. Other men made Santa Barbara Island a regular port around the turn of the century. Buster Hyder recalled that Carl Jergensen and Bert Johnson spent years fishing for lobsters at Gull Rock (Sutil Island) in *Thor*, a boat built by Hyder's father. They reportedly had a cabin at the top of the rock, although that would have been an extraordinary feat. Hyder reported a crawfish shack at the landing cove, where he stayed one night with his parents early in the century.⁸

Government Leases on Santa Barbara Island

As a way to support commerce and increase revenues, the U. S. government typically leased lands that possessed potential for agriculture and exploitation, as long as the use didn't interfere with the government's activities on the property. Santa Barbara Island escaped attention from both the government and private citizens until after 1900, when the Department of Commerce and Labor commenced leasing the island for agricultural and recreation purposes. The lease to the Hyder family (1914-1922) produced the most intensive and well-documented use of Santa Barbara Island.

In January 1903 the Office of the Lighthouse Engineer, 12th District, requested information on certain sites for lighthouse purposes and found that the government had always owned Santa Barbara Island but that a reservation had never been made there for lighthouse purposes. Upon the urging of the Lighthouse Board, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an Executive Order on August 24, 1905, reserving Santa Barbara Island for lighthouse purposes. Evidently no lease or grant had been made on the island up to that time, so under the jurisdictional administration of the Department of Commerce and Labor, regulations for leasing set down by Congress had to be followed and records maintained.⁹

The government set forth to lease Santa Barbara Island. It added two paragraphs into the standard lease that read:

That this lease shall be subject to revocation by the Secretary of Commerce and Labor at his discretion at any time prior to the expiration of the term of five years for which it is made.

That the premises hereby leased shall not be sublet in any event, and that no assignment of this lease shall be made without the consent of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor having been first obtained in writing.¹⁰

Following upon instructions, the Department of Commerce and Labor advertised the island for lease for a five-year term in newspapers up and down the coast. Interested parties submitted sealed bids, and the lease went to the highest bidder.

⁸Oral history interviews with Don Meadows, January 12, 1979, and with Buster Hyder, February 6, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #1755 and 1756; interview with Don Meadows, February 21, 1978 by the author.

⁹Memorandum to Lighthouse Board, February 11, 1903, 11th Coast Guard District, L & P.

¹⁰Memorandum, W. W. Trott, Department of Commerce to Commissioner of Lighthouses, July 30, 1912, Lighthouses, File 1614, RG 26, NA.

The J. G. Howland Lease

J. G. Howland obtained the first recorded lease on July 6, 1909. Howland's father had run sheep on Catalina Island during the Civil War and he had grown up among the islands. His five-year lease commenced July 1, 1909 at a rental of \$26 per annum. Howland soon sublet the island, ignoring the paragraph in the lease that prohibited the practice. On August 1, 1909, Howland leased San Nicolas Island under identical conditions to those of Santa Barbara Island except that he paid \$151 per year. Without consulting the Department of Commerce, he sublet a portion of each island to C. B. Linton of Long Beach, California for the purpose of propagating pearls in abalone. Linton, who paid \$125 per year, transferred his interest in the lease to the C. B. Linton Investment Company, Inc., a pearl culture enterprise. The first contract with Linton was under the date of October 6, 1909, and the second on January 24, 1911. The latter read:

I, the undersigned, hereby grant to C. B. Linton of Long Beach, California, the exclusive right or privilege to place camps upon the islands of San Nicolas and Santa Barbara, California, so long as I own the lease of said islands, for the purpose of securing and preparing abalones¹¹

Howland and Linton duly signed the lease. In 1911 a controversy arose between the two men over the killing of sheep on San Nicolas Island belonging to Mr. Howland, allegedly by the Linton employees. Howland appealed to the Department of Commerce to remove Mr. Linton and his employees from the island. Linton denied the charges stating that if any sheep were killed, it was by men who were not working for the Linton Company and instead collecting abalone on their own but paying the Linton Company in shellfish in exchange for transportation and provisions. As the charges flew, Linton said that Mr. Howland subleased pearl-fishing privileges on Santa Barbara Island to a Japanese for \$300 a year, that he subleased certain portions of San Nicolas Island to two former employees of the Linton Company for the same purpose, that he sold alcoholic liquors on the island of San Nicolas, and that the only use to which he put Santa Barbara Island was to sublet fishing purposes.

In replying to these charges, Howland said that the fishermen had been granted these privileges without charge but with the agreement that they carry no guns and that they would not shoot or disturb the stock. Howland's name came to light again in 1912 over alleged improper activity at "certain islands off the coast of California" where thirteen Chinese were said to have entered the United States without inspection. They were later captured while being smuggled to the mainland. Linton finally interested the Bureau of Fisheries in his work and it urged the Department of Commerce to allow Linton's enterprises remain and finish their experiments with the shellfish in progress. The matter was settled by the Department granting a license to Linton to operate on the shore of San Nicolas Island and for Mr. Howland's lease to run for its unexpired term.

Although correspondence found in Lighthouse Bureau files was largely about Howland's San Nicolas Island lease, it revealed that Howland apparently did not run sheep on Santa Barbara Island, that he exploited it only for fishing rights, and since he only sold alcoholic beverages on San Nicolas Island it may

¹¹Ibid., File 1614, 1911.

be assumed that Santa Barbara Island had no human habitation worth serving. It appeared that even Linton had little work on the island. Howland did not renew the lease.

The Hyder Family on Santa Barbara Island

In the spring of 1914, the Board of Lighthouses again distributed public notices pursuant to the leasing of Santa Barbara Island Lighthouse Reservation for a period of five years. The Bureau hung notices in post offices between San Francisco and San Diego, mailed them to numerous private parties, and published them in five newspapers and the U. S. Government Advertiser. The printing and advertising must have cost at least one year's rental. The two bids received were well above Howland's yearly payment. T. D. Webster of Carpinteria bid \$225 and Alvin Hyder of San Pedro bid \$250 a year thus acquiring the lease on June 16, 1914.¹²

The largest settlement of people on the island in historic times moved onto the island with Hyder. At one time around 1915 some 15 people lived on the little island. Alvin Hyder's son, Denton O. "Buster" Hyder, spoke with Don Meadows in 1940, Ralph Philbrick in 1970, Ron Morgan in 1979 and with Marla Daily many times between 1986 and 1991. The following narrative has been written based on notes and tape recordings of these interviews.¹³

Alvin Hyder was born in a log cabin near Claremore, Missouri, one of twelve children. His father died while he was a young boy and in 1892 the mother brought the family to Huntington Beach. When Alvin was 14, he went to sea on a sailing vessel for two years. By 1900 he and his brother had a small boat in which they went around the various islands picking up crayfish on a regular route. In 1904 Alvin built the *Nora*, a 65-foot, 15-ton boat used to haul sheep to and from the Channel Islands. In the summers he used it to haul fish for the canneries. This boat burned off the coast of San Juan Capistrano. Hyder then had the 16-ton *Nora II* built by Fellows and Stuart in Wilmington. She was 65 feet long with an 18-foot beam, and traveled at nine knots. Hyder equipped her deck with sheep pens built of one-by-sixes. On January 16, 1916, his lease of Santa Barbara Island in hand, Hyder set out in the rain with his wife Annie and two children Nora and Buster to establish a farm and sheep ranch on the island. They took with them household goods, furniture and lumber to build a house. They saw only one house on the island when they arrived. It stood on the north side of the present landing. A bridge ran across the cove from the south side to the

¹²“Award or Recommendation” in Abstract of Bids, Department of Commerce, June 16, 1914, RG 26, File 1614, NA.

¹³Oral history interviews with Don Meadows, January 12, 1979 and Buster Hyder, February 6, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #1755, 1756 and 1757; “The Hyder Family on Santa Barbara Island as Told By Denton O. “Buster” Hyder,” in *Santa Barbara Island*, Marla Daily, Editor (Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Occasional Paper No. 6, 1993), pp. 7-30. All quotes are from Daily's edited interviews unless otherwise noted. Hyder was interviewed many times over a span of fifty years by different people, and at times his accounts differ. The narrative is constructed from all of the various accounts, and the authors beg tolerance for any conflicting facts.



The Alvin Hyder family at their shack on Santa Barbara Island. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*



Home of Cleve Hyder and his family, located near the top of the stairs from the landing. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

house, reportedly that of Chinese lobster trappers who had lived there previously. Otherwise, according to Buster, “there was nothing but wild cats and all kinds of mice all over.”

The Hyders had visited the island for a night some years before obtaining the lease. Buster Hyder recalled staying in the lobster fisherman’s shack at the landing when he was about five years old. He described the “shaky” bridge (it had a handrail) and remembered two or three bunks in the house; his parents slept in the upper bunk, he and his sister in the lower. A pair of skids allowed the former fishermen to pull their skiff up to the shack. When the Hyders returned in 1916, the house was gone but the bridge remained.

The year previous to the families’ arrival Hyder and his brothers had built a house near the edge of the island 100 yards south of and 150 feet above the landing. Built from lumber salvaged from the mainland, it had two rooms: one for Alvin and his family and the other for his brother Clarence, his wife Kelly and their four children. The house was anchored to the ground by cables so the wind wouldn’t blow it off the cliff. It had no electricity. The two families arrived in January so as to be able to plant crops and take advantage of the winter rains.

Hyder rebuilt the pier at the landing, where they unloaded supplies and equipment with a boom. Hyder rigged a sled on wood tracks down the steep slope between the landing and house:

We had a sled on the track that we let up and down with a long rope. That was all volcanic rock we had to drill to cement those spikes in for the track. Talk about workin’. We done it all with pick and shovel. The tracks went right up over the top of the hill. We used the sled for getting everything heavy to the top of the island or back down. The bottom of the track was set on the landing, and when the sled would come down, we would come down, we’d fill it up.

Buster Hyder recalled keeping the rounded out two-by-four wooden tracks greased with oil. A horse pulled the sled up the track, and the people lowered it by hand. The horse named Dan, listened for a signal from below to start hauling, and stopped in just the right place when the load was at the barn. Hyder family members widened the existing narrow trail from the landing to the houses, breaking up the volcanic rock with picks; ten-year-old Buster was then assigned to keep it clear of rocks and dirt with a shovel.

Alvin and Clarence’s brother Cleve and his wife Margaret also lived on the island. They mainly fished for lobster. Cleve built a house near the upper part of the landing in 1918. The one-room cabin had a shed roof and windows looking out onto the landing cove. A picket fence surrounded the yard, making a fairly picturesque scene. Tanks around the house collected rainwater off the roofs. The house was built in the middle of a drainage on a leveled area with a retaining wall; Hyder constructed a drainage ditch to keep water flowing down the canyon from flooding the house. Margaret Hyder taught school to the six island children in her house, using “old apple boxes” for chairs. She joined her husband lobster fishing much of the time. They built another cabin at Webster Point for convenience.

A man named George Sands and his wife Effie joined the community, fished for crayfish and lived in a tent near the barn; they left after two years. Paul Wills worked as a laborer for the Hyders; he lived in a 10 by 12-foot house southwest of the double-room house.



Cleve Hyder shears a sheep on Santa Barbara Island around 1918.
Santa Cruz Island Foundation

The family cooked on a coal-oil stove. Friends in fishing boats and family members transported supplies and groceries to the island. Often they traded mutton with fishermen for groceries. The water shortage ruled out planting an orchard, but the family attempted a garden. They adapted to island life to the point that Buster brushed his teeth with green coreopsis branches.

Since the island had no springs or flowing water, the Hyders constructed a system of reservoirs. They built two large concrete cisterns at the house. The Hyders brought water on *Nora II* in twenty-five 50-gallon barrels from the mainland, piping the water to the house reservoir through a one-and-a-half-inch pipe. In 1918 they installed a Rambler auto engine to pump the water. The Hyders needed water for up to 15 people who lived there and for their livestock. They searched the island for water sources, even looked for fresh water deep in sea caves. Any collecting method possible would be used, no matter how disgusting. Buster Hyder cleaned the bird droppings off of the roof every year before the rains came, because the drain water went to the cistern. Buster recalled how “you had to limit your drinking water. It

had to last a year. Then it got stagnant. Many times when it was raining I'd drink water out of horse tracks. No kiddin'." Buster had the job of removing dead mice from the drinking water supply every day. "Boy, it was hard to drink it. But when you don't have anything else, you have to drink it."

The Hyders constructed two water catchment basins on the island for the livestock and crops. Alvin and Buster built a "big dam" on the west side near Webster Point, using two mules and a scraper. The pond filled with water draining off the west slope of the island. "It's all hard rock under there. It stayed full of water pretty near a year because of the hard pans there."

On the east slope of Signal Peak near Cat Canyon the Hyders had another system of reservoirs. Water running off the side of the hill was collected into concrete ditches that fed into a wooden settling tank, and then fell into the reservoir that measured about 70 by 100 feet. Buster Hyder described building the ditches when he was fifteen years old, around 1920:

There are two ditches coming off the mountain gully, one to the north and one on the south of a bald spot. We used them both. They both come together. The ditches were made of cement. I got all the volcanic rock and sand to build these. We hauled the water for the cement over in the wagon. It had great big wheels on it. I'd fill 'em up with salt water, pump 'em full and then I'd bring them over . . . We built forms and cemented it.

When it rained, Alvin Hyder paid close attention to this particular reservoir system. He came out, even in the middle of the night, to make sure no water would get diverted away from the collection system. He and Buster cleaned out the concrete ditches regularly.

The Hyders built a substantial barn measuring 60 by 40 feet and a stable with two stalls for their two horses; they also had two mules. They brought farming equipment to the island and set to work. The island was covered with foxtails, ice plant and jungles of coreopsis, which the Hyders called cabin stock. They cleared land for hay fields and crops by hand, pulling up coreopsis and cutting the ice plant, which was then dried and burned. They burned parts of the island annually to encourage grasses. In 1918 they burned the entire island but still found they had to pull the coreopsis. The Hyders plowed the land with a moldboard plow hitched to four horses. They grew five acres of potatoes and corn on the west terrace and 150 acres of barley on the larger and more fertile east slope. The rich soil produced plentiful barley, which was cut, baled and shipped on *Nora II* to the mainland fifteen tons at a time. The potato crop failed ("too much guano in the ground . . . it burned 'em," according to Buster Hyder), and most were left to rot in the ground. They also grew hay between 1918 and 1922.

We grew hay all the way out to where those badlands are, clear through that whole area. We planted from the foot of the mountain clear to the south end of the island . . . We could have made money on all of our hay, too. We shipped it to the beach there on 6th Street. We sold our hay to this guy, and he went bankrupt. We lost all our feed and all our work for one year. We got skunked.

Buster Hyder told of hauling a precious hay baler up the steep cliff only to have it slip and plunge into the water. The men rescued the baler and, with the help of a blacksmith, "straightened it out" and put it to work.



The hay wagon next to a pile of cut hay, driven by Cleve Hyder. *Santa Cruz Island Foundation*



Hay field on Santa Barbara Island, circa 1918. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

The Hyders brought about 300 sheep to Santa Barbara Island in 1915, the first known sheep to graze there, at least in many years. Alvin Hyder bought fine Rambouillet sheep from the Caires of Santa Cruz Island. The Hyder sheep were fattened and sold for meat, but in the meantime were shorn in corrals on the west side near the reservoir. Buster Hyder watered the sheep every day, taking a bucket to the reservoir and dipping water out into wooden troughs. At shipping time, the sheep were driven into wing fences, which funneled them into pens by the landing. The Hyders lowered them down to the boat ten at a time. “We’d hog tie them, load them into the sled, and then let it down the hill.” After the Hyder’s lease ran out, Buster returned with a herd of sheep to fatten them, living alone on the island for six months in the late 1920s.

The Hyders kept goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys and geese, often feeding them broken seagull eggs. The high winds wreaked havoc on the chickens and geese: “. . . we watched more gosh darn chickens and turkeys and our stuff blow out in that ocean—blow ‘em clear out.”

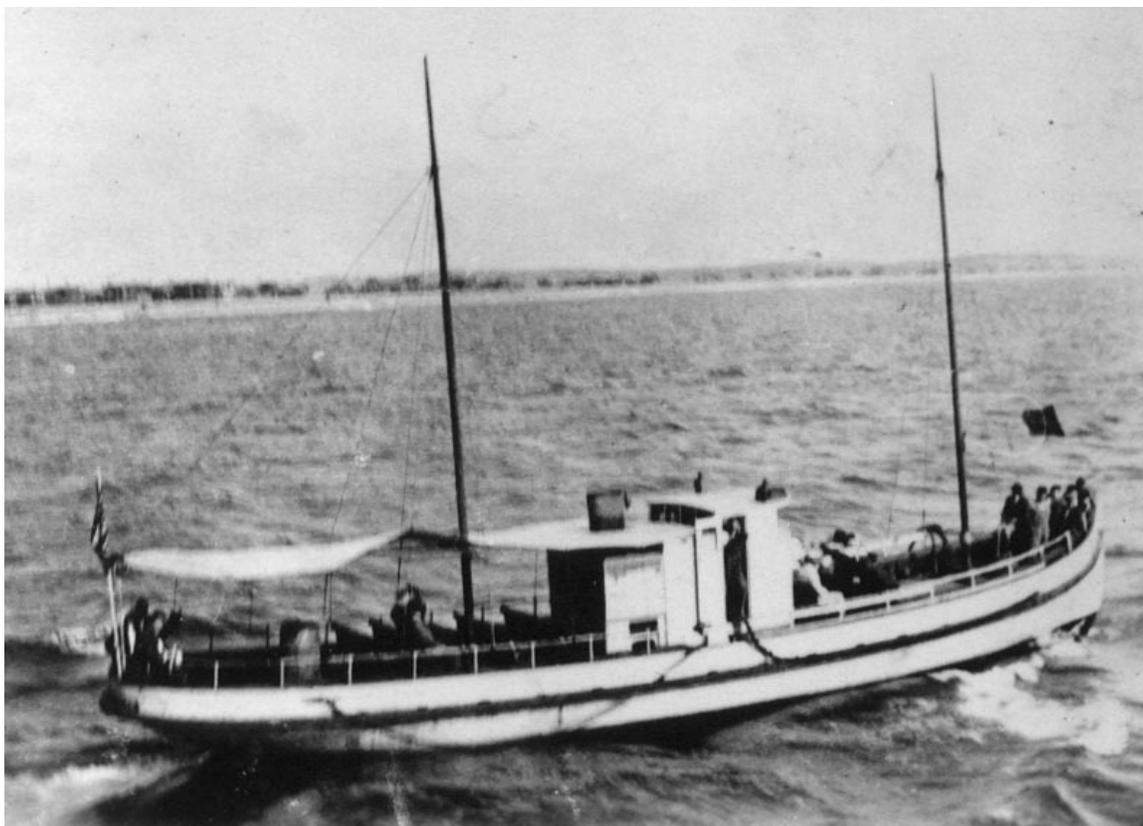
The Hyder horses and mules did much of the work on the island. Horses named Dan and Charlie performed chores such as hauling the wagon, herding sheep and transporting the Hyders across the island. Charlie died after slipping and falling over a cliff during a sheep drive at Graveyard Canyon. Dan, who knew so well the routine of pulling the cart rope at the landing, died while being loaded onto the boat as the Hyders were vacating the island. The island ranch had two mules. Jack, a hard worker who hauled loads of water and rock among other things, died of a heart attack while hauling gravel from Arch Point. The Hyders left Beck, a white mule, on the island when they left, and suspected that soon fishermen had eaten the lonely mule.

In the early decades of the century, people made good money raising rabbits, marketing the meat and selling the pelts. Following the trend, the Hyders brought hundreds of pure black and pure white Belgian hares out to the island and turned them loose. At the time, feral cats roamed the island and feasted on the rabbits, as did the resident eagles. The Hyders responded by poisoning cats with strychnine-laced rabbit carcasses. Four hogs brought to the island also died from eating the poisoned rabbits, and no doubt a number of eagles died as well. Years later Buster Hyder brought hunters to the island to shoot rabbits. “They’d go up and they’d come back with just tons of rabbits. Freeze them all down and eat them later.”¹⁴

Buster Hyder once rowed to Sutil Island where he found a bald eagle nest built from logs and two-by-fours. He brought two eagle chicks home but they died later, supposedly from rabbit poison. He told the story of his father planting dozens of eucalyptus trees in a formation spelling his initials, A. H. “My dad said, ‘Some day they’ll be flying over here with airplanes and they’ll see my initials on the side of the hill’ He was so proud of that, the first thing off the boat he would come up with the water bucket.” Rabbits eventually killed the young trees.

While away from the island for long lengths of time, the Hyders hired caretakers. When Cleve and Margaret Hyder weren’t around, a woman named Margaret Blue from Catalina stayed on the island with her goats. “Russian Joe” watched the island for about two months, and often Annie Hyder’s brother stayed on the island.

¹⁴In various interviews and accounts the number of rabbits imported has ranged from 800 to 4,000. The lesser number is more likely.



The Hyder's boat, *Nora II*. Santa Cruz Island Foundation

The amount of work on the island ranch was staggering. Alvin Hyder and his family members took care of the animals, crops, buildings, equipment, supplies and each other. Buster Hyder described his father:

The ol' man got up with a lantern and went to bed with a lantern. Eight hours was just getting' started. He worked all the time. He was a hard working man who never knew when to stop.

The Hyder lease expired in 1919 but they stayed on anyway. After seven years of hard work and frustration, they decided to leave the island in 1922. They took their twelve goats, 300 sheep, dogs and four horses to their homestead in Cuyama Valley north of Santa Barbara. Following the terms of the lease, they tore down the buildings and brought the materials to the mainland, although they failed to remove the main house. Reportedly Alvin Hyder tried to lease Santa Barbara Island for another term without success; an entrepreneur from Venice outbid him. Nevertheless, he took 250 sheep back to the island for fattening many years after their lease had run out.

In 1936 Alvin Hyder and his son Buster were loading wool on San Nicolas Island. A swell came up and rolled the boat, killing Alvin Hyder. Buster went on to run a sport fishing business out of San Pedro, founding the 22nd Street Landing. He died in 1994 at age 87 on the land his father had homesteaded in Cuyama Valley.

Resort Promotion and Unexploited Leases

In 1919 the Bureau of Lighthouses published and advertised the usual notices for the re-leasing of Santa Barbara Island. Two sealed bids arrived: C. P. Visel's for \$25.50 per year and Abbott Kinney for \$1,250 (Alvin Hyder apparently did not submit a formal bid). Kinney enclosed a check for \$250 and got the lease. The bid had originally been made in the names of all the members of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, Venice, California, but since bids had to be made in the name of an individual or corporation, Mr. Kinney, one of the board members, came forward. The Chamber actually wanted to develop the island for public use: fishing and boating, a station for hydroplanes, camping places, and to furnish headquarters for the Venice Aquarium and for the Venice Marine Biological Station of the University of Southern California. To make the plan a success would cost a considerable amount of money since the entrepreneurs would have to furnish a safe water supply, sanitary facilities, houses, roads and landings. Mr. Kinney asked for a 25-year lease so as to justify the expenditures, but was advised he would have to seek congressional authority.¹⁵

Accordingly, Congressman Osborne drew up House Bill 9641 and set forth arguments in its favor. Santa Barbara Island, it was claimed, was directly in front of Venice and adjoined the celebrated Osborne fishing bank, over a thousand seals graced its rocks, and it was time to open this and other islands to the public rather than leave them to the sheep men. A fellow Congressman appealed to the Department of Commerce to extend the lease since the resort would serve the entire bay district from Redondo Beach to the Long Wharf, Collis Huntington's colossal docking facility in Santa Monica Bay.¹⁶

The bill was poorly drawn, and seemed to restrict competition for the proposed twenty-five year lease to the Venice Chamber of Commerce, so in the end it was abandoned. Since the lease could not be extended, the Venice Chamber of Commerce put an end to their project. Mr. Kinney failed to pay his annual rent in 1920, and his lease was revoked. After this reversal, Abbott Kinney reportedly went to Santa Cruz Island and at Pelican Cove built a casino, bar and cabins (this source may be confusing Kinney with Ira Eaton). Rum running was a known activity around the islands, and old residents on Anacapa such as Frenchy LeDreau, Charles Johnson and Bay Webster were all said to have had a hand in it.¹⁷

Mr. Visel who had made the lower bid of \$25.50 per annum in 1919 asked that he be awarded the lease in the event Kinney's was ever revoked. Superintendent H. W. Rhodes of the Lighthouse Service, 18th District, found his bid so absurdly low that he refused it. Rhodes, however, showed some sympathy for the idea of a resort on Santa Barbara Island and recommended that no action be taken toward releasing the island until it was known what further legislation would be drawn up to extend the lease period by the Venice group. During the next three years, Rhodes received a steady flow of correspondence from parties who wished to purchase or use Santa Barbara Island on a long term lease for resort or fishing purposes, and one request to exploit it for oil. Although most looked upon it as a business venture, others, like the Venice Chamber of Commerce, seemed to think it was time to open the island to all the people and not limit its use to private enterprises.

¹⁵"Award or Recommendation" in Abstract of Bids, Department of Commerce, June 16, 1914, RG 26, File 1614, NA.

¹⁶John E. Claus to Wm. C. Redfield, Department of Commerce, August 9, 1919, RG 26, File 1614, 1920, NA.

¹⁷Interview with Don Meadows by Lois Roberts, February 21, 1978.

In 1927, the island remained vacant and without a lease. In that year the DeQuer School of Human Engineering in Los Angeles asked to get a concession on the island for vacation cottages and a hotel for those who followed aquatic sports. Mr. Crawford Baxter, who wrote the letter, apparently did not know the island or of its lack of sandy beaches. The Lighthouse Commissioner informed him that

There is a very limited and poorly protected anchorage off the landing place on the lee side of the island which is partially protected from northwesterly winds, but the prevailing northwesterly swell usually makes this landing difficult throughout the greater part of the year.¹⁸

The Commissioner further advised that the Department be authorized to lease the island and would resort to the necessary advertising if Baxter wanted to submit a bid. Baxter evidently did not follow through, but public notices for bids were advertised in 1929. The Lighthouse Service reserved for itself two lighthouse sites and a right of way.

Arthur M. McLellan and Harry H. Cupit obtained a lease for five years on November 1, 1929, apparently to use the island for grazing. The lessees made several short visits to the island but never occupied it for any length of time nor did they ever place any equipment on the island or attempt to improve it. The only payment they made was the \$75 covering their first year's rental and submitted with their bid. Superintendent Rhodes in San Francisco recommended that their lease be canceled February 6, 1932. Theirs was the last lease on the island, so that in 1937 when the Channel Islands National Monument was in the planning stage, no grazing leases were outstanding.¹⁹

Government Activities on Santa Barbara Island

Lighthouses

As early as 1853 government officers made note of the potential of Santa Barbara Island for lighthouse purposes. United States Coast Survey topographers noted the adaptability and location advantage of the island in the Southern California Bight, an area used heavily by maritime traffic since before the Gold Rush. Nonetheless, it would take 75 years to get a navigational aid built on Santa Barbara Island.

For unknown reasons the Bureau of Lighthouses ignored Santa Barbara Island for the last half of the 19th century. Only at the urging of the Lighthouse Board in 1903 did the government take action. An Executive Order by President Theodore Roosevelt reserved Santa Barbara Island for lighthouse purposes on August 24, 1905:

It is hereby ordered that an unsurveyed Island, known as Santa Barbara Island, situated in the Pacific Ocean in approximate sections 1, 2, 12 and 13, township 8 south, range 21

¹⁸Conway, Acting Commissioner of Lighthouses, to Crawford Baxter, March 19, 1927, RG 26, File 1614, NA.

¹⁹H. W. Rhodes to Commissioner of Lighthouses, February 6, 1932, RG 26, File 1614, 1922, NA.

west, San Bernardino meridian, containing approximately 638.72 acres, be and it is hereby reserved for light-house purposes.

The reservation included Santa Barbara Island proper, Sutil Island and Shag Rock. The order described the area as about one and one-half miles long and one mile wide. The records of the 18th District Office of the Superintendent of Lighthouses were destroyed by fire in 1906, but from copies of correspondence obtained from the Bureau of Lighthouses prior to 1918, it appears that recommendations for navigational aids along the western Santa Barbara Channel, and especially around Point Conception, outweighed those for lights along the south coast. Nonetheless on July 27, 1928, the Bureau of Lighthouses authorized an automatic light on the northerly point of the island “for the protection of inter-island navigation in general and particularly for the protection of the Hawaiian Island and trans-Pacific traffic, which follows a course passing six miles to the northward of the island.”²⁰

By this time, the Los Angeles Harbor had surpassed San Francisco in tonnage and became the principal terminus for trade on the whole west coast. The Commissioner of Lighthouses approved a light for Santa Barbara Island in letters of January and March of 1928, and an allotment was made by the Bureau in connection with funds for additional aids to navigation on Anacapa Island. The light would be a 375 mm AGA acetylene lantern equipped with a K130 flasher, S20 sunvalve, and one-foot burner (390 candlepower) adjusted to show a flashing one second light every six seconds; it would be powered by twelve A-25 accumulators, or tanks of acetylene gas. Structures included the light tower with an accumulator house, built at San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Island and disassembled for shipment. The equipment and labor would cost \$2,286.00. The white wooden pyramid was constructed on the island by the district carpenter; the light installed by the “mechanician” and assisted by the crew of the lighthouse tender anchored off shore. The tower was located 195 feet above the water and appeared on the 1929 Light List as unwatched. The location given was the northeasterly point of the island, 33 degrees 29’ .3’ latitude north and 119 degrees 01’ .8’ longitude west. A new trail from the landing cove offered access by foot and handcart. The Commissioner estimated a cost of \$75. per year to maintain the light.²¹

In 1934, a second light tower went up on the south end of the island, westerly side, located 486 feet above the water and visible for twelve miles. The light, a 480 candlepower unwatched beacon on a steel skeleton tower, was on a ten second cycle, two seconds of flash. Workers built a trail between the landing and the southern light.

When Santa Barbara Island became part of Channel Islands National Monument in 1938, two parcels of land and right of ingress and egress were retained for lighthouse purposes. The northwesterly parcel, designated as “A”, was of approximately 16 acres, and the southwest parcel, designated as “B”, was 40.96 acres. Parcel “C” consisted of a linear right-of-way between Parcels “A” and “B” and the landing. In 1939, the Bureau of Lighthouses became a part of the U. S. Coast Guard.²²

²⁰“Memoranda on Lighthouse Island Reservations off Southern Coast of California,” Office of the Superintendent of Lighthouses, San Francisco, November 19, 1934, 11th CGL&P.

²¹Recommendation as to Aids to Navigation, and Estimate of Cost of Proposed Works, July 18, 1928, Lighthouse Correspondence, 1926, 3640, RG 26, NA.

²²“Santa Barbara Island” memo from Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, California office to author; GSA, Report of Federal Real Property, 12-31-53, at 11th Coast Guard District, L & P.

At the outbreak of World War II, the military ordered both lights temporarily extinguished. They were relighted in 1943 when the immediate threat to Los Angeles Harbor was felt to be over. During the war the Navy took over responsibility for U. S. Coast Guard activities, including aids to navigation, and instituted a program of timed blackouts of coastal lights in case of enemy attack. The Navy placed additional navigational buoys and developed a blackout system called ANRAC during the blackout in 1942, which was able to control acetylene and electric lights on buoys or fixed structures. The control station, located on the mainland, could control the remote lights now equipped with radio receivers and relays. However, the Coastal Lookout observers evidently operated the Santa Barbara Island lights on site; the Observer in Charge at the island in December 1944 wrote to his superior telling of a faulty switch resulting in a temporary failure of the light. In June of 1945 the Commandant of the 11th Naval District advised that both island lights would be replaced by acetylene or automatic lights, would be maintained by the Coast Guard, and would no longer be subject to blackouts. The ANRAC system was dismantled in September of 1945.²³

After the war the Coast Guard maintained the lights on a regular basis. The major responsibility was replacing the accumulators, gas cylinders weighing about 150 pounds each. Coast Guardsmen visited the island on tender ships such as the *Diligence*, hauling supplies on carts and making any repairs as necessary. A tramway left by the Navy from its wartime occupation of the island was maintained and used by the Coast Guard to haul supplies up the steep hill to the trails leading to the lights. Instead of the jeep they had requested after the war, Coast Guard men had hoisted a stripped down Model A Ford up the tramway for use hauling the twelve heavy acetylene tanks to each light twice a year. Because the soft island soil provided poor traction, the men “welded tractor lugs of heavy angle iron to the bare rims,” thereby churning up the earth to get to their destinations. An inspection by National Park Service officials in 1950 revealed that vandals had stolen the engine from the hoist shed, leaving Coast Guard personnel to haul the accumulators by hand up the stairway. They complained that the vehicle was causing erosion and photographed unsightly roadways crossing the island.²⁴

In 1952, the Light List showed the south end light at 450 candlepower and the north end Santa Barbara Island Light as 200 candle power. On July 10, 1959, a fire denuded over two-thirds of the island and destroyed the south light tower. Permanent discontinuance was published on October 16, 1959. The remaining northeasterly light was visible from 969 degrees to 356 degrees being partially obscured by the hills elsewhere.²⁵

By 1979 the pyramidal wooden Santa Barbara Island Light structure was in poor condition. The historic resource study published that year noted that it was “critically in need of paint and general repair. The door is unlocked, but jammed, and the fittings are rusted and need replacement.” As the oldest structure remaining on the island, the light “presents a poor and deteriorating appearance.” The light tower

²³Observer In Charge to Senior Coastal Lookout Officer, December 20, 1944, and District Coast Guard Officer Joseph Greenspun to Commandant, 11th ND, 15 June, 1945, RG 181, NA(LN), courtesy of James Lima, MMS.

²⁴Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, to Regional Director, Region Four, May 8, 1950, RG 79, NA(SB), courtesy of James Lima, MMS; “The Channel Islands National Monument After Eleven Years,” Special Report by Lowell Sumner, May 25, 1950, RG 79, Box 15, File 204, NA(SB). The tramway mentioned was an updated version of the Hyder's system, in virtually the same location.

²⁵U. S. Coast Guard, Light Lists Pacific Coast of the United States, 1929-Present; “World War Narrative History” Coast Guard, 11th Naval District, Coast Guard History, 1946, RG 26, NA.

was subsequently removed, replaced by a modern steel tower with a solar-powered beacon. The trail remained, and has since been maintained as a hiking trail for visitors. The road to the south light was used for many years as a hiking trail, but is partly bypassed today.

Proposals to Use Santa Barbara Island for Target Practice

In the early 1920s when Lighthouses Superintendent Rhodes was writing to prospective resort and fishing developers, the Department of Commerce was corresponding with the Navy over the use of the island for naval target practice. In 1925 the Commander, Battle Divisions, Pacific Fleet, received permission to fire over the island to observe the effect of plunging gunfire over the island at invisible targets. Superiors directed Rhodes to work out the details, which included sending the Battle Fleet to the island to make an inspection and “insure that there were no inhabitants or domestic animals on the island, which might accidentally be injured.” The Navy made the same arrangements for May 1926.²⁶

In 1931, the Commander of the Battle Force requested use of Santa Barbara Island as a target to experiment with the explosive effect of different kinds of projectiles. Since the island was under lease to McLellan and Cupit, authority for such use was denied. Further, Rhodes felt that testing explosives on Santa Barbara Island was unwarranted since the Navy could use portions of San Miguel, San Nicolas and San Clemente Islands, two of which had already been transferred to them. The damage to the small area of level ground on Santa Barbara Island would be so great as to spoil the surface for other uses. He also argued that the damage could interfere with Lighthouse Service transport of accumulators and other equipment, which was being done with handcarts operating from the landing to either end of the island. Rhodes recalled his visit to the Channel Islands on a sailing schooner in 1888, and from that day he had envisioned their natural resources developed for future generations. He saw the time coming when little public land would be left for recreational purposes. He argued in 1937 that the Department should adopt a policy to advise all applicants for leases that in the best interests of the Lighthouse Service the islands should not be leased. He knew that representatives from the National Park Service had visited the island in the early 1930s, but they reported that they were not prepared to take over the islands. Santa Barbara Island, in particular, Rhodes felt, should be withheld from private interests who might exploit it and saved for the day when it could be “developed into a most attractive national monument open to the general public.”²⁷

²⁶Curtis Duncan, Secretary of the Navy, to Secretary of Commerce, March 3, 1926, File 1614, 1926; Rhodes to Commissioner, January 22, 1937, RG 26, File 1614, 1935, NA.

²⁷Ibid.

Naval Range Finder Marker

In April 1936, the Commandant of the 11th Naval District requested permission to install and maintain a range finder marker on Santa Barbara Island. The Lighthouse Service granted this authority on July 10, 1936. The Navy built a tower about ninety feet high at the highest point on the island, 635-foot Signal Peak. It was painted in twenty-foot sections alternately orange and black. No obstruction lights were judged necessary to safeguard aerial navigation in view of its isolated location.²⁸

Superintendent Rhodes suggested to the Navy that they use the landing on the easterly side of the island and the two small shacks near it that had been built when the Hyder family used the island for grazing and farming. He described the shacks as small and dilapidated. The Navy rebuilt one of them to use as a barracks and destroyed the other.²⁹

The range finder marker was a tool used in testing the emerging field of defensive radar. It worked as a prominent echo return source for a surface search radar. If the distance from the reflector to the radar antenna is known, the indications on the radar scope are provided. The useful life of the Santa Barbara Island tower is unknown; it was there in 1938, but probably had been removed by the time the Army Signal Corps installed a radar set on the island in 1942.³⁰

World War II

Enemy Attacks on the West Coast

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 was followed by enemy attacks on the shores of the Pacific frontier. The first incident in the southern California sector occurred December 24, 1941, when at 6:30 a.m. a torpedo was fired at the freighter *Barbara Olson* near Point Vicente. It missed and exploded after passing the ship. Close by, the crew of the 5,696-ton freighter *S. S. Absaroka* and shore observers had seen a Japanese submarine with a false fishing boat superstructure rise from the water and torpedo the *Absaroka*. One seaman was killed. The freighter was kept afloat by the lumber on board and was towed to port. Scores of people on the shore saw the attack and observers said the submarine remained on the surface for fifteen minutes after launching its two torpedoes. The next day at about 2:00 p.m., a slow moving submarine was seen finding position about 4,000 yards offshore of Redondo Beach Pier. A 75-mm gun was brought to the pier and emplaced so that it could open fire, but limited visibility made firing impossible.

²⁸Operation Order No. 116-45, District Coast Guard Officer, 11th Naval District, July 20, 1945, NA(LN); interview with USCG Commander (Ret.) W. S. Clark, February 14, 1978 by Lois Roberts.

²⁹Superintendent Rhodes to Bureau of Air Command, June 18, 1936, and Secretary of Navy to Lighthouse Commissioner, June 23, 1936, RG 26, NA; interview with Don Meadows, February 21, 1978 by Lois Roberts.

³⁰Interview with Paul Foster, Pacific Missile Range, Point Mugu, December 5, 1977 by Lois Roberts.

On February 23, 1942, a Japanese submarine approached the California coast west of Santa Barbara and fired thirteen rounds at a range of 2,500 yards at the Ellwood Oil Field area. Civilians and police sighted the surfaced submarine.³¹

These submarines, anti-personnel bombs, and balloon attacks brought World War II to American soil and caused the Navy to immediately establish a coastal lookout system with stations on each of the Channel Islands, including Santa Barbara Island.

Coastal Lookout Station

The Navy created the Coastal Lookout Organization to provide a system of coastal surveillance over the shoreline from Point Arguello to the Mexican boundary by visual lookout, maintaining communications with Joint Operations Surface Control Center, headquartered at the 11th Naval District, San Diego. It reported to the Shore Establishment, Local Defense Forces, 11th Naval District. The 11th Naval District worked with Joint Army and Navy Plans, Southern California Sector, and they in turn with the Army's Western Defense Command, the Fourth Air Force, and the Western Sea Frontier, the latter headquartered at the Presidio in San Francisco.

Coast Guard and Navy personnel manned Coastal Lookout Stations. Each station had a staff of seven men on 24-hour duty once the organization was completed. The Coastal Lookout Stations, Offshore Patrol, and Inshore Patrol, which made up the Local Defense Force, communicated through an operational battle circuit. Each station was allotted one portable radio, a transmitter to be placed on a roof or tower, and one receiver. By December 30, 1941, the Inshore Patrol had twelve vessels and the Offshore Patrol three. Among the latter was the *Hermes*, which had long patrolled the islands and served as free transportation for island dwellers. During the war it was credited with sinking a submarine outside San Pedro Harbor.³²

The Navy completed construction of the Santa Barbara Island Coastal Lookout Station on August 12, 1942. It consisted of a wooden tower, antenna pole, a transmitter and roads; a small-gauge steel rail tramway with metal car ran from the dock to the quarters, operated by an electric-powered winch in a shed. Previously, on May 27, 1942, a state of emergency was declared throughout the Western Sea Frontier, and a special line of patrol boats was established well to seaward to guard against enemy attacks. Lookouts would, hopefully, spot enemy vessels or aircraft that sneaked through this barrier. All eight offshore islands had Coastal Lookout Stations in place and manned by this time.³³

Cal Reynolds, interviewed in 1979, recalled his half-year stationed with coastal lookout personnel beginning in June of 1942. The Navy sent Reynolds and his fellow enlisted men from San Pedro; they

³¹“Details of Enemy Attacks on Shore Installations,” *History of the Western Defense Command*, Center for Military History, Washington, D. C.

³²Memorandum, Facilities to Commandant, June 16, 1944, A-3, Org. & Mgmt., 1943-44; Pierce, Commander Inshore Patrol to Commandant, 11th Naval District, March 16, 1942 in Commandant's correspondence, Records of the 11th Naval District, NA(LN).

³³Western Sea Frontier Command, War Diary, March 1942-November 1942, Center for Naval History, Washington, D. C.; Memorandum, T. S. Hare, Patrol Facilities, August 12, 1942, Commandant's Records; R. S. Holmes, Naval Activities, to Commandant, April 24, 1942, A6-3, Operations, 11th District, NA(LN).



Radio antenna (left) and lookout tower, 1942. *Channel Islands National Park*

reported by radio (island call number NCX 12) to headquarters in San Diego. An Army aircraft lookout group from Fort MacArthur joined them on the island. Duties included spotting submarines and reporting all passing vessels. Reynolds told of tearing down the Hyder's house in order to build two side-by-side barracks buildings, connected by an enclosed hallway. A kitchen with a cook provided food service for the enlisted men. A trail led from the barracks to the lookout tower on Signal Peak; both Army and Navy personnel shared the trail, barracks and tower for their respective duties.

Reynolds described duty at the station as “very hang loose . . . not a lot of regimentation, we stood our four on and eight off . . . it was a small island, there wasn't a lot to do on it.” The men worked two weeks on the island and then received one week of leave. They kept chickens and rabbits in pens, fished and tended lobster pots: “[we] always had hot buttered lobster.” The men didn't keep a garden because of the lack of water. The Navy had constructed a water storage tank and pumped water up from the dock. A weekly boat brought supplies and transferred men on and off the island. “It was a good life,” Reynolds recalled, “an enjoyable experience.”³⁴

After the Battle of Midway in June 1942, the perceived danger of enemy attack decreased on the West Coast and development of lookout stations ceased. The stations continued to be manned, however. Patrol boats serviced the stations and provided logistical support, such as relief of personnel, medical aid and

³⁴Oral history interview with Cal Reynolds, March 1, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #1761.

delivery of supplies. No station activity beyond the routine disturbed life on the islands according to the messages sent to the Section Base in San Pedro. While some of the Coastal Lookout Stations extended their activities to include Army flash reports and transmitting vessel reports, Santa Barbara Island personnel reportedly only maintained the blackout capabilities of the lighthouses there.³⁵

The Coastal Lookout System was abolished July 1, 1945. On July 17, the Commandant of the 11th Naval District took thirteen lookout stations out of service, including Santa Barbara Island. The order asked for delegation of radio call signs and transfer of radio equipment to San Diego. Coast Guard cutters including the *Hermes*, which had so long served the islands, resumed regular peacetime duties. Most of the structures at Santa Barbara Island were removed.³⁶

In 1945, the Navy transferred its buildings and equipment on Santa Barbara Island to the Coast Guard. Records show these to be:

Landing: Posts for the frame landing were set on concrete bases sunk into the rock of the beach above which the landing was built. There were two levels, the first that was reached by a vertical ladder from a small boat. Large boats could not get close to the landing because of the shallow water and shore structure. The second level was connected to the lower landing by stairs. The upper landing had an open shed used for storing gear, a large I-beam with a trolley for hoisting heavy loads, and the lower section of a rail tramway.

Tramhoist: A hoisting unit for the tram car was located at the top of the bluff at the upper station of the rail tramway. The prime mover was a Ford V-8 engine. The hoist was equipped with about 250 feet of 1/2" steel wire rope. The free end of the rope was attached to the tram car.

Tanks: There was one steel tank of 500 gallon capacity, 9' 9" in diameter by 6 feet high, and one pine tank 12' 6" in diameter by 10 feet high of 10,000 gallon capacity. The filler pipe, of galvanized iron and 1 1/2" in diameter, ran about 500 feet from the landing to the tank.

Buildings: Two barracks buildings 16' by 36' made of plywood with tongue and groove floors were supported on three sills 4' by 6" each. The sills were set on 6' 6" posts. The roof was composition roofing over sheathing. These two buildings were joined together by a short hall about 4 feet wide at the middle of the 36' sides. There was also a galvanized iron building 7' 3" by 11', a small generator building 6' by 6' and an outside head. At the top of the island was the glassed observation tower with a small generator building and outside head.

Garage: A 12' by 14' garage was constructed of old packing cases. It was used to house a piece of automotive equipment and a trailer.

Other Equipment: There was a trailer with iron wheels. Electric power and telephone lines ran from the landing to the lookout tower. The electric light line ran from the lookout tower to the north light.

³⁵Western Sea Frontier, Diary, 1942-45, Center for Naval History; interview with USCG Commander (Ret.) W. S. Clark, February 14, 1977 by author; J. G. Moskovics to Lt. Commander Hare, July 21, 1942, A6-3, 11th District, NA(LN).

³⁶W. H. Lassing, Operations, to District Coast Guard Officer, July 2, 1945, CGR-304, ET 14, Box 196685; Lassing to Commander, Western Sea Frontier, July 17, 1945, ET-14, 11th District, NA(LN); *San Diego Union*, September 14, 1945.

The Coast Guard concluded after an inspection of the above that the portions of value to them were the landing with all its equipment, the rail tramway, including car and hoist, the garage building, and the iron wheeled jeep trailer. However, it recommended that all the buildings be left in their present locations for the time being and that a jeep be procured for the use of the light tenders and be kept in the garage.³⁷

By 1948 the structures were “relatively intact” according to a park service report. By 1950 vandals had stolen the winch motor and the wooden water tank, and removal of plywood walls of the barracks resulted in their collapse. The landing platform was in good condition although the tramway was inoperable because of the loss of the motor.

When a party of park personnel, including Superintendent Scoyen, visited Santa Barbara Island in May of 1953, they found the former Navy structures in bad repair. The inclined railway was almost useless: the motor had been stolen and the winch shack demolished. What remained of the two Navy barracks was nearly obliterated since vandals had burned the structures. The Coast Guard shack was standing but the door had been blown off. The observation tower and shack on Signal Peak still stood.³⁸

Pacific Coast Aircraft Warning Radar Station

When the war broke out in 1941, radar was still a closely guarded secret. Even the word radar was not used; instead such words as special equipment, aircraft warning equipment and derax were used. Few people even knew that experiments were ongoing at Signal Corps laboratories, or knew that there was any association between radio, electronics and aircraft warning.

On December 7 certain aircraft warning troops were at San Francisco awaiting embarkation to the South Pacific. These units were equipped with the then highly secret SCR-270 radar sets equipped with two antennas radiating at different frequencies for height finding. They also had a few SCR-268s. The personnel of the units had been given as little information as possible about the equipment that they were required to use. Several days after the outbreak of war, these units were all reassembled and assigned to the Commanding General, Fourth Air Force, who was under the command of the Commanding General, Western Defense Command and Fourth Army. The Fourth Air Force deployed these aircraft warning sets, which numbered under twenty, up and down the Pacific coast. They were under the direct control of the Fourth Interceptor Command, later the Fourth Fighter Command, Riverside, California. Throughout 1942 the seaward screen was augmented so that overlapping coverage was provided from the Strait of Juan de Fuca to the Mexican border.

Santa Barbara Island became one of the Pacific Coast Aircraft Warning Radar Stations in 1942 and was equipped with an L-35 type SCR-588 radar. The 588 was already in production when the war broke out; it operated in the 200-megahertz frequency region and provided for height-finding as well as range azimuth indication for ground control of interception at medium range.

³⁷Lundy E. Smith, Mechanical Engineer, “Inspection of Buildings and Equipment Transferred From the Navy to the Coast Guard on Santa Barbara Island,” July 18, 1945, 11th District, Coast Guard, L & P.

³⁸Memorandum, J. V. Westley to Regional Director, May 29, 1953, 312756, NA(SB).

Anti-aircraft gunfire at night or through clouds was the initial objective of the Army radar program. Headquarters Fourth Interceptor Command worked with the Commandant of the 11th Naval District in locating aircraft warning stations in coordination with Army ground observation posts. The aircraft warning radar sets were both fixed and mobile, with 100-foot towers often being used in conjunction with the mobile sets. An aircraft observation tower was built on Santa Barbara Island at the site of the range finder marker tower.³⁹

Further Military Uses of the Island

On December 31, 1957, the Army Corps of Engineers asked to use the island for radar tests. During a 60-day period they would bring on five trucks, trailers, two officers, 14 enlisted men and two civilians, and would construct temporary quarters. The request was denied on the basis that the island had been set aside as a national monument to preserve wildlife and marine life.⁴⁰

In the early 1960s the Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake, installed a photo tracking station on Santa Barbara Island to record the flight of test rockets. The Navy constructed two 48-foot by 20-foot Quonset huts and three cement camera pads, installed two water tanks with a pipeline to the shore, extended the existing railway, and enlarged the previous trails to road width. The new road extended from one side of the island to the other so that jeeps could travel between the camera pads and to the Quonset huts. The road included over a mile on predominantly flat terrain but also inclines with differences in elevations of up to 300 feet. When the Navy left the island it surplussed the camera pads, eight to ten generators, and the two large Quonset huts to the National Park Service. A park ranger noted that numerous items of Navy equipment had been dropped into the water from a high point on the southeasterly side of the island.

Santa Barbara Island and Channel Islands National Monument

As early as 1932, the Bureau of Lighthouses suggested transferring Santa Barbara Island, as well as Anacapa, to the National Park Service for preservation. Not until 1938 did the National Park Service respond, and on April 26, 1938, the island became part of the newly designated Channel Islands National Monument. The Lighthouse Service reserved two parcels and a right-of-way, leaving the bulk of the island acreage under the purview of the Department of the Interior. Later, the right-of-way was exchanged for simple rights of ingress and egress from the two parcels and the landing area.

³⁹Signal Corps Historical Project, "Development of U. S. Army Radar" and History of the Western Defense Command, March, 1941-September 1945, "Radar," pp. 6-7, Center for Military History; Col. E. S. Moon, Fourth Interceptor Command, Riverside, to Commandant, 11th Naval District, March 20, 1942, A6-3, NA(LN).

⁴⁰Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles, to Regional Director, NPS, December 31, 1957, RG 79, Central Copied Subject Files (1953-), A7019 Vol. 1, NA(SB).



The landing on Santa Barbara Island during the Monument period. *Channel Islands National Park*



Remaining Hyder Ranch buildings on Santa Barbara as of 1946. *Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

The National Park Service set to work evaluating Santa Barbara Island's resources and developing a management plan. E. Lowell Sumner, Jr., Regional Wildlife Technician, and R. M. Bond of the Soil Conservation Service, submitted a report on the biology of the islands on June 28, 1939. They recommended that the park service obtain assistance from the Coast Guard and State Division of Fish and Game in patrolling the islands and adjacent waters, and stressed the importance of removing the "hordes of exotic house cats so that certain threatened species of animal life which constitute a unique feature of the island can return to their original condition." Sumner illustrated the need to post the islands with signs proclaiming the island protected as a national monument:

Santa Barbara Island . . . should be posted at the earliest possible moment. Upon the arrival of our group, we found a party, brought by a fishing boat, already ashore with a gun. No shooting was heard, and the individuals involved promised that they would not go hunting again on the island. They professed ignorance of the recently changed status of the island and, in the absence of any signs indicating that the island was a national monument, such ignorance was not at all improbable. In former years considerable slaughter of sea-lions has taken place in this vicinity and the animals need just such a sanctuary as Santa Barbara Island affords.

Sumner also asked that "the monument be placed under the administration of one of the existing national parks on the mainland . . ." The Washington office soon assigned Channel Islands National Monument under Superintendent E. T. Scoyen of Sequoia National Park. Signs were posted as requested by Sumner.⁴¹

Sumner had discussed the pros and cons of methods to exterminate the cats, which he claimed had been there over thirty years. Introduction of male bobcats or coyotes was considered, as was shooting and the use of poison, since no other mammal would be affected. The problem was referred to Jack C. von Bloeker, Jr., Curator of Mammalogy at the Los Angeles County Museum. Von Bloeker had visited Santa Barbara Island in May with his colleague, Dr. John A. Comstock, to make scientific collections.

In his report, Sumner described the familiar cycle of overgrazing on Santa Barbara Island: destruction of native vegetation, introduction of large numbers of noxious weeds, soil erosion and scarring. He counted approximately a thousand sea lions on the island, and noted brown pelicans and eagles. In March of 1940, Meryl B. Dunkle of Long Beach, then doing research for his doctoral thesis, visited Santa Barbara Island with the Los Angeles Museum's Channel Islands Biological Survey. He covered the island "very thoroughly," adding twenty species to the known flora, and observed an adult sea otter and two sea elephants. The rabbits "are about extinct," he reported, "and only a few feral cats were seen. They are very destructive to the bird life and several species are no longer nesting there." On visiting the pelican colony, Dunkle discovered that most of the eggs had been carried off or broken and felt this related to the recent landing of the fishing boat *Santos*. Dunkle also noted the presence of spent rifle shells above the sea lion rookeries. Superintendent Scoyen asked for minimum patrol services from the Coast Guard, and in May set

⁴¹Sumner quoted in memorandum from Victor Cahalane, Acting Chief, Wildlife Division to Dr. Russell, et al, August 14, 1939, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files 1932-53, Box 14, File 201, NA(SB).

out for an official inspection of the islands himself, which raised his opinion of the new National Monument.⁴²

With no appropriation from Congress park service personnel left the island unwatched, except for occasional scientific visits or inspections. Poaching was a problem, as park staff found:

Fishing boats, cruising parties and poachers can and do land almost at will, and high power rifle shells are strewn on the cliffs above the rookeries where sea lions still breed, and where it is hoped, that given protection, the nearly extinct sea elephant and sea otter could be restored.⁴³

The islands were posted against hunting, but without actual patrols during the breeding season, the so-called “sportsman” on the cliffs could take aim unmolested. A plea for a small appropriation for patrols went unheard. The Channel Islands Biological Survey continued, and Park Ranger Clarence Fry and his wife spent a month on the island in 1941 trying to eliminate thirteen feral cats; they trapped eight and shot two, and reported the presence of two “large gray rabbits of the Belgian hare strain.” New Superintendent John R. White visited Santa Barbara Island but was not impressed. He sent General Foreman Hugh Parkes and Assistant Superintendent Tobin to the islands to work on protection measures. Parkes and Tobin implanted warning signs, grumbled about mouse infestation at their tent, and ran across two men who had used it as their lobster base camp for ten years. They also saw University of Southern California equipment that scientists were using for an ongoing project.⁴⁴

During World War II no one from Sequoia National Park visited the islands, and the situation of appropriations had apparently not improved. In 1945 three Los Angeles men asked for a permit to operate a sightseeing boat service to Santa Barbara Island, and install wharves, piers, eating facilities and arrange for hiking trips. When told that there was no public need for opening up the island and that fossils and other features had to be protected, the three men said they had never seen or heard of any on this island that they seemed to know well. Again, the lack of funds had to be put forth as the reason for almost everyone’s ignorance of the island’s resources. Sumner, by this time Park Planner at the regional office in San Francisco, would have accepted the plan if it could have been under the close supervision of a resident ranger.⁴⁵

In 1949 the monument boundaries were expanded to include “the area within one (1) nautical mile of the shoreline of Anacapa and Santa Barbara Islands.” On Santa Barbara Island, this meant that the rocky beaches, offshore rocks and Sutil Island and Shag Rock would be protected. Also under the new boundary would be the kelp beds. Kelp harvesting had been occurring in the Channel Islands for years; in 1933 Philip R. Park, Inc. of San Pedro had a lease from the Division of Fish and Game to harvest kelp in an area

⁴²M. B. Dunkle to Arno B. Cammerer, Director, March 23, 1940, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files 1932-53, Box 14, File 201, NA(SB); interview with Don Meadows, February 21, 1978 by Lois Roberts.

⁴³Memorandum, Regional Biologist [Lowell Sumner] to Regional Director, February 28, 1941, RG 79, NA(SB).

⁴⁴Memorandum, E. T. Scoyen to Regional Director, May 20, 1940, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files 1932-53, Box 14, File 201, NA(SB); interview with Don Meadows, February 21, 1978 by author.

⁴⁵Memoranda, O. A. Tomlinson, Regional Director, October 9 and 24, 1945, RG 79, 202302, NA(SB).

of 2.70 square miles around Santa Barbara Island. By 1951, however, Santa Barbara Island was closed to kelp harvest.⁴⁶

The enlargement of the monument enhanced protection but did not solve the problems. In 1953 the park service consulted with the Division of Fish and Game, the Coast Guard, who had facilities on the island, hunting clubs, kelp industry representatives, skin diving organizations and fishing groups. The resulting report recommended that the Coast Guard remove most of its facilities from Santa Barbara Island except for essential aids to navigation, and that taking marine life would be prohibited above the low tide line. The recommendation that the monument be overseen by Cabrillo National Monument was heeded, a move that improved supervision and projects on the islands significantly. Previously, the park staff had noted with alarm the damage being done by the Coast Guard's stripped down Model A, which, with tractor lugs instead of tires, "chews up the soil almost as thoroughly as a small rototiller . . . The wheels spin, stir up clouds of dust, and dig deep. Erosion has commenced and will continue."⁴⁷

Exterminating Rabbits on Santa Barbara Island

National Park Service correspondence addressed the problem of non-native rabbits on Santa Barbara Island as early as 1941. During the war, park service staff did not visit the island, and when inspection trips were resumed in 1946 exotic rabbits were not mentioned. In fact, even in 1950 over-population by rabbits was not a matter of discussion in the monthly reports, and coreopsis was reported to grow to a height of ten feet. That year biologist Lowell Sumner reported only two rabbits, noting that "the ecological effects of this new rabbit introduction were as yet scarcely evident." But when Sumner filed his inspection report of the islands on May 27, 1953, the picture had changed dramatically. The native vegetation was destroyed almost to the point that the sheep had formerly destroyed it. Sumner wrote:

It is typical of such irruptions that they begin unobtrusively but after several years commence to snow-ball in their effects. The present one has now reached disastrous proportions. The rapidity with which such biological changes can take place on small islands where predators are largely absent illustrates the danger of allowing several years to elapse between biological inspections. Also illustrated is the manner in which the military, when unsupervised, can erase without a thought fifteen years of conservation efforts by our Service.⁴⁸

It has been widely believed that the Navy Coastal Lookout Station personnel introduced Red New Zealand rabbits during World War II, while other sources suggest that the Army personnel at the Aircraft Early Warning Outpost brought them on the island. One former Navy lookout man, Cal Reynolds, recalled having chickens and rabbits, which they at one point traded with someone on Santa Cruz Island for pigs.

⁴⁶W. A. Setchell, Professor of Botany, University of California Berkeley, to Thomas C. Vint, NPS, February 9, 1933; Division of Fish and Game, "Policy on Kelp Harvesting" Adopted December 1, 1950, RG 79, Central Decimal Site Files 1932-53, Box 14, File 201, NA(SB).

⁴⁷Sumner, "The Channel Islands National Monument After Eleven Years," p. 22.

⁴⁸"The 1953 Channel Islands National Monument Inspection," 411417, NA(SB).



Damage to vegetation by rabbits is evident in this NPS photograph. *Channel Islands National Park*

There were no rabbits observed when his group arrived in June of 1942. The men kept their rabbits in pens they had built, located where the original park campground later sat. “We had the animals as a pastime, not only to raise food,” recalled Reynolds. While he didn’t eat rabbit, others in the group did.⁴⁹

Sumner wrote in 1954, “Three box traps still on the island indicate that some of the rabbits were turned loose to forage for themselves, under a plan of recapturing them as needed. The possibility of occupying forces being cut off by enemy action from mainland food supply may have been a consideration in such a plan.”⁵⁰

If rabbits had been a problem in 1941, the military personnel weren’t the first to bring them to the island. The Hyder family imported several hundred Belgian hares, but cats reportedly eliminated most of them. No doubt the two rabbits reported in 1941 originated under the Hyder regimes, while the two noted in 1950 originated during the war. In 1952 a rapid and alarming increase in rabbit population occurred. Biologist Sumner noted that

⁴⁹Oral history interview with Cal Reynolds, March 1, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #1761.

⁵⁰Biologist [Sumner], Sequoia and Kings Canyon, to Superintendent, December 9, 1954, p. 4, RG 79, Central Coded Subject Files (1953-), N-16, Box 30, NA(SB).

The island was obviously in deep trouble. Rabbits of the New Zealand Red strain ran about in great numbers. The [coreopsis] “jungle” had a stricken aspect, with an impoverished understory which was everywhere criss-crossed by rabbit trails. The tree sunflowers were being girdled and felled by the hungry, thirsty animals. The old hay field looked as if it had been run over with a mowing machine. Bare ground showed through the carpet of denuded and dying vegetation.⁵¹

Park personnel claimed that there were so many rabbits they had no thickets to hide in and sat crouched all over the island on the bare ground. Sumner advised immediate action, although he left for Alaska for some time. Almost a year passed, during which the various parties discussed budget, personnel, timing and methods of disposing of the rabbits. At one point, in March 1954, a group including a biologist from the Department of Fish and Game made a systematic but brief survey of the island to assess the rabbit situation. They saw only two rabbits and claimed that the island “looked in very good condition from the standpoint of vegetation” The condition assessment was later discredited, but it did appear to indicate a temporary die-off. Planners urged continuance of the extermination program.⁵²

In October of 1954 the rabbit removal program began. The Division of Fish and Game provided transportation while park service personnel did the work. That October Sumner and three others spent six full days hunting rabbits with shotguns and .22 rifles, making two or three drives across the same areas each day. Sumner reported 400 kills and 150-200 survivors. He took photographs to compare with ones he had taken in 1950, illustrating the decimation of vegetation by rabbits; one photo showed the “Grizzly Giant,” the largest tree sunflower known to the NPS, in its glory in 1950 then toppled by rabbits in 1954.⁵³

Each fall the control program continued. The park reduced the use of guns, realizing that the population could explode when the rabbit numbers are merely halved, and instead used poison bait. A controversy arose when newspapers reported that the park service “bombed” the island with poison bait from airplanes; both Jack von Bloeker of the Los Angeles County Museum and Phil Orr of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History protested, pointing out the danger to other native animals on the island. The park service cleared up the issue, noting that they dropped packaged poisoned bait to ease delivery, and that distribution occurred by hand. They had previously tested the effect of the poison program on native birds of the island, finding no significant effect.⁵⁴

In 1955, when 600 rabbits had been counted on the island, 2,500 rabbits were killed with poison bait. The next year, about 600 were killed and in 1957 about 250. Rabbit foraging had caused iceplant to spread, and by 1958 ice plant covered over half of the island. Since the rabbits could not penetrate the iceplant, they were forced out into the open. Sumner reported that the fall eradication season begun in September of 1958 was so successful that only ten of the some 6,000 rabbits estimated in 1953 remained; all feral cats had been eliminated as well. A team of ten personnel had dropped poisoned carrots on all parts of the island including over the cliffs. In 1961 biologist Richard Prasil made the fall rabbit inspection and

⁵¹Ibid., p. 5.

⁵²Correspondence in, RG 79, Central Coded Subject Files (1953-), N-16, Box 30, NA(SB).

⁵³Biologist [Sumner], Sequoia and Kings Canyon, to Superintendent, December 9, 1954, p. 6, RG 79, Central Coded Subject Files (1953-), N-16, Box 30, NA(SB).

⁵⁴Jack C. von Bloeker to Dr. Lowell Sumner, October 19, 1955; Lowell Sumner to Jack von Bloeker, October 31, 1955; Phil C. Orr to Dorr Yeager, September 5, 1957; Dorr G. Yeager to Phil C. Orr, September 9, 1957, in RG 79, Central Coded Subject Files (1953-), N-16, Box 30, NA(SB).

observed but three rabbits. Despite these efforts, rabbits continued to proliferate. National Park Service staff continued the eradication efforts until all rabbits had been eliminated in 1981. Within a year, staff noted “significant” change in island vegetation, with improvement in the coreopsis and an increase in *Dudleya*.⁵⁵

Administration of Santa Barbara Island, 1955-1980

In 1955 Superintendent Scoyen proposed development at Santa Barbara and Anacapa Islands that would cost \$15,000. For each island, he proposed a shelter cabin for a ranger and one for visitors to be used in emergencies, water storage cisterns and catch basins, boat landing facilities, helicopter pads and campsites. Two years later administration of the islands moved from Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park to Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego.⁵⁶

Vandalism on the isolated and mostly unguarded island proved to be a major problem; the Superintendent routinely reported vandalism, for instance when vandals destroyed the “old shelter,” or when a hunter had been apprehended on the island. The hunter apparently pointed out that the islands had not been listed as protected in the *Coast Pilot*, a problem that was remedied later. On July 15, 1959 a fire burned approximately two-thirds of the island, denuding it of vegetation and destroying the remains of the lookout tower and other structures. In 1963, monument historian Francis R. Holland recorded that most of the equipment turned over to the park service had been wantonly destroyed. A seal hunter was injured that year as well.⁵⁷

Santa Barbara Island made headlines in 1965 when *Los Angeles Times* feature writer Charles Hillinger reported that gunmen firing from boats killed more than 100 sea lions. “Riddled with bullets,” he wrote, “dozens of dead and dying sea lions, a few sea cows and at least one sea elephant litter the beaches, rocks and tidal pools, some still moaning in agony.” Hillinger had accompanied David Brown, curator of mammals at the popular southern California oceanarium Marineland, on a collecting trip. Three days later, Hillinger reported that the park service had found murdered sea lions previously that year, and that one of the Quonset huts used as island headquarters had been dynamited and destroyed in May. In the same incident, vandals had devised a sort of railway car, loaded it with generator parts, building material and a refrigerator, and in attempting to lower it down the steep track had lost control, sending it falling into the deep waters of the cove. The island jeep was pillaged of all removable parts, and thieves took the plywood floor sections out of the remaining hut. Later the State Department of Fish and Game downplayed the shooting events, stating that many of the pinnipeds had died from other reasons.⁵⁸

⁵⁵Lowell Sumner, “The Battle for Santa Barbara,” *Outdoor California*, February 1959, pp. 4-6; entries of October 13 and November 10, 1958, Superintendent’s Monthly Narrative Reports, 1950-59, Box 5, NA(SB); Memorandum, Santa Barbara Island Ranger to Resource Management Specialist, December 20, 1982, CHIS collection. The last of about 60 rabbits was killed with a shotgun by the island ranger on August 7, 1981.

⁵⁶Superintendent E. T. Scoyen to Regional Director, April 26, 1955, RG 79, Central Coded Subject Files (1953-), N-16, Box 30, NA(SB).

⁵⁷Entries of July 11, 1956 and August 13, 1958, Superintendent’s Monthly Narrative Reports 1950-59, Box 5, NA(SB).

⁵⁸*Los Angeles Times*, June 13 and 16, 1965; *San Pedro News Pilot*, June 26, 1965, SCIF.

When incoming superintendent Bill Ehorn arrived in 1974, he found Santa Barbara Island to be in poor condition. There was no dock, the trail to the island had deteriorated, trails were few, and the Quonset hut had no floor. Lack of resource management was apparent, as the island continued to be overrun by rabbits and the Santa Barbara Island song sparrow had become extinct. Visitor use was not well monitored, resulting in vandalism, littering and threats to plants and wildlife. Ehorn gathered the resources to clean up the island, open new trails and begin inventory and monitoring of island resources. Within five years conditions had improved considerably.⁵⁹

Santa Barbara Island as a National Park

After Santa Barbara Island became part of the new Channel Islands National Park in 1980, development of the island for visitor uses expanded, albeit slowly. The 1980 GMP determined that visitor numbers should be restricted and that the campground would be relocated from the eroded area it occupied. The GMP included a breakdown of a small development zone at the area above the landing cove, a 195-acre protected natural area subzone and a historic zone covering the entire landmass of the island in light of the archeological resources.

The park service constructed a new dock with a powerful hoist and a boathouse. In 1991 the park constructed a new ranger residence and visitor center on the site of the Quonset hut. The building includes a comfortable residence for the island ranger, a museum and a bunkhouse that accommodates up to four NPS staff or researchers. The Santa Cruz Island Foundation sponsored the installation in 1993 of interpretive exhibits, which include a diorama of bird life and a relief map of the island, both created by Santa Barbara artist John Iwerks, and a large mural of submarine life by Iwerks and Glenna Hartmann. The exhibit also features information about the Hyder family's occupation of the island. Buster Hyder and his 92-year-old sister Nora attended the opening of the museum, arriving by helicopter. Nora Hyder had not been to the island for 71 years.⁶⁰

Above the ranger building stands a maintenance shop with water storage and solar collectors. As has been the case for over 50 years, fresh water is pumped to the water system from boats at the landing cove. The campground was moved away from the ranger residence to the south, at a location overlooking Cave Canyon and the ocean. A loop trail with numbered interpretive stops encircles the campground. The old roads have mostly been bypassed by a new trail system, largely to allow restoration of the eroding roadbeds. New trails include a loop around the south end and a trail connecting Webster Point with North Peak. The older trail from the saddle to Webster Point has been mostly replaced by a new alignment that makes switchbacks down the hillside.

⁵⁹Oral History interview with Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston.

⁶⁰*Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1993.

Scientific Research on Santa Barbara Island

Although tiny, Santa Barbara Island has attracted scientific interest for almost 150 years. Scientific investigation commenced in 1863 when James G. Cooper hitched a ride on a sealing vessel and spent almost three weeks there observing conditions. He returned with the only known specimen of Island Snapdragon but whether the specimen really came from Santa Barbara Island has been under debate for years. Albert Kellogg of the California Academy of Sciences visited the island around 1871 and presented a paper on the habitat of giant coreopsis on Santa Barbara Island.

Twentieth century scientific observers included botanist Blanche Trask of Santa Catalina Island (1901-1902), entomologist Robert E. Snodgrass (1901), malacologist Henry Hemphill (1905), ichthyologist Barton W. Evermann (1918), geologist and zoologist William A. Bryan of the Los Angeles County Museum (1922) and botanists LeRoy Abrams and Ira L. Wiggins of Stanford University (1931). Interest increased during the late 1930s as Santa Barbara Island was designated a national monument. Allan Hancock hosted numerous trips to the islands on his research vessel *Velero III*, bringing Francis Elmore in 1938. The following year the National Park Service made a biological survey, requiring a number of trips to the island by Richard M. Bond and NPS wildlife technician Lowell Sumner, Jr. Their efforts resulted in a report to their NPS superiors.⁶¹

The Los Angeles Museum's Channel Islands Biological Survey visited Santa Barbara Island in 1939, twice in 1940, in March for seven days and two days in July, and twice in 1941. No report was found for these expeditions but George Kanakoff wrote in his field notes in 1940 that it took two hours to complete the landing and carry the equipment 200 feet up to the "new cabin." On finding sheep excrement he noted that they were "proof that the island is eaten from both sides." He recorded different names to certain geographical features: El Primero (Cave) Canyon; El Segundo (Middle) Canyon; Orphan (Cliff) Canyon; and Graveyard Anchorage. Meryl B. Dunkle of the expedition visited the island a number of times and published a flora of the islands based on his fieldwork.⁶²

Few studies occurred after the war until 1958 when E. R. Blakley of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden initiated a study of the flora of the Channel Islands. Blakley and Martin A. Piehl collected more than a hundred plant specimens in the early 1960s. Ralph Philbrick of the Garden continued this work, visiting the island a number of times between 1964 and 1970. Philbrick published a flora of the island in 1972. Other botanical researchers including Michael Benedict (1966 and 1970), Robert F. Thorne and James K. McPherson (1968) and Donald Ricker (1969) accompanied Philbrick on many of the outings. During the 1970s Michael S. Astone, Mary C. Hochberg and Sherry Whitmore collected on the island.⁶³

The National Park Service contracted a study of the islands in the national monument in 1978 with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Steve Junak, Steven L. Timbrook, Mary Hochberg and Ralph

⁶¹Steve Junak, Ralph Philbrick and Charles Drost, "History of Botanical Exploration" in *Santa Barbara Island*, pp. 57-61.

⁶²Field notes at LACMNH; map at SBMNH #1775.

⁶³Junak, et al, "Botanical Exploration," pp. 61-63; Sarah Chaney and Kathryn McEachern, "Erosion Control and Revegetation on Santa Barbara Island in Channel Islands National Park" in *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.

Philbrick participated in the field study and publication. Junak, of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, visited and collected on the island at least seven times between 1982 and 1991. National Park Service naturalists have been busy on the island, especially since its transition to a national park in 1980. Anne Bellamy, Charles Drost, Ronilee Clark, Karen Danielsen, William Halvorson and Sarah Chaney are among the park service experts who have worked on the island. Biologists from Point Mugu Naval Air Station collected on the island in 1983. Following a study undertaken in 1987-1990 by C. M. D'Antonio, W. L. Halvorson and D. B. Fenn, Sarah Chaney and Kathryn McEachern presented a paper on erosion control and revegetation at the 1999 California Islands Symposium, noting efforts on the island in rehabilitating areas of severe erosion in former farmed fields.⁶⁴

As compared to other islands in the region, Santa Barbara Island was a latecomer in archeological investigations. Not until 1958 did an organized reconnaissance occur when the UCLA Archeological Survey came to the island as part of their Channel Islands Research Project. B. K. Swartz, Jr., and a person named Sutton spent from August 8th to the 15th on the island. They surveyed the island for two days and spent the remainder of the time excavating SBaI-1 from which they removed cultural items that were deposited in the UCLA collections. Swartz and Sutton concluded that the island had been inhabited for temporary periods, probably for quarrying manufacturing materials. The same year National Park Service archeologist Paul J. Schumacher surveyed the island thoroughly and added to the information found by Swartz. In 1961 J. Nichols made a survey but little is known about this activity except the surface collections from four sites, which were deposited at UCLA. A four-day survey under the name of the 7th Dorado Expedition, Western Speleological Institute and apparently led by Phil C. Orr of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History produced a journal which describes a site unknown to others and yet unidentified. Charles E. Rozaire of the Los Angeles County Museum made two trips to the island in 1964, the first to survey the island for new sites and check previously recorded sites and the second to excavate a site he named R-9. The first survey produced a corrected inventory and more thorough descriptions than had been done before. Rozaire's work pointed out that the use of the island had been more intensive than previously believed. Marcia Bright of UCLA further updated the island survey in May of 1966. A team of archeologists accomplished the first carbon dating of island artifacts around 1991, confirming occupancy of the island at least 4,000 years ago. National Park Service cultural resources staff have made further updates to the Santa Barbara Island archeological record, including survey work and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as an archeological district.⁶⁵

Shipwrecks

Santa Barbara Island is the smallest and most remote of the Channel Islands National Park and, while having a rugged coastline rimmed by inaccessible cliffs, it generally experiences the calmest seas and weather. Fog is not as prevalent at Santa Barbara Island, and so only three shipwrecks have been recorded

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

⁶⁵Glassow, *Archaeological Overview*, pp. 27-38; Erlandson et al, "4,000 Years of Human Occupation," pp. 85-92.

in the vicinity of the island. The following accounts are based on Morris and Lima's *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment*, produced in 1996.

Blue Sea (1928). This 61.5-foot wood-hulled fishing vessel, built in Los Angeles in 1918, stranded on October 27, 1928 at an undetermined location. One account locates the wreck on the northwest side of Santa Barbara Island. No wreckage has been found to date.⁶⁶

Emperor (1932). This five-year-old fishing vessel was en route to Catalina Island when she foundered and sank about six miles east of Santa Barbara Island on July 15, 1932. The crew abandoned ship and headed for Santa Barbara Island (presumably in a lifeboat with oars), only to be sighted and picked up by the U. S. Coast & Geodetic Survey vessel *Virginia*. Returning to the *Emperor*, they found it mostly sunk, and returning the next day only a small amount of floating debris was sighted.⁶⁷

Dante Alighieri II (1938). The most dramatic wreck and rescue on Santa Barbara Island occurred in early morning darkness on November 30, 1938, when the new purse seiner *Dante Alighieri II* crashed into the rocks on the southwest side of the island during heavy fog. The 70-foot vessel had a wood hull and carried a crew of twelve. Nine of the men managed to make it ashore, but to an inaccessible ledge above the breakers; three remained aboard the boat. The Coast Guard received a message at Los Angeles Harbor from another fishing vessel about the disaster and headed for the scene in the cutter *Aurora* under Lieutenant Commander Neils Haugen. The cutter arrived at the scene at 7:00 a.m. to find the *Dante Alighieri* broken up and "an exceptionally heavy surf breaking on the beach." The *Aurora* picked up the three crewmembers who had remained aboard and set to work attempting to rescue the men ashore. Coast Guardsmen shot lines ashore from a small boat with no success. A party landed on the lee shore and attempted to reach the stranded fishermen from the cliff above, also an impossible task. They were able to map the scene, including the hazards, and determined an approach to a rescue by small boat. At high tide the seas became calmer and the wreckage drifted away, allowing the opportunity for rescue. The cruise report of the *Aurora* noted:

At 1415 anchored and sent boat in toward beach. A line was shot ashore and a 9 thread line sent in with a ring buoy made fast midway. By picking out a good place for the fishermen to plunge into the surf from the beach and watching the seas carefully, rescue was effected by taking one man off at a time. The life ring was pulled out to a small boat anchored just beyond the breaker line. When the man was safely aboard the boat the line was hauled back by the fishermen on the beach, thus by shuttling the ring buoy back and forth in this manner every man was taken off this treacherous part of the island safely. The job was completed at 1530.

Fishermen from nearby boats aided in the rescue, including translating for the mostly-Italian crew, all of whom were taken to Los Angeles warm and dry. Lt. Commander Haugen received commendation from his

⁶⁶Don P. Morris and James Lima, *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary*, Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56 (Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996), p. 125.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

superiors for the rescue, as well as a letter of gratitude from the rescued fishermen. The propeller, winch and diesel engine from the *Dante Alighieri* have been located by National Park Service divers, being the only wreck resources known to exist on Santa Barbara Island.⁶⁸

George E. Billings (1941). In 1903, the five-masted schooner *George E. Billings* was launched in Port Blakely, Washington. Built by the Hall brothers—master shipbuilders whose ships accounted for the majority of the Pacific lumber trade—the *Billings* was their last and largest vessel at 224 feet in length. Named for a company executive, it delivered Pacific Northwest lumber as far as Australia and sometimes hauled back Hawaiian sugar. In 1926, its masts were removed and new owners towed it to Southern California where it became a fishing barge off Del Mar and Santa Monica, hosting day trippers and overnight guests. The owners burned and sank the ship off Santa Barbara Island in 1941.⁶⁹

Patrick (1980). The 38-foot fishing boat *Patrick*, formerly a Coast Guard vessel, stranded near Santa Barbara Island on January 11, 1980. No other information on the incident has been located.⁷⁰



Aerial view of Santa Barbara Island looking northwest, March 21, 1957. Photograph by B. Angle. Channel Islands National Park

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 127-129.

⁶⁹ Nicholas Walter, "Fathoms below," *Santa Maria Sun*, Nov. 22, 2012.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 147.

Historic Resources

Santa Barbara Island has few extant historic resources of any substance. Buildings such as lobster shacks and the Hyder ranch were removed long ago; structures such as the original Santa Barbara Island Light and South Beacon, U. S. Coast Survey signals and Coastal Lookout Station tower no longer stand. Even historic landscape features are few: vegetation changes and erosion have erased any vestige of cultivated fields, and the short lengths of roadway have been mostly reclaimed by vegetation and/or destroyed by erosion. But to the keen eye, evidence of past occupation appears in many areas across the island and should not be overlooked.

Archeological Resources

The Santa Barbara Island Archeological District has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Principal investigator Roberta S. Greenwood of Greenwood and Associates of Pacific Palisades prepared documentation for the National Park Service in 1978. The listing places the entire island and includes a zone offshore extending approximately 100 meters to include potential historic and prehistoric archaeological resources that are underwater. Greenwood documented 17 prehistoric sites and one historic site, labeled 4-SBI-1 through 4-SBI-18. She also noted two isolated archeological occurrences consisting of single artifacts. She recommended further study of the potential historic sites such as the Hyder settlement and military sites.

Surveys and Mapping

While relatively recent survey benchmarks are found at Signal Peak (Santa Barbara Island 2), North Peak (East Mound 2), Webster Point (Rock USN), the hay field (Santa Barbara South Base) and an unnamed one at the landing cove, the signals and monuments erected by 19th century Coast Survey topographers do not appear to survive. The granite block described in 1871 may well remain on the island but has not been reported. The current benchmarks have no historical significance but are important ground-based landmarks relative to standard mapping.

Fishing Camps

No signs of early fishing, sealing and lobster camps described earlier in the text have been located by the author with the exception of the trail remaining at the bridge site in the landing cove. The known sites have potential for additional discoveries through careful archeological investigations. Sites in the area of Webster Point, the Landing Cove and Graveyard Canyon may produce more knowledge of early occupation by transient hunters. Historical archeology on the island has had but little pursuit and may bear fruit in the future. Evidence of Chinese lobster camps, H. Bay Webster's cabin and others in the Webster

Point vicinity, the Hyder family occupation, and military activities on Santa Barbara Island all deserve closer investigation.

The Hyder Ranch

While all buildings and structures from the Hyder occupation have been removed, features are found on the ground. Various bolts and eyes are evident at the landing, although the small Hyder-era dock has been succeeded by a substantial two-tier structure built by the National Park Service in the early 1980s. The trail from the landing to the site of the Hyder ranch buildings remains in its original alignment, however its surface has been altered by years of subsequent use by the military and National Park Service. The most prominent feature is the rock retaining wall holding back a leveled area about half way up the trail at the switchback, marking the site of the Cleve Hyder house. It is composed of a crescent-shaped dry laid rubble retaining wall about 20 feet long, with earthen buildup behind. Soil has deposited on the once level area making it a slight slope. Other leveled areas appear in the upper ranch area. The site of the Hyder ranch complex, including houses, barn, chicken sheds and cistern, has been altered by at least four subsequent users since 1942. Currently the park visitor center/residence building and support structures occupy the site.

Elsewhere on the island, only ruins of the concrete cistern or “water pond” on the west side remains in the middle of what was, during the Hyder years, a corn and potato field. It is broken up and mostly buried; old lumber is scattered about, remains of what Buster Hyder called the “old ranch.” This site has been recorded as archeological site 4-SBI-18, described in 1978 as “a concrete tank or cistern, rock wall, and lengthy earthen berm of which 50 meters are clearly visible.” A small horse-drawn scraper, built of metal framing with small spikes protruding at an angle, sits in the grass a short distance above the visitor center near the rail.

As a cultural landscape, the Hyder ranch retains too little integrity to promote preservation. However, the Hyder occupation is a significant part of Santa Barbara Island history and any cultural remains should be documented and possibly allowed to remain in place.

Coast Guard and Military Era Resources

The major remaining resources of the military era are the roads, and they are discussed under the next heading. Otherwise, not much remains. The pyramidal tower of the Santa Barbara Island Light, the 1936 range finder marker tower, the 1942 coastal lookout tower and associated buildings are gone. This author’s survey failed to turn up the concrete camera tracking pads from the 1960s.

Few signs of the two light towers remain in either location. A bit of concrete foundation at the north beacon may be associated with the 1928 light but there is no way to determine this. A modern battery-powered beacon consisting of a metal pole mounted on a mobile concrete pad and associated power



These remains of a rock retaining wall is all that remain at the site of Cleve Hyder's house near the top of the landing stairway, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*



Old military and ranch roads form part of Santa Barbara Island's trail system today. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*

apparatus are at the site today. A leveled area, a concrete pier with hardware attached and a broken or burnt off wood post are all that mark the site of the south beacon.

Scattered broken glass, hardware, cable, lumber fragments and what appears to be battery piles remain at the lookout tower site, but little else. Hardened concrete sacks are evident near the visitor center. A short section of galvanized pipe and its anchoring structure can be seen near the landing, as well as various anchor bolts and eyes of unknown origin.

The site of the lookout tower could yield interesting information about the life of enlisted men posted on a barren island during the war in the Pacific. However, the thin soil and sparse vegetation at the site indicates a possibility that any resources may have blown away or been taken by curiosity hunters.

Roads and Trails

The current trail system, which leads visitors around the island, has as its template the roads and trails developed by the Navy, Army and Coast Guard. The earliest trail, marked on the 1871 USCS map, can no longer be found except for a trace on the west side of the saddle. Trails used by the Hyder family have not been adequately documented, but a map based on conversations with Buster Hyder implies that the trail from the ranch houses to the west side field follows the current trail to Webster Point; the same applies to the trail to the east side hay field.

The Lighthouse Service developed trails to the Santa Barbara Island Light in 1928 and the south beacon in 1934. The 1928 trail is now called the Arch Point Trail and has not been significantly altered (an NPS aerial photo dated 1948 curiously labels this trail as a road). The southern 1/3 of the trail to the south beacon has been abandoned, with the northern 2/3 as part of the Signal Peak Loop Trail towards Cat Canyon. The original trail was upgraded to a vehicle road in the 1940s and evidence remains of such almost to the site of the beacon. It is the old roadway used by the erosion-causing Model A Ford in the early 1950s. The single-track loop trail through the badlands and to Cat Canyon and Signal Peak is relatively new, built by the park service in the 1970s.

The one-mile trail from the visitor center to Signal Peak follows the Army/Navy route that had evolved into a jeep road, although the first third, heavily gullied, has been abandoned and treated for erosion. A bypass trail was constructed and is now used by hikers. A switchback route through an erosion area has bypassed an older trail from the saddle to Webster Point. The older trail, with the exception of short top and bottom sections, is in fair condition although overgrown; it is off limits to visitors to protect nesting pelicans. A new trail forms a loop from Webster Point to near North Peak, joining an older park trail connecting the saddle with the Arch Point Trail near the navigational beacon.

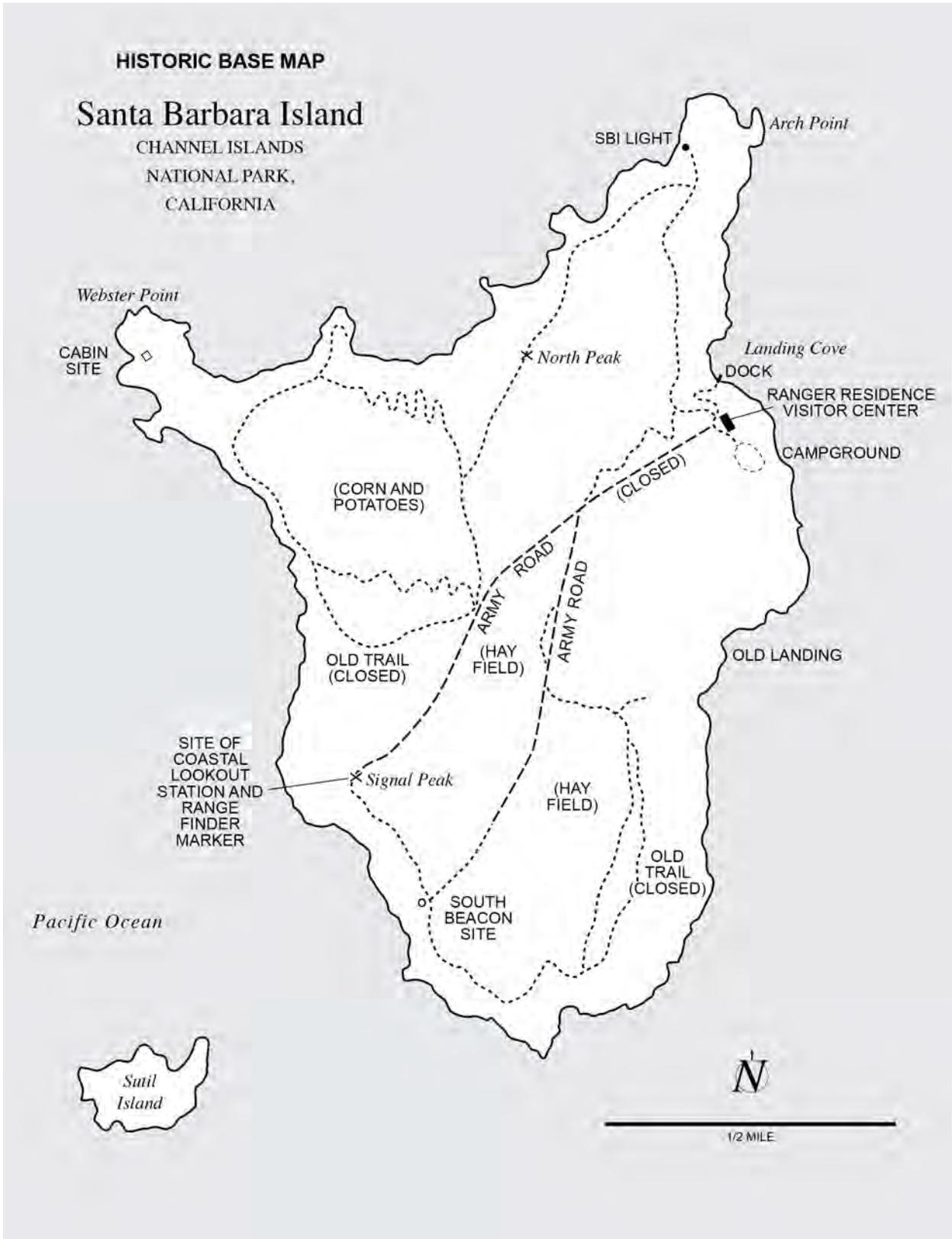
The old trails and roads of Santa Barbara Island, while having an interesting history, do not retain integrity and are not historically significant.



The automated aid to navigation on the northeast side of Santa Barbara Island, 1999.
Photograph by Dewey Livingston



The landing cove and dock are seen at the bottom, with the trail and pipeline leading up to the NPS complex at the top of the island, 1999. *Photograph by Dewey Livingston*





One of the few buildings on Santa Barbara Island is the combination visitor center, bunk house and ranger residence. *Photograph (1999) by Dewey Livingston*

Section 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Channel Islands National Park is rich in cultural resources. It is evident that the public enjoys the experience of seeing them, is enthusiastic about learning more about them and appreciates the interesting and important history of this unique region.

Historic Significance and Recommendations for Preservation

A number of previous historians and archeologists have readily found historic significance in the Channel Islands. As we have seen in the text of this study, the islands have attracted the scrutiny of historians, archeologists, scientists and scholars for more than a century. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created a formal listing of historic properties, and that Act and its amendments require that all federal properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places be inventoried and nominated if eligible. After extensive study undertaken in the 1970s and 1980s, the following properties located within the boundaries of Channel Islands National Park were found historically significant and have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- San Miguel Island Archeological District
- Santa Cruz Island Archeological District (updated to include the east end)
- Anacapa Island Archeological District
- Anacapa Island Light Station
- Steamer *Winfield Scott*
- Santa Barbara Island Archeological District

Two archeological nominations to the National Register are needed:

- Santa Rosa Island Archeological District
- Goldenhorn* (incomplete)
- Other shipwrecks

Updates to the San Miguel, Anacapa and Santa Barbara island archeological district nominations are needed.

Two nominations have been drafted but have not been pursued to completion:

- Santa Rosa Island Historic Ranching District
- Santa Cruz Island Historic Ranching District

This Historic Resource Study endeavors to document and evaluate remaining National Register-eligible properties, and to update work done on previous nominations and studies. The following section outlines the historic significance of various resources within Channel Islands National Park, and follows with recommendations.

San Miguel Island

This island's historic period consists of approximately one hundred years of sheep ranching, as well as its function in a number of military missions during and after World War II. George Nidever, a noted California pioneer, was the first to remain on the island for any length of time raising sheep, and so was the first substantial rancher on the island. He has been credited with the construction of an adobe residence, part of which remains as a ruin. Following Nidever, the brothers Hiram and Warren Mills continued the

ranching operation, building a house in a nearby location. William G. Waters commenced an eventful thirty-year occupation of the island, continuing the sheep business and also attempting to obtain ownership of the island from the government. Waters constructed a road in 1888 and a new, remarkable ranch house on the mesa early in the century. He also added sheep sheds and other improvements, bringing the ranch into its fullest stage of development. The twelve years that Herbert Lester and his family resided at the ranch as caretakers for Robert Brooks is another remarkable story in Channel Islands history, although one somewhat exaggerated by the countless news reports of their fairy-tale existence on the island. Sheep ranching ended soon after the departure of the Lesters in 1942. The abandoned improvements on the island fell into disrepair, and a fire destroyed all wood structures in 1967.

The remaining features are detailed in the individual island section in this document. All of the remains are now archeological in nature, both prehistoric and historic. Some were included in the National Register nomination for the San Miguel Island Archeological District. The ranching legacy of San Miguel Island is locally significant by dint of the industries of Nidever, Mills, Waters, Brooks, Lester and others. Not only an example of early California agriculture which contributed to the growth of the region and state, the ranching era there is further marked by its island location in which boats and isolation, requiring a great deal of self-sufficiency, produced a unique setting for historical events. George Nidever is an important figure in California history, and the archeological remains of his adobe house are of statewide significance. There are numerous research questions that could be addressed through archeological investigation, but the site is fragile and excavations could exacerbate erosion at the site. Nidever and his fellow “mountain men” trappers played an important historical role in closing the gap between the commercial east and the Spanish colonial frontier. While their activities may seem abhorrent to today’s naturalist, these men brought the day closer when California would fall under the American flag and develop into an important and powerful state in the Union.

It is recommended that the historic significance of San Miguel Island ranching be formalized in an amendment to the current San Miguel Island Archeological District nomination form, which would include the cultural landscape features listed in this study: Mills/Waters house site; road to Cuyler Harbor; fence line ruins: corrals, wings, fences; windmill ruin; pier sites and remains; Hammond Field. Integrity varies on these sites and the list may be altered to reflect new findings. No vegetation management recommendations are included in this study, unless vegetation has a direct negative impact on a listed cultural resource. Any new discoveries regarding shipwrecks above mean high tide, documented in detail by Morris and Lima in 1996, or archeological finds since 1978 would also be included in the proposed amendment, or in a separate nomination of shipwrecks of the Channel Islands.

Research, investigations and excavations should continue as regards prehistoric sites, maritime archeology, etc. Other resources noted in the study, such as the ruin on the south side and the rock wall on the north shore, do not have adequate historical documentation for inclusion in the nomination. Some features, such as the Navy roads and lookout site, do not possess sufficient significance or integrity for National Register listing.

Santa Rosa Island

The ranching legacy of Santa Rosa Island reaches back to 1844, the earliest known agricultural activities on the northern Channel Islands. The land grant rancho was operated by Alpheus Thompson and, to a lesser extent, John C. Jones, both prominent figures in the Mexican-era trade and maritime activities of Alta California and Hawaii. Members of the More family, prominent citizens and landowners in the Santa Barbara area, owned the island for more than three decades, developing it into a model sheep ranch that elicited interest from other areas in the state. The Mores constructed many of the extant historic buildings on the island. Vail & Vickers, a family-owned cattle firm with ranch properties in Arizona and California, purchased the island at the turn of the century and transformed it into one of the most productive and interesting cattle ranches in California. Three generations of the Vail family operated the ranch under relatively adverse conditions, shipping livestock on a special cattle boat and herding cattle the old way with horses and reata. The island ranch in many ways typifies California cattle ranching, yet its unique locale and subsequent patterns of operation raise it above the common coastal ranch. The Vail & Vickers Ranch is significant on a statewide level for its contribution to agricultural growth and innovation in California and on a regional level for its association with the Vail family whose ranching legacy stretches from Arizona to the Channel Islands.

The ranch structures and landscape features possess historic integrity, and the island as a whole meets the criteria for a rural historic landscape district. The island possesses nine of the eleven landscape characteristics as defined by the National Register: patterns of spatial organization, response to the natural environment, circulation networks, boundary demarcations, vegetation related to land use, buildings, structures and objects, clusters, archeological sites and small-scale elements. It does not retain integrity in land uses and activities and cultural traditions.

A cultural landscape inventory completed in 2002 resulted in a determination of eligibility for the Santa Rosa Island Ranching District to the National Register of Historic Places. It is recommended that a National Register nomination for the Santa Rosa Island Ranching District be completed, with the mean high tide line as its boundary. This recommendation is justified by the presence of features, such as fence lines, roads and roundup corrals, that contribute to the island's integrity yet are scattered around the island. The island's physical attributes guided the way the island was ranched and are a key element to its significance; to limit a district to the Bechers Bay area would provide an incomplete level of recognition of the scope of the ranching operation. Archeological resources, not subject to this study, would be included in the nomination or nominated separately as an archeological district.

The South Point Light structure may be eligible for the National Register. Unfortunately, information is lacking on this structure, as it was a relatively unimportant aid to navigation compared to more powerful facilities such as the Anacapa Island Light Station. It is recommended that forms be prepared for a Determination of Eligibility for the structure in attempting to assess its significance as part of either a coast-wide or Channel Islands-wide network of aids to navigation. The structure retains historic integrity but is deteriorating rapidly.

The military presence on Santa Rosa Island may have historic significance as related to national defense of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, but removal of practically all structures leaves the resource with no integrity. However, if found to be significant in context with World War II coastal defenses of Los Angeles Harbor, the radar sites at Twin Peaks and Navy Hill may prove to be National Register-eligible. The latter sites definitely possess historical archeology potential.

Santa Cruz Island

The extraordinary history of Santa Cruz Island has been written about for over a century. It spans the eras of Mexican rule in California, the Gold Rush and settlement of the new state, the growth of agriculture and social history especially related to ranching, and the progress of the twentieth century. The activities on the island ranged from ranching to viticulture to fishing and seal hunting, with recreation and science figuring prominently as well. The creation of perhaps the first fine-wool sheep ranch of any importance in California by James Barron Shaw and the island owners of the 1850s and 1860s is a significant part of California history. The position of Justinian Caire, a resilient immigrant from Europe, in California commerce was assisted by his development and operation of the remarkable Santa Cruz Island Company ranch, where hundreds of skilled and unskilled Italians, French, Barbareños and others labored in creating and maintaining a unique agricultural operation. The architectural styles and materials used by Caire, the methods of raising livestock and crops, the employment patterns, the rustic but fine San Francisco- and Santa Barbara-based social climate at the Main Ranch, all contributed to this unique entity.

Litigation among Caire family members in the '10s and '20s resulted in a partitioning of the island. The Caires sold the bulk of the island to Edwin Stanton, a successful oilman from Los Angeles. The Gherinis of the east end continued the family's tradition of sheep ranching, while Stanton switched to raising fine beef cattle. The Stanton family operated their island ranch for fifty years, until the death of Dr. Carey Stanton in 1987. The Gherini family ceased sheep ranching in 1984, ending more than one hundred years of family involvement in stock raising.

The island ranch in many ways typifies California sheep and cattle ranching, yet its locale and subsequent patterns of operation make it unique in comparison to the common coastal ranch. The Caire, Gherini and Stanton Ranches are significant on at least a local level for their contribution to agricultural growth in California.

The extant ranch structures and features possess historic integrity, and the island as a whole meets the criteria for a rural historic landscape. The island possesses most of the eleven landscape characteristics as defined by the National Register.

A cultural landscape inventory completed in 2004 resulted in a determination of eligibility for the Santa Cruz Island Ranching District to the National Register of Historic Places. The boundary encompasses only the National Park Service property. It is recommended that a National Register nomination for the Santa Cruz Island Ranching District be completed. Pending the cooperation and commitment of The Nature Conservancy, only the NPS lands would be nominated, but in the future the entire island should be included. A multiple property nomination for resources within the NPS portion of the island would allow for the addition of The Nature Conservancy property at a later date.

The Gherini Ranch has integrity as a rural historic landscape district in itself, supported by the historical turn of events that resulted in the partition of the island in the 1920s. The boundary agreed upon in court and used for the last 70 years, the rugged ridgeline of the Montañon, would mark the district. The Gherini Ranch spans the eras of Shaw, Caire and Gherini, with structures and features as examples of all three eras. It comprises a solid base for defining boundaries, significance and integrity.

Any nomination as a rural historic landscape district includes landscape features such as fences, roads, rockwork and historic archeological sites. Features listed in the study, Section 4, would be listed as contributing where appropriate.

The Navy base on Santa Cruz Island may have historical significance in the context of the Pacific Missile Range and national defense, but the building complex is not owned by NPS. The Navy road does not possess significance by itself to warrant nomination, but would contribute as a ranch road.

Other historic themes on the island, such as fishing or military occupation, have too little physical integrity to meet National Register criteria. The 1997 nomination form for the Santa Cruz Island Archeological District, which included only the western 90 percent of the island was amended and updated in 2013 to encompass the entire island. Historic archeological resources need to be identified and added to the nomination form.

Anacapa Island

Anacapa, being among the two smallest of the Channel Islands, nonetheless is rich in cultural resources. Listed on the National Register are three properties: the Anacapa Island Archeological District; the Anacapa Island Light Station; and the Steamer *Winfield Scott*. Historical documentation of the island's early history is sparse, but by the 1880s an active sheep ranch was in place on the Middle Island, with sheep ranging on all three. Sheep ranching continued into the 1930s, but never reached a level of importance. Fishermen used the island constantly, and its proximity to the mainland no doubt increased the numbers of visitors there. Characters such as H. Bay Webster and Raymond "Frenchy" LeDreau make the Anacapa story especially interesting. The dominant resources are the 1853 shipwreck of the *Winfield Scott* and the Anacapa Island Light Station. Those have been documented on National Register of Historic Places forms previously.

The Anacapa Island Light Station, consisting of its lighthouse, fog signal building, landing facilities and the complex of five remaining buildings constructed by Lippman are all in good to excellent condition and possess excellent historical integrity. Various extant landscape features such as the rainshed, stone catchments, roads and walkways tend to be in fair condition and in most cases tell a part of the Anacapa story. Twelve buildings and structures listed as contributing resources in the nomination form are: lighthouse tower; fog signal building; assistant keeper's residence; general services building; tank house; derrick building; oil house; power house; lower landing; upper derrick landing; landing stairway; and concrete watershed (rainshed). It is recommended to amend the nomination to include the cultural landscape of this quasi-military installation, which would include an evaluation of features such as the roads and circulation patterns, the foundations, walkways and landscaping at the sites of the three razed

houses, and the concrete markers at the lighthouse and in other locations. Further survey will doubtless reveal more features for the nomination.

Other sites of historical interest are found on Middle and West Anacapa Islands. Middle Anacapa was the central location for the sheep raising operations in the 19th and 20th centuries. West Anacapa, especially Frenchy's Cove, provides potential for historic archeological finds as well. These types of resources have potential for historical archeology investigations and may well yield important or interesting data on the primitive existence of early settlers on the island. It is recommended to pursue such research. No actions for further administrative protection are necessary as the sites are covered in the Anacapa Island Archeological District and are so protected.

Santa Barbara Island

The smallest island has an interesting history despite its diminutive size. Long a haunt of otter and seal hunters and fishermen, it is the site of a short but fascinating period of occupation by the Hyder family, who managed to live there for years despite a lack of fresh water and extreme isolation. The Coast Guard and military history of the island is of interest as well, as small lighthouses and lookout installations were placed here for many years of the 20th century.

Santa Barbara Island has been managed as a natural area for more than 60 years. Little of its history remains on the surface; buildings such as lobster shacks and the Hyder ranch were removed long ago. Even historic landscape features are few: vegetation changes and erosion have erased any vestige of cultivated fields, and the short lengths of roadway have been mostly reclaimed by vegetation and/or destroyed by erosion. Santa Barbara Island, while having a compelling history, does not possess enough integrity to warrant national register nomination for its post-Contact period. It is currently listed as Santa Barbara Island Archeological District.

Shipwrecks of the Channel Islands National Park

The area encompassing the islands of Channel Islands National Park represents a gallery of shipwrecks and maritime history. Don Morris and James Lima produced a Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment in 1996, which outlined maritime trade in the Channel region, individual shipwrecks according to vessel type, and recommendations for further study. The document does not address a National Register District; while one shipwreck, that of the *Winfield Scott* has been listed, the islands' shipwrecks may be eligible as a maritime archeological district. Another approach would be to nominate wrecks individually according to their significance and integrity.

The submerged resources of the park are a fluid resource, as changing beaches, storm events and other factors both reveal and destroy the remains. It is recommended, as Morris and Lima did, that active research and documentation continue, both in the libraries and in the field. New discoveries occur every year and the excellent work by Morris and Lima will need to be updated after about a decade.

Recommendations for Management and Further Study

Protection

Compared to most other national park areas, Channel Islands National Park is both better protected and yet more vulnerable to resource degradation. The offshore isolation keeps visitor numbers down, providing a more intense visitor experience at times, but this isolation also results in a challenge for monitoring and enforcement. Only with increases in budget and personnel, as desired by every park in the nation, can the island resources be adequately monitored. The key may be in visitor awareness of the sensitivity of island resources, both natural and cultural. Interpretation of the historic resources should be expanded to include more ranger talks, interpretive literature and signage, and positive publicity. This process starts with the education of the staff, be they patrol rangers or office staff. Park personnel should convey the significance of the park's resources and impress their enthusiasm on the visitor, creating a protective culture where all eyes are watching out for the resource's health.

Cultural Resources Management

The greater threat to resources in the park is the physical aspects of the islands and their location: weather, coupled with aging structures and the passage of time. Historic fabric takes a beating in the channel climate, especially from wind, salt air and, in the case of the historic piers and shipwrecks, heavy seas. Park staff needs to be ever vigilant in monitoring threats and damage to cultural resources through deterioration, pest or animal intrusion, and adverse weather. A strong cultural resources staff with adequate funding is of utmost importance, as trained personnel can evaluate and monitor conditions, train park staff, undertake preservation efforts, assist with interpretive media and deal with the myriad of paperwork and regulation.

It is recommended that protection of cultural resources be given equal consideration relative to natural resources through staffing and funding; no resources staff should be under-funded in relation to the workload. The park added a Mediterranean network preservation crew in 2010, consisting of an exhibit specialist crew leader and two preservationists. The crew is based at Channel Islands and is responsible for preserving historic structures at Channel Islands and the other two network parks: Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and Cabrillo National Monument. Addition of a cultural landscape architect, park historian and curator would benefit the park management of its cultural resources greatly. Regular training opportunities in historic preservation for the maintenance staff are desirable. The cultural resources staff could also contract with university-based historians and cultural resources specialists. Adequate funding is needed immediately in order to strengthen the cultural resources staff at Channel Islands National Park.

Interpretation

It is recommended that interpretation of cultural resources be increased, and that training of all interpreters include learning and understanding the history and context of the activities that took place on the islands. A dynamic interpretation program should highlight the unique challenges of island ranching. In order to provide a balanced approach to the story of the Channel Islands, interpreters should immerse themselves not only in the natural history of the islands but the human history as well, as it places the visitor in a situation of being a participant in the past activities and humanizes the experience of a park visit. The environmental issues around ranching are also important for presentation to the public; the differences in perceptions of ranching is an important part of the story. Increased funding and staffing in the interpretation division of the park is clearly needed. Ideally, a well-trained ranger or interpreter would be available at all times to a visitor on any island, no matter how remote.

Future Study

It is also recommended that further study of cultural resources be made at Channel Islands National Park. Any theme covered in this study can be expanded upon, and in many cases should be. As has been shown, the agricultural history of the islands has left numerous resources in place, both structural and ephemeral. A Cultural Landscape Report, using this study as a foundation, would evaluate and interpret the finer points of the rich landscapes on the islands, including themes of ranching, military uses and recreation. Coupled with Cultural Landscape Inventories, the resources would be afforded protection through identification, interpretation and management recommendations. More information is needed on the environmental history of the islands. Numerous topics discussed in this study could be taken further, for example, the architectural origins of the Santa Cruz Island Company buildings, the ethnography of the Caire and Vail & Vickers ranch employees, or the culture of the island cowboy. Oral histories are an ongoing need. Academic support through universities could be tapped, as park staff encourages graduate students to take on such themes for thesis study and resource studies.¹

Another type of study needed is the Historic Structure Report. Technical, engineering and architectural evaluation of buildings is essential for proper treatment and preservation. Preservation guides would follow. The variety of buildings on the islands are in need of such guidance: the rubble construction of the adobes, the brick magazine, the frame buildings at the Vail & Vickers Ranch, all require specialized skills and treatment. Studies could be grouped according to resource type, for instance, the wood frame buildings. Piers are a special consideration worthy of future study and evaluation.²

Islands-wide thematic studies will be valuable to future management of the park. These studies would pursue such themes as fishing, ranching, hunting, maritime commerce and shipwrecks, and the

¹ Level II Cultural Landscape Inventories have been completed for Santa Rosa Island and sites on Santa Cruz Island including Rancho del Norte, Prisoners Harbor and the Gherini Ranch.

² At the time of this writing, Historic Structure Reports have been completed for the Vail & Vickers Ranch House, Prisoners Warehouse, and the Scorpion and Smugglers Ranch Houses. Condition assessments of the Santa Rosa Island barns have also been completed.

Spanish/Mexican era. Thematic studies add to the contextual knowledge of resources and help define significance, especially with obscure resources.

The recommendations stated above are at least partially addressed in the 1980 GMP and updates, and the current Resource Management Plan. The GMP update, in progress at the time of this writing, should take into consideration any more recent information and disciplines, such as cultural landscapes, in its plan for future management. Channel Islands National Park is rich in cultural resources. It is evident that the public enjoys the experience of seeing them, is enthusiastic about learning more about them and appreciates the interesting and important history of this unique region.

Section 8

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Allen, Kerry Blankenship, Editor. *Island of the Cowboys: Santa Rosa Island*. Occasional Paper Number 7. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Santa Rosa Island Chapter, 1996.
- Argument of Hon. J. P. Benjamin, The United States vs. Andres Castillero, Claim for the Mine and Lands of New Almaden*. San Francisco: Commercial Steam Book and Job Publishing Establishment, 1860.
- Arnold, Jeanne E. *Craft Specialization in the Prehistoric Channel Islands, California*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987.
- A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World*, Vol. II. London: G. G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798.
- Bailey, Lynn R., Editor. *A Tenderfoot in Tombstone, The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons: The Turbulent Years, 1880-82*. Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1996.
- Bailey, Lynn R. "We'll All Wear Silk Hats," *The Erie and Chiricahua Cattle Companies and the Rise of Corporate Ranching in the Sulphur Spring Valley of Arizona, 1883-1909*. Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1994.
- Bancroft, Hubert Howe. *History of California [volumes] II, III, IV*. San Francisco: The History Company, 1884-1890.
- Bell, Katherine M. *Swinging the Censer: Reminiscences of Old Santa Barbara*. Santa Barbara: [self-published], 1931.
- Bremner, Carl St. J. *Geology of San Miguel Island, Santa Barbara County, California*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1933.
- , -----, *Geology of Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, California*. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. No date.
- Bushing, William W. et al. *Bibliography of the Channel Islands Region Southern California*. Eleutheria Press and Catalina Island School, 1976.
- Caire, Helen. *Santa Cruz Island: History and Recollections of an Old California Rancho*. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1993.
- California's Chumash Indians*. A Project of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Education Center. San Luis Obispo: EZ Nature Books, 1996.
- Callahan, Edward W., Editor. *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900*. New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1969.

- Caughey, John Walton. *History of the Pacific Coast of North America*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1938.
- Cleland, Robert Glass. *The Place Called Sespe, The History of a California Ranch*. Privately printed: 1940.
- , ----- . *From Wilderness to Empire, A History of California, 1542-1900*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947.
- , ----- . *History of California: The American Period*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926.
- , ----- . *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills. Southern California 1850-1880*. San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1951.
- Connor, L. G. *A Brief History of the Sheep Industry in the United States*. Washington: 1921.
- Costansó, Miguel. *The Portolá Expedition of 1769-1770, Diary of Miguel Costansó*. Frederick J. Teggart, Ed. Berkeley: Academy of Pacific Coast History, 1911.
- Daily, Marla, Editor. *A Step Back in Time: Unpublished Channel Islands Diaries*. Occasional Paper Number 4. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1990.
- , -----, Editor. *Chapel of the Holy Cross 1891-1991 Santa Cruz Island*. Occasional Paper Number 5. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1991.
- , -----, Editor. *Santa Barbara Island*. Occasional Paper Number 6. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1993.
- , -----, Editor. *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*. Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Occasional Paper Number 2, 1989. Reprinted as *Noticias*, Vol. XXXV, Nos. 3, 4, Autumn, Winter 1989.
- , -----, Editor. *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*. Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Occasional Paper Number 1, 1989. Reprinted as *Noticias*, Vol. XXXV, Nos. 1, 2, Spring, Summer 1989.
- , ----- . *California's Channel Islands: 1001 Questions Answered*. Santa Barbara: Shoreline Press, [Third Edition] 1997.
- ,----- . *Images of America: the California Channel Islands*. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2012.
- Disaster Log*, San Francisco Marine Exchange.
- Doran, Adelaide LeMert. *Pieces of Eight/Channel Islands: A Bibliographical Guide and Source Book*. Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1980.
- Duflot de Mofras. *Travels on the Pacific Coast*. Margaret Wilbur, Ed. Santa Ana: Fine Arts Press, 1937.
- Easton Gallery, The. *Ranchos: Santa Barbara Land Grant Ranchos*. Text by Bjorn Rye. Santa Barbara: The Easton Gallery, 1996.
- Eaton, Margaret Holden. *Diary of a Sea Captain's Wife: Tales of Santa Cruz Island*. Janice Timbrook, Editor. Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftin, Publishers, 1980.

- Eldredge, Zoeth Skinner. *History of California: Special Articles*. Volume 5. New York: The Century History Company, [no date].
- Ellison, William Henry, Editor. *The Life and Adventures of George Nidever [1802-1883]*. Santa Barbara and Tucson: McNally & Loftin, Publishers and Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1984 [reprint of edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1937].
- Erlich, Gretel. *Cowboy Island: Farewell to a Ranching Legacy*. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 2000.
- Farnham, Thomas Jefferson. *Travels in California*. Oakland: Biobooks, 1947. Originally published in New York in 1844-1845 as *Travels in California and Scenes in the Pacific Ocean*.
- Fireman's Fund Register, 1914, 1915, 1916.*
- Fothergill, Karen R. and Thomas B. Stone. *California Turkey Hunter's Guide*. Sacramento: California Department of Fish and Game, June 1999.
- Gast, Ross H. *Contentious Consul: A Biography of John Coffin Jones*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1976.
- Geiger, M., *Mission Santa Bárbara*. Santa Barbara: Mission Fathers of California, Santa Barbara, 1965.
- Gherini, John. *Santa Cruz Island: A History of Conflict and Diversity*. Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1997.
- Gibbs, Jim. *West Coast Lighthouses*. Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1974.
- Gidney, C. M., Benjamin Brooks and Edwin M. Sheridan. *History of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties California*. Volume I. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1917.
- Glassow, Michael A. and Larry R. Wilcoxon, John R. Johnson and Gregory P. King. *The Status of Archaeological Research on Santa Rosa Island*. Volume I. Santa Barbara: University of California, February 1983.
- Gleason, Duncan. *Islands of California: Their History, Romance and Physical Characteristics*. Los Angeles: Sea Publications, Inc., 1950.
- Greenwood, Roberta S. *Archeological Survey and Investigation, Channel Islands National Monument California, Vol. 1*. Pacific Palisades: Greenwood and Associates, September 1978.
- Gudde, Erwin G. *California Place Names, the Origin and Etymology of Current Geographical Names*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969.
- Hammond, George P. *The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo*. Berkeley: Grabhorn Press, 1949.
- Harper, Franklin, Ed. *Who's Who on the West Coast*. Los Angeles: Harper Publishing Company, 1913.
- Hillinger, Charles. *Charles Hillinger's Channel Islands*. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1998.
- , -----, *The California Islands*. Los Angeles: Academy Publishers, 1958.

- Hoffman, Ogden [District Judge]. *Reports of Land Cases Determined in the United States District Court For the Northern District of California. June Term, 1853 to June Term, 1858, Inclusive. Volume I.* San Francisco: Numa Hubert, Publisher, 1862.
- Holder, Charles Frederick. *The Channel Islands of California: A Book for the Angler, Sportsman, and Tourist.* Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1910.
- Hudson, Travis, Thomas Blackburn, Rosario Curletti and Janice Timbrook, Editors. *The Eye of the Flute: Chumash Traditional History as Told by Fernando Librado Kitsepawit to John P. Harrington.* Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1977.
- Hultz, Fred S. and John A. Hill *Range Sheep and Wool in the Seventeen Western States.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1931.
- Huntsinger, Lynn. "End of the Trail: Ranching Transformation on the Pacific Slope." *Ranching West of the 100th Meridian: Culture, Ecology and Economics.* Edited by Richard L. Knight, Wendell C. Gilgert and Ed Marston. Washington: Island Press, 2002.
- Igler, David. *Industrial Cowboys: Miller and Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Jelinek, Lawrence J. *Harvest Empire—A History of California Agriculture.* 1982.
- Junak, Steve, Tina Ayers, Randy Scott, Dieter Wilken and David Young. *A Flora of Santa Cruz Island.* Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 1995.
- Kelsey, Harry. *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo.* San Marino: Huntington Library, 1986.
- King, Frank M. *Pioneer Western Empire Builders.* Quarter Circle TV, 1946.
- Koch, R. W. *U. S. Army Air Corps B-24 "Liberator" Bomber Crash on San Miguel Island - July 5, 1943.* Long Beach: Research, n.d.
- Lester, Elizabeth Sherman. *The Legendary King of San Miguel / Island Life in the Santa Barbara Channel / The Lesters at Rancho Rambouillet.* Santa Barbara: McNally & Loftin, Publishers, n.d. [reprint of original edition published by W. T. Genns, 1974].
- Literature Review of the Resources of Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands and the Marine Waters of Channel Islands National Park, California.* For National Park Service, San Francisco. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, May 1981.
- McElrath, Clifford. *On Santa Cruz Island: The Ranching Recollections of Clifford McElrath.* Santa Barbara: The Caractacus Corporation (for the Santa Barbara Historical Society), 1993.
- Miller, Bruce W. *Chumash: A Picture of Their World.* Los Osos, California: Sand River Press, 1988.
- Newmark, Harris. *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913.* Edited by Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1916.
- Ogden, Adele. *The California Sea Otter Trade 1784-1848.* Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1941.

- O'Neill, Owen H., Editor-in Chief. *History of Santa Barbara County, State of California: The People and Its Resources*. Santa Barbara: Harold McLean Meier, 1939.
- Orr, Phil C. *Prehistory of Santa Rosa Island*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1968.
- , -----, *Report on Santa Rosa Island 1952*. Sixth Santa Rosa Island Expedition. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1952.
- Petersen, Michel. *Once Upon an Island*. Occasional Paper Number 9. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1998.
- Pinney, Thomas. *The Wine of Santa Cruz Island*. Santa Barbara: The Santa Cruz Island Foundation and Los Angeles: The Zamorano Club, 1994.
- Poett, A. Dibblee. *Rancho San Julian: The Story of a California Ranch and its People*. Santa Barbara: Fithian Press/Santa Barbara Historical Society, 1991.
- Rau, Charles. *The Archaeological Collection of the United States National Museum, In Charge of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.* Washington City: The Smithsonian Institution, 1876.
- Reichlen, Henry and Robert F. Heizer. *The Scientific Expedition of Léon de Cessac to California, 1877-1879*. Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility, March 9, 1964.
- Roberts, Lois J. *San Miguel Island: Santa Barbara's Fourth Island West*. Carmel, California: Cal Rim Books, 1991.
- Rogers, C., Editor. *A County Judge in Arcady: Selected Private Papers of Charles Fernald, Pioneer California Jurist*. Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1954.
- Rolle, Andrew F. *California: A History*. Second Edition. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969.
- Rowlandson, Thomas. *The Sheep Breeder's Guide*. San Francisco: J. Q. A. Warren, 1861.
- Rush, Philip S. *Some Old Ranchos and Adobes*. San Diego: Neyenesch Printers, Inc., 1964.
- Santa Barbara: A Guide to the Channel City and its Environs*. New York: Hastings House, 1941.
- Scammon, Charles M. *The Marine Mammals of the Northwestern Coast of North America*. San Francisco: John H. Carmany & Co., 1874.
- Scheuring, Ann Foley, Editor. *A Guidebook to California Agriculture*. Berkeley: U. C. Press, 1983.
- Stanton, Carey. *An Island Memoir*. Los Angeles: The Santa Cruz Island Company, 1984.
- Starrs, Paul F. *Let The Cowboy Ride: Cattle Ranching in the American West*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Storke, Mrs. Yda Addis. *A Memorial and Biographical History of the Counties of Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and Ventura, California*. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1891.
- Storke, Thomas M., in collaboration with Walker A. Tompkins. *California Editor*. Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1958.

- Thayer, William M. *Marvels of the New West*. Norwich, CT: The Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1888.
- The National Cyclopedia of American Biography*. New York: James T. White Publishers [1961].
- Thomas, Bob. *Thalberg, Life and Legend*. New York: Doubleday, 1969.
- Thompson, T. H. and A. A. West. *History of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties, California*. Oakland: Thompson & West, 1883. Reprinted 1961 by Howell-North, Berkeley.
- Towne, Charles Wayland and Edward Norris Wentworth. *Shepherd's Empire*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945.
- Traver, Ellen A. *Alaska, A Chronological and Documentary Handbook*. New York: Oceana Press, 1972.
- Vancouver, George. *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean and Round the World*. Vol. II. London: G. G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798.
- Wagner, Henry Raup. *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*. San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1941.
- Wellman, Paul I. *The Trampling Herd*. Philadelphia/New York: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1939.
- Wentworth, Edward Norris. *America's Sheep Trails*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State College Press, 1948.
- Wheeler, Eugene D. and Robert E. Kallman. *Shipwrecks, Smugglers and Maritime Mysteries of the Santa Barbara Channel*. Ventura, California: Pathfinder Publishing, 1984, revised 1989.
- Yale, Charles G. *Pacific Coast Harbors A Description of the Harbors, Landings, Roadsteads and Chutes on the Coast Line of California, Oregon and Washington*. San Francisco: 1879.

Government Documents

- Agricultural Crop Reports, Santa Barbara County [1945-1959]. Agricultural Economics Library, University of California, Davis.
- An Analysis of the California Beef Cattle Industry*. Cooperative Extension, Division of Agricultural Sciences, University of California. Special Publication 3281. 1982.
- [Bienvenu, Daniel]. *Historic Structures Report, Part I, Old Ranch House, San Miguel Island, California*. Cabrillo National Monument, November 1965.
- Bond, R. M. and Lowell Sumner. "An Investigation of Santa Barbara, Anacapa and San Miguel Island, California." December 28, 1939.
- Bowers, Rev. Stephen. "Santa Rosa Island" in *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Showing the Operations, Expenditures, and Condition of the Institution for the Year 1877*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1878.
- California Livestock Statistics*. Compiled by George A. Scott. Sacramento: USDA, Bureau of Agricultural Economics/California Department of Agriculture, 1937.
- California Livestock—Annual Report 1972*. California Crop and Livestock Reporting Service.

Chappell, Gordon. "Historic Structures" 30 Oct. 1975, Draft MS.

Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc. *Navy Cold War Guided Missile Context: Resources Associated with the Navy's Guided Missile Program, 1946-1989*. Department of the Navy, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, August 1995.

County Agricultural Statistics, July 1965. Agricultural Economics Library, University of California, Davis.

Craig, Bruce. "Historical Resource Overview: Santa Rosa Island." Draft. Channel Islands National Park, February 1983.

Craig, Bruce. "Preliminary Historic Resource Study: Santa Rosa Island." Channel Islands National Park, April 1984.

-----, -----, "Preliminary Historic Resources Study of Eastern Santa Cruz Island." Channel Islands National Park, December 1983.

Condition Assessment and Preservation Plan, Prisoners Harbor Warehouse. Prepared by Paul Neidinger, NPS architect, June 18, 1999.

Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II: Gherini Ranch. Prepared by National Park Service, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, 2002.

Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II: Rancho del Norte. Prepared by National Park Service, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, 2002.

Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II: Santa Cruz Island Ranching District. Prepared by National Park Service, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, 2002.

Cultural Landscape Inventory Level II: Santa Rosa Island Ranching District. Prepared by National Park Service, Pacific Great Basin Support Office, 2002.

Davidson, George. *United States Coast Survey Pacific Coast. Coast Pilot California, Oregon and Washington Territory*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1869.

-----, -----, *The United States and Geodetic Survey Coast Pilot of California, Oregon and Washington*. Fourth Edition. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889.

DeLong, Robert. *San Miguel Island Management Plan*. Washington: Marine Mammal Commission, 8 February 1975.

Design Criteria and Schematics for U. S. Naval Air Missile Center at Point Mugu, California and San Nicolas Island and Santa Barbara Channel Islands. U. S. Navy, October 1948.

Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Development Concept Plan, Santa Rosa Island. March 1994. Channel Islands National Park.

Dulka, Kurt, Mary Dalke and Larry Barker. *San Nicolas Island and Santa Cruz Island Site Manual*. Point Mugu: Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, October 1993.

Economic Briefs for Agricultural Extension Service, University of California [1974].

- Final Environmental Impact Statement, Resources Management Plan for Improvement of Water Quality and Conservation of Rare Species and Their Habitats on Santa Rosa Island.* Ventura: Channel Islands National Park, 1997.
- Gee, C. Kerry and Albert G. Madsen. *Sheep Production in the 17 Western States.* Fort Collins, CO: U. S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 1983.
- Glassow, Michael A. *Archaeological Overview of the Northern Channel Islands Including Santa Barbara Island.* Tucson: Western Archaeological Center, National Park Service, January 1977.
- Glassow, Michael A., Editor and Compiler. *Channel Islands Archaeological Overview and Assessment.* National Park Service, December 2010.
- Goodwin, R. Christopher and Associates, Inc. *Navy Cold War Guided Missile Context: Resources Associated with the Navy's Guided Missile Program, 1946-1989.* Department of the Navy, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, August 1995.
- "Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960," National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Nomination Form prepared by Linda Flint McClelland, David L. Ames, Sarah Dillard Pope, National Park Service, circa 2002.
- Holland, Francis R. "Master Plan for Channel Islands National Monument Mission 66 Edition," June 1963, 429512, NPS Records, NA(SB).
- JRP Historical Consulting Services. *Draft Inventory and Evaluation of National Register of Historic Places Eligibility for Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California.* Contract No. DACA05-97-D-0013, June 1998.
- Lima, James T. *Historic Study, Prisoners Harbor Landing Site, Santa Cruz Island, California.* Point Mugu: Naval Air Weapons Station, 1994.
- , -----, *San Nicolas Island Lights, A Study of Maritime Aids to Navigation on San Nicolas Island, California.* Pt. Mugu: Environmental Division, Naval Weapons Station: 1997.
- McLendon, Sally and John R. Johnson. *Establishing the Ethnohistorical Basis for Cultural Affiliation in the Areas Formerly Controlled by Chumash Peoples and Presently Under National Park Service Stewardship.* National Park Service, Hunter College at CUNY, and Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1996.
- Morris, Don P. and James Lima. *Submerged Cultural Resources Assessment: Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary.* Intermountain Cultural Resource Centers Professional Papers Number 56. Santa Fe: Submerged Cultural Resources Unit, Intermountain Field Area, National Park Service, 1996.
- Pacific Missile Test Center. *Days of Challenge, Years of Change, A Technical History of the Pacific Missile Test Center.* 1989.
- Palmer, Kevin (Lex). *Central Coast Continuum—From Ranchos to Rockets. A Historic Overview for an Inventory and Evaluation of Historic Sites, Buildings, and Structures, Vandenburg Air Force Base, California.* Santa Maria: BTG, Inc., 1999.
- Report of the Secretary of the Interior . . . in relation to the island of Santa Cruz.* 32d Congress, 1st Session, Ex. Doc. No. 87 [Government Printing Office].

- Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862.
- Roberts, Lois Weinman. *Historic Resource Study: Channel Islands National Monument and San Miguel Island, California.* Chambers Consultants and Planners, May 1979.
- “San Miguel Island Survey” August 19-27 and September 22-30, 1965, by Charles Rozaire, NPS Western Regional Library, San Francisco.
- Scorpion Ranch House, Historic Structure Report.* Prepared for NPS by Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco, 2001.
- Smugglers Cove Ranch House, Historic Structure Report.* Prepared for NPS by Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco, 2001.
- Special Study, Environmental Assessment, Demolition, Restoration of Abandoned Military Facilities, Channel Islands, Johnsons Lee, Santa Rosa Island.* Denver: National Park Service, 1985.
- Stanley, William A. “Three Short Happy Months.” NPS, *Channel Islands.* Washington D.C.: Gov. Printing Office, 1963.
- Sumner, Lowell. “The Channel Islands National Monument after Eleven Years,” Special Report, May 25, 1950. RG 79, Box 15, File 204, NA(SB).
- Swanson, Mark T. *Historic Sheep Ranching on San Nicolas Island.* Report Prepared for Naval Air Weapons Station, Point Mugu. Statistical Research, Inc., Technical Series No. 41, 1993.
- Thirty Eighth Annual List of Merchant Vessels in the United States . . . for the year Ending June 30, 1906.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906.
- Thirty-First Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States . . . for the Year Ended June 30, 1899.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1899.
- Twelfth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States . . . for the Year Ended June 30, 1880.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Agriculture, 1950, Volume II *General Report—Statistics by Subjects.* Washington: USGPO, 1952.
- , -----, 1950, Volume I: *Counties and State Economic Areas—Part 33, California.* Washington: USGPO, 1952.
- , -----, 1964, Volume I, Part 48—*California.* Washington: USGPO, 1967.
- U. S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930, Agriculture—California—*Statistics by Counties.* USGPO, 1931.
- U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Channel Islands National Park. *General Management Plan [for] Anacapa, Santa Barbara, San Miguel Islands.* Volume 1, 1980.
- , -----, -----, *Draft General Management Plan Supplement, Environmental Assessment.* April 1984.
- , -----, -----, *Resources of San Miguel and Prince Islands with Recommendations for Future Protection and Management,* no date.

Wee, Stephen R. and David S. Byrd. *The Navy's Pacific Guided Missile Sea Range, 1946-1991 Historic Context for Cold War-Era Buildings and Structures at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Ventura County, California*. Draft, February 1997.

Wheeler, George M. *Report Upon the United States Geological Surveys West of the One-Hundredth Meridian, in Charge of Capt. George M. Wheeler, Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Vol. I, Geographical Report*. Washington: 1889.

White, Maxwell. *An Interpretive History of the Pacific Missile Test Center. The Genesis: Road to Point Mugu 1936 to 1946*. Point Mugu: Pacific Missile Test Center, n.d.

-----, -----. *Datelines: A History of Navy Missile Testing at Point Mugu, California*. Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, 1992.

Manuscripts and Reports

"A Concise History of the U. S. Army Signal Corps." Office of Command History, U. S. Army Signal Center, Fort Gordon, n.d.

Anderson, R. Scott. "Fire History and Vegetation Change on Santa Cruz Island, Channel Islands National Park, California." Channel Islands National Park and Northern Arizona University, 25 May 1998.

-----, -----. "Fire History and Vegetation of the Northern Channel Islands, Channel Islands National Park, California: Phase II." Channel Islands National Park and Northern Arizona University, 31 January 2001.

Bentz, Linda. "Overseas Chinese Abalone Collectors of Santa Rosa Island." Presented to National Park Service, February 7, 1996.

Caire, Delphine. "First Visit to Santa Cruz Island, 1880." Excerpt from the Memoirs (1933) of Delphine Adelaide Caire. Typescript.

Costello, Julia and Linda Thorpe. "Study of Selected Historic-Period Archaeological Resources on San Miguel Island." Channel Islands National Park. March 2010.

Cuevas, Lourdes. "Diego: A Brief Look" (paper for Anthropology 114B). May 7, 1992.

Daily, Marla and Carey Stanton. "Santa Cruz Island: A Brief History of Its Buildings." 1981.

Dana, Alonzo P. "The Dana, Carrillo, Boronda, Deleissigues and Muñoz Families in California." Privately published manuscript, 1966.

Dawson, William Oberlin. "Diary Kept While on Santa Cruz Island." 1919. SBMNH #0863

Dittmann, Carl. "Narrative of a Seafaring Life on the Coast of California." Santa Barbara, California, 1878.

Erlandson, Jon M. "The Search for Early Shell Middens on San Miguel Island, California." Research report submitted to The Foundation for the Exploration and Research on Cultural Origins and National Park Service/Channel Islands National Park, September 15, 2001.

- Fortney, Mrs. Kenneth (Nevis). "Channel Islands California: Reference List of Possible Sources of Information for use in Research Study Projects." December 1971.
- Gherini, John. "Radio Santa Cruz: Island Ranch Life from 1951 to 1984." Draft manuscript of paper given at 6th California Islands Symposium, December 2003.
- Green, Ted. "Santa Cruz Island Telephone, The 'Mag' Line." Typescript of paper given at California Islands Symposium, April 1999.
- Helen, Robert R. "A Brief History of the Fry's Harbor Quarry, Santa Cruz Island, California." Typescript, 1979. SBMNH #0908.
- Historical Record of the 669th ACW Squadron for the period ending June 30, 1959.*
- Hundley, Jack. "Oil Story, Santa Cruz and Santa Rosa Islands." Typescript. SCIF.
- Johnson, Donald L. "Landscape Evolution on San Miguel Island, California." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kansas, 1972.
- Johnson, John Richard. "An Ethnohistoric Study of the Island Chumash." MA Thesis, University of California Santa Barbara. December 1982.
- Kennett, Douglas J., John R. Johnson, Torben C. Rick and Don P. Morris. "Historic Chumash Settlement on Eastern Santa Cruz Island, Southern California." Draft for *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*. No date (1995 or later).
- McKusick, M. B. "Introduction to Anacapa Island Archaeology." Annual Report, Archaeological Survey, Department of Anthropology-Sociology, University of California Los Angeles, 1939.
- Morgan, Ron. *Channel Islands Photographic Survey*. 1979. SBMNH.
- Morris, Claude R. Untitled manuscript about his experiences with his father, Skipper Al Morris, on *Vaquero* in the 1920s and 1930s, May 24, 1999.
- "Noticia de las Misiones . . . años 1805 y 1806. Fray Estevan Tapis, Presidente. March 3, 1807."
Translated by David D. Earle.
- Progress Report of Los Angeles County Museum Channel Islands Biological Survey, Fourth Expedition, July 21-August 19, 1939. LACMNH.
- "Report from Santa Rosa Island." 1st (1947), 2nd (1948-49) and 3rd (1949-50) Santa Rosa Island Expeditions. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, [circa 1950].
- [Ringrose, Marie Gherini.] "Conversation with Marie Gherini Ringrose and John Gherini Concerning Family History, June 24, 1983," p. 15, typescript in collection of John Gherini.
- Russell, Matthew A. "An Historical and Archaeological Investigation of Three Beached Shipwreck Scatters at Channel Islands National Park." Thesis, Eastern Carolina University, 1996.
- San Miguel Island Archeological District. Kelly, et al, September 1978.
- Shanks, Ralph and Lisa. "Anacapa Light Station." Unpublished manuscript in the possession of Ralph Shanks, Novato, CA.

Sumner, Lowell. "The Channel Islands National Monument after Eleven Years." Special Report, May 25, 1950. RG 79, Box 15, File 204, NARA San Bruno.

Symmes & Associates. "Report on Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara County, California." Typescript, May 1922. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Tufnell, R. N. "Report on the Dry Stone Structures of East Santa Cruz Island." Dry Stone Masonry Conservancy, Kentucky, 1998.

Voy, C. D. "San Miguel Island, California." Transcript in Yates Papers, Bancroft Library (copy at SBMNH).

-----, -----, "Santa Rosa Island." Transcript in Yates Papers, Bancroft Library (copy at SBMNH).

Warren, Earl Jr. "The Agriculture of Santa Cruz Island." Thesis, University of California College of Agriculture, Davis, 1952.

Willett, George. "Expedition No. 13 Los Angeles Museum - Channel Islands Biological Survey, Report on Birds and Mammals." Los Angeles County Museum.

Periodicals and Articles

Agenbroad, Larry D. "California's Channel Islands: A One-Way Trip in the Tunnel of Doom." Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium, 1999.

Allen, Kerry Blankenship. "Isla de los Vaqueros: The Ranching History of Santa Rosa Island 1843-Present." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*. Vol. 40, Number 2, 1995, pp. 7-49.

-----, -----, -----, "Juan Ayon, 1887-1966, Santa Rosa Island Cowboy." Historical remembrance in a memorial pamphlet published by Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1996.

-----, -----, -----, "The Murder of Ah You." *Island of the Cowboys: Santa Rosa Island*. Occasional Paper Number 7. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Santa Rosa Island Chapter, 1996.

Arnold, Jeanne E. "Complex Hunter-Gatherer-Fishers of Prehistoric California: Chiefs, Specialists, and Maritime Adaptations of the Channel Islands." *American Antiquity*, Volume 57, Number 1, January 1992, pp. 60-84.

Austin, Dr. Perry G. M. "Santa Rosa Island." *Noticias*, Vol. V, No. 3, Fall 1959, pp. 9-10. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 93-96.

Barthol, Johannes. "A Western Explorers Guide to San Miguel Island." *The Western Explorer* 3(3):3-24. Cabrillo Historical Association, 1965.

Bennett, John E. "Our Seaboard Islands." *Harpers Magazine*, ILVII.

Berger, Rainer. "Early Man on Santa Rosa Island." *The California Islands*, 1980, pp. 73-78.

- Bonilla, Isaac Antonio. "The Cabrillo Monument on San Miguel Island." *Noticias*, Vol. V, No. 3, Fall 1959, pp. 11-14. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 141-146.
- Booolootian, Richard A. "The Distribution of the California Sea Otter." *California Fish and Game*, Vol. XLVII, No. 3, July 1961.
- Britton, J. R. "Our Summer Isles." *Sunshine, A Magazine of California and the Southwest*. Charles F. Lummis, Ed. Vol. VII, No. 5, October 1897, pp. 192-197.
- Browne, J. Ross. "The Island of Santa Rosa." *The Overland Monthly*, No. 75, Vol. 13, No. 3, September 1874, pp. 209-213.
- Caire, Helen. "A Brief History of Santa Cruz Island from 1869 to 1937." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*. Grant W. Heil, Editor. Vol. XXVII, No. 4, Summer 1982, pp. 2-33. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 28-47.
- , -----. "Christmas at the Island." *Noticias*, Winter 1983. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 48-61.
- , -----. "Hunting Wild Hogs on Santa Cruz Island." *Noticias*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, Spring 1987, pp. 1-13. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 121-132.
- , -----. "Island Roundups and Shearing." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*. Vol. 31, No. 4, Summer 1986, pp. 3-18. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 88-106.
- , -----. "John Barrymore's Visits to Santa Cruz Island." *Noticias*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, Autumn 1988. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 152-159.
- , -----. "Santa Cruz Island Vintage." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*. Vol. 32, No. 4, Summer 1987, pp. 3-11. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 142-151.
- , -----. "The Last Vaqueros." *The Californians*, Vol. 4 Number 5, September/October 1986, pp. 41-46. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 107-120.
- , -----. "Two Island Dogs." *Noticias*, Spring, 1987. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 133-141.
- "Camouflaged Douglas Aircraft Company." <http://www.stelzriede.com/ms/html/mshwdoug.htm>.
- Carlisle, Lynn. "The Santa Cruz Island Collection." *Art of California*, Vol. 3, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 35-41.
- Chaney, Sarah and Kathryn McEachern. "Erosion Control on Santa Barbara Island in Channel Islands National Park." *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.
- "Coast Survey, No. 2; Anacapa Island [and James McNeill Whistler]." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 6-7.

- Cockerell, T. D. A. "San Miguel, California." *Scientific Monthly*, February 1938.
- Cole, Kenneth and Geng-wu Liu. "Holocene Paleocology of an Estuary on Santa Rosa Island, California." *Quaternary Research* 41, [1994].
- Coleman, Chris D. and Karen Wise. "Archaeological Field Research by Los Angeles Museum: Channel Islands Biological Survey 1939-1941." *The California Islands: Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary Symposium*, Dennis M. Power, Editor. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1980.
- Connally, Kirk L. "Island Packers." *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 42-51.
- Curtis, Freddie. "An Archeologist on San Miguel Island." *Los Angeles County Museum Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Spring 1995. p. 5.
- Daily, Marla, Editor. "The Hyder Family on Santa Barbara Island as Told By Denton O. "Buster" Hyder." *Santa Barbara Island*. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Occasional Paper No. 6, 1993.
- , ----- and Carey Stanton. "Historical Highlights of Santa Cruz Island." *La Reata*, Number 5, Fall 1983, pp. 14-18. Reprinted in *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*. Vol. 31, No. 4, Summer 1986, pp. 21-27. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 79-87.
- , ----- with Al and Russ Vail, Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr., Robert E. Anderson, Lloyd Edwards, William E. "Bill" Kennett, John A. Forman, and K. B. "Pete" Hall. "Santa Rosa Island Geologic Mapping and Oil Exploration." Text accompanies "Geologic Map of Santa Rosa Island Santa Barbara County, California" by Thomas W. Dibblee, Jr., John J. Woolley and Helmut E. Ehrenspeck. Dibblee Geological Foundation, Map DF-68, April 1998.
- Dall, William H. "The Lords of the Isles." *Overland Monthly*. XII, June 1874. Pp. 524-526.
- DeLong, Robert L. and Sharon R. Melin. "Thirty Years of Pinniped Research at San Miguel Island." *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.
- Dougherty, Jim. "Boondocks and Bowstrings." *Bow & Arrow*, Vol. 4, No. 5, January-February 1967. SBMNH #1883.
- Dowty, Karen Jones. "Frenchie." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 25-28. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 35-38.
- , -----, ----- "The Anacapa Lighthouse." *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 2-5. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 39-41.
- , -----, ----- "The Websters on Anacapa" *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 21-24. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 29-33.
- Earle, Homer P. "The Santa Barbara Islands." *Sunshine, A Magazine of California and the Southwest*. Charles F. Lummis, Ed. Vol. V, No. 6, November 1896, pp. 227-230.

- Eisen, Gustav. "Exploration of Santa Rosa Island." *The [San Francisco] Weekly Call*, June 16, 1897, Reproduced in *Island of the Cowboys*, pp. 73-78.
- Ellison, William Henry. "History of the Santa Cruz Island Grant." *The Pacific Historical Review*, Volume VI, Number 3, September 1937, pp. 270-283.
- Erlandson, Jon et al. "An Archaeological and Paleontological Chronology for Daisy Cave (CA-SMI-261), San Miguel Island, California." *Radiocarbon*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 1996.
- Erlandson, Jon, Michael A. Glassow, Don Morris, Charles Rozaire and Pandora E. Snethkamp. "4,000 Years of Human Occupation on Santa Barbara Island, California." *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 14, pp. 85-92.
- Erlandson, Jon M., Torben C. Rick, René E. Vellanoweth and Douglas J. Kennett. "Maritime Subsistence at a 9300 Year Old Shell Midden on Santa Rosa Island, California." *Journal of Field Anthropology*, Vol. 26 Number 3, Fall 1999, pp. 255-265.
- Fewkes, J. Walter. "Across the Santa Barbara Channel." *The American Naturalist*. April 1889, pp. 211-217; May 1889, pp. 387-394.
- Forbes, Gordon. "Diary of a Santa Barbara Visitor, 1909." *Noticias*, Vol. XXX, No. 4, Winter 1984, pp. 64-67. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 7-10.
- Gamble, Lynn H. "Archaeological Evidence for the Origin of the Plank Canoe in North America." *American Antiquity*, 67(2), 2002.
- Gates, Thomas P. "The Palos Verdes Ranch Project: Olmsted Brothers' Design Development for a Picturesque Los Angeles Suburban Community of The 1920s." *Architronic*, Volume 6 Number 1, May 1997.
- Genns, Whitney T. "San Miguel Island 'Crookery.'" Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 136-140.
- Gherini, John. "Santa Cruz Island: Conflict in the Courts." *The Fourth California Islands Symposium: Update on the Status of Resources*. Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1994, pp. 165-170.
- Gherini, Mrs. Ambrose. "Santa Cruz Island." *Noticias*, Vol. V, No. 3, Fall 1959.
- Gherini, Pier. "Island Rancho." *Noticias*, Vol. XII, Winter 1966, pp. 14-20. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1994, pp. 71-78.
- Glassow, Michael A. "Recent Developments in the Archaeology of the Channel Islands." *The Channel Islands: Proceedings of a Multidisciplinary Symposium*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1980. Pp. 79-99.
- Goodyear, W. A. "Santa Cruz Island." California Division of Mines and Geology, State Mining Bureau *Annual Reports*, Vol. IX, 1890.
- Goldin, Greg. "Mutually assured destruction? The RAND building comes out of the cold." *Los Angeles Magazine*, April 2003.
- Greene, E. L. "A Botanical Excursion to the Island of San Miguel." *Pittonia*, Vol. I, 1887, pp. 74-93.

- Greene, Jr., General Wallace M. "Outpost on San Miguel Island." *Marine Corps Gazette*, November 1985.
- Harrington, J. P. "Burton Mound." *BAE 44th Annual Report*, 1928.
- Holland, Francis R., Jr. "San Miguel Island: Its History and Archeology." *Journal of the West*, Vol. II, No. 2, April 1963, pp. 145-155.
- Holland, Francis R., Jr. "Santa Rosa Island: An Archeological and Historical Study." *Journal of the West*, Vol. I, No. 1, July 1962, pp. 45-62.
- Howorth, Peter C. "Commercial Collection of Pinnipeds in the California Channel Islands, 1877-1981." *Third California Islands Symposium: Recent Advances in Research on the California Islands*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1993. Pp. 579-590.
- Howorth, Peter C. and D. Travis Hudson. "Submerged Archaeological and Historical Sites in the Channel Islands National Park and Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary." *Third California Islands Symposium: Recent Advances in Research on the California Islands*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1993. Pp. 579-590.
- Hussey, John A. "A Brief Sketch of the History of Santa Cruz Island, California." Reprinted from *The Western Explorer*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December 1961.
- Johnson, John R., Thomas W. Stafford, Jr., Henry O. Ajie and Don Morris. "Arlington Springs Revisited." Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium, 1999.
- Junak, Steve. "A History of Botanical Exploration and Discovery on Santa Rosa Island." *Island of the Cowboys*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1996, pp. 168-191
- Junak, Steve, Ralph Philbrick and Charles Drost. "History of Botanical Exploration." *Santa Barbara Island*, pp. 57-64.
- K. "Shearing Time on Santa Rosa Island." *Overland Monthly*, Vol. XXI, No. 125, Second Series, May 1893.
- Kennett, Douglas J. John R. Johnson, Torben C. Rick and Don P. Morris. "Historic *Chumash* Settlement on Eastern Santa Cruz Island." (Draft) *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, n.d.
- Kew, William S. W. "Geological Sketch of Santa Rosa Island, Santa Barbara County, California." Reprinted from *Bulletin of The Geological Society of America*, Vol. 38, pp. 645-654, December 30, 1927.
- Kinsell, Martinette. "The Santa Barbara Islands." *Overland Monthly*, December 1891, Vol. xviii, Number 40.
- Lang, Sidney E. "The Frenchman of Anacapa Island." [unidentified magazine, SCIF]
- LIFE Magazine, September 26, 1938. Article about architects in the United States.
- Lima, James T. "Shipwreck Research Program at Channel Islands National Park." *Fourth California Islands Symposium: Update on the Status of Resources*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1994.

- Lipps, J. H. "Late Pleistocene History of West Anacapa Island." *Bulletin Geological Society of America*, LXXV.
- McKinney, John. "San Miguel: Island in the Slipstream." *Santa Barbara Magazine*, No date.
- Miller, Scott E. "A History of Entomological Exploration on Santa Rosa Island." *Island of the Cowboys*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1996, pp. 192-200.
- Morris, Don P. "A River Runs Through it: Historical Archaeology in Scorpion Valley, Santa Cruz Island." *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.
- "The National Guard of California." *The Californian Illustrated Magazine*, Vol. 1 (6), May 1892, pp. 556-562.
- "Naval Air Missile Test Center." *U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 48, November 1950, pp. 307-309.
- O'Malley, Penelope Grenoble. "Animal Husbandry on the Three Southernmost Channel Islands: A Preliminary Overview, 1820-1950." *Fourth California Islands Symposium: Update on the Status of Resources*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1994, pp. 157-164.
- Orr, P. "On San Miguel Island." *Museum Talk*, XXV, 2 (Summer, 1950), pp. 13-18.
- Peterson, R. S. and S. M. Cooper. "History of the Fur Seals of California." *Año Nuevo Reports*, Vol. 2, 1967-1968, p. 50.
- Philbrick, Ralph N. "The Plants of Santa Barbara Island." *Madroño*, Volume 21 (5), part 2, 1972.
- Rawlins, Arkle Gillian. "Life on San Miguel Island in the Year 1903." *A Step Back in Time*, pp. 52-59.
- Rick, Torben C. "A 5,000 Year Record of Coastal Settlement on Anacapa Island, California." *Journal of California and Great Basin Archaeology*, Vol 26, No. 1, 2006, pp. 65-72.
- Rick, Torben C., Jon M. Erlandson and René L. Vellanoweth. "Paleocoastal Marine Fishing on the Pacific Coast of the Americas: Perspectives from Daisy Cave, California." *American Antiquity*, 66(4), 2001.
- Roberts, Lois J. "Revising the History of San Miguel Island, California." *Third California Islands Symposium: Recent Advances in Research on the California Islands*. Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1993.
- , -----, "Sheep Ranching on San Miguel Island." *Southern California Quarterly*, Volume LXIX, Number 2, Summer 1987, pp. 103-132. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 147-177.
- Rouse, Stella Haverland. "The Waters Family of San Miguel." *Noticias*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Fall 1977. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, pp. 113-129.
- Sanders, Jeff. "Carey Stanton's Santa Cruz Island." *Santa Barbara*, Volume IX, Number 5, Sept./Oct. 1988, pp. 36-45.
- Sanger, Arthur R. "Santa Rosa Island." *Sea*, [no date], 1952.

- Schumacher, Paul. "Some Remains of a Former People." *Overland Monthly* 15, October 1875.
- Sexton, Horace A. "The Wreck of the Cuba." *Noticias*, Vol. V, No. 3, Fall 1959, pp. 14-17. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 130-135.
- , -----. "Our Trip to Santa Cruz Island." *Noticias*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, Summer 1981, pp. 20-30. Reprinted in *Santa Cruz Island Anthology*, pp. 11-27.
- Sheldon, H. H. "Saints in the Sea." *Touring Topics*, October 1931, pp. 12-15, 36.
- Shinn, Charles Howard. "With the Sheep, in California." *Home-Maker*, March 1891.
- Smith, Clifton F. "Random Notes on the Natural History of San Miguel Island." *Noticias*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Fall 1977. Reprinted with update in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 108-112.
- Smith, Wallace E. "The Reverend Stephen Bowers, 'Curiosity Hunter' of the Santa Barbara Channel Islands." *California History, The Magazine of the California Historical Society*, Volume LXII, No. 1, Spring 1983, pp. 26-37.
- Southwest Contractor and Manufacturer*, April 19, 1913, p. 11.
- Spaulding, Edward S. "Anacapa Island." *Noticias*, Vol. V, No. 3, Fall 1959, pp. 1-3. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 27-28.
- Spaulding, Sam. "Scorpion's Blacksmith Shop." *Proceedings of the Fifth California Islands Symposium*, 1999.
- Stanton, Carey and Marla Daily. "Santa Cruz Island: Spanish Period to the Present." *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 55-69.
- Streator, C. P. "The Water Birds of San Miguel Island." *Santa Barbara Society of Natural History Bulletin*, Volume I, No. 1, 1887, pp. 21-23.
- Sumner, Lowell. "The Battle for Santa Barbara" *Outdoor California*, February 1959.
- Tompkins, Walker A. "Channel Islands Nomenclature." *Noticias*, Vol. IV, No. 3, October 1958, pp. 8-12.
- Vail, Al and Marla Daily. "Santa Rosa Island: Past, Present and Future." *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 97-105.
- Wagner, Henry R. "George Davidson, Geographer." *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. XI No. 4, December 1932.
- , -----. "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century." *Quarterly of the California Historical Society*, Vol. VII, No. 4, December 1928.
- , -----. "The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595." *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 1, April 1924.
- Warren, Earl, Jr. "California's Ranches in the Sea." *The National Geographic Magazine*, Volume CXIV, Number 2, August 1958, pp. 256-283.

- Warrin, Donald. "An Immigrant Path to Social Mobility: Portuguese Atlantic Islanders in the California Sheep Industry." *California History*, Vol. LXXVI, No. 4, Winter 1997/98, pp. 94-95.
- Waters, Minnie. "Mrs. Waters' Diary of Her Life on San Miguel Island, January 1-June 27, 1888. *A Step Back in Time: Unpublished Channel Islands Diaries*, Marla Daily, Ed. Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1990, pp. 4-51.
- The Western Explorer*, III, 3 (April, 1965), 3-24
- Wheeler, Lt. Commander Stanley A. "California's Little Known Channel Islands." *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings [March 1944]*, pp. 257-268.
- White, Harwood A. "Big and Beautiful." *Santa Barbara*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Spring 1996, pp. 32-39.
- Williams, M. Woodbridge. "Notes on Land Snails from Santa Cruz Island." *Pomona College Journal of Entomology and Zoology*, March 1940.
- "The Winfield Scott." From the *Free Press*, January 17, 1896. *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 16-20. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, pp. 21-26.
- Woolley, John J. "The Vast Empire of Walter L. Vail." *Island of the Cowboys*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1996, pp. 89-90.
- Woolley, Will. "Maritime Ranching on Santa Rosa Island." *Island of the Cowboys*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1996, pp. 107-113.
- "Wrecked on Anacapa." From the *Signal*, August 4, 1883. *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 8-13. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 15-20.
- Wright, Austin T. "An Islandian on the Islands." Introduction by Lawrence Clark Powell. Reprinted in *Northern Channel Islands Anthology*, Santa Barbara: Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 1989, pp. 73-91.

Newspapers

Daily Alta California
Goleta Gazette-Citizen
Lompoc Record
Los Angeles Herald-Examiner
Los Angeles Times
The [Oxnard] Press Courier
New York Times
Sacramento Union
San Diego Union
San Pedro News Pilot
The [Santa Barbara] Daily Independent
The [Santa Barbara] Daily News
The [Santa Barbara] Daily News and the Independent
Santa Barbara Gazette
Santa Barbara Morning Press

Santa Barbara News Press
Santa Barbara Post
Santa Barbara Weekly Independent
Santa Barbara Weekly Press
San Francisco Chronicle
San Francisco Examiner
San Francisco Herald
Ventura County Star-Free Press

List of Archival Sources

Public and Private Repositories

Primary Sources:

Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, Alabama
California State Archives, Sacramento
California State Library, Sacramento
Channel Islands National Park, Ventura, California (NPS)
Fort MacArthur Museum, San Pedro, California
Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California
Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History (LACMNH)
Minerals Management Service, Camarillo, California (MMS)
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA):
College Park, Maryland
Laguna Niguel, California
San Bruno, California
San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, Shaw Library
Santa Barbara County Records Office (SBCRO)
Santa Barbara Historical Society
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (SBMNH)
Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Santa Barbara (SCIF)
Seabee Museum, Port Hueneme
U. S. Coast Guard Historian's Office, Washington, DC
University of California Berkeley, Bancroft Library
University of California Los Angeles, Charles Young Library, Special Collections (UCLA)
University of California Santa Barbara, Davidson Library, Special Collections, Map and Imagery Laboratory (UCSB)
Ventura County Museum of History and Art, Ventura, California (VCMHA)

Secondary Sources:

California Historical Society, San Francisco (CHS)
California State Library, Sutro Library, San Francisco
Historic Electronics Museum, Linthicum, Maryland
Los Angeles Public Library, History and Genealogy Room
Point Reyes Library
San Diego Museum of Man
San Diego Public Library
Santa Barbara Public Library
Sonoma County Public Library, Petaluma, California
U. S. Department of Agriculture Library, Beltsville, Maryland

U. S. Navy, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, Point Mugu, California

Personal Collections, Primary Sources

Mary B. Brock, Santa Cruz Island

John Gherini, Santa Cruz Island

E. K. Smith, Santa Rosa Island

Oral Histories and Interviews

Interviews by the author

Vivienne Caire Chiles, daughter of Frederic Caire, June 29, 2000

Diego Cuevas, former vaquero and foreman, Vail & Vickers ranch, July 28, 2001

John Gherini, grandson of Ambrose Gherini (informal), October 10, 1998

Jesus Ildefonso, former Santa Cruz Island vaquero, November 12, 2000

Bob Isaacson, (Santa Barbara County ranching historian), August 6, 2004

Lyndal Laughrin, manager, UCSB Santa Cruz Island field station, November 8, 1999

David E. Livingston, retired businessman, December 5, 1999

Andy Mills, Santa Barbara County rancher, California Rangeland Trust, August 4, 2004

Jane Rich Mueller, longtime visitor to Santa Cruz Island, December 5, 1999

Steven J. Schwartz, Naval Air Weapons Station Pt. Mugu, March 25, 1999

Tim Setnicka, former park superintendent, January 27, 2000

E. K. Smith, Santa Rosa Island native, January 25, 2001

Al Vail, manager of Vail & Vickers ranch, October 4, 1999

Russ Vail, Vail & Vickers ranch (informal), January 25, 2001

Bill Wallace, former foreman, Vail & Vickers ranch, November 1998, November 28, 2001

Existing Oral Histories and Interviews*

Hancock Banning, Jr., February 19, 1970, Oral History Program, UCLA

Richard Bergen, March 11, 1992 by Marla Daily, SCIF

E. R. Blakely, January 10, 1978 by Lois Roberts

Jesus Bracamontes, no date (ca. 1978) by John Woolley, SCIF

Jesus Bracamontes, February 8, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF and Don Morris, NPS

Robert Moore Brooks, March 1, 1978 by Lois Roberts

Helen Caire, April 17, 1993 by Marla Daily, SCIF

Wm. S. Clark, Com. (ret.) USCG, Feb. 13, 1978 by Lois Roberts

Roger "Red" Craine, September 13, 1983 by John Gherini

Jack Crawford, March 5, 1986 by Phyllis Lotz, SCIF

Jack Crawford, May 4, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF

Diego Cuevas, August 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow, NPS

Diego Cuevas, May 24, July 17, 26 and 28, August 29, 1993 by Will Woolley, SCIF

Cris de Alba, March 1, 1978 by Lois Roberts

Joe Dunn and Jack Hundley, October 24, 1991 by Marla Daily, SCIF

Bill Ehorn, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston, NPS

Paul Foster, Harold Wilson and Les Maland, December 5, 1977 by Lois Roberts

Paul Foster, May 24, 1979 by Lois Roberts

Ted Green, January 19, 2000 by Marla Daily, SCIF

George Hammond, January 12, 1978 by Lois Roberts

George Hammond and Elizabeth Lester, September 9, 1979 by Walt Douglas, SBMNH #2285

Jack Hundley, June 25, 1991 by Marla Daily, SCIF

Buster Hyder, February 6, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #1755 and 1756

Robert Lagomarsino, November 13, 2001 by Yvonne Menard and Ann Huston, NPS

Clarence Laurabee, March 24, 1982 by Marla Daily, SBMNH #2373

Elizabeth Lester, January 12, 1978 by Lois Roberts
Richard Main, March 13, 1978 by Lois Roberts
Don Meadows, January 12 and February 22, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #0930
Francis McComb, September 7, 1993 by Marla Daily, SCIF
Ted Naftzger, January 11, 1993 by Nita Vail, SCIF
Cal Reynolds, March 1, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH #1761
Marie Gherini Ringrose, December 26, 1985 by Marla Daily, SBMNH #2374
E. K. Smith, June 19, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF
Carey Stanton, March 2, 1986 by Marla Daily, SBMNH #2375
Charles Storke, January 8, 1993 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF
Karl Struss, February 20 and 23, 1979 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH # 0936 and 0934
Tom Thornton, June 15, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF
Al Vail, October 22, 1986 by Marla Daily, SCIF
Al Vail, September 1992 by Jere Krakow, NPS
Al Vail, March 11 and 25, July 8, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF
Russ Vail, July 28, October 14, 1993 by Carolyn Petry, SCIF
Bill Wallace, SCIF
Meredith Wallace, February 8, 1987 by Marla Daily, SCIF
Arthur and Barbara Woodward, December 28, 1978 by Ron Morgan, SBMNH
John Woolley, October 7, 1978, SCIF
Margaret Vail Woolley, March 2, 10 and 23, 1994 by Ann Eggers Jones, SCIF
Margaret Vail Woolley, September 4, 1992 by Jere Krakow, NPS

*Interviews by Lois Roberts are cited in her 1979 *Historic Resource Study*.

Appendix A: Glossary

Anisal—name of a pasture on Santa Cruz Island on which fennel (anise) grew

Baidarka—a small watercraft similar to a kayak, used by Aleut otter and seal hunters

Barbareño—a worker from Santa Barbara

Barranca— Spanish, eroded gully

Benchmark—a permanent marker, usually of brass, used for surveying property

Borrego— Spanish, sheep

Bracero—Mexican farm laborer allowed entry into the U. S. to work, under the program of that unofficial name in effect 1942-1964

Camino—Spanish, road

Campo—a pasture for grazing sheep or cattle

Cañada—Spanish, canyon

Chirrión—a bull whip woven from four strands of cow hide with a wood handle

Chute—a narrow passageway made of planks for cattle to pass through, to aid in sorting, loading and unloading

Corrida—Spanish, roundup of sheep

Cow-calf ranch—cows are managed to produce calves, which are sold while young to stocker ranches and feedlots

Cucina—Italian, kitchen

Cueva—Spanish, cave

Feed Lot—employed by a beef production business as a outside confined space to fatten cattle prior to slaughter

Feral—domesticated animal gone wild (feral pig)

Ficha—Spanish, coin given for shearing a sheep, to be turned in for pay

Finishing—a steer or cow is fattened for slaughter

Islet—a small island or large rock, usually immediately adjacent to a larger island

Kanaka—a Hawaiian boatman, brought to the Islands to hunt otter

Laguna—Spanish, lake or pond

Lepe—a motherless calf, usually given to another, surrogate mother for feeding (leppy)

Magazin—French, a storage warehouse, commonly referring to arms storage; the structure at Prisoners' Harbor was often called the magazin or magazine

Mag Line—a type of telephone system, used on Santa Cruz Island circa 1888-1984, employing a magneto system

Matanza—Spanish, activity wherein sheep carcasses are reduced through boiling and pressing in large tank to retrieve fats for sale; in reaction to a need to reduce herd size due to drought

Mayordomo—Spanish, superintendent or boss

Montañon—Spanish, mountain, name of range separating east Santa Cruz Island with its isthmus

Pasture—a large, open field for grazing, sometimes irrigated

Pila—Spanish, watering trough for livestock

Portezuela—Spanish, a pass over low hills (puerto suello), name of one of Caire's out-ranches

Potrero—a field for growing crops such as grain

Punta—Spanish, point of land

Roundup—a location for gathering cattle without a corral, where ropes and horsemanship are used

Sacador—Spanish, a wool sacker

Santarosae—name applied by Phil C. Orr to large island that existed during the Pleistocene era, which resulted in the Channel Islands following a rise in sea level

Seca—Spanish, dry

Sierra—Spanish, mountain range

Squeeze chute—a steel or wood contraption that immobilizes a cow or calf, allowing it to be inoculated, branded or castrated

Steers—castrated male cattle

Stocker ranch—calves are imported to the ranch where they grow to a weight ready for sale, wither as finished beef or to a feedlot for finishing

Tomol—a large canoe-like watercraft made of planks, sinew and tar by Island Chumash

Trap—an enclosed pasture where cattle can be kept temporarily at shipping time

Trasquila—Spanish, shearing of sheep, and name of sheep-shearing shed

Vaquero—Spanish, cowboy

Vieja—Spanish, old (Viejo)

Wether—a castrated male sheep

Appendix B

GENEALOGY: THREE GENERATIONS OF THE CAIRE FAMILY

Source: Gherini, *Santa Cruz Island*

		Justinian Caire 1827-1897	“Albina” Caire 1831-1924			
<u>Delphine A.</u> 1856-1949	<u>Arthur J.</u> (1859-1942) m. Mary Suich	<u>Amelie A.</u> 1861-1917 m. Pietro Rossi	<u>Aglae S.</u> 1864-1943 m. Goffredo Capuccio	<u>Frederic F.</u> 1865-1950 m. Lillian Suich	<u>Helene A.</u> 1867-1929	(3 died young: Adrien Albert Marie
	Justinian Olivia Miriam	Albert Maria m. Ambrose Gherini Marie Elena Ilda Pier Francis Sophia Luigi Robert Edmund Esther Aimee A. Olga Beatrice Gioberto Albina Elenore Pietro	Goffredo Aglae E.	L.A. Jeanne Marie Helen Delphine Vivienne		

Appendix C

GENEALOGY: THREE GENERATIONS OF THE VAIL FAMILY

Source: Erlich, *Cowboy Island*

Walter Lennox Vail 1852-1906			Margaret Russell Newhall Vail 1831-1924			
<u>Nathan R.</u> (1883-1943) m. Nita Mills	<u>Walter L.</u> (1886-1931) m. Ellen Barrere	<u>Mary</u> (1887-1977) m. James Wilkinson	<u>Wm. Banning</u> (1889-1934) m. Laura Perry	<u>Mahlon</u> (1891-1968) m. Irene Howard	<u>Edward N.</u> (1893-1962) m. Mary Bullock m. Violet Zellers	<u>Margaret</u> (1896-1957) m. Chas. Bell m. Sam Wise
Margaret (1920-2009) Alexander (1921-2000) N. Russell (1921-2005)	Granville Walter III	Mahlon	Laura ("Dusty") William B. Thomas		Mary Susan	

Appendix D

GENEALOGY: THREE GENERATIONS OF THE VICKERS FAMILY

Source: Erlich, *Cowboy Island*

John Van Vickers
1850-1912

Annie Childs
1854-1945

Florence
(1873-1929)
m. Franklin
McAllister

Dora
(1876-1940)

Lillian
(1879-1901)

Anna
(1882-1966)
m. Clarence
Crawford

Clara
(1886-?)
m. Roy E.
Naftzger

Elizabeth
John
Florence

John V.
Thomas H.

Roy "Ted"

Appendix E

Additional data from the National Archives concerning the U. S. Coast Survey activities on the islands, 1855-1875.

San Miguel Island

Letters from Stehman Forney, U. S. Coast Survey, from his outposts on San Miguel Island.

U. S. Coast Survey Camp
San Miguel Island
Santa Barbara Channel Cal
October 31st 1871

Dear Sir

In accordance with your instructions of March 4, 1871, I organized a party for the triangulation and topography of San Miguel & Santa Rosa islands. I left San Francisco with my party March 24th. I was detained at Santa Barbara waiting transportation, and it was not until April 12th that I reached [San Miguel] island.

The summer seems unprecedented with gales of wind & fog, out of 204 days from April 12 to October 31st, 153 1/2 I was unable to make any progress, from the constant strong gales day and night from the N. W. so violent that my tents could scarcely be secured, making it hopeless to attempt any fieldwork, indeed the work executed, has been accomplished under many adverse circumstances from the dampness of the atmosphere fog and wind. At present this condition has somewhat changed which gives me hope that before the season is yet ended I will have made good progress. I have taken advantage of every day and part of a day to push the work ahead, and feel annoyed that my first season's progress should have been so checked from these causes.

San Miguel Island is entirely destitute of wood, not a tree upon it, there are several brackish streams and springs on it, but not fit for drinking or cooking purposes. Cuylers Harbor affords a safe anchorage for small vessels during the summer months; it is protected from all winds except from the NE.

In the bluff to the westward of the anchorage is a large deposit of lime stone; deposits of the same are also found on different parts of the island, this no doubt at some future day will be found a valuable article of commerce, there being a scarcity of limestone on any part of the Southern Coast of California.

At the extreme western point of the island small vessels will also find safe anchorage during the summer months, as the point gives a lee from the NW gales, on the south shore midway from between the East & West points of the island a good landing will be found for open boats, the highest elevation on the island (being the location of San Miguel Station) is 856 feet, the island is covered with coarse grasses and capable of sustaining 4,000 sheep.

San Miguel lying as it does to the southward & eastward of Point Conception in the very track of the prevailing summer NW gales, being destitute of wood or underbrush of any kind, its surface thus exposed to the heat of the summer sun, might it not be that this rarefied atmosphere produces the vacuum, to which the Point Conception cold winds rush, and hence the fierce gales for which it is notorious.

As the topography advanced I was able to find all the points of Ass't Greenwell located and marked in 1861, the signals were gone, and the center stubs and reference marks more or less covered with sand & soil, but all in a perfect state of preservation. I mention this

fact to show the value of the red wood of this coast, for such purposes, of which these stubs were made. At the time of my commencing the work on the island, I was unable to find several of the points, and I established new ones, for the connection with Santa Rosa and the finishing of the topography.

In conclusion, this island with the dangerous rocks and reefs lying off it, being in the track of Coasting vessels as well as those making the Coast of California from long sea voyages, I submit, that the safety of ships and the commerce of the coast would not be materially aided by a first class light here. I enclose the summary report of the season's work up to date, as also monthly journals of the party operations, as called for by my instructions.

Yours very respectfully,
 Stehman Forney
 Sub Ass't USCS
 San Miguel Island¹

Forney submitted this Summary Report of his work up to October 31, 1871:

Triangulation

No. of signals erected at old Δ Points	6
No. of signals erected for new points	11
No. of stations occupied	8
No. of stations observed upon	14
No. of single horizontal angles	1,910
No. of single vertical angles	116
No. of vols. of original field observations	1-1/2

Topography

No. of miles of shoreline surveyed	17
No. of miles of bluff surveyed	10
Area covered by topography	24 miles
Greatest elevation	856 feet
No. of topographical signals erected	14
No. of days from April 12th to October 31st	204
No. of days when work was prevented by fog & wind	153-1/2
No. of days when chief of party at sea & from field on CS business	8
No. of days when work was executed	42-1/2

Forney completed the survey of San Miguel Island around December 1, 1871.²

In 1876 Coast Survey employee O. H. Tittman placed a new survey signal on Green Mountain, which he named "New San Miguel." What appear to be remains of this signal were found in the fall of 1999. Tittman described the signal:

¹Letter, Stehman Forney to Superintendent Benjamin Pierce, Nov. 30, 1871, Assistants 1866-75, E-F, RG 23, NARA-CP.

²Stehman Forney to Prof. Benjamin Peirce, October 31st 1872.

The station is marked by a rectangular brick pier whose foundation is laid about 2-1/2 feet in the ground. Set into the foundation is a smooth stone, about 8 x 8 x 8 inches in size, taken from the beach, having in its center a leaden bolt & copper tack to mark the station points. To render this point visible, two arches, the tops of which are 8 inches above the ground intersect each other in the center of the pier. A hollow about 10 inches square extends from the mark to the top of the pier.³

Santa Rosa Island

Previous government survey expeditions had set foot on Santa Rosa Island. In the 1850s George Davidson traveled amongst the islands in beginning the process of triangulation, which was essential to placing the location and relationships between points. In May of 1860 William Greenwell explored Santa Rosa Island and established seventeen survey signals that acted as preliminary control points for a detailed survey of the island. Typically, the monument consisted of a twelve-foot pole with three or four diagonal braces, or four redwood stubs sunk into the ground with composition nails driven in the tops. The tall poles could be seen from other locations for triangulation purposes. The monuments established that May were:

- Farrell—Greenwell noted that the “top of the hill is covered with small pieces of shells”
- Gulch—at Cañada Corral (later Arlington)
- Spur
- La Mesa—noted that about 600 yards southeast of the monument is an old “corral”
- Brockway
- Sand Point—location of an anchorage; a “low white hill, smooth & grassy”
- Round Top—west of Cañada Lobo
- Corvron—Cañada Corvron near the center of the east end
- Barton—south from Corvron Spring on stony ground
- Alta—described as a “smooth egg-top hill”
- Borrego
- Bald Hill
- South Point—not a safe anchorage [surprising as this described Johnson’s Lee]
- Ridge—3 miles south of the principal anchorage
- Corral—600 meters east-southeast is an old corral and wharf
- East Point
- Black Hill—“a very conspicuous black mountain, known upon the island by that name . . . up the cañada leading from the house to its head”

Letters from Stehman Forney, U. S. Coast Survey, from his outposts on Santa Rosa Island as of 1872:

At the west [sic: east] end of the island abreast of the ranch house is a possible anchorage, during the summer months will also be found to the westward of the southeast point, there

³RG 23, Scientific Records, Descriptions of Stations (GA Series), Box 147, File 941 GA 1872-C GA-1162, California No. 1 Compiled, pp. 70-72, NARA-CP.

are no harbors around the shores of Santa Rosa, which are steep and broken, good boat landings may be found five or six miles apart all along the shores of the island.

[The mountains] attain a height of 1260 feet, this table land is cut up by vast numbers of deep gulches which make down from the mountains to the sea, many of them containing never failing streams of clear pure water. On the south side of the island, there is no regularity to the formation of the hills and gulches, it being very rough and almost impassable for anything but sheep. It is cut up into a multiplicity of isolated hills and deep gulches, resembling in formation the sand hills of Long Island on a grand scale.

The island is well watered and covered with the wild grasses and coarse bushes of California. Scrub oak and pines are found in the gulches and on the south faces of the hills. Many of the peaks on the south side of the island are covered with fossil shells, Indian mounds, covered with mortars, pestles, arrow heads and other ancient curiosities, are scattered over the island, from the vast number of these mounds, grave yards and human skeletons, that are to be found here, no doubt the island at some time was thickly inhabited by Indians.

The island is capable of sustaining 10,000 head of sheep, and at present is well stocked with these animals.⁴

Forney also submitted a report on his progress, reproduced here:

U. S. Coast Survey Camp
Santa Rosa Island
Santa Barbara Channel Cal
October 31st 1872

Summary Report

Triangulation

No. of signals erected at old \ Points	23
No. of signals erected for new points	5
No. of stations occupied	1
No. of stations observed upon	7
No. of single horizontal angles	153
No. of single vertical angles	2

Topography

No. of miles of shoreline run	41
No. of miles of fencing run	8
No. of miles of road run	13
Area covered by topography	41 sq. miles
Highest elevation	1260 feet

No. of days from Nov 1, 1871 to October 31, 1872	365
No. of days in the field during the above time	250
No. of days out of the field during the above time	115
No. of days when work was prevented by wind & fog	104-1/2
No. of days waiting for transportation from mainland to the island	18
No. of days pitching & moving camp	6
No. of days when work was executed	121-1/2

⁴Stehman Forney, Sub Assistant, U.S.C.S. to Prof. Benjamin Peirce, Superintendent, U.S.C.S., October 31st 1872, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP). It is interesting to note Forney's figure of 10,000 sheep, while a contemporary newspaper article claimed that four times that many pastured on the island.

Yours very respectfully,
Stehman Forney
Sub Ass't USCS
Santa Rosa Island

Forney continued work on the island until March 1873.⁵

Santa Cruz Island

Letters from Stehman Forney, U. S. Coast Survey, from his outposts on Santa Cruz Island.in 1874:

San Francisco, Cal
August 16, 1874

Mr. C. B. Patterson
Superintendent, U.S.C.S.
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of July 25th, I respectfully submit the following explanations regarding the use of schooner and saddle horses for the successful prosecution of my work on the Santa Barbara Islands.

The services of a schooner are absolutely required for transporting my camp and party to and from the mainland, in estimating for the hire of schooner I have allowed myself but one trip per month during the working season. I hope you will agree with me that I should have the opportunity of receiving a mail and communicating with the office at least once every month, besides procuring fresh provisions, etc., for the use of my party, with your knowledge of the isolated position of the islands, completely cut off as they are from any regular communication with the main land, I trust you will find the above explanation entirely satisfactory.

It would be impracticable to prosecute the work successfully without the use of saddle horses. Most of the work has to be done eight and ten miles from camp, owing to the facilities for procuring wood and water I am obliged to pitch my camp so far from the immediate field of work, as all of my work lies over a very rough country it would take the best part of the day to go to and from camp on foot, while with the aid of horses I can get my men in the field at an early hour and when they do arrive there, they are fresh and reach for a good day's work.

I travel to Santa Barbara by the steamer of the 22nd of August and intend to take the field by the 1st of September.

Yours very respectfully,
Stehman Forney
Sub Assistant, U.S.C.S.⁶

⁵Letters, Stehman Forney to Benjamin Peirce, February 5 and March 20, 1873, and "Memo of General Instructions" from Peirce to Forney, February 25, 1873, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP).

⁶Stehman Forney to Mr. C. B. Patterson, August 16, 1874, RG 23, Superintendents File 1866-1910, Box 355, NA(CP).

While in San Francisco for the summer, Forney visited the office of the Santa Cruz Island Company, reporting to Washington that the name of the secretary of the company was Marc De Kirwan. While in that city he produced a sketch, scale of 1/100,000, showing his work between November 1, 1873 and September 15, 1874. He reported on the measurements he had taken and days worked:

Topography	
Number of miles of shoreline run	16 1/2
Number of miles of fencing	1 3/4
Area covered by topography [square miles]	10
Highest elevation	1785'
Number of days from November 1, 1873 to October 15, 1874	319
Number of days in field during the above time	234
Number of days out of field during the above time	85
Number of days when work was prevented by wind, rain, fog	107
Number of days for organization	10
Number of days when work was executed	110 ⁷

Santa Cruz Island, October 1, 1874
 C. B. Patterson
 Superintendent, U.S.C.S.
 Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of September of 2nd authoring me to furnish M. De Kirwan with a tracing of my survey of Santa Cruz Island has been received.

I am personally acquainted with the gentleman and it will give me great pleasure to furnish him with any information regarding my operations on the island, that you may approve of, he applied to me in the first place for a tracing of the island, and I advised him to make an application to you, and if you authorized me to furnish him with it, I would do so with the understanding that he would pay for the labor of making the tracing. It gives me pleasure to inform you that M. De Kirwan has been exceedingly kind to me, in offering myself and party with every comfort and facility the island offers for the successful prosecution of my work.

Yours very respectfully,
 Stehman Forney
 Sub Assistant USCS

Forney described aspects of the island that have become interesting and important historical descriptions. A large excerpt from the annual report follows:

The island is capable of sustaining 50,000 sheep. At the ranch house on the west end of the island there is a stream of water running all the year, but the water contains a large percentage of alkaline matter. The northwest face of the island is exceedingly barren, and

⁷Stehman Forney to C. B. Patterson, August 23 and September 16, 1874, in Ibid.

destitute of water except a few small pools of brackish water in the gulches. The surface . . . is covered with large angular pieces of stone, and cactus.

On the north slope of the island in the country is rough and almost impassable for man or beast . . . the ridges and cañons are covered with a dense growth of chaparral, stunted pine, and oak trees, in some of these cañons small pools of brackish water are found. From Prisoners Harbor eastward the hills are smooth and more regular, covered with an abundance of coarse grass. The east slope of the island near the sea bluff presents the appearance of a level table or mesa land, but is more cut up by deep gulches, the surface of this portion of the island is covered with large pieces of angular stones, and coarse grass. Near the landing at Scorpion Harbor there is a ranch house, corrals, shearing shed, two small fields under cultivation, and a well of brackish water. In the third gulch southward from the landing at Smugglers Cove, 1/2 mile from the beach is a spring with fresh water surrounded by a grove of willows. The south slope of the island is exceedingly rough and cut up by deep cañons, which in many places are impassable. Many of the valleys on the island contain an abundance of grass, while the hillsides and mountain tops are barren or covered with chaparral, cactus, scrub oak, and pine trees. In the interior of the island on the slopes of the mountains, small springs of fresh water can be found, but they are in such obscure localities that it requires a person well acquainted with the island to find them.

At the main ranch house, which is 2-2/3 miles up the Cañon from Prisoners Harbor, there is a stream of fresh water which runs all the year at this point. This is the best water on the island, during the summer months this stream sinks about 1/2 mile below the house, leaving the bed of the stream dry until it reaches Prisoners Harbor, where the water comes to the surface, and forms a fresh water pool near the beach, this pond is an excellent place from which to water vessels, except during very high tides, and northwest swells when the surf breaks into the pond At Prisoners Harbor, there is a well of fresh water, but it is not so good as that in the pond, when not impregnated with salt. The improvements at Prisoners Harbor consist of a substantial wharf 515 feet in length, one dwelling house, extensive tanks for extracting tallow from the carcasses of sheep, this method is resorted to when there is no market for them, in order to dispose of the increase on the island, they generally kill from fifteen to twenty thousand sheep in one season's operation.

Great numbers of old shell mounds and Indian graves are found on the island, some of them on the top of the highest mountain peaks, the graves and shell mounds on the high peaks are four or five miles from the nearest fresh water, and difficult of access to the seashore and valleys. I mention these facts, thinking they may interest persons engaged in ethnological researches.

Gold-bearing quartz is found on the island, the proprietors have opened a tunnel 60 feet into the mountainside, some good specimens of quartz have been found, but as yet no paying ore has been obtained.

The wild animals of the island are comprised of wild cattle, wild pigs, and a small gray fox which exists in great numbers.

Forney noted anchorages, such as Coches Prietos (name originating from the canyon behind), one at Cañada Los Alamos (no name for anchorage); he described Potato Harbor (not so-named by Forney) as a good landing but not a good anchorage for sailing vessels.

East of this . . . is what is known as Scorpion Harbor, this is a passable anchorage during northwest winds, with a steep beach covered with large pebbles, stones and boulders, this is not a safe refuge for sailing vessels during southeast gales, as they are followed by calms accompanied by heavy north east swells, which set directly on the beach, leaving sailing vessels in dangerous positions, without any means of making out, these swells proceed a strong north east gale, from three to five hours. Two schooners have gone ashore at this place, under these circumstances.

In his Summary Report for the season Forney listed the measurements he and his crew had taken on the island:

Signals erected on old triangulation points	13
Topographical signals	87
Miles of shorelines surveyed	31 3/4
Square miles of topographic survey	41
Miles of fencing surveyed	16 3/4
Miles of road	12 1/4
Miles of creeks	6
Highest elevation, over which topography was carried	2410'
No. of days in period	242
No. of days in field	178
No. of days office work	64
No. of days wind, fog & rain	46
No. of days transporting camp, disband party	8
No. of days organize party	4
No. of days work executed	120 ⁸

⁸Annual Report, Santa Cruz Island, November 1, 1874 to June 30, 1875, in Ibid.

Appendix F

Data on wine inventory, Santa Cruz Island as of 1905:

Management made an inventory of wine on hand at the end of every year. The extent of the vintage can be seen in this inventory of wine in the cellar as of December 31, 1905:

type	vintage	gallons on hand
Zinfandel	1902	340
"	1903	6580
"	1904	25,400
"	1905	15,300
Grenache	1902	2,600
"	1903	1,654
"	1904	2,000
"	1905	750
Mataro	1903	500
"	1904	1,423
"	1905	1,100
Burgundy	1902	880
"	1903	1345
"	1904	1,600
"	1905	1,820
Trousseau	1903	150
"	1904	170
"	1905	500
Carignan	1903	50
"	1905	170
Barbera	1905	25
Cabernet	1905	25
Burger	1900	5,400
"	1901	6,000
"	1902	6,340
"	1903	6,300
"	1904	7,100
"	1905	3,350
Moscato	1900/02	1,536
"	1903	50
"	1904	543
"	1905	440
Sauvignon	1899	30
"	1902	220
"	1903	1,000
"	1904	1,572
"	1905	550
Bordelais	1901	170
"	1902	870
"	1903	520
"	1904	271
"	1905	210
Riesling	1901	140
"	1902	1,331

“	1903	1,000
“	1904	1,000
“	1905	500
Pichette	1905	1,200
Grand total gallons		112,025 ⁹

In the following years the amount of wine in the winery fluctuated, depending on sales, quality and production. The 1907 vintage produced 22,887 gallons; that year the vintner did not produce any Burgundy, Carignan, Cabernet, Beaujolais or Riesling. The following lists the wine stored in the Main Ranch cellar as of January 1 of the year:

1908—81,394 gallons;
 1909—74,195 red, 27,086 white, total 101,281;
 1910—108,378 red, 33,642 white, total 142,020;
 1911—176,951 red (plus 295 gallons in demijohns), 40,184 white, total 217,540;
 1912—208,980 red, 45,551 white;
 1913—same as 1912;
 1914—71,736 red, 9,726 white, total 81,462;
 1915—54,429 red, 4,615 white, total 59,044;
 1916—94,410 red, 5,745 white, total 100,155;
 1917—169,757;
 1918—93,760

The firm apparently sold off its entire wine inventory as implementation of the Volstead Act approached; between September and November of 1919, 41,000 gallons were sold to Federspiel and Company.¹⁰

A look at the record for one year's vintage provides some understanding of the business of wine making on Santa Cruz Island. The following are statistics from the vintage of 1918, opening September 16 and closing November 7, 1918:

<u>Red Wine</u>		<u>White Wine</u>	
Zinfandel	60,906 gallons	Moscato	1,000 gallons
Burgundy	1,300 gallons		
total red	62,206 gallons	total white	1,000 gallons
			total 63,206 gallons

<u>Company Labor</u>		<u>Russian Labor</u>	
462 days labor	\$746.83	337 days labor	\$656.65
average days wages	1.61	average days wages	1.95
421.062 pounds grapes picked		361.479 pounds grapes picked	
8,330 boxes		6,857 boxes	
50 6/10 pounds average box		52-7/10 pounds average box	
average cost per box	.09	average cost per box	.09-6/10
210.6 tons		180.7 tons	
average cost per ton	3.55	average cost per ton	3.64
53-8/10% of total tons		46-2/10 of total tons	

⁹[Unidentified] S.C.I.Co. Ledger, p. 61, SCIF.

¹⁰Notes in files of John Gherini.

Vintage Summary

15,187 boxes
782,541 pounds net
391-3/10 tons
51=2/10 pounds average box
4-16/100 wine gallons per box
161-53/100 wine gallons per ton
.02-2/10 cents cost per wine gallon picking
63,206 total vintage gallons (before racking)
\$1,403.48 vintage cost (picking only)

Number of Boxes and Kinds of Grapes

11,063 boxes Zinfandel
1,220 boxes Burger
817 boxes Trousseau
599 boxes Grenache
595 boxes Mataro
390 boxes Burgundy
260 boxes Moscato
226 boxes Cabernet Sauvignon
17 boxes Mission¹¹

¹¹[Unidentified] S.C.I.Co. Ledger, pp. 253-254, SCIF.

Appendix G

Inventory of Air Force buildings and utilities left on Santa Rosa Island in 1965.¹²

bldg #	description	cost	floor area	no. floors
1	Civil Engineer Maintenance Shop	?	457	1
101	Headquarters, SQ.	?	3,029	1
102	Officer Quarter, Men	102,000	6,442	1
210	Communication Transmitter Bldg.	31,000	1,220	1
300	AC&W Operations Bldg.	201,000	5,995	1
302	Tower, Navaid	335,000	N/A	1
106	Heating Plant	53,000	860	1
107	Building	139,000	1,319	1
110	Dispensary	47,000	3,200	1
151	Radio Relay Building	1,000	248	1
154	Warehouse	1,000	2,138	1
200	Communication Receiver Bldg.	22,000	2,138	1
303	Administration Office	25,000	1,655	1
304	Dining Hall, Airmen	42,000	1,621	1
306	Tower, Navaid	250,000	N/A	1
308	Tower, Navaid	40,000	N/A	1
131	Dining Hall, Airmen	139,000	4,198	1
134	Service Club	38,000	1,834	1
127	Dormitory, Airmen	88,000	5,710	2
128	Dormitory, Airmen	101,000	5,710	2
129	Dormitory, Airmen	101,000	5,710	2
133	Technical Training	32,000	1,267	1
135	Recreation Bldg.	69,000	3,360	1
147	Auto Maintenance Shop	46,000	2,193	1
148	Civil Engineer Maintenance Shop	24,000	1,930	1
149	Auto Storage Shed	32,000	3,456	1
150	NCO Open Mess	15,000	1,137	1
113	Pier, Cargo	1,036 S.Y.	279,000	1
114	Building	3,000	400	1
125	Dormitory, Airmen	87,000	5,710	2
126	Dormitory, Airmen	87,000	5,710	2
106 A	Water Supply Treatment	43,000 TGD	101,000	
1018	Water Storage Tank	150,000 gal	37,000	
1019	Water Storage Tank	202,000 gal	40,000	
var.	Water Supply Mains	4,786 L.F.	42,000	
var.	Sanitary Sewage Main	3,480 L.F.	44,000	
var.	Electric Distr. System	31,236 L.F.	275,000	
N/A	Roads	43,544 S.Y.	114,000	
N/A	Fencing	9,388 L.F.	37,000	
N/A	Storm Drainage	4,101 L.F.	68,000	
N/A	Sidewalks	1,547 S.Y.	6,000	
N/A	Open, Auto Storage	3,082 S.Y.	12,000	
TOTAL		3,206,000	[78,647]	

¹²“Buildings, Structures, Utilities and Miscellaneous Facilities,” Schedule A—Supplement to Report of Excess Real Property, NARA San Bruno. See Appendix for complete list of structures.

Index

- Abell, Alexander, 412
Abrams, LeRoy, 318, 683, 870
Acapulco (Mexico), 14, 407
Acme (Chinese junk), 177
Agenbroad, Dr. Larry, 311
Aggi (vessel), 291
Aguirre, Antonio, 408-410
Ah Ming, 171
Ah You, 167
Ahnden, John H., 611
Ainsworth, Ed, 637
Air Force, U. S., 7, 89, 90, 91, 95, 138, 210, 211, 218, 235, 254, 264-265, 271, 272-285, 316, 353, 360, 363, 387, 666, 674, 691, 857, 860
Albright, Horace, 32
Alden, James, 26, 28-31, 49, 50, 415, 422
Alden, James Madison, 413, 414
Alert (vessel), 146
Aleuts, Aleutian Islands, 18-20, 140-141, 388, 406
Algoma (tug), 84
Allen, Merle, 792
Allison, May, 590
Aloha (yacht), 89
Alvarado, Juan Bautista, 143-144, 408-411
Alvarado, Pedro de, 11
Ammon, Larry, 634
Anacapa Island Light Station/Lighthouse, 3, 8, 30, 33, 42, 83, 87-88, 617, 690, 796-809
Anacapa Island(s), 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 14, 15, 29, 30-34, 36, 37-38, 40, 41, 83, 88, 256, 273, 398, 667, 690, 781-834, 841, 851, 853, 861, 864, 868
Anderson and Cristofani Boat Works (San Francisco), 613
Anderson, Howard, 205, 218, 234
Anderson, R. Scott, 319
Anubis (vessel), 65, 107
Aristocratis 291-292
Arlington Man/Woman, 9, 310, 312
Army, U. S. 7, 69, 72, 88, 92, 95, 138, 199, 202, 207, 210, 239, 247-249, 252, 264-271, 274, 283-285, 291, 316, 331, 342, 349, 351, 408, 636, 655, 666-668, 674, 678, 740, 817, 856-861, 877
Arnold, Jean, 687
Arrillaga, Governor, 17, 404
Asahi Fishing Company, 581
Aspen Airways, 629
Asti (Sonoma County), 546, 561
Astone, Michael S., 870
Atlantic Oil Company, 659
Atlantic-Richfield Company, ARCO, 102, 659, 662
Aurelie (vessel), 439
Aurora (Coast Guard cutter), 690, 819, 872
Austin, Perry G. M., 173
Ayala, Ramon, 441
Ayon, Juan, 230-231, 233

Baca, Pablo, 423, 425, 440
Bache, Alexander Dallas, 28-31
Baglin, Al and Rosie, 81
Baidarka, 19, 140, 406

Baird, Spencer, 301, 679
Ball, Albert (Gee), 253
Bancroft, Capt. John, 142
Bancroft, H. H., 20, 53, 145, 407
Banks, R. L., 816
Banning, Hancock, Jr., 43, 71-72
Barbara Olson (freighter), 856
Bar-Bee (vessel), 819
Barclay, George R., 156
Barron, Eustace, 411, 418
Barron, William E., 410, 411, 418-421, 419, 451, 505, 511, 516, 522
Barrymore, John, 590
Bart, Clarence L., 664
Barthol, Johannes, 75
Baxter, Crawford, 852
Beilenson, Anthony, 41
Bell, Alexander Graham, 537
Bell, Katherine, 418
Bellamy, Anne, 871
Benedict, Michael, 686, 870
Bentz, Linda, 293
Berger, Rainer, 311
Bermudez, Joe, 459, 461, 484, 740
Beulah Port, 803
Bienvenu, Daniel, 102
Billcona (vessel), 690
Bixby Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 26, 326, 699
Blacker, Col. Jack, 254, 281
Blackthorn (vessel), 819
Blake, Harvey, 155
Blakely, E. R., 92, 686
Blazenka B (vessel), 692
Blue Fin (vessel), 291
Blue Sea (vessel), 872
Blue, Margaret, 849
Blunt, Simon F., 817
Blunt, W. G., 301
Bolivar (vessel), 147
Bolton, James B., 409, 418
Bond, Richard M., 863, 870
Bonita (steamer), 515
Boston Daily Advertiser, 57
Bouchard, Hippolyte de, 145
Bourago (full name unknown), 477, 479, 492
Bowers, Stephen, 301, 318, 680-681
Box, James, 412-413
Bracamontes, Jesus, 197, 205, 209, 232, 237, 300, 388
Bracero Program, 232
Brandegge, Townshend, S. 317
Bremner, Carl St. John 110, 313, 683
Brenon, Herbert, 590
Briancon (France), 439
Brigham & Drew (wool merchants), 601
Bright, Marcia, 871
Brittan, Lynn, 259
Britton, J. R., 840
Bromfield, Ann, 319

Brooks, Robert, 53, 65, 68, 69-73, 79, 81, 89, 90-91, 92, 96, 98, 112, 122, 186, 245, 247
 Browne, J. Ross, 164-166
 Bruce (full name unknown), 50-51, 53, 117
 Bryan, William A., 870
 Bryant, H. C., 33
 Burtis, Charles, 441, 581, 688
 Burton, Lewis, 155-156
 Burton, Phillip, 41
 Butler, Donald, 81, 91

Caballero, Jose, 408
 Cabrillo National Monument, 37-39, 864, 868
 Cabrillo, Juan Rodriguez, 7, 11-13, 40, 44-47, 92, 98, 111, 125, 138, 302, 401, 783, 837, 839
 Caire, Adrien, 439
 Caire, Albina, 439, 446, 447, 449, 495, 542, 557-562, 558, 560, 569
 Caire, Amelie, 546, 557, 560-570
 Caire, Arthur J., 440-441, 448, 457, 486, 498, 502, 508, 518-519, 545, 553, 555, 557-558, 560, 567-570, 572, 585, 644, 788, 849
 Caire, Delphine, 440-442, 446, 448, 542, 557, 560, 560-570, 735
 Caire, Frederic, 449, 450, 468, 486, 498, 505, 507, 508, 515, 557-558, 560, 567-573, 575, 586, 590, 683-684, 788, 849
 Caire, Helen, 439, 442, 445, 446, 451, 501, 505, 508, 509-518, 522-524, 531, 554, 559, 578, 585-586, 590, 637
 Caire, Helene, 557, 560, 560-570
 Caire, Jeanne, 453, 500
 Caire, Justinian, 7-8, 25, 400, 423, 425, 438-442, 438, 443, 446, 449-450, 453, 455, 463, 465-466, 468, 469, 486, 487, 495, 499, 500, 504, 505, 520, 521, 527, 528-529, 531, 533, 536-537, 539, 541, 546, 548, 556-557, 561-570, 584, 586, 606, 609, 635-636, 640, 661, 665, 680, 691, 694-697, 713, 720, 733, 737, 741, 745, 759
 Caire, Justinian III "Justy", 644
California (battleship), 805
California (vessel), 818
 California Academy of Sciences, 301, 302, 318, 319, 679, 683, 870
 California Department/Division of Fish and Game, 19, 22, 36-37, 97, 111, 291, 304, 578, 579, 863, 864, 865, 867, 869
California II (vessel), 819
 California Institute of Technology, 302
 California Native Plant Society, 687
 Camarillo (Ventura County), 70, 320, 633
 Camp Cooke, 221
 Capuccio, Aglae Caire, 547, 557, 560-563, 567, 569, 571, 595
 Capuccio, Goffredo, 547, 550, 561
 Carpenter Brothers, 801
 Carr, James K., 39-41
 Carrillo family, 138, 143-149, 151-153, 156-157, 324, 408-409
 Carter, Jimmy, 41
 Castagnola, 233, 295
 Castagnola, Joe, 70
 Castagnola, Sonny, 253, 295
 Castanares, Gov., 17, 404
 Castillero, Andres, 7, 400, 408-412, 418, 697

Castle Air Force Base, 91
 Castro, Jose, 144, 148, 408
 Cate School (Santa Barbara County), 588
Celilo (vessel), 515
 Cermeño, Sebastian R., 11, 14, 47, 139, 401, 783
 Cerruti, Giovanni Battista, 423, 425, 440
 Chaffee, C. Fay, 791-792
 Chaney, Sarah, 871
 Channel Island National Park, 22, 39, 40-42, 83, 101, 104, 256, 288, 311, 320, 626, 628, 631, 634, 635, 663-664, 687, 688, 815, 817, 869, 871
 Channel Islands Aviation, 320, 633
 Channel Islands National Monument, 22, 33-35, 38-39, 41, 101, 102, 256, 794, 807, 812, 852, 853, 861-864
Chappo (vessel), 688
 Chase, A. W., 840
 Chase, Capt., 425, 541
Chehalis (vessel), 106
Chevrolet (vessel), 636
Chickasaw (vessel), 292
 Chiles, Vivienne Caire, 463, 544
 China Lake (U. S. Navy), 95, 98, 674, 676, 677, 861
 Chinese 22, 123, 140, 197, 234, 289, 292-294, 311, 389, 441, 468, 548, 577, 579, 643, 644, 688, 785, 787, 842, 845, 874
 Chiricahua Cattle Company, 181
 Christy Ranch, 400, 405, 413, 441, 463, 471, 472, 473, 475, 495-498, 496-497, 499, 510, 516, 517, 520, 522, 525, 526, 527, 528, 531, 532, 533, 538, 539, 545, 546, 554, 565, 569, 608, 613, 641, 647, 651, 652, 654, 658, 701, 712, 721, 743
 Chumash, 7, 9-18, 45-47, 117, 138-139, 143, 172, 256-257-258, 292, 307, 358, 399-405, 680-681, 683, 746, 783
Cinnamon Bear (vessel), 691
City of Sausalito (vessel), 690
 Clark, Ronilee, 871
 Cleland, Robert Glass, 637, 857, 859-860, 863-865, 872-877
 Clement, Auguste, 547
 Cleveland, Grover, 62
 Clinton, Bill, 633
 Clokey, Ira W., 683
 Clune, F. J. Jr., 816
 Coast Guard, U. S., 35, 37-38, 75, 81-83, 87-89, 91-92, 265, 267, 269, 271, 285, 287-288, 291, 305, 347, 365, 615, 666, 668-669, 689-692, 782, 797, 801-813, 819-821, 825, 827, 854
Coast Pilot, 59, 868
 Cobb, Frederick, 803
 Cockerell, Theodore D. A., 33
 Cole, Kenneth, 317
Colleen (vessel), 185
 Collins, Russ, 253
 Colman, Ronald, 591
Comet (vessel), 65, 106, 107, 129, 201
 Comstock, Dr. John, 110-111, 303-304, 318, 365, 685, 863
Convoy (vessel), 147, 289
 Cook, Capt. James, 18, 140, 403
 Cook, John, 39
 Cooke, Dorothy Irma Daniel 682
 Cooper, James G., 870
Coos Bay (vessel), 541
 Corsair, 690

Cortes, Hernan, 11
 Corvelein, Carl, 792
 Costanso, Miguel, 15, 402, 783
 Cota, Ed, 620
 Coursey, C. R., 791
 Coursey, Rex, 805
 Covarrubias, Nicholas, 62, 147
 Craig, Bruce, 630, 704, 714
 Craine, Red, 504, 510, 532, 537, 543-544, 553, 559, 575, 637, 640-641, 644-645, 647-648, 651-652, 657, 764
 Cranston, Alan, 41
 Crawford, Anna Vickers, 275
 Crawford, Jack, 254
 Crosby, Bing, 298
 Crow, Elizabeth, 318
 Crow, Judge Samuel E., 567, 571
Crown of England (vessel), 32, 290
Crusader (vessel), 148
 Cuate, 509, 593
Cuba (vessel), 83, 108-109, 587
 Cuevas, Diego, 193, 196, 199, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210, 211, 218, 221, 222, 223, 226-227, 229, 231, 232, 233, 234-235, 237, 240, 250-253, 260, 267, 271, 281-282, 284, 287-288, 292, 308, 310, 339, 342, 361, 366, 382
 Cuevas, Muñaso, 227, 232
 Cupit, Harry H., 852
 Curtis, Freddie, 111
 Cusani, Augustine, 792
 Cuyama Valley, 850
 Cuyler, Lt. Richard M., 28

 D. T. I. Sheep Company, 634
 D'Antonio, C. M., 871
 Daily, Marla, 122, 319, 641, 647, 663, 686, 693, 843
 Daisy Cave, 9-10, 45, 59, 104, 110, 112, 113
 Dall, William, 54, 109
 Damita, Lili, 591
 Dana, John F., 157
 Dana, William Goodwin, 20, 140
 Dana, William Henry, 146
 Daniell, W. F., 682
 Daniello, Len, 633
 Danielsens, Karen, 871
Dante Alighieri II (vessel), 872
 David Taylor Research Center, 677
 Davidson, George, 29-30, 49, 104, 159, 415, 482, 430-432, 435, 539
 Dawson, William Oberlin, 519-520
 De Cessac, Leon, 680-681, 683
 De Kirwan, Marc, 425, 429, 435
 De la Guerra de Ord, Augustine, 407
 De la Guerra y Noreiga, Jose, 144
 De la Guerra, Antonio Maria, 410
 De la Guerra, Francisco, 410
 De la Guerra, Joaquin, 155-157
 De la Torre, Isodoro, 412
 Dearing, Margaret, 683
Del Rio (vessel), 819-820
 DeLong, Robert, 102, 112, 127
 DeMille, Cecil B., 590
 Den, Nicholas, 147
 DeQuer School of Human Engineering, 852

 Derby, Al, 792
 Derrickson, George, 459, 480, 497
 Dibblee, Albert, 157
 Dibblee, Thomas, 315
 Diebenkorn, Richard, 639
Diligence (Coast Guard tender), 854
 Dittman, Carl, 53
 Dixon, William, 428
Dolphin IV (vessel), 691
Dora Bluhm (vessel), 290-291
Double Eagle (landing barge), 621
 Dowty, Karen Jones, 793
 Drost, Charles, 871
 Drury, Newton, 86, 664
 Ducazau, Arno, 75, 76, 110
 Duffield, Henry Jr., 639, 758
 Dufлот de Mofras, 15, 47, 407
 Dunkle, M. B., 111, 318, 685, 815-816, 863, 870
 Dunn & Company, 515
 Dunn, Joe, 625

Eagle (vessel), 689
 Eastman, Capt. E. A., 582
 Eastwood, Alice, 682
 Eaton, Ira, 108-109, 477-479, 541, 544, 575-590, 637, 688, 789, 851
 Eaton, Margaret Holden, 451, 477-479, 492, 536, 576-590
 Eaton, Vera, 590
 Edward R. Siple Company, 673
 Edwards, H. Arden, 303, 636
 Edwin L. Stanton Company, 636
 Ehorn, William, 38-41, 102, 256, 258-259, 320, 347, 814-815, 869
 Ehrenspeck, Helmut, 317
 Eisen, Gustav, 173, 290, 302, 318
 Eisenhower, Dwight, 94, 674
 Eissler, Fred, 627
Ella G (vessel), 290
 Elliot, E. E., sheep camp, 786, 787, 789, 792, 821, 829, 830
 Ellison, William Henry, 556
 Elmore, Francis, 870
Emperor (vessel), 872
 Empire Ranch (Arizona), 179-181, 183, 189, 220, 221, 224, 230
 Engle, Clair, 39-40
 Engelhardt, Fr. Zephyrin, 17
 Englund, Ulmar and Rae, 81
 Epling, Carl C., 318
 Epsilon Oil Company, 625
Equator (vessel), 819
 Erbeti, Carlo, 547
 Ericson, August, 579
 Erlandson, Jon, 9, 113, 311
 Ersepki, Charlie, 610, 611
 Espinosa, Jose, 428, 508-509
Eureka (vessel), 541
 Everhart, Gary, 40
 Evermann, Barton W., 870

 Fages, Pedro, 16, 403
 Fanucchi, Giovanni, 500
 Farnham, Thomas Jefferson, 47, 839

Farnum, William, 590
 Farrell, John R., 428, 431, 435
 Fenn, D. B., 871
 Fernald, Charles, 152-153, 412
 Ferrer, Bartolome, 12-13, 839
 Fetter, Giuseppe, 541
 Fewkes, J. Walter, 681-682
 Fiala, Theodore R., 547
 Figueroa, Jose, 144
 Finley, Richard, 91, 307
 Fischer, Margarita, 590
 Fitzgibbons, David, 55
 Fleming, Guy L., 318
 Flournoy, Frank, 486, 566, 567-571
Flyer (vessel), 585
 Forbes, Alexander, 409
 Forbes, Gordon, 582-583
 Forbes, William, 411
 Ford, Henry Chapman, 681
 Forney, Stehman and maps by, 31-32, 49, 53, 60, 122, 159-163, 198, 211, 215, 300-301, 317, 329, 359, 361, 364-366, 375, 376, 384, 388, 417, 427-437, 442, 451, 465, 495, 499, 525, 531, 538, 545, 679, 681, 722, 725, 752, 754, 757
 Franceschi, Francesco, 681
 Fraser, Allan G., 586
 Freeman, Charles, 428
 Freidenrich, David Jr., 571
 Fry, Clarence, 864
Fulton (vessel), 107

G W Prescott (vessel), 105
 Galbraith, Isaac, 19
 Gallagher, Thomas J., 423, 425, 440
 Garcia, Salvador, 152
 Gates, Carrol W., 181, 185
 General Motors/Mari-Pro, 678-679
 Geng-wu Liu, 317
 Genna, Fr, 448
 Gensoul, Adrien, 423, 425
George Billings (vessel), 873
Georgia (vessel), 691
 Gherini family, 8, 24, 253, 400, 493, 534-535, 573, 595-636, 640, 658, 663, 694, 704, 712
 Gherini Ranch, 256, 532, 595-636, 640, 648, 650, 652, 669, 695-700
 Gherini, Ambrose, 486, 534, 560, 562, 569, 571-572, 594, 595-605, 596, 613, 615, 617, 618, 684, 695, 713
 Gherini, Francis, 248, 595, 605, 613, 615, 620, 624, 626, 629, 631-634
 Gherini, Inez, 634
 Gherini, John, 556, 603, 617, 623, 625, 627, 629, 632
 Gherini, Maria Rossi, 443, 451, 453, 594, 595-597, 596, 606, 609, 635, 636, 695, 737
 Gherini, Pier, 465, 467, 546, 595, 597, 601, 605, 613, 615, 617, 618, 620, 626, 632, 712
 Gherini, Thomas, 632, 714
 Girvan, William, 608, 611, 713
 Glassow, Michael, 42, 302, 310, 312, 686, 783
 Glidden, Ralph, 110
Goldenhorn (vessel), 32, 289-290
 Goleta (Santa Barbara County), 27, 45, 158, 167, 326, 633, 678-679, 700

Goliah (vessel), 156
 Goodyear, W. A., 489
 Grant, Adele Lewis, 682
 Gray, David, 91, 254
 Green, Ted, 538
 Greene, E. L., 55
 Greene, Edward L., 681
 Greene, Wallace, 84-85
 Greenwell, William E. and maps by, 29-31, 49, 122, 159-160, 329, 361, 414-417, 422, 428, 432, 435, 436, 480, 545, 752, 768, 785
 Greenwood, Roberta, 112, 121, 125, 816, 830, 874
 Griffin, John, 441
 Griggs, Joe, 613, 621
 Gunderson, Charley, 618, 620
Gussie M (vessel), 582
 Guthrie, Daniel, 319

 Hageras, Sam, 618
 Haise, George, 226, 303
 Halleck, Peachy and Billings, 151, 409
 Halvorson, William, 871
 Hammond, George, 76, 76, 77, 87, 110, 122, 130
 Hancock, Allan, 303, 685-686, 870
 Hansen, Frank, 537, 592
 Hanson, Capt. Charles, 585
 Harford, W. G. W., 301
 Harrington, J. P., 10, 46, 783
 Hartmann, Glenna, 869
Hassler (vessel), 428
 Hayakawa, Sen. S. I., 256
 Headley, Richard, 584
 Heizer, Robert F., 138, 302
 Helen, Robert R., 591
Helene (vessel), 688
 Helfrich, Rick, 253
 Hemphill, Henry, 870
 Henne, Chris, 319, 815
 Henshaw, Henry W., 680
Hermes (vessel), 75
 Herrera, Antonio, 46
 Herrera, Frances S. "Chunie", 257
 Hewatt, Dr. Willis, 684
 Hill, Mike, 103
 Hillinger, Charles, 281, 620, 643, 650, 661, 664, 674-675, 781, 797, 805, 868
 Hillsborough, California, 595
 Hochberg, F. G., 817
 Hochberg, Mary, 686, 870
Hodge (sheep boat), 253, 615, 616
 Hoffmann, Ralph, 44, 110, 318, 682
 Hogstrom, K. I., 247
 Holder, Charles Frederick, 1, 135, 170, 295, 397, 449-450, 495, 506, 508, 510, 585, 682, 782, 787-788
 Holland, Francis R., 38, 101, 788, 868
 Holland, J. C., 108
 Hollister Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 326, 699
 Hollister, W. W., 157
Homer (vessel), 541
 Horizons West/Guided Travel Adventures, 633
 Howell, John Thomas, 682
 Howland, J. G., 842-843

Hueneme Light (Ventura County), 543
 Hueneme Sport Fisheries, Inc., 813
 Hueneme, Port/Point (Ventura County), 32, 70, 94, 191, 217, 225, 245-247, 251, 272, 275, 278, 281, 615, 618, 643, 657, 670, 690, 782, 797, 803, 805, 807, 813
 Huerra, Fidel, 621-622
 Huffman, William, 658
 Humble Oil Company, 103, 625
Humboldt (vessel), 515
 Hundley, Jack, 625, 658, 659
 Hunt, Hayden, 221, 226, 231, 237, 282
 Huntington, Collis, 851
 Hurst, Paul, 590
 Huse, Brian, 261
 Huse, Charles, 149, 153, 155
 Hyder family, 8, 22, 837, 841, 843-850, 844, 856, 858, 866, 869, 875, 877
 Hyder, Alvin, 613, 841, 843-850, 851
 Hyder, Clarence, 845
 Hyder, Cleve, 844, 846, 848, 876
 Hyder, Denton O. "Buster", 835, 841, 843-850, 869, 877
 Hyder, Nora, 843, 869

 Imhoff, John E., 643, 650
Imperial (vessel), 690
International I (vessel), 688
Irene (vessel), 579
 Irvine Ranch (Orange County), 325, 699
Isabella (vessel), 105
 Island Adventures, 625, 629, 631, 633-634, 706, 711, 714
Island Packer (vessel), 820
 Island Packers, 39, 320, 630-631, 658, 814-815
 Iwerks, John, 869

J M Colman (vessel), 65, 106
 Jalama Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 192
 Jalauehu, Francisco, 405
Jana Dawn (vessel), 692
Jane L Stanford (vessel), 199, 291
 Jepson, Willis, 682
 Jergensen, Carl, 841
 Jesus Maria Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 221-222
Joan (vessel), 692
 Johnson, Andrew, 785
 Johnson, Bert, 841
 Johnson, Charles, 792, 851
 Johnson, Donald L., 112-113
 Johnson, Dr. John R., 10, 311, 687
 Johnson, J. M., 791
 Johnson, P. C., 429, 437
 Johnson, William M., 30, 428-429, 431-432, 768
 Jones, John C., 146-157, 148, 324
 Jones, Marcus E., 682
 Jones, Philip Mills, 138, 302, 317
 Jones, William Carey, 151
 Journeay, Ben, 618
 Joyaux, J. B., 166, 425, 431, 435, 440, 441, 463, 465, 508, 515, 536, 546
Judith (Coast Guard cutter), 820
 Junak, Steve, 318, 319, 686, 817, 870-871
 Justinian Caire Company, 439, 557, 559, 561

 K (Martinette Kinsell), 171-172
 Kaigani hunters, 142, 148
 Kaiser Industries, 255
 Kanaka, 20, 140-142, 148-149, 152, 406
 Kanakoff, George, 318-319, 685-686, 815, 870
Kate and Anna (vessel), 64
 Kelley, H. Roy, 645, 698
 Kellogg, Albert, 679
 Kelly, William C. Jr., 257
 Kelsey, Harry, 11-13
 Kennett, Douglas J., 113, 311, 687
 Kennett, William E., 315
 Kew, William S. W., 313, 683
 King, George H., 633
 Kings Canyon National Park, 35, 38, 813, 868
Kinkajou (vessel), 690
 Kinney, Abbott, 851
 Kinsell, Martinette, 682
 Kirby, J. M., 683
 Knoche, Herman, 682
 Kritzman, George, 96
 Krug, Charles, 500
 Kuchel, Thomas, 40

 La Posesion, 12-13, 46
 La Purisima, 16, 158, 404
 La Societe.. (French Bank), 423, 425, 440
Labor (vessel), 818
 Lagomarsino, Richard A., 658
 Lagomarsino, Robert, 41, 256-257, 632
 Laguna Ranch (Los Angeles County), 181
 Lang, H. A., 801
 Lang, Sidney, 795
 Larco Fish Company, 54, 295, 582, 613, 618, 793
 Larco, Eugenio "Jenny", 477, 575-576, 578
 Larco, Nicolas, 423, 425, 440
 Larsen, Shorty, 585
 Laughrin, Dr. Lyndal, 659-660, 663, 686, 768
 Laurabee, Clarence, 589
 Lausten, Ralph, 634
Leader (vessel), 104-105
 LeConte, Joseph, 625
 LeDreau, Raymond "Frenchy", 790, 792, 793-797, 794, 812-813, 816, 830
 LeFever, Arthur, 251
 Lefranc, Charles, 500
 Lester family (San Miguel Island), 22, 50, 54, 64, 69, 72, 73-83, 85, 87, 97, 110, 111, 118, 121, 122, 125, 126-127, 130
 Leuzarder, J. M., 54
 Lewis, Jewel, 318
 Libby, Clarence, 537
Liberty (vessel), 105
 Librado, Fernando, 46, 783
Life Magazine, 82
 Light, Allen (Black Steward), 141-142
 Lighthouses, Bureau of/U. S. Lighthouse Service, 33-34, 69, 72, 83, 285, 288, 787-788, 791-805, 839-843, 851-856, 861, 863, 877
 Lima, James, 105-106, 109, 113, 129, 130, 311, 688, 817, 819, 872
 Lindwall, Paul R., 251

Linton, C. B., 841
Lion (vessel), 689
 Lippman, M. W., 801-803
 Lipps, J. H., 816
 Lockwood, Harold, 590
 Loew, Oscar, 680
 Lompoc (Santa Barbara County), 77, 156, 157, 192, 283, 513, 522, 577
 Lompoc Air Force Station, 283
 London, Jack, 590
 Long, Wayne, 298
 Lopez family (Santa Rosa Island), 207, 229, 231, 237
 Los Alamos (Santa Barbara County), 421
Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, 253
 Los Angeles Museum Channel Islands Biological Survey, 110-112, 213, 303-304, 318-319, 685-686, 816-817, 863-864, 870
Los Angeles Times, 40, 61, 81, 106, 281, 290, 302, 637, 643, 661, 664, 674-675, 813, 868
 Los Angeles, city and county, 3, 23, 30, 32, 35, 61, 62, 66, 68, 69, 70, 77, 79, 85, 89, 105, 145, 154, 157, 178-181, 183, 185, 187, 191, 216, 220, 221, 222, 223, 234, 236, 241, 242, 264, 265, 267, 283, 285, 287-288, 299, 315, 325, 408, 413, 447, 502, 513, 515, 565, 573, 576, 581, 587, 601, 613, 615, 626, 636, 637, 643, 645, 666, 668, 671, 673, 682, 685, 694, 697, 747, 797, 801, 819, 836, 852-854, 864, 872
Louise D (vessel), 819-820
Louise Ray (vessel), 819
 Lucero, Andy, 620
 Lunden, Ole, 805
 Lux, Fred, 475

Magic (vessel), 290
 Mahe, Gustave, 423, 425, 440
 Main Ranch (Santa Cruz Island), 400, 405, 413, 414, 415, 420-422, 435, 440-445, 444, 449-450, 451, 453, 459, 461, 463, 465, 467-469, 471-473, 476, 479-480, 492, 493, 495, 498, 499-501, 504, 509-511, 512, 519 et seq., 547, 553, 556, 565, 569, 573, 585, 587, 590, 625, 636, 641, 644, 645-648, 650, 651, 652, 654, 659, 660, 662, 665, 666, 668, 669, 681, 684, 685, 694, 701, 703, 705, 717, 720, 721, 728, 739, 747, 750, 752, 759, 768
 Malibu (Los Angeles County), 9, 401
Mandalay (vessel), 106
 Manila Galleons, 14, 104
 March Air Force Base, 90
Maria Ester (vessel), 407
 Marines, U.S., 84-86, 96, 98, 112, 125
 Marquez, Sergio, 237
 Martin, Camilo, 423
 Martin, Lloyd, 112
 Mason, Herbert L., 683
 Mather, Stephen, 572
 Matthews, E. O., 681
 Mauri, Felix, 605
 Maxwell, Howard, 674
 May, Cliff, 645
 Maynard, Lon, 231
 McCluskey, Reed, 99
 McEachern, Kathryn, 871

McElrath, Clifford, 449, 459, 461, 484, 485-486, 503, 506, 518-520, 522, 524, 526, 527, 531, 544, 547, 552-556, 563, 571, 574, 578, 585, 590, 593, 597, 682
 McGinness, Ilda Gherini, 595, 631, 632
 McGuire, George, 582
 McKusick, Marshall B., 816
 McLellan, Arthur M., 852
 McMinn, Howard, 683
 McMurray, Orrin Kip, 562
 McPherson, James K., 870
 Meadows, Don, 111, 213, 303-304, 318, 685, 785, 792, 815, 840, 843
 Mecham, F. A., 507
 Meighan, Clement W., 816
 Mendoza, Viceroy, 11
 Merriam, John C., 86
 Merry, Faul & Company, 515
 Mesagner, Louis de, 787
 Metzger, Jacob, 154
 Meyer, T. Lemmen, 423, 425
 Micheltorena, Manuel, 144, 147, 151
Mildred E (vessel), 185, 241
 Miller & Lux, 325, 523
 Miller, Eliza More, 175, 177-178
 Miller, Lt. John, 691
 Miller, Walter, 584
 Mills brothers (San Miguel Island), 51, 53-55, 57, 59, 64, 117-118
 Mills, Alex, 185, 299
 Miratti, Francesco, 502-503
 Mission 66 (NPS), 39, 814
 Mohrhardt, P. F., 54
 Mondran, 413, 415, 417, 436, 467, 480
 Moore, J. R., 68-69
 Moran, Reid, 319
 More family, 7, 25, 138, 154, 156-178, 187, 201, 205-208, 212, 215, 263, 298-299, 301, 323-324, 355, 380, 426
 More, Alexander P., 156-159, 167-177, 168, 242, 323, 325, 328-330, 440, 541
 More, Eleanor H., 175
 More, Frank, 174
 More, H. Clifford, 177-178
 More, Henry H., 157-159, 164, 166-167
 More, John F., 158, 167, 173, 175
 More, T. Wallace, 154-157, 198, 412-413
 More's Landing (Goleta), 158, 167
 Morgan, Frank, A. 315
 Morgan, Ron, 118, 122, 125, 843
 Morris, Al and Claude, 244-247
 Morris, Don, 105-106, 109, 112-113, 115, 129, 130, 311, 353, 687, 688, 817-819, 872
 Morris, Susan, 312
 Moullet, Jules, 546, 550, 768
 Muller, Cornelius, 319
 Muller, William, 243
 Mullett, James, 582
 Munz, Philip A., 318, 683

N B (vessel), 106
N L Drew (vessel), 167
 N. F. Gehl Packing Company, 515
 Naftzger, Clara Vickers, 275

Naftzger, Ted, 135, 220
NAMTC (vessel), 94-95
Natco (sheep boat), 613-615
 National Park Service, 22, 33-34, 38-42, 86, 95, 99-104, 107, 112-113, 115, 121, 122, 137, 197, 198, 208, 211, 212, 213, 227, 232, 241, 254, 256-259, 262-263, 284-285, 288, 295, 297, 319-323, 345, 349, 356, 359, 361, 379, 399, 400, 534-535, 572-573, 626-627, 631-635, 661, 663-665, 687, 701, 705, 714, 741, 747, 788, 792, 793, 795, 807, 812-813, 816, 854, 855, 861, 863, 865, 868, 870-871, 873, 874, 875
 National Parks and Conservation Association, 261
 National Register of Historic Places, 41-42, 84, 113, 127, 129, 130, 284, 322, 323, 329, 349, 365, 390, 694, 695-696, 701, 711, 717, 770, 818, 821, 871, 874
 National Trading Company, 597-598, 601, 605, 607, 615, 617, 618
 Nature Conservancy (see *The Nature Conservancy*)
Navidad (vessel), 13
 Navy, U. S., 3, 7, 28-29, 33, 35, 40-41, 54, 77, 79, 81, 83-84, 86-88, 90-104, 112, 118, 121, 123, 127, 138, 210, 211, 234, 247-249, 254, 260, 269, 272-274, 277-279, 287-288, 335, 353, 358, 360, 389, 534, 615, 618, 648, 652, 655-657, 666-679, 691, 737, 740, 746, 750, 751-753, 759, 760, 762, 769, 793, 797, 805, 807, 809, 811-812, 854-861, 877
 Negrete, Juan, 620
Nellie (vessel), 688
 New Almaden Quicksilver Mine, 409, 412, 418
New York Times, 426, 626
 Newhall, Margaret Russell (Vail), 180
 Newmark, Harris, 23-24, 243, 413
 Nichols, J., 871
 Nichols, W. I., 57
 Nidever, Frank, 107, 577, 689
 Nidever, George (younger), 516, 543, 577-578
 Nidever, George, 19, 31, 50-53, 51, 54, 57, 82, 101, 111, 117, 140-143, 148, 173, 304, 388, 406, 689, 787
 Nidever, Jake, 60, 577
Nora and *Nora II* (sheep boats), 613, 843, 846, 847, 850
 Norland, Elizabeth Crow, 683
 Northern Arizona University, 311

 OARRS, 633
 Ogden, Adele, 18-19
OK (vessel), 689
 Olivari, Pietro (Pete), 543-544, 547, 620, 638, 643, 652
 Olmsted, Frederick Law, 572
 Olson, Ronald L., 683
Onward (vessel), 225, 237, 242, 248
 Opfel, Oscar, 590
 Opplé, Kenny, 253
 Orcutt, George, 167
 Orcutt, Martha, 167, 175, 178
 Ord, Capt. E. O. C., 28-30, 785, 839
 Ord, Pacificus, 151
 Orr, Phil C., 8-9, 92, 138, 210, 245, 282, 303, 305-310, 306, 312, 315-316, 354, 365, 373, 387, 686, 816, 867, 871
 Ortega, Estevan, 148
 Otto, Henry, 590
 Outhwaite, Leonard, 683
Overland Monthly, 19, 171, 294
 Overton, Georgia, 559
 Oviatt, John, 620

 Ovingston, Earle, 595, 617, 713, 733
 Owens, Duane, 629-630, 633, 704-706
 Owens, Jaret, 624, 629-630, 714
 Oxnard (Ventura County), 39, 70, 82, 620, 629, 633, 645, 789, 813

 Pacific Missile Range, predecessors and successors, 84, 93-95, 100-101, 125, 264, 273, 666, 669-678, 694, 749, 781, 811-813
 Pacific Wool Growing Company, 53-55
 Paddle Sports, 633
 Paez de Castro, Juan, 13, 46-47, 138
 Palou, Fr. Francisco, 402
 Parkes, Hugh, 864
 Parsons-Aerojet Company, 671
 Pasich, Ed, 620
Patrick (vessel), 873
 Pauba Ranch (Riverside County), 181, 220, 221, 222, 226, 255, 299
Pearl (vessel), 818
Pectan (vessel), 108
Peerless (schooner), 576
 Pelican Bay Camp/Resort, 538, 574, 585, 586-590, 588, 789
 Pepper, Frank, 217, 223, 297
 Perini, A., 472, 475, 489, 491
 Perla, Jim, 603
 Petaluma (Sonoma County), 507
 Petersen, David, 620, 621
 Petersen, Fred, 792
 Petersen, Michel Ravenscroft, 621-625, 693
 Petersen, William "Pete", 616, 621-625, 629-630, 692-693, 704
 Peterson, David (1902), 579
 Petroleum Helicopters, 633
 Pfaffly, Lt. D. H., 674-675
 Philbrick, Ralph, 103, 319, 686, 817, 836-837, 843, 870-871
 Philip R. Park, Inc., 864
 Pico, Juan Estevan, 405
 Pico, Pio, 409
 Piehl, Martin A., 870
 Pierce, Benjamin, 840
 Pierce, Franklin, 785
 Pinart, Alphonse, 680
Pinocchio (vessel), 820
Pioneer (vessel), 792
 Point Arena, 13
 Point Conception, 3, 4, 12, 21, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 44, 49, 83, 89, 105, 107, 269, 282, 283, 291, 326, 699, 853
 Point Mugu, 12, 89, 94-95, 100, 123, 272-273, 277, 656, 657, 670-677, 799, 807, 809-812, 871
 Point Reyes (Marin County), 13, 825
 Point Reyes National Seashore, 40
 Pollard, Harry, 590
 Portolá, 15, 402, 783, 839
 Potter, Milo, 586
 Powell, James, 148
 Powers, Blaine, 643, 646, 747
 Powers, John H., 609, 713
 Prasil, Richard, 867
 Prescott, James B., 241, 543, 550
Pride (vessel), 64

Prince de Joinville (vessel), 149
 Prince Island, 31, 44, 67, 79, 83, 86, 91, 93, 102-104, 111
 Prisoners Harbor, 398, 402, 405, 407, 412, 413, 415, 417, 422, 424, 425, 427, 428, 430, 432, 435, 441, 442, 445, 449, 450-463, 452, 458, 460, 477, 484, 485, 493, 502, 503, 504, 507-511, 513-514, 519, 521, 525, 529-530, 533-534, 535, 537, 538, 539, 542, 545, 550, 552, 553, 555, 564, 569, 571, 572, 575, 577, 585, 591, 626, 641, 643, 647, 648-649, 652, 654, 655-658, 659, 663, 667, 671-673, 675, 684, 685-686, 691, 695, 696, 721, 737-746, 738, 742, 744, 752, 753, 755, 757, 758, 759-760, 762, 769, 769, 771

Queen (vessel), 541
 Quinteros, Santiago, 173-174, 174, 388

Raffour House (Santa Barbara), 502
 Rancho del Norte, 642, 643, 645-646, 649, 650, 663, 673, 695, 696, 698, 700, 746-749, 748, 754, 758, 760, 762, 763, 764, 768, 769, 771
 Rancho Rambouillet, 73-81
 RAND Corporation, 645
 Rand, W. C., 683
 Rawlins family, 63-64
 Ray, Paul, 253
 Raymond, Walter, 586
 Reichlen, Henry, 680
 Reis, Elena, 632
Republic (vessel), 818
 Reseigh, John 787
Restless (schooner) 63, 582
 Revel, Ulrico, 547
 Revello, Giovanni, 543
 Reynolds, Cal, 857-859, 865-866
 Reynolds, Steven, 156
 Rhodes, Supt. H. W., 33, 69, 72, 826-287, 789, 791-792, 799, 805, 851-852, 855-856
 Rice, Edward, 305-307
 Richardson's Rock, 14, 15, 32, 47, 66, 83-84, 107
 Rick, Torben, 311, 687
 Ricker, Donald, 870
 Ringrose, Marie Gherini, 595, 631, 632
 Robbins, Thomas (Tomas), 147
 Robinson, Alfred, 20, 149, 152, 154
 Robinson, Donald, 38-39, 807, 809
 Rock Springs Land & Cattle Company (Mojave Desert), 325
 Rogers & Co. (Rogers Brothers), 21, 105, 106, 289, 582
 Rogers, David Banks, 302, 305, 573, 683, 815
 Rogers, Howard, 232
 Rogers, Jimmy, 192
 Rogers, Will, 192
 Roosevelt, Franklin, 33, 79, 86, 265
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 841, 852
 Roripaugh, Louis, 222, 226, 298
 Rossi, Amelie Caire, 546, 560, 561-563
 Rossi, Edmund, 560, 561-563, 567, 569, 571
 Rossi, P. C., 546, 557, 560, 561
 Roth Company, 799
 Roth, I. C., 799
 Rothrock, Dr. Joseph T., 680
 Rothrock, J. T., 427
 Rowntree, Gertrude Lester, 682

Rozaire, Charles, 95-96, 104, 111, 816, 871
 Ruggles, E. G., 789
 Russell, George Vernon, 626
 Russell, Mr. and Mrs. John, 65, 70-72
 Russian River, 13

Sacramento Daily Union, 420
 Sam Wong, 643
San Antonio, 402
San Buenaventura (sloop), 687
 San Buenaventura, 16-18, 78, 144, 40-405, 681, 783
 San Clemente Island, 3, 23, 28, 30, 69, 87, 88, 90, 94, 96, 98, 100, 186, 670, 855
San Diego (Daily) Union, 88, 293
 San Diego, city and county, 3, 12, 28, 29, 30, 38-39, 88, 90, 144, 179, 181, 221, 244, 245, 248, 264, 287, 293, 636, 666, 843, 857-859, 868
 San Fernando Rey Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 26, 326, 699
San Francisco [Morning] Call, 57, 66, 168
San Francisco Examiner, 60
 San Francisco, city and bay, 5, 13, 20, 23, 32, 41, 50, 51, 53, 54, 57, 59, 61, 68, 84, 106, 108, 109, 110, 140, 151, 164, 167, 170, 175, 177, 179, 187, 244, 246, 248, 285, 289, 294, 334, 347, 406, 410, 411, 412, 418, 419, 423, 425, 427, 429, 430, 439-440, 446, 448, 449, 450, 459, 485, 502, 503, 513, 515, 519, 524, 526, 538, 543, 546, 551, 557, 561-563, 565, 567, 588, 595, 597, 609, 613, 663, 666, 680, 694, 697, 713, 740, 785, 787, 793, 795, 799, 817, 818, 843, 852, 853, 857, 860, 864
San Giuseppe (vessel), 819
 San Julian Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 156, 513, 522
 San Luis Obispo, 9, 13, 401, 681
 San Miguel Island, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12-15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43-134, 136, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 160, 169, 177, 242, 245, 247, 254, 256, 289, 303, 406, 428, 429, 577, 587, 667, 670, 674, 685, 688, 783, 787, 812, 855
 San Miguel Island Company, 62, 66
 San Nicolas Island, 3, 28, 30, 31, 53, 71, 87, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 102, 141, 143, 186, 221, 245, 273, 670, 671, 673-674, 680, 685, 811, 812, 842-843, 850, 855
 San Pedro, city and harbor, 3, 12, 14, 30-32, 36, 87, 88, 107, 108, 184, 185, 242-248, 278, 289, 290, 291, 408, 459, 515, 543, 544, 545, 565, 566, 567, 579, 666, 689, 690, 693, 799, 801, 807, 819, 843, 850, 857, 859, 864
 Sands, George and Effie, 845
 Sanger, Arthur, 233, 296-297, 303
 Santa Barbara (California), 4, 16, 20, 22, 30, 38, 50, 53, 57, 59, 62, 63, 66, 70, 77, 82, 89, 97, 105-106, 108-109, 136, 138, 140, 143, 144-145, 147, 148, 149, 152, 154, 155, 157, 158, 160, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 173, 174, 185, 191, 205, 208, 219, 220, 222-223, 225, 234, 236, 241, 242, 244, 246, 247, 251, 256, 264, 289, 290, 291, 293, 294, 295, 307, 316, 320, 331, 342, 343, 355, 405, 407, 409, 411-412, 413, 418, 423, 426, 427, 428, 429, 440, 449, 455, 457, 459, 469, 486, 502, 503, 504, 507, 509, 513, 515-517, 519, 522, 537, 541, 543-544, 546, 556, 557, 565-566, 571, 574, 576, 578, 579, 582, 586, 587, 588, 591-592, 595, 601, 603, 613, 615, 617, 618, 620, 623, 643, 657, 663, 666, 681, 687, 688, 689, 691, 694, 783, 787, 789, 813, 818, 857, 869

Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, 319, 686, 687, 755, 817, 870, 871
 Santa Barbara Channel, 3, 12, 14-16, 23, 32, 85, 105, 117, 139, 255, 264, 317, 403, 518, 535, 539, 625, 628, 762, 783, 797, 799, 813, 817, 853
 Santa Barbara County, 25-28, 62, 70, 75, 101, 173, 221, 316, 323-328, 410, 420, 421, 567, 571, 582, 627-628, 644, 653, 695, 697-700, 737, 836, 839, 850
 Santa Barbara County Master Plan, 626
Santa Barbara Daily Press, 167
Santa Barbara Daily Press, 167
 Santa Barbara Gazette, 688
 Santa Barbara Historical Society, 661, 787
 Santa Barbara Island, 3, 5, 8, 10, 14-15, 19-22, 29-32, 33-38, 40-41, 87-88, 102, 256, 264, 613, 666, 667, 783, 785, 835-880
 Santa Barbara Mission, 17-18, 148, 404-405
Santa Barbara Morning Press, 106, 185, 186, 217, 241
Santa Barbara Morning Press, 62, 108, 185, 186, 217, 241
 Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 8, 75, 92, 110, 209, 254, 302, 305, 309, 311, 318, 319, 354, 573, 682-684, 686, 687, 815-816, 867, 870-871
Santa Barbara News Press, 40, 79, 225, 297, 636
Santa Barbara Post, 420
 Santa Barbara Soil Conservation District, 654
 Santa Catalina Island, 3, 12, 13, 14, 23, 28, 30, 31, 47, 71, 82, 87, 181, 184, 221, 224, 243, 245, 249, 253, 294, 295, 408, 450, 566, 572, 573, 679, 682, 758, 836, 842, 849, 870, 872
Santa Cruz (schooner), 167, 245, 249, 252, 304, 451, 477, 484, 502, 503, 508, 509, 513, 515, 516, 516, 519, 531, 540, 541-545, 557, 564, 575, 578, 581, 589, 590, 640, 643, 656, 657-658, 691, 695
 Santa Cruz Island, 3, 4, 5, 7-9, 10, 12-18, 22, 23-24, 25-27, 28, 30-31, 32, 33, 40-41, 42, 44, 45, 47, 72, 87, 94, 95, 101, 109, 136, 138, 139, 141, 160, 163, 166, 169-170, 184, 197, 215, 245, 247, 248, 249, 252-253, 256-257, 273, 289, 295, 301, 324, 325, 326, 331, 384, 397-780, 782, 783, 788, 789, 811, 815, 817, 820, 839, 849, 851
 Santa Cruz Island Company, 423-426, 429, 435, 439-441, 450, 454, 455, 459, 465, 466, 469, 473, 476, 480, 483, 484, 489, 491, 492, 493, 495, 497, 498, 502, 503, 505, 507, 508, 511, 515, 517, 521, 522, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 531, 533, 535, 536, 539, 541, 543, 545, 546, 557, 559-563, 537, 577, 578, 581, 584, 585, 586, 588, 591, 592, 599, 636, 639, 657, 658, 659, 661, 662, 678, 680, 683, 694, 701, 709, 711, 715, 720, 729, 730, 735, 739, 740, 741, 759, 768
 Santa Cruz Island Exploration Company, 621
 Santa Cruz Island Foundation, 281, 357, 633, 646, 663, 665, 687, 743, 747, 749, 764, 869
 Santa Cruz Island Hunt Club, 658, 746
 Santa Ines/Ynez (Santa Barbara County), 16, 405
 Santa Monica Mountains National Park, 41
 Santa Monica Mountains/Range, 4, 5, 8-9
 Santa Monica, city/bay, 12, 245, 290, 645, 783, 851
Santa Rosa (schooner), 106, 167, 168, 171, 177, 242, 541, 557
Santa Rosa Island (schooner), 185, 186, 241, 242, 541, 557
 Santa Rosa Island, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8-9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 25-27, 28-32, 40-41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 69, 75, 77, 87, 90, 93, 94, 100, 101, 105, 108, 117, 135-392, 398, 401, 405, 406, 408, 413, 426, 428, 429, 432, 440, 459, 506, 515, 541, 577, 613, 625, 628, 631, 632, 637, 641, 666, 671, 681, 683, 685, 686, 688, 690-691, 699, 700, 783, 816
 Santa Rosa Island Air Force Station, Johnson's Lee, 195, 198, 199, 201, 205, 208, 218, 260, 264-265, 274-285, 276, 280, 292, 308, 309, 310, 316, 320, 342, 343, 348-349, 355, 363, 364, 367, 389
 Santa Rosa Island Company, 175, 177-178
 Santa Rosa Ranch (Riverside County), 181, 220, 221, 255
 Santa Ynez Valley, 27, 187, 326, 700
 Santarosae, 5, 8, 311
 Scammon, Charles, 21
Schofield (vessel), 269
 Schultz, William "Dutch", 578
 Schumacher, Paul, 54, 109, 301, 679-681
 Schumacher, Paul J. (NPS), 871
 Scorpion Harbor/Anchorage/Ranch, 398, 405, 413, 415, 417, 432, 436, 441, 442, 463, 465-486, 487, 489, 491, 492, 493, 497, 499, 507, 510, 515, 517, 519, 520, 522, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 533, 534, 537, 538, 539, 541, 544, 545, 546, 552, 555, 556, 565, 569, 571, 572, 578, 595-635, 596, 649, 683, 684, 687, 689, 692, 693, 696, 698, 701-711, 712, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 720-723, 725-730, 732, 734, 735-736, 770
 Scott, Louis 271, 275, 307, 316, 351, 383
 Scoyen, E. T., 34-36, 38-39, 795, 812-813, 860, 863, 868
Sea Lion (sloop), 688
Sea Wolf (vessel), 541
 Seaboard Stone & Construction Company, 592
 Seastrand, Andrea, 632-633
Senator (vessel), 426
 Sequoia National Park, 34-35, 38, 812-813, 863, 864, 868
 Serra, Junipero, 16, 144
 Sespe Rancho (Ventura County), 145, 157, 158
 Setchell, W. A., 36
 Setnicka, Tim, 261
Shamrock (vessel), 820
 Shaver, C. Mack, 260
 Shaw, James Barron, 23, 25, 410-413, 415, 418, 420-421, 424, 425, 435, 465, 508, 539, 634, 694, 697, 698, 745
 Sheldon, Harry, 523
 Sherman & Ealand, 185, 515
 Shinn, Charles Howard, 22
 Shrader, John 303
Sierra (vessel), 692
 Sierra Club, 627
 Sierra, Juan, 207
 Signal Oil Company, 198, 210, 307, 315-317, 355, 361, 364, 365
 Sill, Daniel, 140-141
 Sinton & Brown Ranch (Santa Barbara County), 191
 Smith, C. W., 195, 201, 205, 209-211, 212, 217, 221, 223-226, 224, 230, 234, 235, 242, 248, 287, 289, 296, 303, 304, 313, 359, 360, 363, 459
 Smith, Charlie, 225, 229, 235, 237
 Smith, Clifton, 112, 319, 686
 Smith, E. K., 203, 205, 206, 209, 211, 225-226, 233, 234, 235, 236-237, 248, 260, 295, 296, 331, 334, 339
 Smith, Jeddiah, 19
 Smithsonian Institution, 110, 301, 679-681
 Smugglers Cove/Ranch, 398, 405, 406, 417, 430, 436, 459, 461, 463, 467, 468, 471, 472, 473, 475, 476, 480, 486, 487-492, 497, 499, 522, 524, 525, 533, 534-535, 538, 544, 545,

546, 551, 564, 569, 577, 579, 595, 597, 598, 599, 606, 607,
 609-611, 613, 617, 621, 625, 626, 627, 629, 631-633, 635,
 680, 683, 684, 687, 689, 691, 692, 696, 698, 703, 711-715,
 717, 719-736, 746, 770
 Snodgrass, Robert E., 870
 Snyder, William, 585
 Soil Conservation Service, 259, 652
Sophia (vessel), 149
 South Point Lighthouse, 42, 279, 285-288, 292, 347-348,
 365, 390
 Southern California Bight, 836
Southerner (steamer), 818
 Southwest Museum, 72, 683
 Southwind Kayak Center, 633
 Spaulding, Albert C., 686
 Spencer, Mary Fisk, 318
Spirit of America (vessel), 692
 Sprong, Russell, 318, 685
SS Absaroka (vessel), 856
SS Golden Sun (vessel), 803
SS Lightburne (vessel), 803
SS Vellron (vessel), 813
 Stafford, Barbara and Jennifer, 81
 Stager, Kenneth, 319
 Standard Oil of California, 103, 206, 209, 212, 213, 279,
 313-314, 317, 350, 355, 360, 383, 391, 599, 630, 637
 Stanton Axle Works, 636
 Stanton family, 8, 25, 400, 521, 536, 547, 620, 636-679,
 684-686, 694
 Stanton Oil Company, 636, 659
 Stanton, Dr. Carey, 26, 41, 103, 252-253, 449, 498, 539,
 625, 631, 638, 639-665, 642, 660, 667-669, 675-676, 681,
 684, 686, 741, 747, 768
 Stanton, Edwin, 26, 40, 215, 245, 247, 249, 545, 573, 589,
 631, 636-659, 638, 664, 665, 667-669, 671-672, 684, 691,
 694, 695, 699-700, 740, 742, 747, 751, 760, 763
 Stanton, Edwin III, 661
 Stanton, Edwin Jr., 638, 639
 Stanton, Evelyn, 636-638, 638, 644, 661, 667, 672, 684
Star of Freedom (vessel), 164, 166, 427, 431, 440, 515, 541,
 680
 Stearns Wharf (Santa Barbara), 82, 156, 246, 504, 509, 541,
 544, 557, 582, 615, 640
 Stearns, Abel, 153-156, 159
 Stearns, John P., 355
 Stearns, R. E. C., 681
 Steen, Ivor, 792
 Stevens, James, 148
 Stock, Dr. Chester, 302
 Storke, C. A., 175
 Storke, Charles, 158-159
 Storke, Thomas, 40, 174, 298, 787
 Storke, Yda Addis, 170-171
 Strategic Air Command, 91
 Stuart, H. H., 412
 Sumner, E. Lowell, 34-36, 37, 101-102, 794-795, 812-819,
 863-867, 870
Surprise (vessel), 105-106
 Swain, Alonson, 480, 506-507, 513, 518, 525-527, 528-529,
 537, 539, 547, 553, 555, 578, 589, 592, 607, 608, 611, 682,
 689, 711, 717, 726, 730, 757
 Swanson, Axel, 618
 Swanson, Gloria, 590
 Swartz, B. K. Jr., 871
 Symmes, Leslie (Symmes Report), 450, 461, 463, 486, 493,
 497-499, 504, 507-508, 520, 522-524, 526-527, 529-534,
 539, 545, 563-566, 593, 712-713
T G Sanborn (vessel), 425, 541
 Taft, President, 66
 Tapis, Estevan, 17, 403-405
 Taylor Ranch (Ventura), 191, 249
 Taylor, George E., 626
 Tejon Ranch, 325
Tennessee (vessel), 84-85
 Thacher School (Ventura County), 588
 Thacher, Olive Day, 682
 Thalberg, Irving, 82
 The Nature Conservancy, 399, 400, 631, 634, 659, 662-665,
 676, 686-687, 741, 743-744, 749-750, 755, 758
 Thierry, Capt. Jess Jr., 669, 717
 Thompson, Alpheus, 26, 145-159, 148, 412
 Thompson, Dixey, 149-156
Thor (vessel), 841
 Thorne, Robert F., 870
 Thornton, Tom, 223, 229, 253
 Tico, Fernando, 782
 Timbrook, Janice, 686
 Timbrook, Steven, 686, 870
 Tittman, O. H., 49-50, 122, 417
 Tobin, Superintendent (NPS), 864
 Toll, Roger, 572-573
 Tombstone, Arizona, 183
 Tomlinson, O. A., 36, 37, 813
 Tompkins, Walker, 301
Tortuga (vessel), 242
 Towne, C. W., 606
 Trask, Blanche, 317
 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 27, 62, 257
 Truman, Harry, 36
 Truth Aquatics, 320
 Tucker, Thomas R., 39
 Turner, Matthew, 541
Typhoon (vessel), 690
 U. S. Coast Survey, 27-32, 49-50, 53, 54, 60, 110, 122, 159-
 163, 285, 292, 300, 301, 317, 318, 329, 355, 361, 366, 384,
 413-416, 427-437, 451, 465, 483, 539, 567, 589, 211, 679,
 725, 732, 752, 768, 784-785, 797, 820, 838-840, 852, 874
 Udall, Stewart, 40, 93
 Union Oil Company, 108, 315, 534, 626, 628
Unity (vessel), 689
USS Prime (vessel), 693
USS Reaper (vessel), 692
 Vail & Vickers, 7, 22, 25-27, 75, 137, 138, 178, 179-262,
 265, 269, 271, 272-273, 281, 284-287, 290-291, 294-295,
 297-299, 307, 313, 315-318, 320, 322-328, 329-387, 515,
 541, 543, 613, 615-616, 631, 641, 643, 656, 671, 690
 Vail Company, 69, 220, 255, 272, 274, 299, 592
 Vail family, 41, 70, 75, 96, 187, 194, 202-203, 219, 220,
 238, 299, 310-311, 313, 328, 330, 389
 Vail Peak, 274, 279, 355, 360, 363, 389
 Vail Trust, 189, 255, 275

Vail, Al, 136, 187, 189, 193, 195, 196-198, 203, 205, 207, 208, 212-215, 218, 220-223, 225-233, 249, 251, 253, 255-256, 258-263, 265, 273, 277, 281-282, 289, 292, 294-295, 299, 313, 331-332, 342, 343, 381
Vail, Banning, 180, 185, 220, 242
Vail, Ed, 40, 71, 73, 97, 186, 195, 200, 203, 216, 217, 219, 220-221, 223, 226, 235, 239-240, 242, 245, 249, 251, 253, 269, 271, 275, 281-282, 289, 297, 305, 307, 331, 388, 389
Vail, Edward L., 183-185, 202, 205, 217
Vail, Granville, 220, 248
Vail, Laura "Dusty", 313
Vail, Mahlon, 220, 222, 255, 275, 297
Vail, N. R., 187, 195, 209, 212, 217, 219, 220-221, 234, 236, 241-244, 247, 264, 286-287, 297-299, 304, 313, 360
Vail, Nita, 263
Vail, Russ, 196, 208-209, 220, 225, 244-247, 251, 255-256, 258-263, 284, 299, 344, 357, 381, 386
Vail, Tim, 263
Vail, Walter L., 178-181, 182, 183-185, 187-188, 220, 222, 224, 297, 325-326, 330, 331
Valadie, Leon, 500, 547
Valdez, Ben, 620
Valenzuela, Ignacio, 149
Van Duzee, Edward P., 318
Van Rensselaer, Maunsell, 683
Van Valkenburgh, Richard, 683
Vancouver, George, 15, 139, 140, 403, 406, 783
Vandenburg Air Force Base, 27, 221, 326, 700, 812
Vandenburg Air Force Base, 26, 326, 700
Vaquero (cattle boat), 73, 79, 191, 225, 242, 243-248, 244, 246, 249, 250, 269, 295, 298, 299, 304, 313
Vaquero II (cattle boat), 191, 205, 250-253, 282, 327, 343, 356, 369
Vargas, Francisco de, 47
Vasquez, Capt. Colis, 63, 536, 576, 579, 582-584, 585, 589
Vasquez, Ramon, 550, 688
Veirs, Stephen Jr., 632
Velero III (vessel), 303, 685-690, 870
Vellanoweth, Rene E., 311-312
Venice Aquarium, 851
Ventura (Ventura County), 16, 18, 40, 42, 51, 60, 94, 136, 150, 157, 191, 246, 248-249, 257, 272, 320, 405, 409, 538, 543, 575, 632, 633, 661, 663, 670, 741, 788, 805
Ventura County, 28, 70, 159, 801, 803
Ventura Free Press, 787
Vickers Company, The, 220, 255, 257-260
Vickers family, 189, 220, 254, 298, 304
Vickers, J. V., 178, 179, 181-185, 241, 243, 323, 325, 326
Vickers, Sumner P., 220
Vineth (vessel), 691
Vint, Thomas, 36
Virginia (vessel), 872
Visel, C. P., 851
Vizcaino, Fr. Juan Gonzalez, 402, 839
Vizcaino, Sebastian, 11, 14-15, 47, 139, 401-402, 783, 839
Vollin, Cal, 795
Volstead Act (1919), 503
Von Bloeker, Jack, 111, 318-319, 685-686, 816, 863, 867
Voss, John, 318
Voy, C. D., 60, 301-302
W T Co #3 (barge), 82, 109
Walker, Joseph R., 19
Wallace, Bill, 195, 197, 198, 199, 205, 207, 218, 221, 227, 232, 260, 310, 331, 332, 339, 340, 343, 347
Wallace, Meredith, 227, 260
Walnut, California, 192
Wampas/Grey Ghost (vessel), 689
Warner Ranch (San Diego County), 181
Warren, Earl, 40, 298
Warren, Earl Jr., 603, 605, 639, 643
Washburn, W.A., 152
Waters, William G., 22, 50, 53-69, 56, 82, 105, 106-107, 108, 117, 118, 119, 121-122, 130
Watson A West (vessel), 108-109
Watts, David D., 663
Weber, Msgr. Francis, 661
Webster, H. Bay, 585, 589, 785, 787-789, 792, 797, 830, 840, 851, 874
Webster, T. D., 843
Weekly Press, 541
Weill, Alexander, 423
Weingard, Alvin, 97
Wells, Hersel, 616
Wenner, Adrian, 299
Wentworth, Charles, 606
Wheeler, Lt. Cmdr. Stanley, 299
Whelen, Nick, 814
Whistler, James McNeill, 29-30, 784
White, John R., 35
Whitmore, Sherry, 870
Wiegghill, Francis T., 813
Wiggins, Ira L., 318, 683
Wilkinson, James Vail (Sandy), 255, 258
Wilkinson, Mary Vail, 258
Willett, George, 319
Williams, M. Woodbridge, 684, 686, 713
Wills, Paul, 845
Wilmington (Los Angeles County), 191, 242, 244-246, 298
Winfield Scott (vessel), 32, 797, 817-818, 821
Wirth, Conrad, 40
Wise, Margaret Vail, 197, 254, 275
Wise, Sam, 197, 387
Wolf, Carl B., 682
Woodward, Arthur, 111, 201, 303-305, 388, 685
Woolley, John J., 180, 311, 317-318,
Woolley, Margaret Vail, 196-197, 202, 203, 205, 209, 212, 214-215, 229, 231, 234-235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 255, 258-259, 298, 330, 355, 381
Wright, Austin, 209, 355, 682,
Wright, Frank Lloyd, 645
Wright, John, 682
Wrigley Transportation Company, 249
Wrigley, William Jr., 572
Wurster, William W., 645
Yankee Blade (vessel), 289
Yates, Dr. Lorenzo, 301-302, 681, 683, 815
Ynez (vessel), 107
Yount, George, 20
Yukon (vessel), 690

